



Pete Hall – *Always Strive to Be a Better You: How ordinary people can live extraordinary lives*

The benefits of reframing

Directions: “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” That’s just one of a million examples of how we can reframe a *negative* into a *positive*. Use the tips below and the samples in this form to analyze and reframe situations, interactions, and your inner monologue. Then consider the reflective questions that follow.

Tips for reframing:

Step 1

Become aware of your current thinking, situation, and/or language.

- Listen for key words: should, can't, hate, but...
- Acknowledge extreme language: worst, never, always, everyone, nobody...
- Ask yourself, "What is the story I'm telling myself?"

Step 2

Pause and validate.

- Pause long enough to *think* before you *act* upon your thoughts
- Apply mindfulness strategies to build awareness of your surroundings, your thoughts, and your emotions
- Ask yourself, "How am I feeling about this situation?"

Step 3

See the bigger picture.

- View the situation as a small portion of a much bigger picture
- Understand what's controllable and what's uncontrollable - so you know how to proceed
- Ask yourself, "What am I missing? What else is there to this scenario?"

Step 4

Find the silver lining.

- Seek out the possible positive outcomes
- Identify the learning, growth, or beneficial opportunities that might arise from this situation
- Ask yourself, "What's the best that could happen?"

Step 5

Reframe.

- Use *positive* language to describe the situation
- Incorporate key words: and, yet, can, could, will, maybe, perhaps, possibly...
- Ask yourself, "How might I rephrase this to allow for the possibility that it's better than I thought?"

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Original situation	Reframed alternative
Your computer battery just died (and you've got important tasks to complete with it).	<i>Time to go old school! I can make a phone call or two while I wait to get to a charger to plug in.</i>
There's a traffic jam ahead (and you're already running a little behind).	
Bills are due (and you're a little short of funds at the moment).	
The item you need is sold out (and you really needed it).	

Original interaction	Reframed alternative
Another driver flips you off.	<i>Now, why would a reasonable, decent person do that? I'll bet they're in a hurry. Godspeed!</i>
A colleague rolls his eyes at a contribution you make in a meeting.	
A cashier makes a dismissive comment as you check out.	
Someone says, "I hate you."	

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Original thought (from your <i>inner monologue</i>)	Reframed alternative
<i>I'll never be good enough to get that raise.</i>	<i>I'm really going to have to work to develop those skills. And once I do, I'll be eligible for a raise!</i>
<i>This is shaping up to be the worst day ever.</i>	
<i>Why does this always happen to me?</i>	
<i>I think he/she/they is angry with me.</i>	

Questions to reflect upon and/or discuss:

When you consider the 5 tips for reframing, which come more naturally for you? For which ones do you have to really work and focus?

It's often easier to reframe after-the-fact than it is in-the-moment. How might you prompt yourself to use these strategies in the real world, while it's happening?

What do you notice about your patterns of thinking, now that you're building awareness of these tips?

How have your reframing practices impacted your overall well-being and feelings of optimism, hope, and joy?