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Introduction Block

PRACTICING THE OPPOSITE

CHANGE WHAT YOU DO. → IMPROVE YOUR LIFE.

What is Practicing the Opposite?

Practicing the Opposite means **purposely doing the opposite of what you usually do.**



Most cats don't like water, but this one is Practicing the Opposite by bathing so it can get clean.

Practicing the Opposite can help you...

1. **START** doing things that you *don't* usually do, but would make your life better.
2. **STOP** doing things that you *do* usually do that make your life harder.

HOW THIS PROGRAM WORKS

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

We learn the surprising science behind Practicing the Opposite.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

We hear from young people who have been helped by Practicing the Opposite.

Part #3: How can you Practice the Opposite?

You learn to Practice the Opposite.

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

You plan how you will continue to Practice the Opposite in your life.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

Everyone has ways they want to grow and change.

Which of these challenges sounds like something you have dealt with or might deal with in the future?

It's okay if you deal with more than one, or you're not sure which to choose. Just choose one that we can work together on today.

- "I'm sometimes nervous and scared to do things that I should really do."
- "I feel sad and bored a lot, and I don't feel like doing things that once made me happy."
- "I argue, fight, and get in trouble sometimes."

Anxiety Block

You're not alone.

29% of young people say that they feel nervous almost every day.

Why is it so challenging?

It can make life difficult by affecting school, sports, relationships with friends and family, and more.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

First: We'll learn brain science that explains how Practicing the Opposite can help you change your life.

Then: We'll learn how changing what we do changes what we think and feel.

Finally: We'll talk about the types of challenges Practicing the Opposite helps with.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear this slide read aloud:

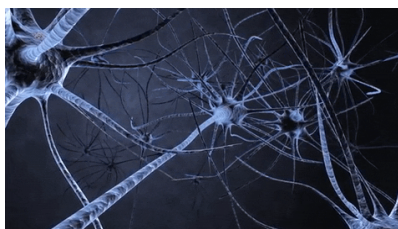
0:00 / 0:25

Scientists have found that **our brains grow and change** throughout our lives.

+ The human brain is made up of billions of tiny cells called **neurons**.

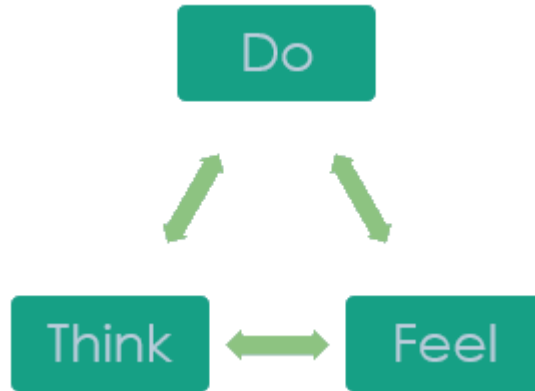
+ Every time we think, feel, or do something, we form a new connection between our neurons.

+ **The more we think, feel, or do something, the stronger these connections become.**



Neurons in the brain.

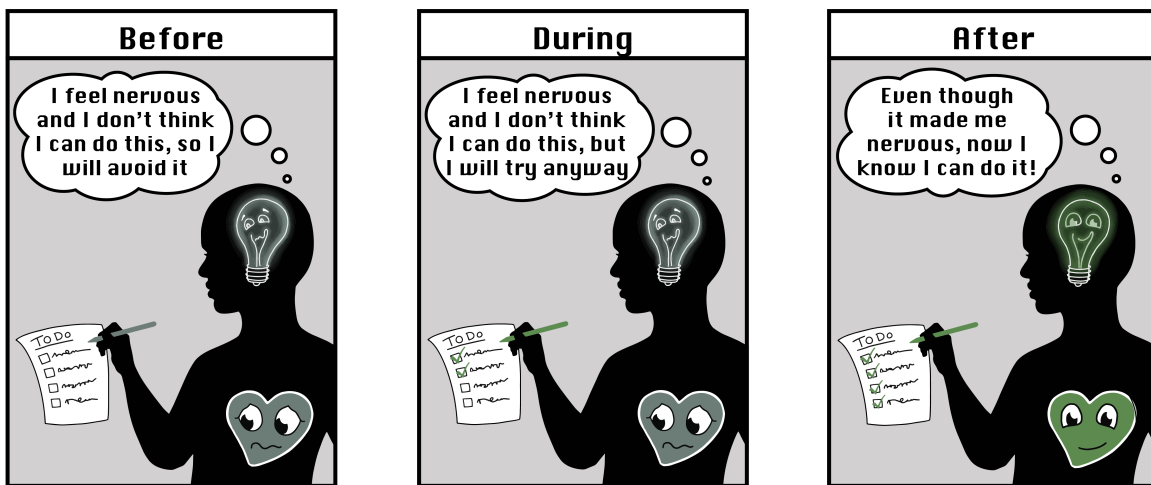
Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?



What we **do**, **think**, and **feel** are all connected in our brains. If we change what we **do**, we will also change what we **think** and **feel**.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER PRACTICING THE OPPOSITE

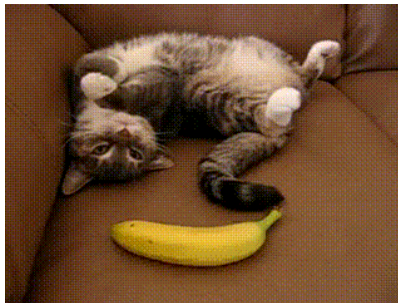


Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

The more we practice the things we're scared of, the less scary they become!

Practicing the Opposite seems HARD at first, but gets EASIER the more we practice.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?



What is one important thing you have been avoiding because it scares you, even though it probably will not hurt you?

For example, many young people avoid participating in class, going to the doctor, or being near bugs because they are afraid, even though these things are safe.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

First: We'll tell you about two studies in which scientists taught young people Practicing the Opposite.

Then: You'll hear from two young people who were helped by Practicing the Opposite.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

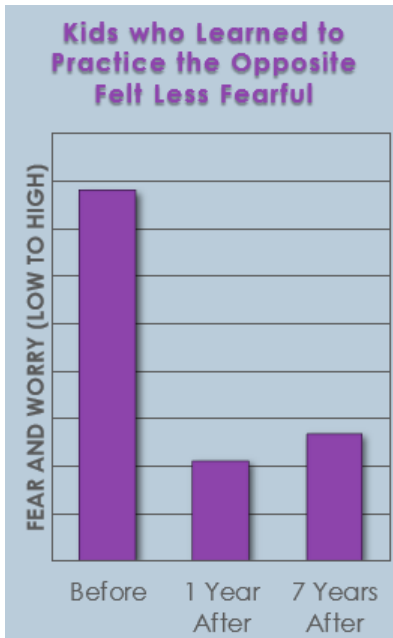
In one study, young people learned to Practice the Opposite by doing things they were scared of and usually avoided.

- Most of the young people struggled to Practice the Opposite, especially at first.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

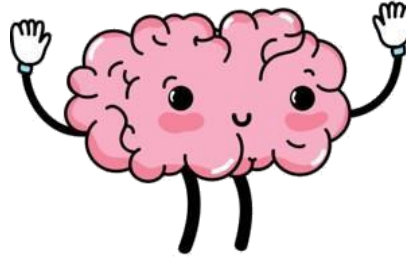
After Practicing the Opposite for weeks, they got much better at doing things they used to avoid. And, they felt less worried and fearful.

- This change stuck. **7 years later, these young people still felt much less worried and fearful.**



Step #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Other studies have found that Practicing the Opposite **changes your brain**. New actions build up connections in the brain with new feelings and new thoughts.



You may be thinking, *"I'm just an anxious person. I'll always be this way."* Practicing the Opposite helps you overcome challenges you might have thought were just part of your personality.

Our fears don't need to hold us back forever. We can change our lives for good.

Step #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Let's hear from two teens who overcame their fears by Practicing the Opposite.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear From an Older Student, K.C.!

0:00 / 1:05

"In middle school, I felt nervous around other people because I felt like they were judging me and I didn't belong. I felt very stressed at lunch and in class.

I told my older sister how I felt, and she told me she used to feel the same way! She got better when she started doing the things she was afraid of. That sounded so difficult – I didn't know how I could bring myself to do all the things I'd been avoiding. But she finally convinced me to try – and I'm glad she did!

First, I tried talking with some other kids at lunch, even though I was worried they wouldn't like me. I was so afraid at first, but once I started, it wasn't as bad as I thought it would

be. Then, I started answering questions in class, and I actually felt better after doing it a few times. I still felt a little afraid, especially at first, but I was okay with that.

I recognized that I could work through my fears through facing them, and I started trying to face them more and more."

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear From an Older Student, R.A.!

0:00 / 0:52

"I used to feel really nervous and worried most of the time, especially when I went out of my house without my parents or my siblings. I just felt like I wasn't safe enough on my own.

My fears really got in the way of my life because I didn't want to leave home. Soon I started talking to a counselor. My counselor helped me to try doing the things I was afraid of. I went out of the house by myself, I went for bike rides alone, and I stayed late after school some days.

It was so scary at first that I nearly gave up, but I kept trying, and it got much less scary after a while. Eventually, I learned that I didn't need to avoid the things I feared. I also learned that just because I felt scared, didn't mean I was in danger.

I still think sometimes about the same old fears, but I don't let my fears affect what I do anymore – I keep doing the things I need to even when I feel afraid."

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Apply what you've learned!

Imagine you are helping a student in the grade below you with math. They tell you that they are too scared to answer questions in class.

Based on what you've learned today, which of these things would you tell them to do?

- They should try and avoid being called on by going to the bathroom.**
- They should tell their teacher that they are afraid and ask their teacher not to call on them.**
- They should practice raising their hand and answering questions anyway, even if it's scary at first.**

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

If you picked "They should practice raising their hand and answering questions anyway, even if it's scary at first," **you were correct!** The younger student could help themselves get over their fear by practicing speaking in class.

Avoiding being called on won't help the student get over their fear! It might help to tell a trusted teacher that they are nervous, but they should still practice raising their hand in class.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

What else could you say to the younger student to help them use Practicing the Opposite? For example, you could tell them about how they will feel if they keep Practicing the Opposite, one of the studies you read about, or one of the students you heard from.



Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

First: Identify your fears with a Fear Ladder.

Then: Practice facing a fear!

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Using a Fear Ladder helps us understand the things we fear and how much we fear them.

Here is an example of a Fear Ladder.

LEVEL	ACTIVITY	FEAR RATING
3	Auditioning for the play	10/10
2	Speaking in class	6/10
1	Going to a club meeting	3/10

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

On the next page, write down fears that make your life harder.

- If you really want to act in your school play, but are too afraid to, that fear would make your life harder because it stops you from doing **something that you want to do**.
- However, **some things that you fear are actually dangerous**. For example, it probably won't help you to get over a fear of petting tigers...unless you're a zookeeper!

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Now, it's your turn!

Write down fears that make your life harder. Try to write down things you usually avoid because of fear.

What's something you're **extremely** scared of doing?

What's something you're **pretty** scared of doing?

What's something you're **a little** scared of doing?

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

PRACTICE THE OPPOSITE NOW

Young people can have all sorts of fears. Three common fears are heights, spiders, and getting shots at the doctor.

Choose one thing below that you are pretty scared of.

We will ask you to watch a video of what you choose, so choose something that will

make you uncomfortable, but won't seriously freak you out. If nothing here scares you, you can find your own video online!

- Heights
- Spiders
- Getting shots at the doctor
- found my own video (fill in below)

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Before we show you the video, please rate how nervous you **THINK you will feel while you watch it.**



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Now, watch the video.

Extreme Bungy Jumping with Cliff Jump Shenanigans! Play...



Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Now, watch the video.

Adorable Spider Gives Dad High Fives | The Dodo



Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Now, watch the video.



Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Now that you've seen the video, how nervous did you **ACTUALLY FEEL** while you watched it?



- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

If you felt less nervous than you expected...

That's great to hear! Seems like you're already seeing how you can face your fears!

If you didn't feel less nervous than you expected...

We recommend that you continue to practice. Practicing the Opposite can be scary at first! The more we practice, the more it helps.

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Now, we will help you plan ways to keep practicing the opposite.

Remember, the key to feeling happier is Practicing the Opposite over and over.



Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Planning **WHEN** and **WHERE** you will Practice the Opposite is a good way to make sure you will actually do it.

Here is an example of how to plan when you will Practice the Opposite.

Which fear did you choose?
 My middle fear: My fear of spiders.
How will you use Practicing the Opposite to overcome this fear?
 Watch a video of someone holding a spider.
When will you Practice the Opposite?
 Tomorrow right after I eat breakfast.
Where will you Practice the Opposite?
 In the kitchen.
How will you reward yourself for Practicing the Opposite?
 I'll eat my favorite chocolate bar.

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Choose a fear from your Fear Ladder to work on facing from the drop down box below.

You can work on facing and overcoming your other fears another time!

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

You chose to work on...

`{q://QID49/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}`

How will you use Practicing the Opposite to face this fear?

When will you Practice the Opposite?

Where will you Practice the Opposite?

How will you reward yourself for Practicing the Opposite?

We know Practicing the Opposite can be challenging.

If you're working with a school clinician, they can help support you.

If not, you could ask for support from a friend or family member. Or, you can do it all by yourself!

Save or screenshot your Fear Ladder and your plan to face and overcome your fear by Practicing the Opposite.

Fear Ladder

Something I'm extremely scared of doing: \${q://QID182/ChoiceTextEntryValue/1}

Something I'm pretty scared of doing: \${q://QID182/ChoiceTextEntryValue/2}

Something I'm a little scared of doing: \${q://QID182/ChoiceTextEntryValue/3}

Plan

The fear I'm working on: \${q://QID49/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}

How I will use Practicing the Opposite to face this

fear: \${q://QID213/ChoiceTextEntryValue/1}

When I will Practice the Opposite: \${q://QID213/ChoiceTextEntryValue/2}

Where I will Practice the Opposite: \${q://QID213/ChoiceTextEntryValue/3}

How I will reward myself for Practicing the

Opposite: \${q://QID213/ChoiceTextEntryValue/4}

Depression Block

You're not alone.

About 40% of young people say that they feel bored almost every day, and 31% say they feel sad almost every day.

Why is it so challenging?

It can make life difficult by affecting school, sports, relationships with friends and family, and more.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

First: We'll learn brain science that explains how Practicing the Opposite can help you change your life.

Then: We'll learn how changing what we do changes what we think and feel.

Finally: We'll talk about the types of challenges Practicing the Opposite helps with.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear this slide read aloud:

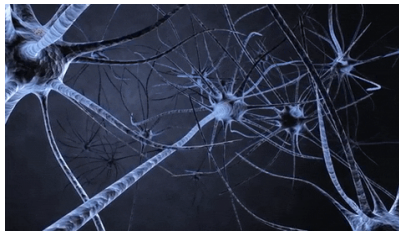
0:00 / 0:25

Studies have found that **our brains grow and change** throughout our lives.

+ The human brain is made up of billions of tiny cells called **neurons**.

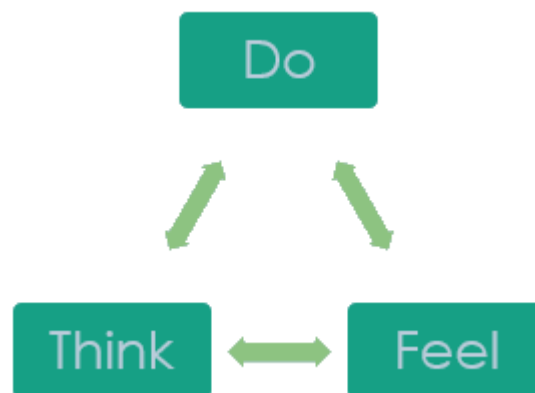
+ Every time we think, feel, or do something, we form a new connection between our neurons.

+ **The more we think, feel, or do something, the stronger these connections become.**



Neurons in the brain.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?



What we **do**, **think**, and **feel** are all connected in our brains.
If we change what we **do**, we will also change what we **think** and **feel**.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

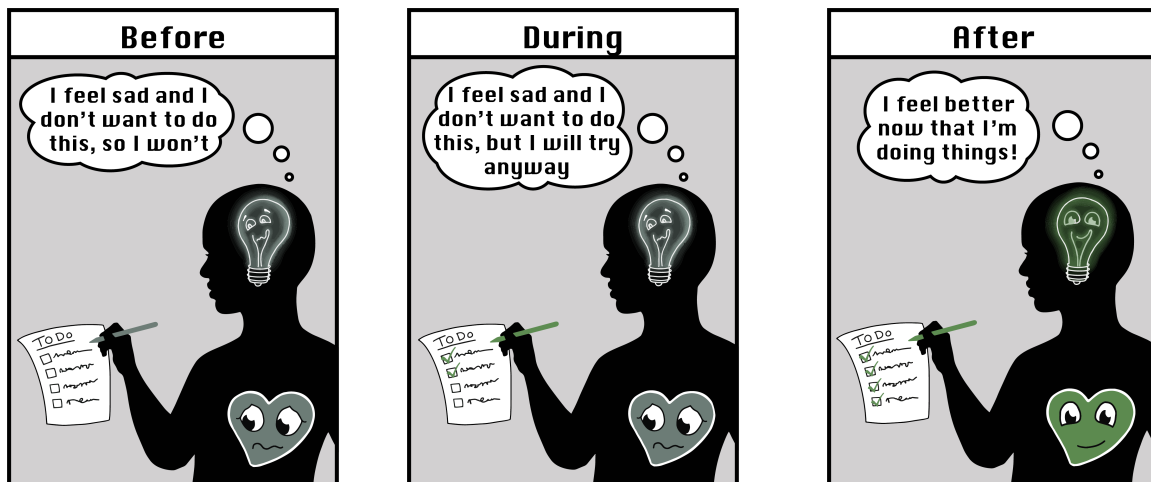
Doing happy things can help you have **happy feelings** and **happy thoughts!**

To do happy things, you can:

- **Do things that make you feel good.**
 - For some people, this means going for runs or making art.
- **Not do things that make you feel bad.**
 - For some people, this means not avoiding your homework or not listening to sad music.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER PRACTICING THE OPPOSITE



Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

The more we practice the things we're not in the mood to do, the more we want to do them, and the better we feel.

Practicing the opposite seems HARD at first, but gets EASIER the more we practice.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?



What is one important thing you have been avoiding because you're not in the mood to do it, even though it would improve your life?

For example, many people stay inside by themselves instead of spending time with friends because they feel tired or bored.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

First: We'll tell you about studies in which young people learned about Practicing the Opposite.

Then: You'll hear from two young people who were helped by Practicing the Opposite.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

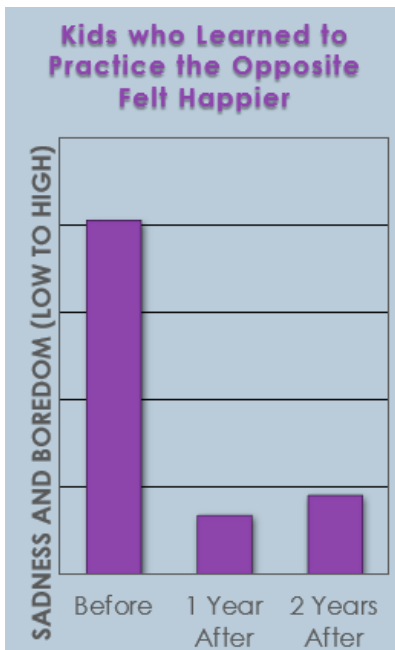
In one study, young people learned to Practice the Opposite by doing fun and helpful things they didn't feel like.

- It was **hard work** to Practice the Opposite, especially at first.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

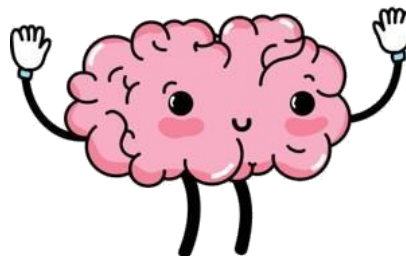
After Practicing the Opposite for months, the young people said they felt sad and bored much less.

- This change stuck! **Even 2 years later, they felt much less sad and bored.**



Step #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Other studies have found that Practicing the Opposite **changes your brain**. New actions build up connections in the brain with new feelings and new thoughts.



You may be thinking, "I'm just a negative person. I'll always be this way." Practicing the Opposite helps you overcome challenges you might have thought were

just part of your personality.

Our negative feelings don't need to hold us back forever. We can change our lives for good.

Step #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Let's hear from two teens who improved their lives by Practicing the Opposite.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear From an Older Student, X.R.!

0:00 / 1:24

"When I first started high school, I felt really lonely and I didn't like myself very much. I felt like I just didn't fit in. I stopped doing things that used to be fun for me, like hanging out with friends and riding my bike. All I wanted to do was lie in bed.

When I heard a friend at practice talking about feeling the same way, I felt less lonely, because I realized that I wasn't the only person struggling with starting high school. Realizing that I wasn't the only one made it easier to get to know other people.

Even though I wasn't always in the mood to talk to people, I tried sitting with people at lunch anyway. It wasn't always fun, but I eventually met some people who I liked! I still wanted to sit by myself sometimes, but I realized how much happier I was after I made friends.

I started feeling happier, and it became easy for me to fill my time with fun things, like playing board games and going for bike rides with my friends. I never thought I would, but now I look forward to going to school, and I even feel pretty okay about myself."

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear From an Older Student, A.U.!

0:00 / 1:22

"When I was 13, my grandma died, and I was devastated. We had been so close my whole life. People told me that I would start feeling better in a few months, but I really didn't – If anything, I felt even more sad and alone, and I was afraid I'd never be happy like I used to be.

When I was down, I didn't spend much time with other people I cared about, and I had stopped doing things that used to be fun, like playing guitar.

After a long time of feeling down and alone, I learned that I could help myself feel better by doing the things that I used to enjoy. So, I decided to start trying to do those things again.

It was hard at first. I just didn't feel like doing much, not even fun things. I didn't even want to talk with my friends and family or to practice guitar. But I kept trying to do them anyway because I knew that if I did, I would eventually start feeling better and having fun again.

After months of doing these fun things often, I still missed my grandma, but I was enjoying spending time with other people again and I was even able to ask them for support when I felt down. I also started playing guitar again, and I decided to join the school band.

I have hope now that I can have a happy life. I know that if I start feeling bad, I have some control over how I react. I will have good times and bad, but I don't have to feel down forever."

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Apply what you've learned!

Imagine you are helping a student in the grade below who tells you that they have stopped going to soccer practice even though soccer used to be their favorite sport. They are feeling really down and bored. What would you tell them to help them start feeling better?

Based on what you've learned today, which of these things would you tell them to do?

- They should just stay home and sleep because they're feeling so down.
- They should tell their friends and teachers that they are feeling sad so they can't go to practice.
- They should go to practice anyway, even though they don't feel like it.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

If you picked "They should go to practice anyway, even though they don't feel like it," **you were correct!** The younger student could feel better by doing things fun things (like soccer).

Staying home and sleeping probably won't help the student feel better. It might help to tell trusted friends or teachers that they are feeling down, but they should also practice doing fun and important things.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

What else could you say to the younger student to help them use Practicing the Opposite? For example, you could tell them about how they will feel if they keep

Practicing the Opposite, one of the studies you read about, or one of the students you heard from.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

First: Identify activities that will improve your life.

Then: Try Practicing the Opposite.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

When you're feeling down, it can be hard believe that there is anything you can do to feel better. **These are the times when it's most important to try doing something anyway!**

Making a list of fun things will help you decide what to do when you don't feel like doing anything.

Here's an example of how you might complete this activity.

Activities I Enjoy Now

1. Spending time in nature
2. Drawing
3. Talking on the phone

Activities I Used to Enjoy

1. Playing soccer
2. Going to my friends' houses
3. Playing board games

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?



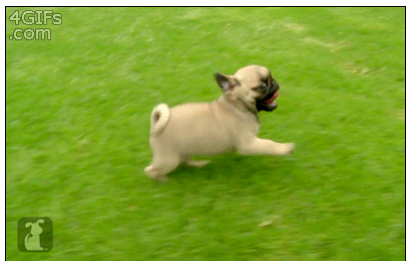
memeguy.com

Write three activities that you used to enjoy in the boxes below.

For example, some people might write going for a walk, drawing, or calling a friend.

Rank them in order from fun things that are easiest for you to do when you feel sad, to hardest for you to do when you feel sad. You can change the order by clicking and dragging.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?



Write three activities that you enjoy in the boxes below.

If you don't really enjoy anything right now, write down the activities you don't dislike too much.

Rank them in order from fun things that are easiest for you to do when you feel sad, to hardest for you to do when you feel sad.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

TRY PRACTICING THE OPPOSITE

Before we Practice the Opposite together, we want to know how you feel right now.



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

If you were feeling unhappy, you might not think to watch a happy video. But, let's try watching a happy video together to see how it influences your feelings and thoughts.

Which video do you think you would like the most?

- A cat comforts a scared dog
- A cute kid gives you a pep talk
- A cute bunny has a snack with a friend

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Watch the video.

Hidden Camera Catches Cat Comforting Anxious Dog Whil...



Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Watch the video.

A Pep Talk from Kid President to You



Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Watch the video.

Meet Smudge - The World's Friendliest Bunny! | Time Out



Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

How do you **FEEL** after watching this video?



Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

How did you feel before and after watching the video?

- I felt happier after.
- I feel the same.
- I feel sadder after.
- I can't tell if watching the video influenced my mood.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

You said that you feel happier after watching the video!

That's great to hear! Even if you only felt a little bit happier, it is exciting to see how Practicing the Opposite can improve your mood.

What is one positive thought on your mind right now?

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

TRY PRACTICING THE OPPOSITE

You said that you feel the same after watching the video.

Thanks for sharing how you feel with us. Remember that Practicing the Opposite is a skill. The more you practice it, the more it helps you. You could also go back and watch a different video, look up a video yourself, or try something completely different, like playing basketball after school even though you're tired or baking cookies even though you feel sad.

What is another way you can try Practicing the Opposite?

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

TRY PRACTICING THE OPPOSITE

You said that you feel sadder after watching the video.

Thanks for sharing how you feel with us. Remember that Practicing the Opposite is a skill. The more you practice it, the more it helps you. You could also go back and watch a different video, look up a video yourself, or try something completely different, like playing basketball after school even though you're tired or baking cookies even though you feel sad.

What is another way you can try Practicing the Opposite?

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

TRY PRACTICING THE OPPOSITE

You said that you can't tell if watching the video influenced your mood.

Thanks for sharing how you feel with us. Remember that Practicing the Opposite is a skill. The more you practice it, the more it helps you. You could also go back and watch a different video, look up a video yourself, or try something completely different, like playing basketball or baking cookies.

What is another way you can try Practicing the Opposite?

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Now, we will help you plan ways to keep practicing the opposite.

Remember, the key to feeling happier is Practicing the Opposite over and over.



Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Here is an example of how to plan when you will Practice the Opposite.

Planning **WHEN** and **WHERE** you will Practice the Opposite is a good way to make sure you will actually do it!

Activities I Enjoy or Used to Enjoy
 Going to Sam's house

The Plan
Day: Saturday
Time: Noon
Preparation:
 Text to see if Sam is free

Backup Plan
 Going for a walk with my family

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Your Turn!

Choose an fun thing to do when you feel sad!

Choose among the things you listed earlier. You can make plans to do other things later on, too!

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Your Turn!

This is the thing you chose to do when you feel sad:

$\$ \{q://QID87/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$

What day will you do this activity?

What time will you do this activity?

How will you prepare for this activity?

What is your backup plan in case your plan falls through?

We know Practicing the Opposite can be challenging.

If you're working with a counselor, they can help support you.

If not, you could ask for help from a friend or family member. Or, you can do it all by yourself!

Save or screenshot your list of fun activities and your activity plan to help yourself Practice the Opposite!

Fun Activities

That you used to enjoy:

- + \$ {q://QID124/ChoiceTextEntryValue/1}
- + \$ {q://QID124/ChoiceTextEntryValue/2}
- + \$ {q://QID124/ChoiceTextEntryValue/3}

That you enjoy now:

- + \$ {q://QID69/ChoiceTextEntryValue/1}
- + \$ {q://QID69/ChoiceTextEntryValue/2}
- + \$ {q://QID69/ChoiceTextEntryValue/3}

Plan

Activity I will do when I feel sad: \$ {q://QID87/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}

What day I will do this activity: \$ {q://QID214/ChoiceTextEntryValue/1}

What time I will do this activity: \$ {q://QID214/ChoiceTextEntryValue/2}

How I will prepare for this activity: \$ {q://QID214/ChoiceTextEntryValue/3}

My backup plan in case my plans fall

through: \$ {q://QID214/ChoiceTextEntryValue/4}

Misbehavior Block

You're not alone.

Over 20% of young people say that they often get in trouble, and 40% say that they feel angry or irritable.

Why is it so challenging?

It can make life difficult by affecting schoolwork, sports, relationships with friends and family, and more.

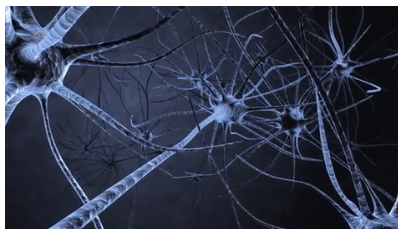
Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear this slide read aloud:

0:00 / 0:25

Studies have found that **our brains grow and change** throughout our lives.

- + The human brain is made up of billions of tiny cells called **neurons**.
- + Every time we think, feel, or do something, we form a new connection between our neurons.
- + **The more we think, feel, or do something, the stronger these connections become.**

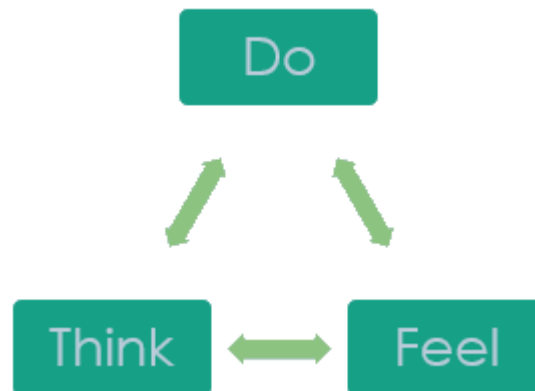


*Neurons in the brain.***Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?**

First: We'll learn brain science that explains how Practicing the Opposite can help you change your life.

Then: We'll learn how changing what we do changes what we think and feel.

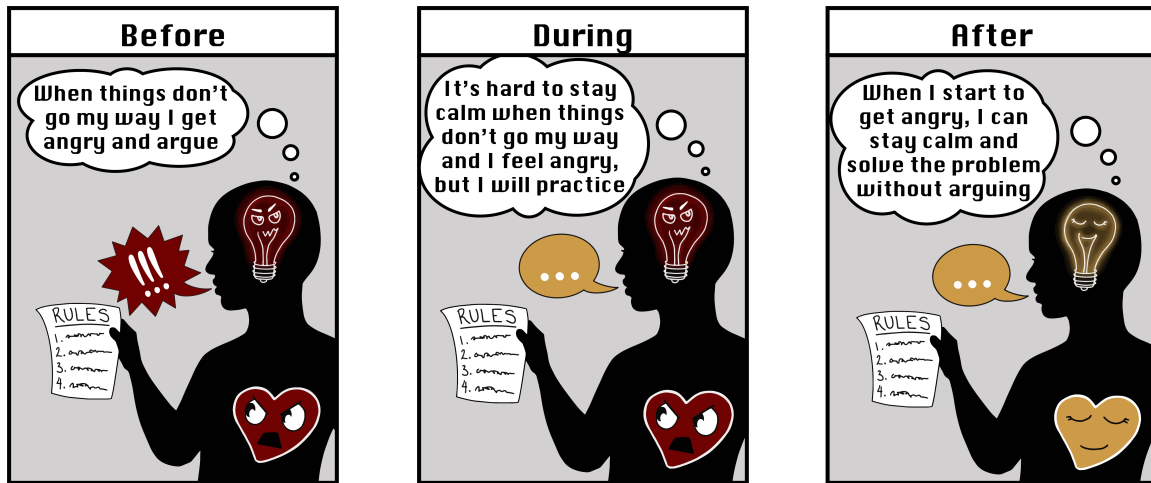
Finally: We'll talk about the types of challenges Practicing the Opposite helps with.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

What we **do**, **think**, and **feel** are all connected in our brains. If we change what we **do**, we will also change what we **think** and **feel**.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

WHAT HAPPENS BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER PRACTICING THE OPPOSITE



Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

Sometimes, when we act out, argue, or fight, we don't know why we did it. Maybe we didn't even realize we were angry. Maybe we did something without thinking first.

At first, it's hard to SLOW DOWN, STOP, and THINK before you do things.

But, the more you practice, the easier it gets. If you practice enough, it'll start to happen automatically.

Part #1: How does Practicing the Opposite work?

Noticing the things that cause us to argue or fight can help us prepare for them and avoid doing things that get us in trouble.



Think back to the last time you acted out or got into a fight or argument. What happened right before?

For example, maybe you yelled at someone else last week, and you remember that you got a low grade right before.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

First: We'll tell you about studies in which young people learned about Practicing the Opposite.

Then: You'll hear from two young people who were helped by Practicing the Opposite.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

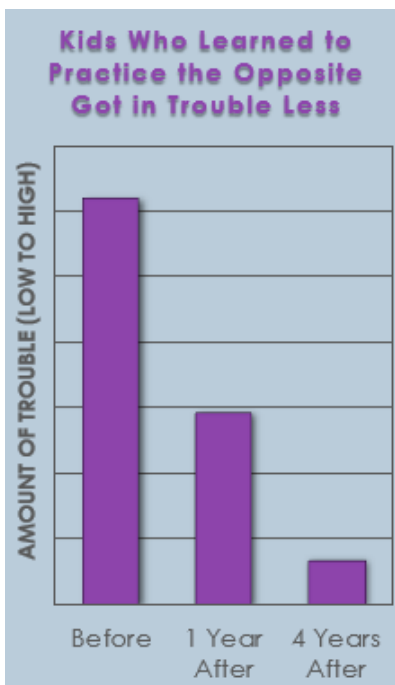
In one study, young people who reacted to their anger or got into trouble often were taught to Practice the Opposite. They learned to pause and think about other ways to solve their problems instead of automatically reacting to their anger.

- It was **hard work** to Practice the Opposite, especially at first.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

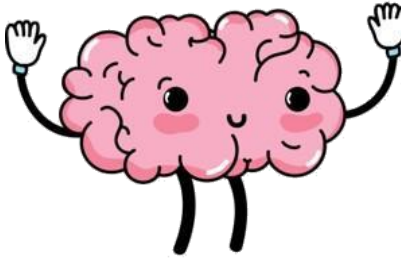
After Practicing the Opposite for weeks, they said they got into trouble much less often.

- This change stuck. **Even 4 years later, these young people got into trouble much less often.**



Step #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Other studies have found that Practicing the Opposite **changes your brain**. New actions build up connections in the brain with new feelings and new thoughts.



You may be thinking, *"I just have a short temper. I'll always be this way."* Practicing the Opposite helps you overcome challenges you might have thought were just part of your personality.

We don't have to keep feeling angry and out of control . We can change our lives for good.

Step #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Let's hear from two teens who learned to better handle their anger by Practicing the Opposite.

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear From an Older Student, J.W.!

0:00 / 1:18

"Three years ago, I was known as a troublemaker. Instead of doing my work, I clowned around and talked back to my teachers. I shoved people and even got into a few fights. I got my phone taken away a lot, and sometimes I got detention.

My teachers met with my parents, and they told me that I needed to learn how to control my anger. Funnily enough, this made me really angry. But I also didn't like feeling out of control or getting into fights.

I learned that feeling angry makes me want to argue and even fight. I began practicing

doing the opposite of what my anger tells me to do. If my anger tells me to yell at someone, I practice not yelling at them. Instead, I take a deep breath and try to think of another way to solve the problem.

At first, I wasn't used to taking deep breaths and trying to think of ways to solve the problem without exploding. I thought yelling made me feel better, but yelling actually caused me trouble and made me even angrier. When I took a deep breath and tried to solve the problem instead, I felt calmer and happier. I still get angry sometimes, but I almost never get in big fights. I get better grades in school, and I even have more fun with my friends when I'm not arguing and fighting."

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Hear From an Older Student, O.F.!

0:00 / 1:26

"Ever since I was a little kid, it was hard for me to control myself. I always used to scream at my brother and even hit him, because he was really mean to me. Over the years, I started feeling angry more often, and screaming and hitting was the only way I knew to handle it. I got in trouble all the time at school and at home, mostly because I felt like everyone was out to get me and I needed to defend myself.

Eventually, I decided to change how I was acting because I didn't want to get in trouble anymore. I learned that Practicing the Opposite would help me solve my problems. Practicing the Opposite was hard, and there were times when I almost gave up, but I kept trying again.

Instead of screaming and hitting, I practiced taking deep breaths and thinking about how to handle whatever made me angry. It was easier for me to handle problems when I thought about the reasons why people were mean to me. When I really thought about it, I realized *most* people weren't out to get me. My brother didn't really mean to hurt me. He was mean to me because he needed more time alone. I solved the problem by giving him more privacy, instead of fighting.

Now that I give my brother his personal space, we enjoy spending time together because

we don't argue as much. We still argue sometimes, but now I know how to find solutions that work for both of us. When I feel like other people are being mean to me, I try my best to understand where they are coming from in order to find a solution that works better than fighting or arguing. I rarely get as angry anymore because I can solve problems without exploding."

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

Apply what you've learned!

Imagine you are helping a student in the grade below you. They tell you that they get really frustrated on the soccer field and shove other players. Then, the referees give them fouls, which upsets their teammates.

Based on what you've learned today, which of these things would you tell them to do?

- Argue with the referee to see if you can get them to change their mind.**
- Take a deep breath and keep playing your best. In the future, be careful not to shove.**
- Blame your teammates. They should have been there for you.**

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

If you picked "**Take a deep breath and keep playing your best. In the future, be more careful not to shove,**" **you were correct!** The student could feel better by taking a breath, and solve the problem by continuing to do their best, and trying to learn from their mistake.

Arguing with the referee and blaming teammates probably won't solve the problem. It might also result in a penalty!

Part #2: Does Practicing the Opposite work?

What else could you say to the younger student to help them use Practicing the Opposite? For example, you could tell them about how they will feel if they keep Practicing the Opposite, one of the studies you read about, or one of the students you heard from.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

First: Learn the steps for Practicing the Opposite.

Then: Choose calming strategies.

Finally: Think about how you can Practice the Opposite.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

You should practice the opposite when something happens that makes you feel angry.

Example: A.J. makes fun of K.M. for wearing, "Cheap, ugly clothes." K.M. wants to yell at A.J.

Step 1: Even though we want to act out, fight, or argue, we pause instead.

Right as K.M. is about to yell at A.J., K.M. pauses.

Step 2: We use a calming strategy instead of acting out, fighting, or arguing.

K.M. takes four deep breaths.

Step 3: We find a way to solve the problem that doesn't get us in trouble.

K.M. decides not to sit at A.J.'s lunch table anymore. K.M. sits with different friends who don't tease.

Part #3: How do you Practice the Opposite?

Different people have different ways of feeling better. Here are a few that help a lot of people. If a strategy doesn't work for you, try practicing it! The more you practice it, the more likely it is to help you.



Rank the calming strategies by clicking and dragging them. Rank them from the ones you're the most likely to try, to the ones you're the least likely to try. You can add your own, too!

Doing jumping jacks (or other quick exercises)

Going for a walk

Taking deep breaths

Spending time alone

Talking to someone I trust

Distracting myself

Looking for ways to solve the problem

Other

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

The key to handling frustration and anger is Practicing the Opposite over and over.



Each time something frustrating happens, you have the opportunity to Practice the Opposite. Frustrating things will never stop happening, but they will get easier to handle as you keep Practicing the Opposite.

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Here is an example of how to plan when to Practice the Opposite.

What is something that sometimes makes you act out?	How do you usually respond to this?	How will you respond to this with Practicing the Opposite instead?
Getting yelled at by my parents	I yell at my parents	I will take deep breaths and then talk to them to solve the problem when I feel better.
When kids at school are mean to me	I shove the kids who make fun of me	I could walk away or think of a funny joke
Not understanding math questions	I yell at my classmates and my teacher	I could ask the teacher for help

Part #4: When will you Practice the Opposite?

Your turn!

What is something that sometimes makes you act out?

How do you usually respond to this?

How could you respond to this by practicing the opposite instead?

We know Practicing the Opposite can be challenging.

If you're working with a school clinician, they can help support you.

If not, you could ask for support from a friend or family member. Or, you can do it all by

yourself!

**Save or screenshot the calming strategies and your plan to help yourself
Practice the Opposite.**

Calming strategies to try:

$\{q://QID157/ChoiceGroup/AllChoicesTextEntry\}$

Plan

Something that sometimes makes me act

out: $\{q://QID176/ChoiceTextEntryValue/1\}$

How I usually respond: $\{q://QID176/ChoiceTextEntryValue/2\}$

How I could respond by Practicing the Opposite

instead: $\{q://QID176/ChoiceTextEntryValue/3\}$

Feedback Block

A Note About Practicing the Opposite

We don't expect you to have mastered Practicing the Opposite after doing this activity.

For many people, **it requires practice.**

It's normal to take small steps, and it's normal to have some challenges along the way. **Make sure to celebrate small victories.** Little by little, **you'll notice major changes** as long as you continue to **Practice the Opposite.**

Thank you for completing this activity!

We would like to hear from you about your experience completing it.
This is the feedback portion of the activity.

How old are you?

What grade are you in?

What is your current gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Which school board are you a part of?

What are three things you liked about this program?

1.
2.
3.

What are three things we could change about this program to make it better?

1.

2.

3.

Now that you've completed this program, how much do you believe that Practicing the Opposite will help you?

- Practicing the Opposite will hurt me.
- Practicing the Opposite will not help me.
- Practicing the Opposite will help me a little bit.
- Practicing the Opposite will help me.
- Practicing the Opposite will help me a lot.

How often do you plan to use Practicing the Opposite strategies?

- Never
- A few times a year
- A few times a month
- A few times a week
- Every day or most days

How would you feel about recommending this activity to a friend?

- I would tell my friends NOT to do it
- I would not recommend it
- I would recommend it a little
- I would recommend it
- I would recommend it a lot

How much did you like the look and feel of the activity?

- I hated the look and feel of the activity
- I did not like the look and feel of the activity
- I liked the look and feel of the activity a little
- I liked the look and feel of the activity
- I liked the look and feel of the activity a lot

How well did you understand the program?

- I was very confused by the program
- I did not understand the program very well
- I understood the program a little
- I understood the program
- I understood the program very well

How much do you think other young people would like this program?

- They would hate the program

- They would not like the program
- They would like the program a little
- They would like the program
- They would like the program a lot

How much do you think other young people would be helped by this program?

- They would be hurt by the program
- They would not be helped by the program
- They would be helped by the program a little
- They would be helped by the program
- They would be helped by the program a lot

Looking for more support? Check out the resources below.

- If you need help reach out to [Kids Help Phone](#)



- If you need help **yourself** or a **friend** go to [Jack.org](#)
- If you need **free** professional **mental health treatment** without a referral go to [Children's Mental Health Ontario](#)

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