

The *False Beliefs* Exercise

Catch the thought that feels like a fact, then write the truth beside it. A two-column tool for taking back your thinking.

A false belief is a thought you have repeated so often it starts to feel like a fact. It is not. The exercise is simple: catch the false belief, then write the truth beside it. Putting them side by side is what exposes the gap, and that gap is where the belief loses its grip.

Beliefs are not facts. They are sentences you have practised. You can practise better ones.

Below are common false beliefs and the truths that answer them, to show you how it works. Then make your own.

THE T-CHART

THE FALSE BELIEF	THE TRUTH
<i>Herpes makes me unlovable. No one will want me.</i>	Herpes filters for people who can see the whole me. The right partner is not scared off by a common skin condition.
<i>I am dirty or damaged now.</i>	Herpes is a common virus carried by a huge share of people. It is not a verdict on my worth or my cleanliness.
<i>My dating life is over.</i>	Disclosure is a filter, not a confession. My dating life is not over, it is becoming more honest.
<i>Everyone can tell, and people are judging me.</i>	No one can see my status. The judgment I fear is almost always my own, projected outward.
<i>I got this because I was careless or because I deserve it.</i>	Herpes spreads even when people are careful. It is not a punishment, and it says nothing about my character.
<i>I have to tell everyone, immediately, or I am lying.</i>	I disclose to partners before intimacy, on my terms, with calm and confidence. That is honesty, not obligation to the world.
<i>This will define the rest of my life.</i>	Herpes is one small part of my life, not its headline. I decide what defines me.

MAKE IT YOURS

This works best in your own hand. Draw two columns in a journal, your Notes app, or a Google Doc. On the left, write the false beliefs running through your head right now. On the right, sit with each one and write the honest truth that answers it. Come back and add to it whenever a new one surfaces.

No one is hopeless and no one is helpless.