



Is your thinking crooked?

Crooked thoughts are extreme, exaggerated, irrational and often unhelpful thoughts that can stop you looking at a situation in a clear way. They can lead to uncomfortable feelings, which might then result in you doing all kinds of things – e.g. eating too much, exercising too little – leading to weight gain.

Do you ever do the following?:

- Exaggerate or make mountains out of molehills?
- Take things personally?
- Take responsibility when it's not yours to take?
- Over-generalise?
- Try to mind-read and second-guess what other people think?

These are all examples of crooked thinking. Everyone makes these thinking errors but the trick is learning to recognise them, challenge them and come up with a more balanced thought. An ABC Thought Log helps you challenge unhelpful ways of thinking.

Using a Thought Log:

1. Start with any box that works for you. If you find it easier to identify with the situation or event, start with box A; if you can identify your thoughts start with box B.
2. Assuming you start with box A, use box B to investigate if you're making thinking errors and write the likely consequences in box C.
3. If you discover you're making thinking errors, what more realistic and useful thought fits the evidence better? Write this in box D
4. In box E, write down how you might feel about the situation and how you could now behave

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A – ACTIVATING SITUATION

Unexpected traffic jam on the way to work.

B – BELIEFS

(Thoughts)
I'll be late for work. My boss will be furious and fire me

C – CONSEQUENCES

Feelings: tense, angry, anxious.
Your behaviour: drive aggressively and arrive at work hot and stressed.

D – DISPUTING AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

Take a step back and examine your beliefs (thoughts): is it true that people get fired for being late once? Can I remember that ever happening before?

New, more realistic, useful and balances thought:
My boss might not be pleased but will understand if I explain the situation.

E-EFFECTS OF THE NEW WAY OF THINKING ON YOUR FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR

How do you feel now?
How might you behave?
I feel calmer now and my hearts' stopped racing. I'll ring the office on my mobile to explain what's happened and how late I'm likely to be and I'll get straight to work as soon as I arrive.