

# The Fourth Commandment Of Highly Effective Leadership: Counter Your Negative Thoughts

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Professor Martin Seligman is known as the father of positive psychology. In his popular [TED Talk](#), he argues that most psychologists are fixated on finding what's "wrong" with people, while he insists on finding what's "right."

His theory, and the theories of so many positive psychologists, are based on a study he conducted with a large group of children who were at risk of depression. In his book, *Learned Optimism*, Seligman shares how he taught the children to control their negative or pessimistic thinking using Dr. Aaron Beck's [cognitive behavior therapy \(CBT\) model](#). He then followed the group of children for many years and compared them to other children who were not taught any specific way to control negative thoughts. The study showed that the children who were taught and coached were half as likely to develop anxiety and depression later in life.

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Let's say your largest client calls you out of the blue, your boss asks to see you, your child's principal leaves you an abrupt voicemail, or a friend doesn't give you a cheerful hello. That is the adverse event.

What is the thought that then pops into your mind? That is your belief. Usually, it's a negative one, like, "Uh-oh! What did I do now?" or "What did my child do wrong at school?"