



CHALLENGING THOUGHTS TIPS & TRICKS

The idea of changing your thinking may initially seem overwhelming. In fact, it may take some time to challenge and correct your old thinking habits, but be patient and you will master this skill. There are however a few tips and tricks to get started in practicing challenging your unhelpful, automatic thoughts. Read on for four ways to evaluate your unhelpful or anxious thought and then practice balancing it.

LOOK AT THE EVIDENCE

Looking for evidence relies on facts rather than opinions. Do you have any objective proof that your thinking is correct? Approach this from a court of law perspective. We are looking for cold hard facts not maybe's, ifs, or possibles. Feelings are not counted as facts just like they wouldn't be in a court of law.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS

You can ask yourself **four** things

- ☞ Are my thoughts/beliefs helping me to achieve my goals?
- ☞ Are my thoughts/beliefs helping me to get on with others whom I care about?
- ☞ Is my thinking helping me to feel good about myself and my life?
- ☞ Do the advantages of thinking this way outweigh the disadvantages?

DECATASTROPHISING

'What if' statements are usually based on an expectation that the worst will happen. A lot of the anxiety produced by 'what if' statements comes from the underlying assumption that you won't be able to cope or change with whatever happens. Remind yourself that dealing with the unexpected provides opportunities for growth and learning. Instead of being scared of change and looking for the worst, approach it as an exciting new change or adventure.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THINKING THIS WAY

Consider the advantages of adopting an alternative view point.

- a. What other explanations could there be for my assumptions or conclusions.
- b. Is there a more positive way I could look at this which will help me to deal with the problem and feel better?
- c. What might someone else whose views I trust think about this?
- d. What other explanations would I offer to another person who came to me with this problem?

