



# Challenging Unhelpful Thinking

Automatic thoughts are quick, can be constant, often intrusive notions that pass through our awareness as we go through our day. They can be helpful as they aid our understanding of the world around us, events, people and objects. We can however have unhelpful styles of thinking based on fear, control and negativity which are often related to our life path, our previous learning and experience. The thought is really not the problem, it is the value we place on the event we are thinking about! A thought is not a fact, it is literally just a thought but if we assign meaning, attach to an old meaning in some way, the result will be the old, perhaps unfitting emotional reaction.

Remember automatic thoughts can:

- Be very quick
- Be images, memories, sounds etc. not just words.
- Ask you to take action in some way
- Be outside of your usual values or morals, making you believe you are a bad person
- Be constant and recurring, becoming a habit

But thoughts are not facts. They are in fact, electro-chemical impulses in the brain.

In order to rationalize the thought, it can be helpful to write out what we are thinking. When an event occurs, notice your automatic thought about the event. How does it make you feel?

Then consider how valid this thought is. Is there any proof that says this is true? Is there any evidence to say it may be false?

What other more helpful thoughts can you now think of in relation to this event?

Remember, thinking it doesn't make it true!



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Record	Rationalize	Replace