



Your Self Defeating Behavior might be, for example: binge eating, verbally lashing out at your partner (expressing irritability), avoiding behavior or situations that trigger anxiety, procrastinating, excessive worrying, overthinking, or overworking.

You tighten, tense, and brace against the emotional pain of your own stuckness.

Negative thoughts are often about (1) yourself, (2) your future, and/or (3) other people / the world (e.g. other people aren't supportive of me, other people aren't reliably caring).

The cycle perpetuates. You do more Self Defeating Behavior in reaction to your negative emotions. Your negative emotions also further increase & intensify your negative thoughts.

Where people get stuck: People repeatedly try to stop the cycle at Box 1, by trying to stop their self defeating behavior using strategies like willpower. If you have been trying this but you're still doing the self defeating behavior, try interrupting the cycle using strategies that address Box 2 or Box 3.

To work on Box 2, you can use techniques when you notice yourself doing your self defeating behavior that soften your physical reaction. Or, use on a daily basis to calm your physiological reactivity. Options include: a few minutes of slow breathing, mindfulness or lovingkindness meditation, yoga, or running.

To work on Box 3, you can pre-prepare balanced thoughts that counteract your most common negative thoughts. Or, try Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.