



Reframing Automatic Thoughts: WORKSHEET 4b

_____ Situation _____ Initials _____ Date _____

NOTICE THE AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS

Write down your automatic thoughts, using the actual words and sentences you notice in your mind.

REFRAME TO DELIBERATE HELPFUL THOUGHTS

Write your 'reframed' thoughts, using the actual words and sentences you would rather think, to better serve you, others and the situation.

TIPS: A core technique here is to identify and replace RED thoughts (tension producing thoughts) with GREEN thoughts (tension relieving thoughts). If we catch our thinking (in words) we can determine if we're making any unhelpful assumptions or thinking-errors (ask ourselves: what am I telling myself about this?; is it fair and reasonable?; is it a helpful thought?; is what I'm thinking 100% true or should I check my data and assumptions?).

TIPS FOR REFRAMING

Ask ourselves:

- what am I telling myself about this? is it automatic or deliberate?
- is the thinking fair and reasonable?
- what other ways could I think about it?
- what would an objective and wise outsider say to me about it?
- am I overthinking or ruminating on it?
- is it a helpful thought?
- is what I'm thinking 100% true or should I check my data and assumptions?
- what would I tell a friend in this situation?
- is there a more constructive way of thinking about this?
- am I jumping to conclusion?
- am I over-focused on what others might think?
- am I thinking the worst?
- am I taking it too personally, when it's not about me?
- am I unfairly labelling myself or others here?
- is this a time to be self-compassionate?
- overall, is this way of thinking contributing to my tension or worry, or helping to contain it?

EXTENDED IDEAS

Help ascertain the helpfulness or rationality of automatic thoughts, by seeing if there is evidence of one or more of the following **10 Common Errors in Thinking**:

1. **All-or-nothing thinking**: If a situation fall short of perfect, you see it as a total failure.
2. **Overgeneralisation**: You see a single event as evidence it will 'always' happen or 'never' happen.
3. **Mental Filter**: You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it, blind to the positives.
4. **Discounting the Positive**: You reject positive experiences by insisting they 'don't count'
5. **Jumping to Conclusions**
 - a. (1): Mind reading: concluding without evidence someone thinks badly of you.
 - b. (2): Predicting the future: You predict that things will turn out badly and ignore possible positive futures.
6. **Magnification**: You exaggerate the importance of your problems and minimise the good things
7. **Emotional Reasoning**: You assume that your negative feelings or emotions are the way things really are. eg "I feel bad, my life must be bad"
8. **Personalisation**: You hold yourself personally responsible for an event that isn't entirely under your control.
9. **Labelling**: You attach a negative label to yourself to explain things eg "I am a loser".
10. **Should Statements**: You tell yourself things should (must) be the way you expect them to be

REFRAMING SAMPLES

Reframing (<i>change the way we think about it to reduce tension</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>They are just a difficult person</i> • <i>What an idiot (negative label)</i> • <i>They shouldn't swear at me</i> • <i>Customers are a battle, they're so difficult</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>They are angry (having a bad day)</i> • <i>Bob has forgotten his card again</i> • <i>I <u>prefer</u> people wouldn't swear at me, but if they do when worked up. I can respond professionally by</i> • <i>Customers are the job, most behave fine</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I hate dealing with angry people</i> • <i>I get so angry when they do that</i> • <i>How dare they say XYZ</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I've dealt with this before, so I'll just...</i> • <i>Just breathe and let it go</i> • <i>I won't take the bait, their words are just anger...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If they do XYZ again, I'll blow my stack!</i> • <i>They're getting away with poor behaviours</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When they do XYZ, I will calmly say/do...</i> • <i>I'm not losing by letting some things go, it's a tactical choice (an influencing technique). I'm choosing not to take it personally</i>
Gratitude & Appreciation (<i>a focus on good things</i>)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Think of the good things happening</i> • <i>Focus on the good behaviour of coworkers, customers, passengers, patients</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Focus on strengths and accomplishments</i> • <i>Focus on behaving according to my values</i>

Powerful Grounding Thoughts

- I can choose to smile and nod and not fix things right now (I'll come back with a plan)
- I don't have to agree with this, but I can use basic empathy to defuse things and get through it.
- This is not my favourite part of the job, but it's my responsibility, so I know I will take steps.
- When in doubt, usually I can pause, ask for time to think about it – then get some advice.
- I've dealt with all sorts of things in my work and life already – I will navigate this in time too.
- If I've made a mistake, even though I have feelings of guilt and frustration, I have the capacity to choose to see this as a learning experience, to identify what to do differently, and take that action.
- A good and meaningful life on this earth will have its ups and downs, sometimes uninvited and unfair – and I can (with help) tolerate this long enough to work out the right action or until it passes.

Self-Compassionate Thinking

Ponder the 'tone' in which you might talk to yourself, the tone of the inner voice when talking about you, yourself. Does it tend to sound critical or compassionate? Consider using the supportive tone you'd use when talking to someone you care about.

- What would I tell a friend in this situation? And what tone would I use?
- Is this a chance to give myself a bit of a break?
- Are my expectations of myself and this situation realistic?