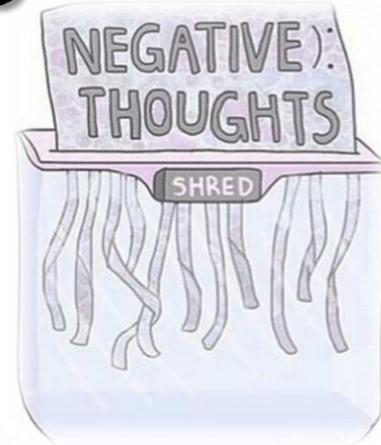
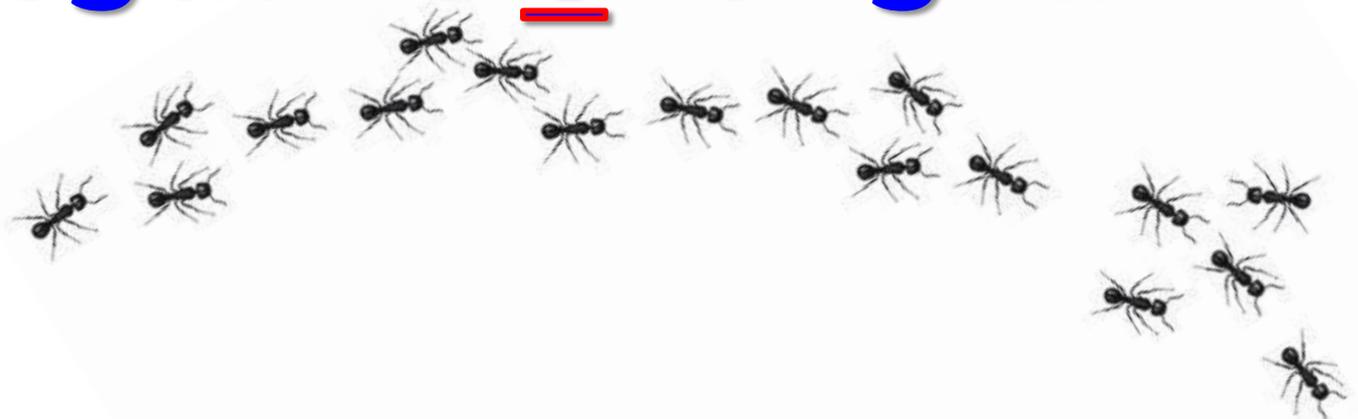
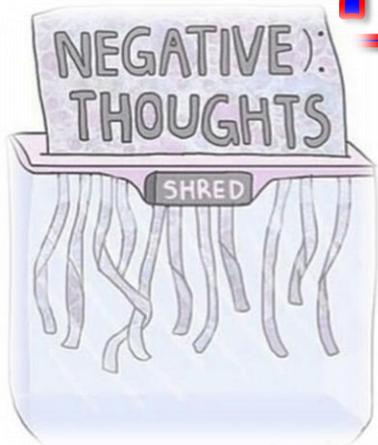


# “Killing A.N.T.s”



ACT Prep:

Combating Automatic  
Negative Thoughts



# **BEFORE the Test**

**Brush up on test taking strategies that have worked for you in the past. Here are few you can try:**

- Do an information dump on your scrap paper by jotting down hard to remember formulas, terms, and other vital info
- Underline key phrases in the directions and questions. Pay special attention to limiting words like *only*, *always*, or *most*
- Answer the easy questions first as they may give clues for the more challenging questions
- Read all choices and eliminate most obvious answers
- Use your scrap paper to cover what you haven't addressed yet to help you concentrate on one question at a time
- Return to questions you don't know instead of spending your time there

**Plan ways to manage your time effectively. This requires an awareness of your testing habits. For example if you know a certain subject takes you longer to complete and/or comprehend, you will want to take less breaks in that section to make best use of your time.**

English – 45 minutes for 75 questions

Math – 60 minutes for 60 questions

Reading – 35 minutes for 40 questions

Science – 35 minutes for 40 questions

Writing – 40 minutes for 1 prompt

# **BEFORE the Test (contin...)**

Find a good relaxation technique you like and practice it before the test. Then think about times when you know you'll need to use it...consider your triggers (*i.e. long passages, multi-step equations, charts, etc.*)

Modify your environment. Since your physical environment is set for you, you are responsible for modifying your **MENTAL ENVIRONMENT**

- Affirming thoughts and alternate beliefs (*see list*)
- Putting a pin in irrelevant thoughts (later today, past weekend, lunch, assignments due, etc.)

Remember panicking never produces the results you actually want to see!

# **DURING the Test**

Before the test, you planned how to manage your time. Now execute your time management plan. Do not rush!

**Implement the test taking strategies you brushed up on. You can also consider the following:**

- Do an information dump on your scrap paper by jotting down hard to remember formulas, terms, and other vital info
- Underline key phrases in the directions and questions. Pay special attention to limiting words like only, always, or most

# **DURING the Test (contin...)**

- Easy questions may give clues for the more challenging questions
- Read all choices and eliminate most obvious
- Try using your scrap paper to cover what you haven't addressed yet to help you concentrate on one question at a time
- Return to questions you're unsure of instead of spending your time there

**Maintain your mental environment (*with affirmations, pinning irrelevant thoughts, your chosen relaxation techniques*)**

**Brain breaks are okay, just keep in mind the time you have. This is where your time management plan really comes in handy. Here are two options you can give a try:**

- Cover the test with your scrap paper to block everything out before implementing your relaxation technique, writing your affirmation, or giving yourself a pep talk
- Write the down the current question number and draw tally marks along the top edge of your scrap paper. Concentrate on nothing but drawing tallies. Return to the test once you've reached the edge of the paper. Need another break? Look at the question number of your previous tally break and determine if it's too soon for another break. Has enough time passed or do you need to push through a few more questions? Consider the amount of time you have remaining in that section and whether or not you can afford to factor it in.

**Recheck your answers with any time left, especially the math section**

# Affirming Thoughts/Alternate Beliefs

Dispute the thought/belief and replace it with a positive or rational thought. Here are some examples...

- 👎 I am going to bomb this test and my chances of getting into college.
- 👍 This test may be a challenge, but I will give it my best shot and I will survive.
  
- 👎 I am not good with tests, I just am not good with tests, I've never been good at tests!
- 👍 What I want is peace and focus, and these thoughts aren't it!     OR
- 👍 There is absolutely nothing my past can do for me now and these thoughts certainly don't help.
  
- 👎 My mind will go blank like it always does and I won't remember anything.
- 👍 There probably will be some questions I can't answer, but that doesn't mean I can't be successful.
  
- 👎 He/She/They're done already...now more people are finishing...I'm clearly doing something wrong here!
- 👍 The goal is to finish, not "race-to-finish." People who get done early don't necessarily know more than I do and focusing on them takes away focus from myself