

Lesson 3

Helpful or Unhelpful?

Introduction

What if you woke up tomorrow and all your stresses had vanished?

It is possible!

And we're going to tell you how to do it!

Science

Problem-solving approaches used by experts in the field of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy ask a key question: Is your thought helpful or unhelpful?

If it's unhelpful, then it's a possibility that you're self-sabotaging, holding yourself back by believing something that may not be true.

Using the ABC model you learned about in our last lesson helps you cast light on what you can do or change in order to reduce your stress.

Value

Identifying whether your thought as a result of a stressful situation, is helpful or not, gives you a big clue as to what to do next.

Your stress reduction as a result of problem-solving using this approach will enable you to set your mind to achieving whatever it is you want to achieve. You'll no longer be captive by your overactive mind or unhelpful thoughts. Your problems will not play over and over like a broken record.

You'll feel like the weight has been lifted off your shoulders when you become skilful in this and you'll regain control. You'll be physically healthy too, and your relationships and va-va-voom for life will lift off.

Exercise video

We have two kinds of thoughts – helpful and unhelpful.

In short, unhelpful thoughts make us feel worse. They trap us in a negative cycle that we struggle to escape from.

Helpful thoughts on the other hand encourage us to not sweat the small stuff and interpret situations from a more positive and often more realistic viewpoint.

I don't know about you, but when I have unhelpful thoughts running through my mind, it's hard to break away from them, see them in any other way. And it always seems to be about the same old stuff.

When we notice it's a repeated unhelpful thought, it might be due to a deep core belief we hold about ourselves because someone made us think that, perhaps when we were young.

The thing to do is challenge the heck out of our unhelpful thoughts and stop that cycle from spinning. We can do this, by counteracting each negative thought with a positive one. Let's go to an example.

Scenario: Presenting at work

Feeling: Stressed, sweating, shaking

Unhelpful thoughts: E.g. everyone can see I'm sweating and shaking.
They must think I'm unprofessional.
I should be able to do this. I can't deal with this.
I am unprofessional.

Helpful thoughts: People are looking as they're interested in what I have to say.
I'm sharing information that everyone needs to know.
I am doing this.
I am doing one of the tasks expected of me – I'm professional.

Wrap

We all have our hang ups. The key is whether we give in to them, or challenge them and live a calmer and happier life - one in which we can achieve our full potential. We're only on this earth for a small amount of time. Let's make the most of it!

CTA

For the week ahead, how about catching your negative thoughts and spinning them on their heads? No-one likes backing down from a challenge right? You'll soon see the benefits and notice that you're ticking off your goals one by one.