



WORKSHEET: Responding to Negative Thoughts

For when negative thoughts or experiences hijack your day

1. 🧠 What happened?

Briefly describe the event or trigger.

What happened that brought on the negative thoughts or distress?

2. 🗨️ What was the thought?

What thought or story started looping in your mind?

Be honest and specific, even if it feels extreme.

3. 😞 What emotion did it trigger?

What feeling came with that thought?

Shame Anger Sadness Guilt Fear Frustration Other: _____

4. 🗨️ REBT: Dispute the Thought (D-E-F)

D – Dispute the irrational belief

- Is this thought *true*?

- Is it *helpful*?

- Is it *rational* or extreme?



New rational/balanced response:

What would a wise, kind version of you say instead?

5. 🎯 ACT: Defuse and Refocus

Is this thought a “passenger on the bus,” or does it need to drive?

You don't have to believe or obey every thought you have.

- I can notice the thought without reacting
- I can make space for discomfort
- I can return attention to what matters

6. 💡 Values-Based Action

What small action could I take that aligns with the kind of person I want to be?

Even 1% effort counts.

7. 🌀 Now, refocus on your day:

What's one thing I can still enjoy, choose, or engage in today?

💬 “I can have this thought or feeling and still choose how I respond. My day isn't ruined—just redirected.”



Common Thinking Patterns That “HOOK US”

These are 4 common ways of thinking that “hook” us when situations arise. These ways of thinking aren’t “bad” or “wrong”, but if they continue too long, they take us away from the things that are important to us. If we learn to recognize our thoughts- label them – and then allow them to pass, we aren’t “trapped” in our thoughts.

Consider the following 4 thinking patterns and how they might affect you:

1. Judgments

(what judgments does your mind make about yourself, others, life, the world, your body, your mind, your behavior, etc.)

2. Time Traveling

(what stories about the past – e.g. painful memories - or the future –e.g. worrying, predicting the worst - does your mind tend to hook you with?)

3. Reason Giving

(what reasons does your mind give you as to why you can’t or shouldn’t do the things that matter to you?)

4. Rules

(what unhelpful rules does your mind insist upon, in terms of what you can, can’t, should or shouldn’t do; or how life, others should or shouldn’t be?)
