

# **KILL THE A N T s    (Automatic Negative Thoughts)**

From *Change Your Brain Change Your Life*, by Dr. Amen (Barbara Moon)

These ANTs actually affect the brain. We can choose whether we listen to them and believe them. It helps to notice them and not take them. We can change our brains by killing the ANTs.

Types of ANTS:

Always/ Never -- "She always misunderstands me." "They never help me or care about me."

Focusing on the negative -- "Nothing ever works out."

Predicting the worst -- "That won't work." "They won't listen."

Mind reading -- "She won't want to do that." "He will get angry."

Thinking with one's feelings -- "I feel guilty so I must be a bad person." "I'm a loser and God doesn't care about me." What one feels must be the truth.

Guilt -- beating up oneself, using should, ought, must, have to.

Labeling -- "He's a jerk, arrogant, etc." "I'm stupid, clumsy, ugly, etc."

It's about me -- "My boss didn't speak this morning so she must be mad at me."

Blaming -- "It's his fault." "She made me mad." Being a victim instead of taking responsibility.

## **Helpful Steps**

Think of negative thoughts as pollution.

Begin to recognize when we have these kinds of thoughts.

Write them down.

Talk back to them.

Begin to notice how the body feels when we have negative thoughts.

Notice how the body feels with positive thoughts.