

Thoughts Are Not Facts

Depression Skills Workbook — noticing thoughts, building balance, and choosing small actions.

A thought may feel convincing without telling the whole story.

A practical, supportive workbook for individual reflection and clinician-guided skill building.

Take your time. Skip any question that does not feel helpful. Asking for support is always an option.

READ THIS FIRST

A note about your well-being

This workbook provides education, personal reflection, and coping skills. It does not replace mental health assessment, counseling, therapy, medical care, or emergency services.

You may skip any activity, take a break, or ask a clinic staff member for help. If an exercise makes your distress worse, stop and use a different support option.

Need help now?

If you are having a mental health crisis or thoughts of suicide, **call or text 988** in the United States. If someone is in immediate danger or experiencing a life-threatening emergency, **call 911**. In a clinic, tell staff immediately if you feel unsafe.

You do not have to finish this workbook to deserve help. Safety and connection come first.

Understanding painful thoughts

Depression can make thoughts feel certain, heavy, and difficult to question. This workbook invites you to notice the thought, name the feeling, examine available evidence, build a more balanced view, and choose a manageable action. You do not need to force positivity.

Five steps

1. Notice the thought. **2.** Name the feeling. **3.** Check the facts. **4.** Build a balanced thought. **5.** Choose one small action.

Sometimes painful thoughts accurately reflect real difficulties. The goal is not to dismiss them but to see what is known, what is uncertain, and what support may help.

Why I am using this workbook today:

What I hope to understand or do afterward:

Why painful thoughts can feel true

When mood is low, attention may focus on painful information and miss other details. Balanced thinking is not pretending the situation is good. It is allowing a fuller description.

Painful thought: “I ruined everything.”

A more complete thought: “Something went wrong. I can look at what happened and consider a repair or support step.”

Painful thought: “Nothing will improve.”

A more complete thought: “Things feel stuck right now. I do not know the whole future.”

Painful thought: “I cannot handle this.”

A more complete thought: “This is hard. I can ask for help with one part of it.”

Common thought patterns

These are examples, not diagnoses. A thought may fit more than one pattern or none.

☐ All-or-nothing thinking

☐ Mind reading

☐ Predicting the worst

☐ Emotional reasoning

☐ Discounting the positive

☐ Harsh self-labeling

☐ "Should" statements

☐ Taking all the blame

Which pattern do I notice most often?

What could I ask myself when I notice it?

Step 1 — Quick check-in

Date or situation (optional):

What happened just before the thought?

How difficult does this moment feel? (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

What do I notice in my body?

☐ I need rest

☐ I need food or water

☐ I want to isolate

☐ I could use professional support

☐ I want someone to check in

☐ I need urgent help staying safe

Step 2 — Capture the thought

Write only what feels manageable. You can stop if the exercise increases distress.

Situation:

The thought I noticed, in its own words:

The emotion connected to this thought:

What this thought urges me to do:

Step 2 — Capture the thought (continued)

What am I afraid may happen?

Step 3 — Name the thought pattern

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ All-or-nothing | ☐ Mind reading |
| ☐ Fortune telling | ☐ Catastrophizing |
| ☐ Emotional reasoning | ☐ Labeling myself |
| ☐ Discounting positive information | ☐ Self-blame |
| ☐ Other or unsure | |

The thought pattern I notice is:

What makes me think this pattern may fit?

How could I describe the situation more specifically?

Step 4 — Check the facts

Be fair to both sides. Do not ignore genuine problems or force yourself to reach a reassuring answer.

What evidence supports my thought?

What evidence does not support it?

What am I assuming or predicting?

What information is missing?

Step 4 — Check the facts (continued)

What might I say to a friend experiencing this?

Step 5 — Build a balanced thought

A balanced thought should be believable, compassionate, and grounded in the information you have.

My original thought:

What part is understandable?

What part may be incomplete?

My more balanced thought:

Step 5 — Build a balanced thought (continued)

What could make this thought more believable?

Choose one small action

This uses the workbook's fifth core method step: translating a balanced thought into a manageable action.

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|--|--|
| ☐ Drink water or eat | ☐ Take a short break |
| ☐ Message a supportive person | ☐ Use a grounding skill |
| ☐ Go to a safe place with support | ☐ Attend an appointment |
| ☐ Do a small home task | ☐ Ask clinic staff for assistance |

One action I can take when safe and ready:

What might get in the way?

What is my smaller or backup action?

What support could help?

Depression action ladder

Choose actions that fit your energy and circumstances. Rest and asking for help also count.

Tiny step (under two minutes):

Another tiny step:

Small step (when I have a little more energy):

Another small step:

Support step (person, service, or appointment):

REUSABLE WORKSHEET

Thoughts Are Not Facts — Practice Log 1

Situation:

Automatic thought:

Feeling and body signals:

Facts that support and do not support the thought:

A more balanced thought:

Thoughts Are Not Facts — Practice Log 1 (continued)

One small action or support step:

Mood intensity now (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

REUSABLE WORKSHEET

Thoughts Are Not Facts — Practice Log 2

Situation:

Automatic thought:

Feeling and body signals:

Facts that support and do not support the thought:

A more balanced thought:

Thoughts Are Not Facts — Practice Log 2 (continued)

One small action or support step:

Mood intensity now (0–10)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

REUSABLE WORKSHEET

Thoughts Are Not Facts — Practice Log 3

Situation:

Automatic thought:

Feeling and body signals:

Facts that support and do not support the thought:

A more balanced thought:

Thoughts Are Not Facts — Practice Log 3 (continued)

One small action or support step:

Mood intensity now (0–10)

0

☐

1

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2

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6

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7

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8

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9

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10

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Support and safety planning

Some thoughts and situations need immediate human support rather than additional writing. This page can help you identify whom to contact.

Warning signs that I need support now:

Trusted person or clinic staff member:

Professional support service I can contact:

A safe place or practical action while getting help:

If I cannot stay safe

Tell clinic staff immediately. In the United States, **call or text 988** for mental health crisis support; **call 911** if there is immediate danger.

When the thought comes back

Painful thoughts may return. This does not mean you failed. You can reconnect with helpful people, realistic thoughts, and small actions as often as needed.

A recurring thought I want to notice rather than automatically believe:

A more complete, believable response:

One action that usually supports me:

One person or service I can reach toward:

Credits & Additional Resources

Author: Bobby Perrine

Original publication: Bodhi Life Balance

Edition: 2026 revised workbook

Additional mental health workbooks:

<https://bodhilifebalance.com/mental-health-workbooks>

This workbook is an educational support resource and can be used independently or with a behavioral health professional.