



## Chapter Twelve

### Into Love: The Power in Self-acceptance

#### The *Tweaking Thoughts* Exercise

Accepting that you have negative thoughts is the very first point of change. The *Tweaking Thoughts* Exercise is the next step towards feeling much, much happier.

It's about catching your self-critical thoughts, accepting them, but then tweaking them into kinder and more accepting ways to talk to yourself.

To begin, draw a table with two columns. In the left-hand column, write down a self-critical thought that you've noticed. For example:

**'I always put my foot in it!'**

Self-Critical Thought	More Accepting Thought
<i>I always put my foot in it.</i>	

In the right-hand column, put in a more accepting thought.

But be careful. An important part of this exercise is *not* to try and put in an *opposite* thought. For example:

**'I never put my foot in it; I am the soul of discretion!'**

If you try to put in a completely opposite thought, your mind will argue back ....'Who are you trying to kid?'

So an example of tweaking to a more accepting thought in this case would be:

**'Yes, I've been known to put my foot in it – we all do that occasionally. I also have times when I'm aware and considerate of others.'**

I've included some further examples for you in the table below.

Each time you write in a more accepting thought in the right-hand column, draw a line through the self-critical thought you've written in the left-hand column. This gives your mind a very powerful message that you want to change the established unhelpful thinking pattern that has been your habit.

Self-Critical Thought	More Accepting Thought
<del><i>I always put my foot in it.</i></del>	<i>Yes I have been known to put my foot in it – we all do that occasionally. I also have times when I'm aware and considerate of others.</i>
<del><i>I'm a failure!</i></del>	<i>There was that time when I achieved.....  And that other time when I .....</i>
<del><i>I'll never change.</i></del>	<i>I'm filling out this exercise, so I'm obviously having a go at making changes.</i>
<del><i>I should have fixed this by now.</i></del>	<i>Maybe it would have been helpful to work on it before. But I was thinking differently then. It's great that I'm making a start now and I can continue to do so step by step.</i>

Below is a blank *Tweaking Thoughts* table for you to fill in.

Complete this exercise each day for at least a week and you'll find your negative self-talk diminishes.

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