

Empowering Ourselves Through Language



Exercise: Goodbye to 'Can't' and 'Try'

Words are powerful—they shape the way we think. Believing that we can't do something creates an immediate mental roadblock. We decide whether we can or can't, whether we try or do.

Use this exercise to see how getting rid of the words 'can't' and 'try' can help us think more positively about what we can do and how we will do it. After all, changing our words changes how we determine what we are capable of and, therefore, our lives!

Instructions



REFLECT

Think of different phrases where you commonly use 'can't' and 'try'—e.g.

I **can't** focus.

I will **try** to fall asleep.

I **can't** go out.

I will **try** to talk to my teacher.

I **can't** run fast.

Aim for 3 or more phrases for each word:

2

REFRAME

Identify what is behind your 'can't' and 'try' statements—the more detail you can add, the easier it will be to find a positive way to reframe the mental roadblock. For example, once you know why you can't focus, you can think of positive, empowering ways to help yourself.

Let's change the original list to find workable solutions:

I **can't** focus because I get distracted easily.



When I find a quiet place or wear earplugs, I find it easier to focus.

I **can't** go out because my friends aren't available.



I'm going to enjoy staying in and reconnect with an old hobby.

I **can't** run fast.



When I run my hardest, I can feel my speed increasing. The more I practice, the easier it will be.

I **try** to fall asleep but my thoughts usually stop me.



When I listen to nature sounds when I am falling asleep, my thoughts calm me.

I will **try** to talk to my teacher but I feel intimidated and she's always so busy.



I will email my teacher to make an appointment.

Revisit and reframe your own personal 'can't' and 'try' phrases:

_____	----->	_____
_____	----->	_____
_____	----->	_____
_____	----->	_____
_____	----->	_____
_____	----->	_____

Think positive, make a plan, and stick to it.

You can do this!

Reflections & Actions

How can I catch myself when I slip into 'can't' and 'try'?

What can I do to turn empowering language into a habit?

What can I do when I hear others speaking negatively about themselves?
