
Day 6: Catching Your Automatic Thoughts

Today's Focus: Identify automatic thoughts that trigger avoidance

Time Commitment: 20 minutes

Core Exercise: Procrastination Thought Records

Morning Check-in (2 minutes)

Daily Questions:

- What am I avoiding today and what fear is driving it?
- What is one small step I can take toward a feared task?
- How can I show yourself compassion around this challenge?

Week 2 focus:

From my fear ladder, I'm working on: _____

Understanding Automatic Thoughts (3 minutes)

Automatic thoughts are the immediate, often unnoticed thoughts that pop up when we face feared tasks. They happen so fast we accept them as truth.

Common avoidance thoughts:

- "I'll mess this up"
- "They'll think I'm incompetent"
- "I don't know where to start"
- "It has to be perfect"
- "I'll do it later when I feel ready"

Think of a recent avoidance moment. What thought flashed through your mind first?

Main Exercise: Thought Record Practice (12 minutes)

Purpose: Catch and examine the thoughts that trigger avoidance

Current Situation Analysis (6 minutes)

Situation: What specific task are you avoiding right now?

Automatic Thoughts: What thoughts come up when you think about this task?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Emotions: What do you feel when these thoughts arise?

Intensity: Rate the emotion's intensity (1-10): _____

Behavior: What do you do instead of the task?

Thought Challenging (6 minutes)

Pick your strongest automatic thought from above: " _____ "

Evidence FOR this thought:

- _____
- _____

Evidence AGAINST this thought:

- _____
- _____

Alternative perspective:

"A more balanced way to think about this would be: _____"

How intense is the emotion now? (1-10): _____

Evidence Collection Start (2 minutes)

Purpose: Begin building a case against fear-based assumptions

For the thought you just challenged, what evidence from your life contradicts it?

Example: If your thought was "I always mess things up"

Evidence against: "I successfully completed my project last month, my friend complimented my cooking, I solved that problem at work"

My evidence against my automatic thought:

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
-

Quick Action Step (1 minute)

Now that you've challenged your thought, take one small action toward your avoided task:

What I'll do right now (2-5 minutes):

How it felt to take action after thought work:

Tomorrow's Preparation

Tomorrow we'll continue building your evidence collection and practice more thought challenging techniques.

Thought Awareness Reminder:

"My first thought is not always my best thought. I can pause, examine, and choose a more helpful perspective."
