# Dealing with negatives thoughts

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## 1 Question

How do you deal with negative thoughts?

## 2 Answer

My approach to dealing with negative thoughts used to be to let my brain think about it for as long as it needed until it was satisfied with some sort of solution or it had moved on due to more urgent matters (or because I fell asleep).

More recently my approach has evolved. Having spent a large portion of the last few years thinking about artificial general intelligence, I've come to see myself as a machine, similar to a computer. I enjoy taking computer science theory and applying it as a way of life.

For instance, in the case of negative thoughts, I see them as being a process that is running in my brain and is using computing resources. Like any process, the operating system allocates it an amount of quantum (a period of time) before it is preempted and replaced by another process. As such, I now timebox the amount of time I allocate to a negative thought before I actively repress thinking about it.

This might mean to consciously say to myself "I am not thinking about problem X anymore, time is up" or "Your time allocation for thinking about Y is now completed, please move on".

Such active and conscious effort to stop thinking about those negative thoughts has paid quite a lot. I spend a lot less time reflecting on those thoughts and find it easier to move on.