

F.A.R. EXERCISE

This exercise is designed to assist in thought control, which helps stabilize mood and emotions. I've broken this process down into three main steps: Find, Argue and Replace, or "F.A.R."

F=Find-

- First, find (identify) the triggering event or circumstance, such as, "My boss ignores me," or "Traffic jam."
- Now, learn to identify your anxious or sad feelings and admit to yourself that you're feeling them. You can use the list called "Feeling Words" in the toolbox.
- Next, find the thoughts that underlie the feelings. These will be things like: "I will miss this deadline, lose my job, and live in poverty." Or "That person thinks they're better than me. I can't take being put down!" This will take more time and energy, even prayer, because often these thoughts are unconscious, or nearly so. Write them down in the space provided.
Congratulations, you've accomplished the first step!

A=Argue- Learn to argue with yourself. Use the Distorted Thoughts document. In doing this, you are breaking up the fallow ground of your own thinking so that the seed of truth can take root. Tell yourself what's wrong with the way you're thinking: "I'm catastrophizing missing the deadline. I'm making it much worse than it is!" Or "Where is the evidence that person thinks they're better than you? You're mindreading. And you're also catastrophizing how bad it is to deal with an arrogant person." In this step, you're not beating yourself up so much as confronting yourself, holding yourself accountable for the way you're treating yourself, just like you'd confront someone who said similar things to an innocent child. In other words, you're telling yourself to stop hurting yourself.

R=Replace- Learn to replace misbeliefs with truth. Truth will typically be much more nuanced, complex and detailed than distorted thinking. If the distorted thought is, "My wife is an idiot and I can't stand it!" then the truth would be something like, "My wife gets distracted sometimes when too much is going on. She loses her concentration. Sometimes she makes mistakes, like locking the keys in the car or leaving the stove on all night. Most of the time, the mistakes aren't catastrophic. A few times they have caused inconvenience. But she's a PhD in Microbiology, so it's not that she lacks intelligence. I get frustrated with her, but her occasional flakiness isn't horrible, it's just irritating." Truth has shades of gray whereas distorted thinking tends to be very black and white, or extreme.

Use this table to write down your answers.

Find	Argue	Replace
Event:		
Feeling word:		
Thought:		
Event:		

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