

Example Form 8.1: Practicing Cognitive Flexibility

Use this form to help you move past your first impressions by identifying if you’re falling into a negative thinking trap and coming up with alternative ways you can think about the situation. Use the following questions to help you evaluate your automatic thoughts.

- ☐ Do I know for certain that _____ will happen or is true?
- ☐ What evidence do I have for this thought or belief?
- ☐ Could there be any other explanations?
- ☐ Even if _____ was true, could I live with it?
- ☐ How much does it *feel* like _____ is true? What is a more *realistic* chance that _____ is true?
- ☐ Is my negative automatic thought driven by the intense emotions I’m experiencing?
- ☐ If _____ was true, could I cope with it? How would I handle it?

Situation/Trigger	Automatic Thought(s)	Is this a Thinking Trap?	Other Interpretation(s) <i>Often include “automatic thought may not be true” and “even if it is, I could cope.”</i>
Home alone on a Saturday night	I’m such a loser I’ll never find a partner	Yes	Just because I’m not out with people right now doesn’t mean I’m a loser I may be more hopeful about finding someone tomorrow – when I’m feeling less depressed
My boss didn’t agree with a point I made in a meeting	My contributions aren’t valued I’m bad at my Job I’m going to be fired	Yes	My coworkers disagree a lot, it doesn’t mean I’m not valued or getting fired It’s not the end of the world if my boss doesn’t agree with everything I say
Noticing my heart beating fast and sweating before a presentation	I’m going to have a panic attack I can’t go through with this Everyone will notice how anxious I am	Yes	I’ve felt this way going into presentations before and not had a full-blown attack I can still give the talk while feeling uncomfortable Even if I do need to take a break during the talk, I can live with that