

Turn Negative Thoughts into Positive Action

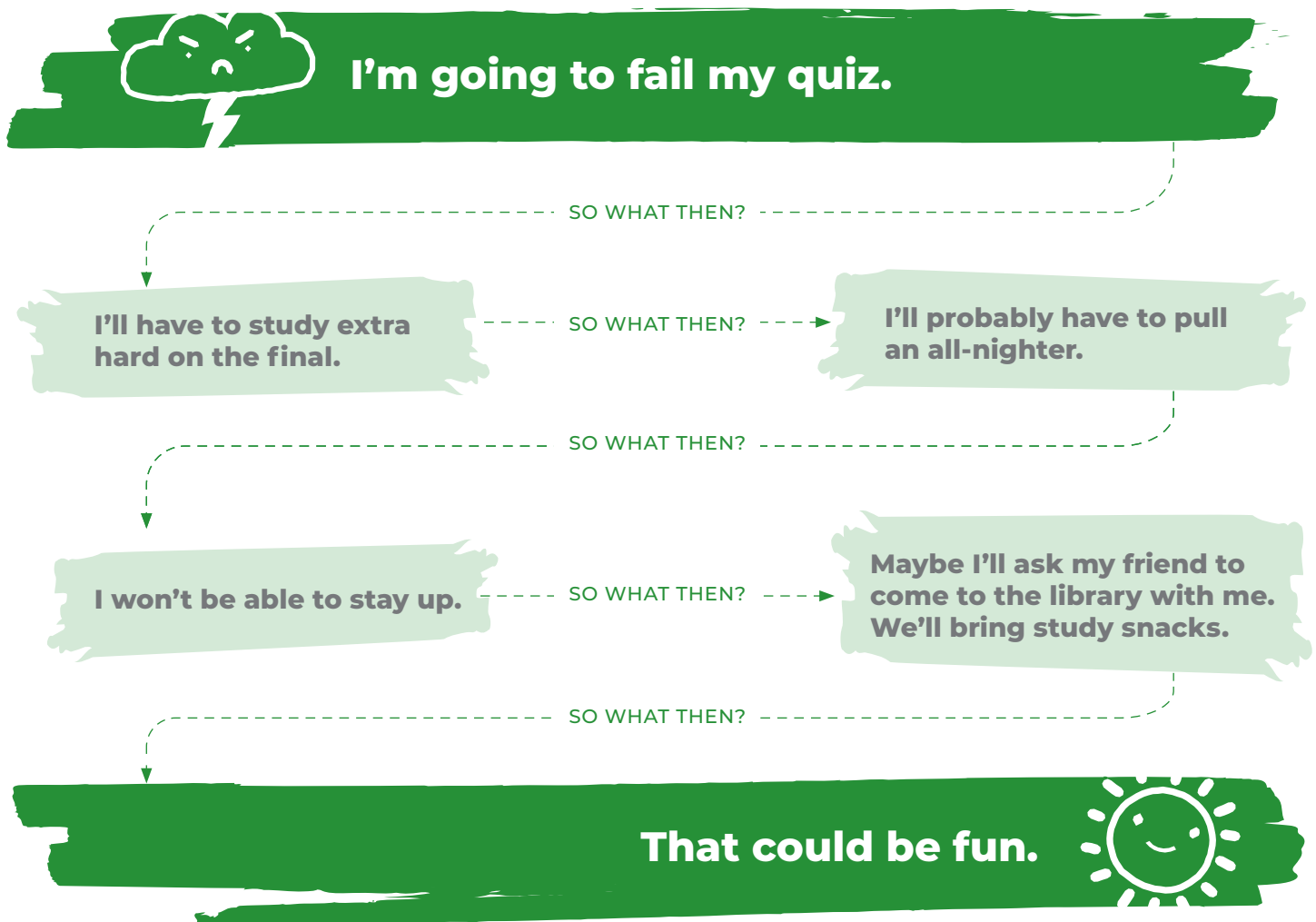
Exercise: So What Then?



Imagining the worst situation is a survival mechanism—it equips our brains with the tools to handle life-threatening circumstances. However, it can cause us to panic and freeze, making us incapable of thinking through relatively simple situations.

Instead of fighting your brain's ability to think up the worst-case scenario, embrace it! It's much easier to handle negative thoughts when we acknowledge them. Therefore, when you feel like you're spiraling, ask yourself, 'so what then?' 5 times to help rationalize and break down daunting situations.

Practicing this now will help you prepare for when it happens in real life!



Instructions

1

TAKE A STEP BACK

When you find your brain spiraling from a negative thought, take a moment to stop what you're doing and breathe (see 3 Breaths & 3 Wishes).

2

ACKNOWLEDGE

Acknowledge the negative thought. What is it? Is there a big test coming up? Is there a school dance or big game or play? Whatever it is, write it down and look at it, or say it out loud.

3

ASK "SO WHAT THEN?"

Once you've determined the negative thought, ask yourself "so what then?" and allow yourself to actually come up with a realistic answer. Write it down or say it out loud. Look at and hear it objectively.

4

REPEAT X 4

Repeat this process 4 more times. Doing so will help you rationalize those worst case scenario or slippery slope thoughts and reground yourself.

The Goal

The goal is to reach one of the following conclusions:

I'LL BE OKAY

The likelihood of what I'm thinking about occurring or standing true is extremely low.

I'LL LEARN SOMETHING

Perhaps this will be hard, but there is something to learn and grow from.

I BELIEVE IN MYSELF

It seems impossible right now, but I believe in myself, my abilities, and those of the people around me.

Reflections & Actions

Record the most powerful ways you turned around worrying scenarios in the exercise and refer back to it if you need inspiration.

Remember that you are not alone; everyone faces challenges. Breaking them down into steps can make them more manageable.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

Usually, worrying about situations is far worse than being in the middle of them.

You can do this!