

Thinking Errors

All or Nothing	You see things in black and white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.
Over-Generalization	You see a single negative event, such as a romantic rejection or a career reversal as a never-ending pattern of defeat by using words such as "always" or "never" when you think about it.
Mental Filter	You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors a beaker of water. Example: You receive many positive comments about your presentation to a group of associates at work, but one of them says something mildly critical. You obsess about his reaction for days and ignore all the positive feedback.
Discounting the positive	You reject positive experiences by insisting they "don't count". If you do a good job, you may tell yourself that it wasn't good enough or that anyone could have done as well. Discounting the positive takes the joy out of life and makes you feel inadequate and unrewarded.
Jumping to conclusions	You interpret things negatively when there are no facts to support your conclusion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind Reading: Without checking it out, you arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you. • Fortune-telling: You predict that things will turn out badly and feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.
Magnification or Minimization	You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your problems or shortcomings), or you inappropriately shrink things down until they appear tiny (the importance of your desirable qualities or your progress in therapy). This is also called the binocular trick.
Emotional Reasoning	You assume that negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore it must be true." Example: "I feel guilty. I must be a rotten person."
"Should" Statements	You try to motivate yourself with "shoulds" or "shouldn'ts", as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. Or, you tell yourself that things "should" be the way you hoped or expected them to be. "Should statements" that are directed against yourself lead to guilt and frustration. "Should statements" that are directed against other people or the world lead to anger and frustration.
Labeling	Labeling is an extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking. Instead of saying, "I made a mistake," you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." You might also label yourself "a fool" or "a failure" or "a jerk." Labeling is quite irrational because you are not the same thing as what you do. Human beings exist, but "fools", "losers", and "jerks" do not. These labels are just useless abstractions that lead to anger anxiety, frustration, and low self-esteem.
Personalization	You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event that isn't entirely under your control. When a woman received a note that her child was having difficulties at school, she told herself, "This shows what a bad mother I am," instead of trying to pinpoint the cause of the problem so that she could be helpful to the child.

Adapted from "You Can Change the Way You Feel" in the The Feeling Good Handbook by David O. Burns, M.D., New York: William Morrow, 1989 and from "You Feel the Way You Think" in the Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy by David O. Burns, New York: William Morrow, 1980.



REAL-LIFE ABCDES—DISPUTING AND DECATASTROPHIZING

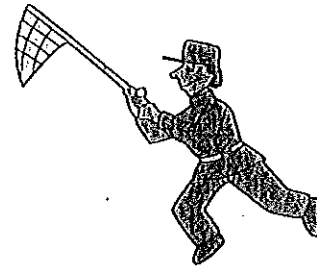
Strategies for "Thought Catching"

My ABC Diary

Adversity	Beliefs	Consequences
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____

Questions:

- Where is the evidence that the belief is true?
- What is an alternative way to view the situation?
- What is the worst thing that could happen? Is it likely?
- What is the best thing that could happen? Is it likely?
- What is my plan of attack?



ADVERSITY _____

(The factual aspects of the negative event—who, what, where—that posed a problem. Be specific.)

BELIEFS _____

(The belief and interpretations about the Adversity.)

CONSEQUENCES _____

(How you feel and behave following the Adversity.)

DISPUTATIONS _____

(Self-disputing the irrational, pessimistic, and exaggerated beliefs.)

ENERGIZATIONS _____

(The emotional and behavioral consequences of your Disputation.)

(Adapted from Martin Seligman's "The Optimistic Child," developed from his work in the Penn Prevention Program.)

CBT Thought Record

Where were you? What were you doing?

Emotion or feeling (Rate strength 0-100%)

Negative Automatic Thought (NAT)

Evidence that supports the thought

Evidence that does not support the thought

Alternative thought

Emotion or feeling (Rate strength 0-100%)

Daily Devotion for October 11, 2012

Getting Unstuck from My Thinking Rut



By Lysa TerKeurst [About Lysa](#) [View Our Archives](#)

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"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will." Romans 12:2 (NIV)

Have you ever had the thought, "What's the use? I'm just a stuffer." Or, "What's the use? I'm a just a yeller."

That may be partially true, but I believe there is more to it than just claiming because we act a certain way, that's the way it will always be.

Brain research shows that every conscious thought we have is recorded on our internal hard drive known as the cerebral cortex. Each thought scratches the surface much like an Etch A Sketch.

When we have the same thought again, the line of the original thought is deepened, causing what's called a memory trace. With each repetition the trace goes deeper and deeper, forming and embedding a pattern of thought. When an emotion is tied to this thought pattern, the memory trace grows exponentially stronger.

We forget most of our random thoughts that are not tied to an emotion. However, we retain the ones we think often that have an emotion tied to them. For example, if we've had the thought over and over that we are "unglued," and that thought is tied to a strong emotion, we deepen the memory trace when we repeatedly access that thought. The same is true if we decide to stuff a thought—we'll perpetuate that stuffing. Or if we yell, we'll keep yelling.

We won't develop new responses until we develop new thoughts. That's why renewing our minds with new thoughts is crucial. New thoughts come from new perspectives. The Bible encourages this process, which only makes sense because God created the human mind and understands better than anyone how it functions.

A foundational teaching of Scripture is that it is possible to be completely changed through transformed thought patterns. That's exactly the point of today's key verse, Romans 12:2.

Scripture also teaches that we can accept or refuse thoughts. Instead of being held hostage by old thought patterns, we can actually capture our thoughts and allow the power of Christ's truth to change them:

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Corinthians 10:5 NIV)

I don't know about you, but understanding how my brain is designed makes these verses come alive in a whole new way. Taking thoughts captive and being transformed by thinking in new ways isn't some New Age form of mind control. It's biblical, and it's fitting with how God wired our brains.

I can't control the things that happen to me each day, but I can control how I think about them. I can say to myself, "I have a choice to have destructive thoughts or constructive thoughts right now. I can wallow in what's wrong and make things worse, or I can ask God for a better perspective to help me *see* good even when I don't *feel* good."

Indeed, when we gain new perspectives, we can see new ways of thinking. And if we change the way we think, we'll change the ways we act and react.

Dear Lord, teach me to trust You and to believe that even though my situation is overwhelming, You always have the best for me in mind. Give me Your perspective today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Related Resources:

For more encouragement and practical advice on taking our thoughts and actions captive, check out Lysa's new book, *Unglued*. Available now!

The accompanying Unglued Bible Study will help you understand what the Bible says about better ways to react. To order your copy, [click here](#).

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Reflect and Respond:

What is one area of your life where destructive thoughts seem to take control? Ask God to show you how to see the good in this area even though you don't necessarily feel good about the situation.

Start right now, and continue each morning for the next 5 days to pray the verses below over the area of your life you described above. Sometimes changing our perspective requires an initial act of obedience.

Power Verses:

2 Corinthians 4:8, "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair." (NIV)

Isaiah 41:13, "For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you." (NIV 1984)

John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." (NIV)

Source: <http://networkedblogs.com/DiVDw>

