

6 toxic thoughts successful people avoid

Do you ever get the feeling you're self-sabotaging? Do you catch yourself dwelling on negative thoughts that you know you shouldn't be thinking? The truth is, many of us do. But toxic thoughts are something successful people avoid for a reason: they harm your career.

By recognising when your thinking is holding you back, you can reframe it to be more positive and even helpful. Leah Lambart, Career Coach at Relaunch Me, shares her tips on how to do just that by highlighting six common toxic thoughts.

1. **“Everything has to be perfect in order for me to be successful.”**

Perfectionism is harmful because it's an impossible goal. “At the end of the day, there's no perfect resume, no perfect interview and no perfect job. Everyone and every job has its strengths and weaknesses and no one is perfect,” says Lambart.

Instead of being scared of making a career change or focusing on things you haven't achieved yet, embrace any missteps as opportunities to improve. “Trying new things is how we learn and develop new skills,” Lambart explains. Placing such high expectations on yourself is both emotionally straining and unproductive.

2. **“I'm destined to fail.”**

Sometimes we can feel overwhelmed by obstacles or even daily stresses that are a normal part of life, but the truth is, you're never destined to either fail or succeed: your future is in your own hands and how you journey there is up to you.

“Rather than focusing on the end goal and whether you will fail or succeed, focus on the process and what you can achieve along the way,” Lambart suggests. “For job-hunters, this could mean completing an online course, meeting a new industry contact or getting positive feedback from a recruiter.” Baby steps are better than no steps at all. Don't forget to celebrate these small wins and see them as achievements in their own right.

3. **“I need other people’s approval in order to succeed.”**

“Fear of what others think is a common experience that holds people back from finding meaningful work,” says Lambart. “Many people fear what others will think if they transition to a career with less status or lower pay.”

However, everyone’s values are different. “What’s very important for one person may not even rate on the scale for another.” Take other people’s opinions with a grain of salt, as after all, what they think won’t nearly be as time-consuming and important as how you spend your life. “Seek support from friends and family, rather than seeking permission. At the end of the day, you will be far happier if you’re doing something that’s meaningful to you.”

4. **“I ‘always’ or ‘never’ do that.”**

Nobody ‘always’ or ‘never’ does anything; saying so suggests you have no control over your behaviour. Remember, you can change in order to get where you want to go – especially if you’re looking to make a career move. Lambart says it’s important to stay positive and practice self-compassion.

“If you’re using language that’s negative, then it will come across to others and they will start believing it. Focus on using positive language that shows you’re in control of your future, and that you’re open to opportunities and adaptable to change.” Never say never!

5. **“My past dictates my future.”**

If you’ve experienced something that’s negatively impacted you, like losing your job, it’s easy to lose confidence. But just because you’ve experienced hardship in the past, it doesn’t mean you won’t achieve what you want to in the future. Take it as an opportunity to re-evaluate what you want and keep trying, because anything worth doing requires some risk.

Lambart recommends looking for opportunities both professionally and personally that will energise you and restore your confidence. “Get involved in a club, sporting activity or a passion you’ve always enjoyed. It’s only when your confidence is restored that you’ll feel ready to take the action that’s required to move forward.”

6. **“My emotions are my reality.”**

“Sometimes your inner critic will raise its ugly head at the worst possible times,” says Lambart. “It says ‘You’re not good enough,’ ‘No one will hire you,’ ‘You’re underqualified,’ etc.” It’s important to acknowledge when you’re becoming emotional and be prepared for it.

“For each negative comment, have a counter-argument prepared so that you can fight the inner critic when it appears.” For example, if you’re thinking you’re not qualified, remind yourself of your skills and capacity to learn. “If you’re

prepared for it, then you can acknowledge that it's just your emotions, rather than fact."

Ultimately, our thoughts are just thoughts and they can be considered, challenged and with practice, recreated to be more positive and helpful for us to shine in our careers.