

Thought *Defusion*

Seeing your thoughts as thoughts, not facts.

Our minds produce thoughts all day long: judgements, predictions, memories and rules. Many are helpful, but some can be difficult and persistent. When we are hooked by a thought, it feels like the absolute truth. We become caught up in it, and it begins to guide what we say and do, often pulling us away from what matters to us.

Thought defusion is the skill of unhooking: stepping back and seeing a thought for what it is, words and pictures passing through the mind. It does not mean getting rid of thoughts or proving them wrong. It means holding them more lightly, so you can choose how to respond. This worksheet will help you understand how thoughts hook you, notice your own patterns, and practise simple ways to unhook.

A THOUGHT

Something the mind produces, such as an opinion, prediction or judgement.
For example: I will make a mess of this.

A FACT

Something that can be observed or confirmed. For example: I have a presentation on Monday.

Thoughts that often *hook* us

Tick the ones that feel *familiar*

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Judgements about myself | ☐ Worst-case predictions |
| ☐ Rules such as I should... | ☐ Comparisons with others |
| ☐ Old stories such as I always... | ☐ Worries about what others think |

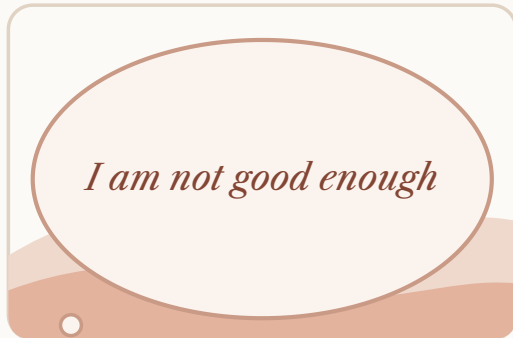
The thoughts that hook me *most*

Hooked or *Unhooked*?

Recognising your own patterns.

Getting hooked by thoughts is a normal part of being human. Everyone experiences it. The aim is not to stop thoughts from appearing, but to notice when a thought has taken hold, so you can step back and see more clearly.

WHEN I AM HOOKED



- The thought feels like the truth.
- It fills my view and takes over.
- I react automatically.

WHEN I AM UNHOOKED



- I notice it as a thought.
- I can see what is around me.
- I choose what to do next.

Signs I might be *hooked*

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Going over the same thought again and again | ☐ Believing the thought completely |
| ☐ Arguing with my thoughts | ☐ Feeling stuck, frozen or overwhelmed |
| ☐ Avoiding people or situations | ☐ Reacting before I have time to think |

A recent time I was *hooked*

What was the thought, and what did I do next?

Practise *Unhooking*

Simple ways to step back from your thoughts.

The aim is not to get rid of difficult thoughts or prove them wrong. It is to hold them more lightly, so they have less power over what you do. Try one of these practices the next time a thought hooks you.

I am noticing the thought that... 1

Put this phrase in front of a difficult thought and notice how it feels a little less like a fact.

Name the story 2

Give a familiar pattern a name: there is the not good enough story again.

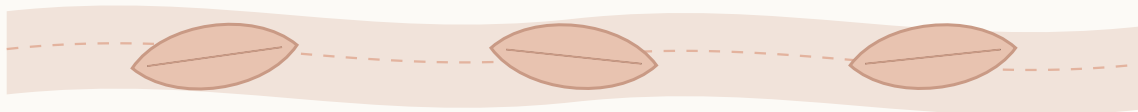
Leaves on a stream 3

Imagine placing each thought on a leaf and watching it float slowly by.

What if it goes wrong?

I am not good enough

They will judge me



Let each thought arrive, rest on a leaf, and drift past in its own time.

My thought	I am noticing the thought that...	What I noticed

Would you like more *support*?

Sometimes certain thoughts and beliefs continue to hold us back. Counselling offers a safe space to understand these patterns and build a more balanced inner voice.

Learn more at
www.marlynna.com

Based on ACT tools by Russ Harris.

This resource is for general reflection and is not a substitute for professional support. Therapy sessions are not for emergencies. For immediate crisis support or urgent medical care, please contact your local emergency services.