Unhelpful and Helpful Thoughts

In the previous activity, you learned about talking back to negative thoughts. We are going to discuss another way to classify your thoughts that might make it easier for you to identify "negative" thoughts, visualize the stop sign, and turn them into "positive" thoughts. You may find it helpful to call negative thoughts "unhelpful thoughts" and call positive thoughts "helpful thoughts."

Negative Thought → Unhelpful Thought

Positive Thought → Helpful Thought

Why?

1. Some thoughts work against self-love, self-care, and overall appreciation for your accomplishments, therefore we call them *unhelpful*. These thoughts don't help you achieve your hopes and dreams and don't allow you to appreciate the wonderful human that you are.

2. The term negative can have strong emotions attached to it and may make it difficult to identify *less negative emotions*.

   For example, someone may identify the thought "I hate myself" has negative but might not identify "I'm ashamed of myself for snacking at midnight" as a negative thought.

3. Some thoughts may appear to be unhelpful at first, but are actually "constructive thoughts." These can be classified as helpful thoughts because they acknowledge the obstacles you may encounter while trying to fulfill a goal or improvement you've set for yourself.

   An example of this is "I know I shouldn't have eaten that snack at midnight, but I know I can do better tomorrow."