

Challenge Your Stinkin' Thinkin'

Is what you are telling yourself *really* **balanced, fair, and realistic**?

To find out, ask yourself the following questions:



- Have I been in this type of situation before? What happened in the past?
- What would my best friend tell me in this situation?
- What would I tell a friend in this situation?
- Is there anything positive I am discounting or not remembering?
- In one month, how much will this really matter? In one year? In five years?

- How much of this is *really* my responsibility? How much of this is the responsibility of other people? How much of it is outside my control? Am I blaming myself for something that is not 100% in my control?
- What's the worst thing that could happen? If the worst thing DID happen, what could I do to handle it?
- Are there any other possible explanations?
- Is this a hassle or a horror?
- What's the best thing (or some good things) that could happen?

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Let's look at a few examples

Automatic Anxious Thought

Challenge that Sneaky Thought!

"Everyone's looking at me - they think I'm weird or something."

- "I have no idea what they are thinking. They would probably look at anyone new who walks in the room."

"They never called me for an interview. I'm never going to get a job this summer. Or any job, ever."

- "Just because I didn't get this one job doesn't mean I won't get *any* job. There could have been many reasons why they didn't call that had nothing to do with me. Maybe someone else just had more experience. Maybe I'll get the next one."

"What if I have a panic attack during the driving test and I crash the car?"

- "That's extremely unlikely to happen. I will probably feel anxious but that's expected. If I do start to feel panicky I will have plenty of time to steady myself or even pull the car over. The examiner will understand. I can always take the test again if I need to."