

Dr. Daniel Amen – Kill The ANTS

1. ANTS: _____
2. Everytime you have a thought your brain releases _____.
3. What type of Therapy is used for your thoughts? _____
4. Anxiety and depression is _____ Automatic Negative Thoughts.
5. _____ are the seeds of depression, anxiety, overeating, and weak minded.
6. An internal _____ will kill the negative the negative thoughts coming through your brain.

7. Technique when feeling *sad, mad, nervous*, or *out of control*:

Step 1: _____ down your automatic negative thoughts:

Step 2: Ask Questions:

- a. Is it _____?
- b. If yes, Can I absolutely know that it's _____ with absolute certainty?
- c. How do I feel when I believe that _____?
- d. How would you feel if you didn't have that _____?

Step 3: Take the original thought and turn it to it's _____.

8. If you don't have the thoughts that are bothering you... you feel more _____.

Use WIT: (a summation of steps 1,2, and 3 above)

- *Write down the thought and clearly identify it.*
- *Investigate the thought and ask whether it is true, and If not...*
- *Talk back to it and tell it it's false.*

In his book, Change Your Brain Change Your Life Dr Daniel G Amen identifies 9 types of negative thoughts which infiltrate our mind if we allow them to.

They are labelled as ANTs which stands for Automatic Negative Thoughts.

“Negative thoughts invade your mind like ants at a picnic.” The nine different ways your thoughts lie to you and make situations seem worse than they are, are listed below. Think of these nine ways as nine different species of ANTs. When you can, identify the type of ANT and you can take away the power they have over you.

How to Exterminate Your ANTs

1. When you notice an ANT entering your mind, recognize it, write it down, talk back to it.
2. When you hear yourself say an ANT, STOP and correct them.
3. Identify your favorite ANTs and use the following process to kill these ANTs
 1. **All or nothing** – These are the ANTs that infest your brain when you think everything is good or all bad. It is the same as black or white thinking. If you stick to your exercise plan for a month, you think you are the most disciplined person on the planet. If you miss a day at the gym, you think you have no discipline and give up and go back to being a couch potato. A better approach is to acknowledge that you didn't do your daily workout and then get back on track the following day. One slip up doesn't mean you should give up entirely.
 2. **Always thinking** – This is when you think in words that over generalize, such as always, never, every time or everyone. Consider some of the thoughts such as “I will never lose weight,” “I have always had a sweet tooth – I will never be able to stop eating chocolate,” This kind of thinking makes you feel like you are doomed to fail at eating right and staying healthy. It is as if you have no control over your actions or behaviors.
 3. **Focusing on the negative** – This ANT makes you see only the negative aspects of situations even when there are plenty of positives. “I know I lost 10 pounds, but I wanted to lose 15, so I'm a failure” is an example of this type of thinking. Focusing on the negative makes you more inclined to give up on your efforts. Putting a positive spin on this same thought – “wow!” I lost 10 pounds. I'm on my way to my goal of 15 pounds” – encourages you to keep up the good work and makes you feel pretty good about yourself.
 4. **Thinking with your feelings** – “I feel like my skin is never going to clear up.” Thoughts like this occur when you have a feeling about something and you assume it is correct, so you never question it. Feelings can lie too. Look for evidence. In this example, schedule an appointment with a dermatologist to find out if there's anything you can do to improve your skin.
 5. **Guilt beating** – Thinking in words like “should”, “must”, “ought to”, and “have to” are typical with this type of ANT, which involves using excessive guilt to control behavior. When we feel pushed to do things, our natural tendency is to push back. That doesn't mean that guilt is all bad. There are certainly things in life that we should and shouldn't do if we want to have the best body possible: “I want to eat the chips and guacamole at the party, but I should have the raw carrots instead” or “I feel like staying in bed, but I should do my workout.” Don't mistake these for guilt beating ANTs.

6. **Labeling** – When you call yourself or someone else names or use negative terms to describe them, you have a labelling ANT in your brain. A lot of us do this on a regular basis. You may have said one of the following at some point in your life; “I’m a loser”; “I’m a failure”; or “I’m lazy.” The problem with calling yourself names is that it takes away your actions and behaviors. If you are a loser, a failure, or lazy, then why bother trying to change your behavior? It is as if you have given up before you have even tried. This defeatist attitude can be ruinous for your body.

Beware of the red ANTs

These last three ANTs are the worst of the bunch. I call them the red ANTs because they can really sting.

7. **Fortune-telling** – Predicting the worst even though you don’t know what will happen is the hallmark of the fortune telling ANT. Examples include: “I just had a biopsy I am sure it is cancer”. Nobody is safe from fortune telling ANTs .
8. **Mind reading** – When you think that you know what somebody else is thinking even though they have not told you, and you have not asked them, it is called mind-reading. Listen carefully to the other person before trying to predict what they have to say.
9. **Blame** – Of all the ANTs, this one is the worst. Blaming others for your problems and taking no responsibility for your own successes and failures is toxic thinking. For example: “It is your fault I’m out of shape because you will not go with me to exercise.” Whenever you begin a sentence with “it is your fault...” it ruins your life. These ANTs make you a victim. When you are a victim, you are powerless to change your behavior. Quit blaming others and take responsibility for your actions.