



## Lou Brown ADHD & LIFE COACH

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### How to Reframe Your Thoughts

**“My life has been filled with terrible misfortunes, most of which have never happened” ~ Mark Twain**

**“We don’t see things as they are, we see things as we are” ~ Anais Nin**

Believe it or not, the world contain no intrinsic meaning. Instead we give it meaning by taking the information presented to us and inferring meanings to it in our minds. We do this using a frame.

A frame or frame of reference is basically a complex schema of unquestioned beliefs, values and assumptions, mixed with information from our environment. Our past experiences, our success and failures, our triumphs and humiliations, and the way other people have spoken or related to us, especially in our early years, all contribute to our current beliefs and therefore our frame.

The interesting thing is that once an idea or belief about ourselves sticks, we generally consider it true without questioning its validity or usefulness. Then we adjust everything we see, experience, think and feel to fit with our beliefs. In other words our version of our reality is created by our beliefs using our frame.

So what can you do when your frame is not serving you well? You can change the way you look at things.

There are many ways to interpret the same situation. The idea is to pick the one you like, the one that serves you well.

Re-framing does not change the external reality, but helps you view things in a different light.

For example, many years ago I tripped and fell whilst roller-skating. I hurt my left hand and left knee leaving me with pain and swelling. Instead of bemoaning the situation and letting those limiting self beliefs in, such as “I’m too old to be doing this sort of thing anymore” and “what do you think will happen if you act like a teenager”, I used several reframes instead:

- At least I didn’t break a bone (like I did previously)
- I’m healthy so I will heal quickly
- I didn’t let my age get in the way of doing the things I love
- And my son thought I was ultra cool skating with him

This certainly didn’t change the situation but it definitely took the edge off my suffering.

So why not give it a go?

An easy way to start is to practice reframing the way you see simple problems.

Here’s an example: “I’m so annoyed as I left my lunch at home today” becomes “because I left my lunch at home today I get to try out that new healthy café down the road.”

Now try reframing the below statements? Can you find any hidden opportunities?

1. My day is going to be so boring now that my friend has cancelled our lunch plans. I’ve got nothing to do and no one to share my day with.
2. The rain has spoilt my plans to go to the park today. Life sucks.
3. I am so disappointed that I didn’t get that job that I really wanted.
4. This traffic jam is going to make me late for work. I will never get the report in on time. I might as well give up on that promotion now.

You can keep practicing the skill of reframing by regularly trying to reframe any challenges in your life. Write them down then see if you can change your perspective about them? Ask yourself – is there an opportunity hiding here somewhere?

Choosing the frame through which you see life is really liberating. Reframing can change your mood in an instant making you happier and more content. It can help you see the gift in any situation or the light at the end of the tunnel. It is also a great stress reduction strategy and anything that reduces stress is good for our health and wellbeing.

## Reference

<http://changingminds.org/techniques/general/reframing.htm>

