

Change your mind, change your mood! Do the following exercise to help identify ‘thoughts’:

Don’t confuse emotions with thoughts – learn how to *identify what you are thinking* when you are feeling upsetting emotions (like anxiety, anger, aggression, depression etc.). Beware - the following statements are not useful:

- *I am nervous because I am anxious.*
- *I am afraid because I am nervous.*
- *I am angry because I am stressed.*
- *I am anxious because I am embarrassed.*



Those statements all married an emotion with an emotion... but an emotion doesn’t come out of the blue and cause another emotion does it? - they are mostly caused by our thoughts and beliefs and perceptions - so more thoughtful identifying statements might be:

- *I am nervous because I think I will fail this exam because I always fail at things these days.*
- *I am afraid because I think this interview is going to go badly because I’m not good enough for this job or company.*
- *I am angry because I think that your behaviour is disgraceful.*
- *I am anxious because I think that everybody is looking at my big butt in these stupid jeans.*

Task: make an ‘emotion and emotion’, and an ‘emotion and a thought’ statement:

Emotion & Emotion	
Emotion & Thought	



Re-cap: thoughts are not the same as feelings – identify the thoughts!

So - **feelings are ‘internal emotions’ caused by thoughts**. It would not be correct to say “I feel anxious because I am nervous”, as anxious and nervous are both feelings... it would be correct to identify the thought that is causing the feeling (eg ‘I know I am going to make a show of myself at the interview, so I feel anxious and nervous’).

Identifying your thoughts and ‘feelings’ – with a simple ‘thought form’. Example:

Thought: I think...	Feeling: Therefore, I feel...
I'll never be happy again	Depressed, hopeless
I am fat and ugly	Anxious, hopeless
He's deliberately embarrassing me.	Angry, vengeful, defensive
Nobody cares about me.	Hurt, isolated, rejected.
I won't be able to take care of myself.	Anxious, helpless
I've solved problems before, I can do it again.	Hopeful, energised.
I don't <i>need</i> to be 'perfect'. Nobody is.	Relieved, less pressured.
I should give myself credit for trying. Practice makes perfect	Proud, happy.

Task: fill in a 'thought form' worksheet for yourself...

(use common hypotheticals – no need to 'share'! ☺ - form and flip chart)

Thought: I think...	Feeling: Therefore, I feel...



Let's go a little further and look at examples that identify **thinking**, the **emotions** the thoughts cause, and the consequential **behaviours**:



- **Thinking** that you are not very good at talking with people may make you **feel** very worried or anxious when you are out in social situations. You may **go quiet** and not interact.
- **Thinking** that no one likes you may make you **feel** depressed. You may **stay at home** on your own.
- **Thinking** that you never get things right may make you **feel** angry with yourself. You may **give up trying** because 'what's the point?'
- **Thinking** that it's all the rotten world's fault that you have to downsize may make you **feel** aggressive. You may be **short tempered** and unreasonable.

Task: fill in a 'Thinking that... may make you feel... you may...' worksheet

(work in pairs, form and flip chart)

Thinking that...	May make you feel...	You may...



Proceed to further exercises.....