

REWRITING YOUR THOUGHT PATTERNS

Imagine your mind is like a garden, and your thoughts are like the plants that grow in it. Now, just as a gardener tends to his plants, you need to pay attention to the thoughts that grow in your mind.



Certain thoughts tend to repeat and create a pattern, much like the way certain plants in a garden form pathways. And very often, **these thoughts are automatic** - as the word suggests they pop into our minds without effort and in a matter of seconds.

While some of these thoughts are pleasant, others may be unpleasant. And these unpleasant thoughts are like the weeds that keep sprouting in your garden, that take over without you even realising it. But the good news is that you can notice and pluck these weeds, and in turn the kind of pathways they form.

To do this it is important to understand the kind of automatic thoughts that come to your mind. The following bubbles contain examples of these automatic thoughts.



As you would have noticed not all of these thoughts are pleasant - and if we find that our automatic thoughts tend to veer more towards the negative it's time to stop and examine them. Because when thoughts like this take sprout and are allowed to grow they can become deep-rooted patterns of thinking.

The table below contains some examples of the kind of patterns that may develop from these automatic thoughts. Take a moment to go through each example, and add your examples in the space provided below.



Thought Pattern	Example
<p>Jumping to Conclusions</p> <p>Coming to a negative conclusion without any proof to support it</p>	<p>Example “Why is my friend not picking up her phone? There must be something terribly wrong that happened to her.”</p> <hr/>
<p>Personalisation</p> <p>Taking personal responsibility for all situations</p>	<p>Example “My friend cancelled the plan, it is because I am boring and dull”</p> <hr/>
<p>All or Nothing Thinking</p> <p>Looking at situations as extremes - either completely good or completely bad</p>	<p>Example “She made a mistake, so she is incompetent for the job ”</p> <hr/>

Tackling Weeds (Negative Thought Patterns):

Now that we have identified the patterns of negative thought we’re going to tackle them using the 3 Cs : Catch It, Check It, Change it :

1. Catch It: You've already nailed this step! You've identified a negative thought. Now, let's move on to the next two Cs.

2. Check It:

Using the examples you've noted, ask yourself:

- Is this true?
- Is this helpful?
- Would others see this situation in the same way?

3. Change It:

Now that you've examined the thought, what's a different way you would like to think about this situation?



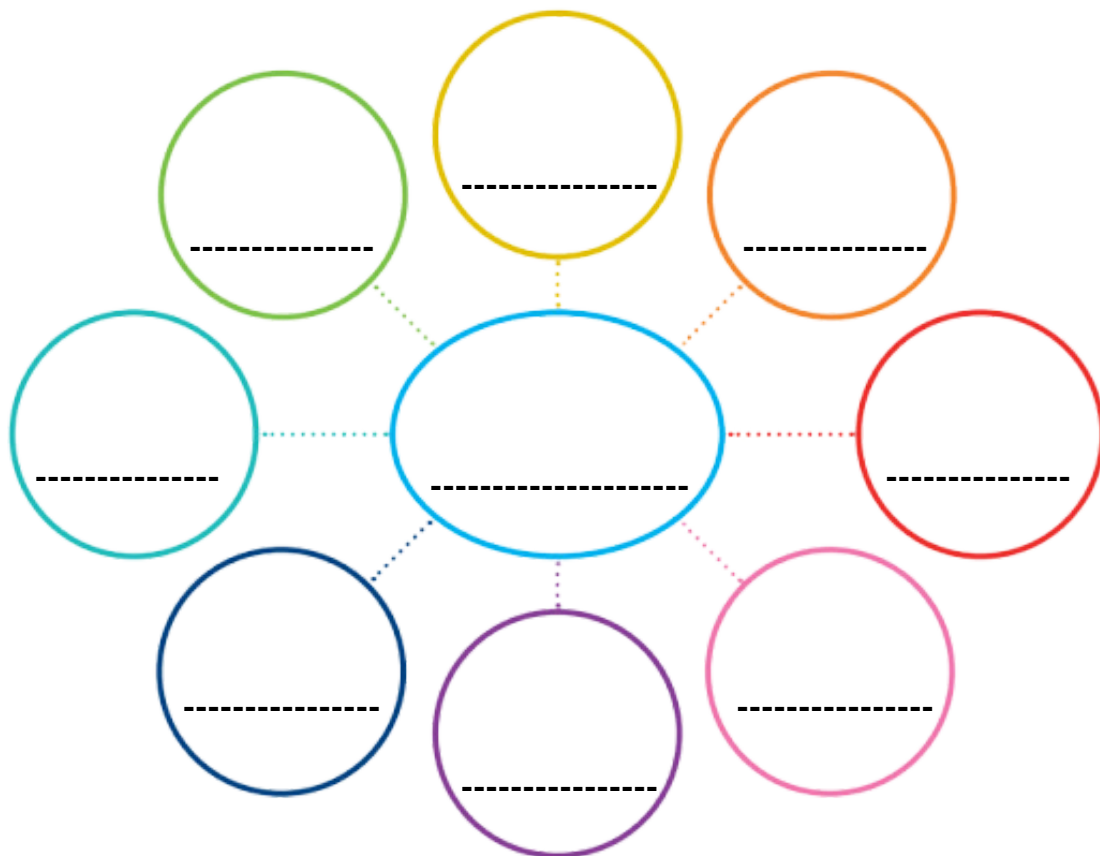
Example:

- Situation: Friend cancels plans with me.
- Initial Thought: 'My friend cancelled plans with me because I am boring.'
- Alternative Thought: 'I know my friend has a busy work schedule; maybe they couldn't find the time for our meeting. This doesn't necessarily mean they find me boring.'

Your Turn!

In the diagram below, jot down:

- The situation triggering the negative thought (use an example from earlier).
- The initial automatic thought in an outer circle.
- Fill all remaining circles with as many different alternatives as possible.



Reflection: Take a moment to ponder the perspective and thoughts you now have towards the situation.

Note: Identifying and transforming thought patterns is a process, akin to maintaining a beautiful garden. The above steps offer a way to reshape your thinking. If you find it challenging, consider seeking guidance from a professional. Your mental garden deserves the best care!

If you, or someone you know is looking to seek professional help, reach out to us at **The Mood Space** <https://www.themoodspace.com/getstarted> and our Care Team will get back to you within 24 hours.

Not looking for professional help just yet? We understand, keep browsing through our Care Space tools and explore our self-help handouts and worksheets to navigate mental health-related challenges in a better manner.

