

---

## The ANTs Handout

Read this over to yourself, out loud, using slow talk every day

---

If the thoughts in your mind are intrusive, pressuring, anxiety-causing, negative, scary, obsessive, or irrational...

You are paying attention to automatic negative thoughts (ANTs).

This is the same automatic negative thinking you've lived with for so long and has become a habit in your life.

### Here is the truth:

The ANTS thoughts are always wrong. They always lie. They can never tell the truth.



*Throw ANTs in the trash*

The ANTS thoughts have no authentic power over me. That's why they're so scared I won't believe them. Their only hope is that I'll listen to them, believe them, and give them my power and attention. They feed and fuel themselves on my own old negative beliefs. If I don't accept and believe these old ANTs fears, they have no choice but to go away.

**The ANTS voice is magnified by my anxiety, fear, and depression.** To keep me feeling this way, the ANTS voice exaggerates, catastrophizes, puts me down, makes me feel guilty, robs me of my self-esteem, and makes my future look hopeless. These are all untrue – they are all lies – and it's about time I stopped believing them.

I must never listen to the lying ANTS voice. I know better. They always lead me in the wrong direction. They are a voice of negativism and defeat. They want to pull me down in the mud with them. I am not going to let them do this.

Even worse, The ANTS thoughts are *bullies*: they have no real power to use against me. They try to build on my own old feelings of depression, helplessness, and anxiety to pull me down.

If I catch on to what the ANTS are doing, and the lying ANTS thoughts feel like they are losing, then they try to put on more pressure. They tell me that anxiety, fear, embarrassment, catastrophe, and humiliation loom around every corner.

Thinking about making a public presentation or talking to an authority figure brings on stark, gut-wrenching fear. The ANTS love this one! I can almost see them dancing in glee!

**The ANTs thoughts love my anxiety and fear!** Because if I believe them, they have me trapped, entombed, and immobile. If I believe all these ANTS lies, I'll be stuck forever in my anxiety and depression. I'll never get any better. And all because I'm believing false, inaccurate, irrational lies from the past.

I must never listen to the lying ANTs voice.

The ANTs thoughts would love to prevent me from getting any better. All bullies like to see this happen to their victims.

But I don't have to listen and believe those ANTS thoughts. I do not choose to be a victim. I can see what they're trying to do to me now.

What can I do? I can say,

*"Oh, it's that lying ANTs thought again. It's trying to frighten and depress me. It's telling me the same old lies. I refuse to believe them anymore. I've got better things to do than listen to a bullying liar."*

I won't argue or fight against the ANTS thoughts. I've noticed that arguing comes from the negative emotions, and negative emotions never help me get better. The ANTS are good at arguing anyway... they love the pain and misery they cause me.

So, I'm going to do what they hate the most: I am not going to pay any more attention to them. I'll get up, get active, and do something else instead. I won't pay attention to those lying ANTs beliefs again.

Instead, I choose to calm down and ignore these lying automatic negative thoughts. These lying ANTS thoughts can't keep on talking forever. If I don't pay attention to them, they have to **shrink** and **shrink** and **shrink** and **shrink**...

What the ANTS hate worst of all is when I ignore them! They hate it when I won't listen to them and fall meekly into place like I used to do. Now I know better. I won't give in to the lying ANTs voice anymore.

Since they are pathological liars, and since their enjoyment comes from making me miserable, they don't like to give up. They may try a few new ways to throw a roadblock in my path, to scare me, or to confuse me about my progress. This is simply the ANTS way of trying to hold on to me and to keep me as one of its disciples.

Instead, I'll say to the ANTs:

**"Oh, it's you again. You can't fool me anymore. I know this is just another one of your tricks to try and increase my anxiety. Well, you can try all you want. I don't care. I'm not going to listen to these lying ANTs thoughts again."**

And then, I'll move on and use the strategies and distractions, read over this handout in slow talk, and I won't let them upset me anymore. I know that if I let them upset me, I am giving them my strength and power. If I don't let them upset me, and realize they don't have any power of their own, they have to shrivel up into nothing and go away for good.

The ANTS voice cannot tell the truth.

The ANTS voice is a loud and nasty bully: all gruff, bluff and no power.

The ANTS voice is only there to scare me. I won't let it happen anymore.

The ANTS voice exaggerates everything that is negative. It lies to me.

The ANTS voice has no real power over me – unless I decide to believe it.

The ANTS voice constantly lies, and liars are loud and like to be heard.

The ANTS hate it when I ignore them and say,

**"SO WHAT?"**

**"Who cares?"**

“Those ANTS thoughts couldn’t tell the truth even if they tried...”

“Now, I can see that the ANTs thoughts are always wrong; they always lie – they can never tell the truth.”

“I won’t believe them anymore because, if I do, I’ll be **trapped, entombed, and immobile**. I won’t let that happen to me.”