THE LAZAROFF THOUGHT/CHALLENGE

**This worksheet is designed to separate our negative thoughts from what we need to be doing so we can make a logical list to move our professional choices forward.**

We all have negative, self-deprecating thoughts, the kind that undermine us, keep us up at night. They are often evidence of the cracks in our self-esteem.

The problem with self-esteem issues is they have no bearing on your capabilities, but they convince us to spend our time inefficiently, spinning our wheels, and not doing things that would help our businesses or careers.

While these thoughts never entirely go away, if we can *separate them out from what we need to be doing,* we can move our professional choices forward.

Fortunately, our intellect and logic can function independently of our emotions. This worksheet engages logic so we can practically and intelligently approach our next steps.

It also helps us recognize that when the thought crops up, it’s just not true.

This will take a little time and effort, but it’s worth it. Do it.

INSTRUCTIONS: THIS IS A TWO-PAGE COMPLETED SAMPLE. THE BLANK TEMPLATE IS BELOW.

1. *What is the over-arching negative thought that you have about your professional success right now? Write it here, then write it in the chart on the next page next to THOUGHT.*

* I’m not smart enough to make my business successful.

*OK, how have you been addressing this thought? Write this in the column below the word THOUGHT.*

* I’ve asked for advice
* I’ve listened to other people
* I’ve hired “experts.”
* Etc.

1. *What evidence do you have that this thought is accurate? Write it here, then write it on the next page in the middle column where it says EVIDENCE.*

* My business is not succeeding.

*OK, now write down all the things that prove this evidence is accurate. Think: “My business is not succeeding because \_\_\_\_.” Once you have your list, put it in the middle column below the word EVIDENCE.*

* *I don’t have customers*
* *I don’t have a plan*
* *I can’t figure out where to start*
* *I keep making mistakes*

1. *Create a CHALLENGE QUESTION out of your THOUGHT: “Is this because I’m not smart?”*

*Ask yourself the challenge question for each piece of evidence in the middle column.*

*For example:*

* + 1. *I don’t have customers. Is this because I’m not smart? No, it’s because I don’t have a good marketing plan.*
    2. *I don’t have a business plan. Is this because I’m not smart? No, it’s because I never made one.*
    3. *I can’t figure out where to start. Is this because I’m not smart? No, it’s because I’m overwhelmed.*

THOUGHT/CHALLENGE CHART

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. THOUGHT:   I’m not smart enough. | 1. EVIDENCE:   *My business is not succeeding.* | 1. USE THE THOUGHT TO CHALLENGE THE EVIDENCE:   *Is this because I’m not smart?* |
| * I’ve asked for a lot of advice. | * I don’t have customers… [because I’m not smart enough?] | * No, it’s because I don’t have a good marketing plan. |
| * I’ve hired people I think know more than I do. | * I don’t have a plan… [because I’m not smart enough?] | * No, it’s because I never made one. |
| * I trust other people over myself. | * I can’t figure out where to start… [because I’m not smart enough?] | * No, it’s because I’m overwhelmed. |
| * I’m always asking for permission. | * I keep making mistakes… [because I’m not smart enough?] | * No, I haven’t learned yet what works or what doesn’t. |
| (What I’ve been doing…) | (What’s been happening…) | (What I should be doing, instead…) |

*Here’s the payoff for completing this exercise: When we look at the last column,* *what do we know now? This is your reality and often your To Do list:.*

* **I am NOT stupid, but I need to organize my approach to my business.** 
  + - **I need a marketing plan**
    - **I need a business plan**
    - **This will help me be organized**
    - **I’m learning as I go along, like everyone**

LAZAROFF THOUGHT CHALLENGE:

1. *What is the over-arching negative thought that you have about your professional success right now? Write it here, then write it in the chart on the next page next to THOUGHT.*

*OK, how have you been addressing this thought? Write this in the THOUGHT column below.*

1. *What evidence do you have that this thought is accurate? Write it here, then write it on the next page in the middle column where it says EVIDENCE.*

*OK, now write down all the things that prove this evidence is accurate. Think: “My business is not succeeding because \_\_\_\_.” Once you have your list, put it in the middle column below the word EVIDENCE.*

1. *Create a CHALLENGE QUESTION out of your THOUGHT: “Is this because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?”*

*Ask yourself the challenge question for each piece of evidence in the middle column.*

*For example:*

1. *I don’t have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Is this because ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? No, it’s because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*
2. *I don’t have \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Is this because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? No, it’s because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*
3. *I can’t figure out \_\_\_\_\_\_. Is this because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? No, it’s because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.*

THOUGHT/CHALLENGE CHART

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. THOUGHT: | 1. EVIDENCE: | 1. USE THE THOUGHT TO CHALLENGE THE EVIDENCE: |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| (What I’ve been doing…) | (What’s been happening…) | (What I should be doing, instead…) |

*Here’s the payoff for completing this exercise: When we look at the last column,* *what do we know now?*

*This is your reality and often your To-Do list. Spend your time on this list.*

* **\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_**