

5 Thought Challenges

What are the chances?

- Good for challenging thoughts about things that are unlikely to happen.
- Example – “If I go to the supermarket on my own I’ll faint”
- “What are the chances that I will actually faint in the middle of the supermarket?”
- “It’s not happened before, even when I’ve felt really dizzy / faint, so the reality is that the chances are very slim indeed.”

What’s the worst thing?

- For challenging thoughts about things that actually are likely to happen
- Example “What if I bump into someone I know at the Stress course?”
- “What is the worst thing that could happen?”
- “I’d be really embarrassed.....They would probably feel embarrassed too, but actually we’re here for the same sort of reason. We’re both trying to help ourselves, and that’s a good thing!”

Am I right to think that?

- Good for challenging the truth of the things we tell ourselves
- Example “I’m a failure”

- “Am I right to think this?” (Am I all or nothing thinking here? What would a friend say to me if they heard me talking like this?)
- “Yes I am all or nothing thinking. I only failed one part of the course, and I can re-take it next term.”

The Five year rule!

- Good for getting perspective on things that have been stressful/difficult.
- Example “I really made a fool of myself in that meeting this morning”
- “Will this matter in 5 years’ time?”
- “It was tough this morning and I felt embarrassed, but I came through it and I’m still standing. If that’s the toughest thing I have to go through in the next 5 years I’ll consider myself lucky!”

What is this worth?

- Could be termed “Is life too short to be thinking like this?”
- Example “I go to bed each night worrying about how I coped today. Did I say something silly to my neighbour? Was I too hard on the kids? I always feel I’ve failed and feel I’m stuck in a very big rut”
- “Is life too short to worry like this?”
- “No-one at home says I’m failing. In fact, they often say how well I deal with the children. My neighbours talk away to me so they must think I’m OK. I should learn to pat myself on the back a bit more”