

Your Thought Record

Printable worksheet · the interactive version lives at omnipsyche.org/therapyhomework



Name (optional) _____

Date _____

Thoughts are guesses

Your brain is a prediction machine. It takes a sliver of information ("she has not replied in six hours") and instantly writes a story ("she is angry at me"). The story arrives feeling like a fact, and your mood responds to the story, not the sliver.

A thought record does one thing: **it puts the story on trial**. Not to force positive thinking, but to get to accurate thinking. Sometimes the thought survives the trial, and now you know it is worth acting on. Usually it comes out smaller, softer, and more honest.

Pick a moment from the last few days when your mood dropped hard, and let us look at it.

THE SITUATION

1 What was the situation? Just the facts, like a camera saw it.

Where were you, when, who was there, what happened? No interpretations yet: "My boss said we need to talk Monday" is a fact. "My boss is going to fire me" is a thought, and it goes in a later box.

THE FEELING

2 What did you feel? Name each emotion in one word.

Anxious, ashamed, angry, sad, guilty, embarrassed, hopeless. Just the words; commas welcome.

3 How intense was the strongest of those feelings?

Remember this number. You will rate it again at the end, and the comparison is the interesting part.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Barely there

Overwhelming

THE THOUGHT

4 What went through your mind? Write the automatic thought as a single sentence.

The hot one, the sentence that stings when you read it back. "I am going to get fired." "Everyone could tell I was nervous." "I always ruin things."
If several came, pick the one with the most heat.

5 Right now, how much do you believe that thought?

Gut answer, before any examination.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Barely

Completely

6 Check the thought for thinking traps. Which of these does it lean on?

Almost every hot thought uses at least one. Select all that fit; this alone often loosens a thought's grip.

- ☐ **All-or-nothing thinking**
One flaw means total failure. Words like "always," "never," "completely."
- ☐ **Catastrophizing**
Jumping straight to the worst outcome and treating it as certain.
- ☐ **Mind reading**
Being sure you know what someone else thinks of you, without evidence.
- ☐ **Fortune telling**
Predicting the future confidently, then feeling it as if it already happened.
- ☐ **Emotional reasoning**
"I feel it, so it must be true." Feelings as evidence.
- ☐ **Labeling**
One event becomes an identity: "I am a failure," instead of "that did not go well."
- ☐ **Mental filter**
Zooming in on the one negative detail and cropping out everything else.
- ☐ **Discounting the positive**
"That does not count." Successes get explained away; failures get filed.
- ☐ **Should statements**
Rigid rules about how you or others must behave, with punishment attached.
- ☐ **Personalization**
Taking responsibility for things that were never fully in your control.

7 What real evidence supports the thought?

Facts only, things a courtroom would accept. "She has not replied" counts. "She probably hates me" does not; that is the defendant testifying for itself.

8 What real evidence goes against it?

Be as thorough here as your brain was on the other side. Past times the fear did not come true. Other explanations. Things you are cropping out. What would you point out to a friend who had this thought?

9 Write the balanced thought: what a fair judge would say after hearing both sides.

Not fake positive, just accurate. Often it sounds like: "It is possible that X, but the evidence better fits Y, and either way I could handle it." Take a breath and rate how you feel now compared to your first number.

Bring this to your next session. What you wrote here is exactly the kind of material good sessions are made of. Repeat the exercise whenever it is useful; the value compounds.

Michael C. Shedrick, M.S., PLPC, NCC. This exercise is for educational and informational purposes only. It is not therapy, not a substitute for professional diagnosis or treatment, and completing it does not create a counselor-client relationship. If it was assigned by your treatment provider, bring it to them. If you are in crisis, call or text 988 (Suicide and Crisis Lifeline). Free mental health education and tools: omnipsyche.org