

# MIND MAPS



## PART 3

### Breaking Free from the Negativity Mind Trap

In order to break free from a mind trap, we need to adopt a new mindset. Our thoughts can become patterns of thinking similar to streams that carry water down a mountain. To create a new way of thinking, we have to chart a new course.

#### EVALUATING WHERE YOU ARE

Plan for time when you are free of distractions and consider the answers to these questions:

- Generally speaking, would you consider yourself an optimist or a pessimist?
- What are the repetitive, negative thoughts that replay in your mind?
- Can you identify any go-to phrases that might lead you toward a negativity mind trap? Here are some examples:
  - Here we go again...
  - This can't be good...
  - He/she won't ever...
  - This is never going to get better..
- Is there a root issue to these negative thoughts (e.g., a past hurt, a worry about the future, a fear)?

## CREATING A NEW MIND MAP

### **Step 1: : Take your thoughts captive.**

*Be on guard for a potential mind trap.*

- Are you welcoming negative thoughts like a restaurant host welcomes customers?
- Are you willing to be ruthless with your negative thoughts before they have a chance to grow?
- What's your script? Write a go-to phrase or sentence that you will use to take your thoughts captive as negative thoughts surface.

### **Step 2: Find your inputs.**

*Be willing to make drastic changes if necessary.*

- Are there others' voices that foster negativity in you?
- How can you eliminate or dial down the voice of these inputs?
- What's your plan? Decide what steps you will take to reduce these inputs in your life. Ask a friend or family member to help you stick with your plan.

### **Step 3: Choose joy.**

*With God's help, we can be content despite our circumstances or surroundings.*

- Are your negative thoughts robbing you of joy?
- Where will you choose to place your focus instead of negative thinking?
- What will you practice? Decide what you will do to practice choosing joy (e.g., focused prayer, a "joy walk," reciting Philippians 4:8–9).

## MOVING FORWARD

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. *Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8–9*

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

We all want to live life to the fullest, but when you feel trapped or hopeless, it can be hard to know what to do. That's why we created Counseling Referrals. With a quick search of our licensed professionals, you'll find a partner who can help you find freedom. To learn more, visit [counselingreferrals.org](https://counselingreferrals.org).