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How to Challenge Your Thoughts

If you find yourself thinking negatively or notice that your thoughts have taken you from here to catastrophe in 2½ seconds, a helpful strategy to use involves challenging your thoughts to see if they are valid.

By asking yourself questions like those below, you will be able to determine if your thoughts and reactions to a situation was based upon facts or if you put your own interpretation on the situation and/or jumped to a conclusion?

- What went right? What went wrong?
- Am I only focusing on the negative?
- What are the facts in this situation?
- What evidence is there to support my thoughts or reaction? What evidence is there that puts into question my thoughts or reaction?
- Am I falling into a thinking trap or jumping to conclusions (e.g., catastrophising or overestimating danger)?
- Are there any other ways I could interpret this situation?
- Have I confused a thought with a fact?
- What would I tell a friend if he/she had the same thought?
- What would a friend say about my thought?
- Is my judgment based on the way I feel instead of facts?
- Am I 100% sure that _____ will or did happen?
- How many times has _____ happened before?
- Is _____ so important that my future depends on it?
- What is the worst that could happen?
- If it did happen, what could I do to cope with or handle it?
- Is there something I could learn from this situation to help me do it better next time?