

Written 2

Psychology



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A. What are the three things you regret most in your life? How do the events you'd relate to counterfactual thinking? I regret not studying hard enough for my history final and hence making too many mistakes in an otherwise simple exam. Downward counterfactual thinking relates to this event as after feeling instant guilt I made myself feel better and improved my mood temporarily by making a comparison of my poor performance in the exam with the fact that at least with a 55% on the exam I avoided a fail (Roese & Olson, 1995).

I also regret missing my flight to Washington to visit my parents and forgetting my girlfriend's birthday. Counterfactual thinking plays a role in these events simply as by missing out on these events I came to the realization that if I marked a calendar or made notes on my digital diary with frequent alarms I would not be so forgetful in the future. Upward counterfactual hence denotes how the consequences might have been more favorable and how a lesson can be taken from regretful events such as these (Leder, Mannetti, Higgins, Kruglanski, & Aiello, 2008).

B. Some psychologists suggest you can reduce cognitive dissonance by restoring positive self-evaluations that are threatened by the dissonance. Elliot and Devine (1994) refer to this as self-affirmation. Give an example of a time in your life when you reduced an unpleasant internal state in some self-affirming way.

Over the past few years I had gotten into the habit of smoking more frequently. After the death of my father, the acting stressor in my life, my smoking habits skyrocketed. My friends made me realize that I was heading down a slippery slope so I joined a group based cigarette cessation program and everyday would write down desirable characteristics about me which

helped me adopt a less biased attitude when faced with threatening health messages. It was through this self affirmation intervention, that I felt less helpless and had lowered defensiveness towards warning labels which reinforced my desire to quit smoking (Baron, Branscombe, & DonnBryne, 2008).

Resources

Baron R., Branscombe N., and DonnBryne. " Social Psychology." 12th ed., Boston: Pearson 2008.

Roese, N. J., & Olson, J. M. " What might have been: The social psychology of counterfactual thinking." Mahwah, NJ. Erlbaum. (1995).

Pierro, A., Leder, S., Mannetti, L., Higgins, E. T., Kruglanski, A. R., & Aiello, A. " Regulatory mode effects on counterfactual thinking and regret." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 44 (2008): 321-329.