**Section 1 - Getting Psyched for Learning**

This section will show us "strategies, methods, and skills that have been shown to be helpful with mood problems such as depression, anxiety, anger, panic, jealousy, guilt, and shame. The skills taught in this book can also help you solve relationship problems, handle stress better, improve your self-esteem, become less fearful, and grow more confident."

Greenberger PhD, Dennis; Christine A. Padesky PhD. Mind Over Mood, Second Edition (Page 1). The Guilford Press. Kindle Edition.

Much of the content in this section of the course will be taken from the following book:
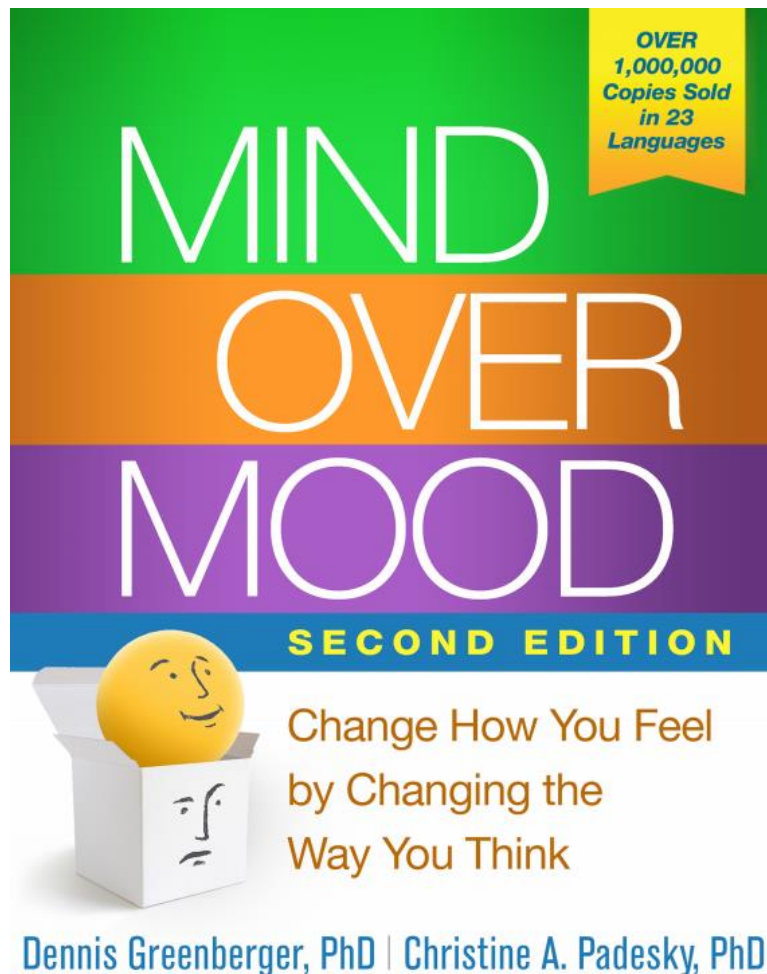
The ideas in this book come from cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), one of today's most effective forms of psychotherapy. "Cognitive" refers to what we think and how we think. Cognitive-behavioral therapists emphasize understanding the thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors connected to our moods, physical experiences, and events in our lives. A central idea in CBT is that our thoughts about an event or experience powerfully affects our emotional, behavioral, and physical responses to it.

The same Mind Over Mood skills that help manage moods can also help you with stress; alcohol and drug use; eating issues such as bingeing, purging, or overeating; relationship struggles; low self-esteem; and other issues. It also can be used to develop positive moods, such as happiness and a sense of meaning and purpose in your life.

Greenberger PhD, Dennis; Christine A. Padesky PhD. Mind Over Mood, Second Edition (Page 1-2). The Guilford Press. Kindle Edition.

**YOUTUBE CLIP:** Making Sense of CBT

**Section 2 - Understanding Your Problems**

EXERCISE:  **Understanding Your Own Problems**

Just as Ben, Marissa, Linda, and Vic used the five-part model to understand their problems, you can begin to understand your own problems by noticing what you are experiencing in these five areas of your life: environment/life changes/situations, physical reactions, moods, behaviors, and thoughts. On Worksheet 2.1, describe any recent changes or long-term problems in each of these areas. If you have difficulty filling out Worksheet 2.1, ask yourself the questions in the Helpful Hints on the facing page.

WORKSHEET 2.1.  **Understanding My Problems**

Environment/life changes/situations: _____

_____

Physical reactions: _____

_____

Moods: _____

_____

Behaviors: _____

_____

Thoughts: _____

_____

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Can you see some connections among the five parts on Worksheet 2.1? For example, do your thoughts and moods seem connected? Did changes in your environment or life situations lead to any changes in the other four parts? Do your behaviors seem connected to your moods or thoughts? For many people, these five areas are connected. The good news is that because this is so, small positive changes in one area can lead to positive changes in all the other areas as well. In therapy, we look for the smallest changes that can lead to the biggest overall positive improvement. As you use this book, notice what small changes help you feel better. While small changes in several areas may be necessary for you to feel better, changes in your thinking or behavior are often important if you want to create lasting positive improvements in your life. The next few chapters help explain why this is so.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------

**HELPFUL HINTS** If you are having trouble filling out Worksheet 2.1, you might find it helpful to look again at the five-part models filled out by Linda, Marissa, and Vic. Then ask yourself the following questions:

*Environment/life changes/situations:* What recent changes have there been in my life (positive as well as negative)? What have been the most stressful events for me in the past year? Three years? Five years? In childhood? Do I experience any long-term or ongoing challenges (e.g., discrimination or harassment by others, physical/health challenges for me or family members, ongoing financial problems)?

*Physical reactions:* What physical symptoms am I having? (Consider general changes in energy level, appetite, pain levels, and sleep, as well as occasional symptoms such as muscle tension, tiredness, rapid heartbeat, stomachaches, sweating, dizziness, and breathing difficulties.)

*Moods:* What single words describe my most frequent or troubling moods (sad, nervous, angry, guilty, ashamed)?

*Behaviors:* What behaviors are connected to my moods? At work? At home? With friends? By myself? (Behaviors are the things we do or avoid doing. For example, Linda avoided airplanes, Vic tried to be perfect, and Ben stopped doing things.)

*Thoughts:* When I have strong moods, what thoughts do I have about myself? Other people? My future? What thoughts interfere with doing the things I would like to do or think I should do? What images or memories come into my mind?

-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Section 2 Summary

- There are five parts to any problem: environment/life situations, physical reactions, moods, behaviors, and thoughts.
- Each of these five parts interacts with the others.
- Small changes in any one area can lead to changes in the other areas.
- Identifying these five parts may give you a new way of understanding your own problems and give you some ideas for how to make positive changes in your life (see Worksheet 2.1).



**FIGURE 2.1.** Five-part model to understand life experiences.
Copyright 1986 by Christine A. Padesky.

**Section 3 - It's the Thought That Counts**

EXERCISE: **The Thought Connections**

Worksheet 3.1 provides practice in recognizing the connections between thoughts and mood, behavior, and physical reactions.

WORKSHEET 3.1. **The Thought Connections**

Sarah, a 34-year-old woman, sat in the back row of the auditorium during a school meeting for parents. She had concerns and questions regarding how her 8-year-old son was being taught, as well as questions about class-room security. As Sarah was about to raise her hand to voice her concerns and questions, she thought, "What if other people think my questions are stupid? Maybe I shouldn't ask these questions in front of the whole group. Someone may disagree with me and this could lead to a public argument. I could be humiliated."

**THOUGHT–MOOD CONNECTION**

Based on Sarah's thoughts, which of the following moods is she likely to experience? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ 1. Anxiety/nervousness

☐ 2. Sadness

☐ 3. Happiness

☐ 4. Anger

☐ 5. Enthusiasm

**THOUGHT–BEHAVIOR CONNECTION**

Based on Sarah's thoughts, how do you predict she will behave?

☐ 1. She will speak loudly and voice her concerns.

☐ 2. She will remain silent.

☐ 3. She will openly disagree with what other people say.

**THOUGHT–PHYSICAL REACTIONS CONNECTION**

Based on Sarah's thoughts, which of the following physical changes might she notice? (Mark all that apply.)

☐ 1. Rapid heart rate

☐ 2. Sweaty palms

☐ 3. Breathing changes

☐ 4. Dizziness

WORKSHEET 3.2. What Is the Thought–Mood Connection?

Whenever we experience a mood, there is a thought connected to it that helps define the mood. For example, suppose you are at a party, and a friend introduces you to Alex. As you talk, Alex never looks at you; in fact, throughout your brief conversation, he looks over your shoulder across the room.

Following are three different thoughts you might have in this situation. Four moods are listed below each thought. Mark the mood that you believe you would have with each thought:

**Thought: Alex is rude. He is insulting me by ignoring me.**

- Possible moods (mark one):      Irritated         Sad      Nervous          Caring

**Thought: Alex doesn't find me interesting. I bore everybody.**

- Possible moods (mark one):      Irritated         Sad      Nervous          Caring

**Thought: Alex seems shy. He's probably too uncomfortable to look at me.**

- Possible moods (mark one):      Irritated         Sad      Nervous          Caring


WORKSHEET 3.3. What Is the Thought–Behavior Connection?

On a daily basis, we all have "automatic thoughts" that influence our behavior. These are the words and images that pop into our heads throughout the day. For example, imagine that you are at a family reunion. The food has just been laid out, and some family members go over to the buffet tables to fill their plates, while others remain seated and talking. You have been talking with your cousin for 10 minutes. Consider each of the following thoughts and write what behavior you would probably do if you had this thought.

| Thought | Behavior |
|---|---|
| If I don't go now, they'll run out of food. | _____ |
| It's rude to rush to the buffet tables when we're in the middle of a conversation. | _____ |
| My grandfather looks too unsteady to carry a plate. | _____ |
| My cousin and I are having such a wonderful conversation – I've never met anyone so interesting. | _____ |

Section 3 Summary

- Thoughts help define the moods we experience.
- Thoughts influence how we behave and what we choose to do and not to do.
- Thoughts and beliefs affect our physical responses.
- Life experiences (environment) help determine the attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts that develop in childhood and often persist into adulthood.
- Mind Over Mood helps you look at all the information available; it is not simply positive thinking.
- While changes in thinking are often central, mood improvement may also require changes in behavior, physical reactions, and home or work situations/ environments.

Greenberger PhD, Dennis; Christine A. Padesky PhD. Mind Over Mood, Second Edition (Page 24). The Guilford Press. Kindle Edition.

**Section 4 - Identifying and Rating Moods**

### Mood List

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Depressed | Anxious | Angry | Guilty | Ashamed |
| Sad | Embarrassed | Excited | Frightened | Irritated |
| Insecure | Proud | Mad | Panic | Frustrated |
| Nervous | Disgusted | Hurt | Cheerful | Disappointed |
| Enraged | Scared | Happy | Loving | Humiliated |
| Grief | Eager | Afraid | Content | Grateful |
| Other moods: | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

It is also important to distinguish moods and thoughts from behaviors and from situational factors (aspects of the environment). Behaviors and situational factors can often be identified by answering the following questions:

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

**REMINDERS**  • Situations and behaviors can be described by asking yourself:

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

- Moods can be described by one word.

- Thoughts are the words, images, and memories that go through your mind.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

EXERCISE: **Identifying Moods**

One step in learning to feel better is to learn to identify different parts of your experiences – situations, behaviors, moods, physical reactions, and thoughts. Worksheet 4.1 is designed to help you learn to separate your moods from the situations you are in. In order to complete this worksheet, focus on specific situations in which you had a strong mood.

WORKSHEET 4.1. **Identifying Moods**

Describe a recent situation in which you had a strong mood. Next, identify what moods you had during or immediately after being in that situation. Do this for five different situations.

1. Situation:_____

    Moods: _____

2. Situation: _____

    Moods: _____

3. Situation:_____

    Moods: _____

4. Situation:_____

    Moods _____

5. Situation:_____

    Moods: _____

One of Vic's responses on Worksheet 4.1 looked like this:

Situation: *I'm alone, driving in my car, on the way to work at 7:45 AM.*

Moods: *Frightened, anxious, insecure.*

As this example illustrates, knowing the situation does not always help us understand why someone felt a particular emotion. The presence of strong moods is our first clue that something important is happening. Later chapters teach you why Vic – and you – experienced the particular moods described on Worksheet 4.1.
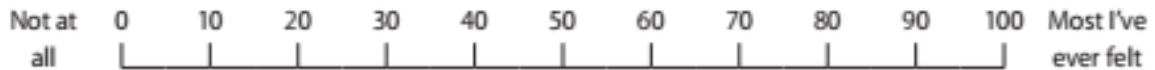
Please read the instructions on the following page before completing this worksheet!

EXERCISE: **Rating Moods**

On Worksheet 4.2, practice rating the intensity of your moods. On the blank lines, copy the situations and moods you identified on Worksheet 4.1. For each situation, rate one of the moods you identified on the scales provided. Mark the mood you rated.

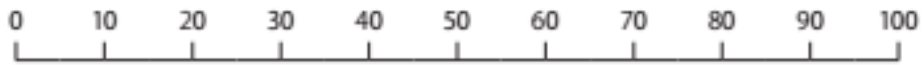WORKSHEET 4.2. **Identifying and Rating Moods**
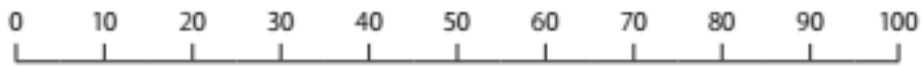
1. Situation:_____

   Moods: _____

   Not at    0      10     20     30     40     50     60     70     80     90    100    Most I've
   all       |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|    ever felt

2. Situation:_____

   Moods: _____

           0      10     20     30     40     50     60     70     80     90    100
           |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|

3. Situation:_____

   Moods: _____

           0      10     20     30     40     50     60     70     80     90    100
           |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|

4. Situation:_____

   Moods: _____

           0      10     20     30     40     50     60     70     80     90    100
           |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|

5. Situation:_____

   Moods: _____

           0      10     20     30     40     50     60     70     80     90    100
           |_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|_____|

Please read the instructions on the following page before completing this worksheet!

Instructions on how to rate moods:

| 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 | 40 | 50 | 60 | 70 | 80 | 90 | 100 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|

Not at all      A little      Medium      A lot      Most I've ever felt
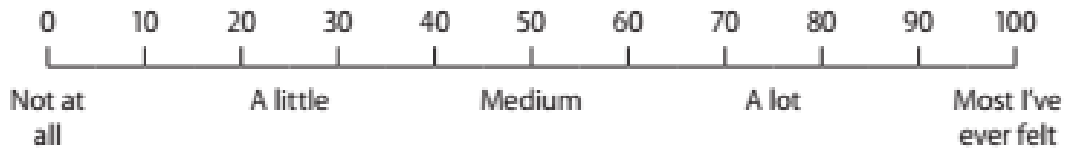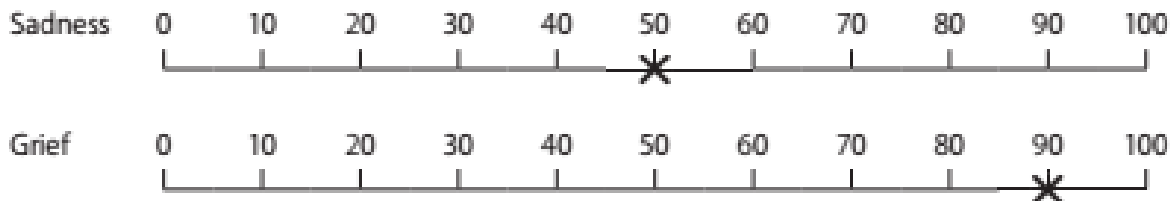
The therapist then asked Vic to use this scale to rate the moods he listed on Worksheet 4.1. For the lunch invitation, Vic's ratings looked like this:

Situation: *I received a phone call from Max asking me to lunch.*

Moods: *Sadness, grief.*

Sadness   0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90   100
                                               ✷

Grief   0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80   90   100
                                                   ✷

These ratings indicate that Vic experienced a high level of grief (90) and a medium level of sadness (50) while on the phone with Max.

Section 4 Summary

- Strong moods signal that something important is happening in your life.
- Moods can usually be described in one word.
- Identifying specific moods helps you set goals and track progress.
- It is important to identify the moods you have in particular situations (Worksheet 4.1).
- Rating your moods (Worksheet 4.2) allows you to evaluate their strength, track your progress, and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies you are learning.

**Section 5 - Setting Personal Goals and Noticing Improvement**

EXERCISE:  **Setting Goals**

Write on the lines in Worksheet 5.1 two changes in your moods or life you hope will result from learning the skills in this book. Each goal you write should be something that you can observe or measure (such as a mood or behavior change). If you have more than two goals, either fit them on the lines below or write them on another piece of paper.

WORKSHEET 5.1.  **Setting Goals**

1. _____

_____

_____


2. _____

_____

_____

**WORKSHEET 5.2.   Advantages and Disadvantages of Reaching and Not Reaching My Goals**

Goal 1: _____

|  | Reaching This Goal | Not Reaching This Goal |
|---|---|---|
| Advantages | | |
| Disadvantages | | |

Goal 2: _____

|  | Reaching This Goal | Not Reaching This Goal |
|---|---|---|
| Advantages | | |
| Disadvantages | | |

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Did you find that there are both advantages and disadvantages of reaching or not reaching your goals? Are the advantages of reaching your goals and the disadvantages of not reaching your goals big enough that you feel motivated to learn and practice skills to help you reach your goals?

EXERCISE: **Signs of Improvement**

In addition to rating your mood, it is helpful to actively look for and notice signs of improvement. What do you expect might be different as you begin to improve? Indicate on Worksheet 5.4 what you might notice as you begin to make changes and improve.

---

WORKSHEET 5.4. **Signs of Improvement**

Check any of the following that would be early signs of improvement:

- ☐ Sleep better.
- ☐ Talk with people more.
- ☐ Feel more relaxed.
- ☐ Smile more often.
- ☐ Get my work done.
- ☐ Wake up and get out of bed at a regular time.
- ☐ Do activities I currently avoid.
- ☐ Handle disagreements better.
- ☐ Lose my temper less often.
- ☐ Other people tell me I seem better.
- ☐ Feel more confident.
- ☐ Stand up for myself.
- ☐ See hope for the future.
- ☐ Enjoy each day more.
- ☐ Feel appreciation and gratitude.
- ☐ See improvement in relationships.

In addition to what you checked above, write two or three other signs that you could look for to know you are beginning to improve and getting closer to reaching your goals:

_____

_____

_____

Section 5 Summary

- Setting personal goals for mood or behavior change helps you know where you are headed and can help you track your progress.
- People often have mixed feelings about making changes, because there are usually advantages and disadvantages in doing so. Keeping your reasons for change in mind can help you stay motivated.
- Supportive people in your life, as well as your personal qualities, past experiences, values, strengths, and motivation to learn new skills, can all offer hope that you will reach your goals.
- It is important to pay attention and notice the early signs of improvement you have checked on Worksheet 5.4, because positive changes often start small and grow bigger over time.

Greenberger PhD, Dennis; Christine A. Padesky PhD. Mind Over Mood, Second Edition (Page 38). The Guilford Press. Kindle Edition.

**Section 6 - Situations, Moods, and Thoughts**

WORKSHEET 6.0. Thought Record (continued on next page)

**THOUGHT**

| 1. Situation | 2. Moods | 3. Automatic Thoughts (Images) |
|---|---|---|
| Who?<br>What?<br>When?<br>Where? | a. What did you feel?<br>b. Rate each mood (0–100%). | a. What was going through your mind just before you started to feel this way? Any other thoughts? Images?<br>b. Circle or mark the hot thought. |
| | | |

**FIGURE 6.1.** Sample Thought Record. Copyright 1983 by Christine A. Padesky.

## RECORD

| 4. Evidence That Supports the Hot Thought | 5. Evidence That Does Not Support the Hot Thought | 6. Alternative/Balanced Thoughts<br><br>a. Write an alternative or balanced thought.<br><br>b. Rate how much you believe each thought (0–100%). | 7. Rate Moods Now<br><br>Rerate column 2 moods and any new moods (0–100%). |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

Greenberger PhD, Dennis; Christine A. Padesky PhD. Mind Over Mood, Second Edition (Page 40-41). The Guilford Press. Kindle Edition.

**THOUGHT**

| 1. Situation | 2. Moods | 3. Automatic Thoughts (Images) |
|---|---|---|
| Who?<br>What?<br>When?<br>Where? | a. What did you feel?<br>b. Rate each mood<br>(0–100%). | a. What was going through your mind just before you started to feel this way? Any other thoughts? Images?<br>b. Circle or mark the hot thought. |
| Tuesday 9:30 A.M.<br><br>In my therapist's office, looking at the Thought Record. | Overwhelmed 95%<br><br>Depressed 85% | This is too complicated for me to learn.<br><br>I'll never understand this.<br><br>Image/memory: Taking a report card home with bad grades and being yelled at by my parents.<br><br>I'll never get better.<br><br>Nothing can help me.<br><br>This therapy won't work.<br><br>I'm doomed to always be depressed. |

**FIGURE 6.2.** Marissa's first Thought Record.

## RECORD

| 4. Evidence That Supports the Hot Thought | 5. Evidence That Does Not Support the Hot Thought | 6. Alternative/Balanced Thoughts<br><br>a. Write an alternative or balanced thought.<br>b. Rate how much you believe each thought (0–100%). | 7. Rate Moods Now<br>Rerate column 2 moods and any new moods (0–100%). |
|---|---|---|---|
| I look at this Thought Record and I don't know what to do.<br><br>I never was very good in school.<br><br>I don't know what you mean by "evidence." | At work, I learned the computer filing system, which is complicated.<br><br>Some of the early worksheets seemed hard until my therapist helped me do them a few times – then they seemed easier.<br><br>My therapist said I need to know how to do only the first two columns now.<br><br>I can get help from my therapist until I know how to do it on my own. | Even though this seems complicated now, I've learned other complicated things in the past. 90%<br><br>My therapist will help show me how to do this. 60%<br><br>With practice, it might make sense and get easier. 70% | Overwhelmed 40%<br><br>Depressed 80% |

How to fill in the first three columns of the Thought Record:

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

REMINDERS
- In the "Situation" column of the Thought Record (column 1), write down the answers to these questions: Who? What? When? Where?
- Moods are identified in one word and rated for intensity on a 0–100% scale (column 2).
- Physical reactions can be described and rated at the bottom of the "Moods" column (column 2). This is especially helpful for people with anxiety, anger, or health concerns.
- The "Automatic Thoughts (Images)" column (column 3) describes thoughts, beliefs, images, memories, and meanings attached to the situations.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

EXERCISE:  **Distinguishing Situations, Moods, and Thoughts**

Worksheet 6.1 is an exercise to help you identify and pull apart the different aspects of your experience. Write on the line at the right whether the item in the left column is a thought, mood, or situation. The first three items have been completed as examples.

**WORKSHEET 6.1.   Distinguishing Situations, Moods, and Thoughts**

|  | Situation, mood, or thought? |
|---|---|
| 1. Nervous. | Mood |
| 2. At home. | Situation |
| 3. I'm not going to be able to do this. | Thought |
| 4. Sad. | |
| 5. Talking to a friend on the phone. | |
| 6. Irritated. | |
| 7. Driving in my car. | |
| 8. I'm always going to feel this way. | |
| 9. At work. | |
| 10. I'm going crazy. | |
| 11. Angry. | |
| 12. I'm no good. | |
| 13. 4:00 P.M. | |
| 14. Something terrible is going to happen. | |
| 15. Nothing ever goes right. | |
| 16. Discouraged. | |
| 17. I'll never get over this. | |
| 18. Sitting in a restaurant. | |
| 19. I'm out of control. | |
| 20. I'm a failure. | |
| 21. Talking to my mom. | |
| 22. She's being inconsiderate. | |
| 23. Depressed. | |
| 24. I'm a loser. | |

**WORKSHEET 6.1** *(continued from previous page)*

|  | Situation, mood, or thought? |
|---|---|
| 25. Guilty. |  |
| 26. At my son's house. |  |
| 27. I'm having a heart attack. |  |
| 28. I've been taken advantage of. |  |
| 29. Lying in bed trying to go to sleep. |  |
| 30. This isn't going to work out. |  |
| 31. Shame. |  |
| 32. I'm going to lose everything I've got. |  |
| 33. Panic. |  |

Following are answers to Worksheet 6.1. Review the pertinent sections of this chapter to clarify any differences between your answers and the ones given.

1. Nervous .......................................................................... Mood

2. At home .......................................................................... Situation

3. I'm not going to be able to do this.................................. Thought

4. Sad ................................................................................ Mood

5. Talking to a friend on the phone ..................................... Situation

6. Irritated.......................................................................... Mood

7. Driving in my car ............................................................ Situation

8. I'm always going to feel this way ..................................... Thought

9. At work........................................................................... Situation

10. I'm going crazy .............................................................. Thought

11. Angry ............................................................................ Mood

12. I'm no good ................................................................... Thought

13. 4:00 P.M. ...................................................................... Situation

14. Something terrible is going to happen............................ Thought

15. Nothing ever goes right ................................................. Thought

16. Discouraged .................................................................. Mood

17. I'll never get over this..................................................... Thought

18. Sitting in a restaurant ........................................................ Situation

19. I'm out of control .............................................................. Thought

20. I'm a failure ...................................................................... Thought

21. Talking to my mom ............................................................ Situation

22. She's being inconsiderate .................................................. Thought

23. Depressed ........................................................................ Mood

24. I'm a loser........................................................................ Thought

25. Guilty ............................................................................... Mood

26. At my son's house .............................................................. Situation

27. I'm having a heart attack ................................................... Thought

28. I've been taken advantage of............................................. Thought

29. Lying in bed trying to go to sleep ...................................... Situation

30. This isn't going to work out .............................................. Thought

31. Shame .............................................................................. Mood

32. I'm going to lose everything I've got ................................. Thought

33. Panic ................................................................................ Mood

Section 6 Summary

- Thought Records help develop a set of skills that can improve your moods and relationships and lead to positive changes in your life.
- The first three columns of a Thought Record distinguish a situation from the moods, physical reactions, and thoughts you had in the situation.
- The Thought Record is a tool that can help you develop new ways of thinking in order to feel better.
- As is true whenever you develop a new skill, you will need to practice using the Thought Record until it becomes a reliable tool to help you feel better.

Greenberger PhD, Dennis; Christine A. Padesky PhD. Mind Over Mood, Second Edition (Page 49). The Guilford Press. Kindle Edition.

**Section 7 - Automatic Thoughts (Stinking Thinking)**

*Marissa was working at her desk when her supervisor came in to say hello. While they were talking, her supervisor said, "By the way, I want to compliment you on the nice report you wrote yesterday." As soon as her supervisor said this, Marissa became nervous and scared. She couldn't shake this mood the rest of the morning.*

*Vic was putting the dishes on the counter after dinner when his wife said, "I took the car in to get the oil changed today." With irritation, Vic said, "I told you I was going to change the oil on Saturday." His wife replied, "Well, you've been saying you'd take care of it for two weeks, so I just took care of it myself." "Fine!" yelled Vic, throwing a dish towel across the room. "Why don't you just get yourself another husband!" He grabbed his coat and slammed the door as he left the house.*

As you begin keeping track of your moods, you will notice times when you, like Marissa, experience a mood that doesn't seem to fit the situation. Most people don't feel anxious after getting a compliment. At other times, you will have a quick, strong reaction like Vic's. An outsider looking on this scene might think that Vic was overreacting in this situation, and yet his reaction might have seemed to be just the right one to him.

How can we make sense of our moods? If we can identify the thoughts we are having, our moods usually make perfect sense. Think of thoughts as clues to understanding moods. For Marissa, we have the following puzzle:

| Situation | Clue: Thoughts | Mood |
|---|---|---|
| My supervisor compliments me | ??? | Nervous 80% Scared 90% |

How can this make sense? Marissa was confused about why she reacted this way until she talked to her therapist.

**Dialogue between Marissa and her therapist:**

*Therapist: What was scary about this situation?*

*Marissa: I don't know – just knowing the supervisor noticed my work, I guess.*

*Therapist: What's scary about that?*

*Marissa: Well, I don't always do a good job.*

*Therapist: So what might happen?*

*Marissa: Someday the supervisor will notice a mistake.*

*Therapist: And then what might happen?*

*Marissa: The supervisor will be mad at me.*

*Therapist: What's the worst that might happen then?*

*Marissa: I hadn't thought about it, but I – I guess I could get fired.*

*Therapist: That is a scary thought. And then what might happen?*

*Marissa: With a bad recommendation, I'd have trouble getting another job.*

*Therapist: So that helps explain why you felt scared. Can you summarize for me what you've figured out here?*

*Marissa: Maybe the compliment made me realize my supervisor is noticing my work. I know I make mistakes, so I worried about what might happen if my supervisor noticed one of these mistakes. I guess I jumped to the conclusion that I'd be fired and not be able to get another job. It sounds a little silly now.*

Notice how the thoughts uncovered by Marissa and her therapist provide the necessary clues to understand her emotional reaction.

| Situation | Clue: Thoughts | Mood |
|---|---|---|
| My supervisor compliments me | My supervisor is noticing my work. When my supervisor finds a mistake, I'll be fired, and won't be able to get another job. | Nervous 80% Scared 90% |

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See if you can guess what Vic's automatic thoughts might have been when he got so angry with his wife for changing the oil in the car.

| Situation | Clue: Thoughts | Mood |
|---|---|---|
| Judy changed oil in car. Judy says, "You've been saying you'd take care of it for two weeks, so I just took care of it myself." | | Angry 95% |

After Vic left the house, he realized that he was not upset that his wife had changed the oil in the car. In fact, his week had been very busy, and it was a big help that she had taken care of this chore. His anger was related to the thoughts he had about her changing the oil. He thought, "She's mad at me for not doing it. She doesn't appreciate how hard I'm trying to do everything. She is critical of me; she thinks I'm not good enough. No matter how hard I try, she's never happy with me."

These thoughts help us understand Vic's reactions. Thoughts like these are called "automatic thoughts," because they simply pop into our heads automatically throughout the day. We don't plan or intend to think a certain way. In fact, often we are not even aware of our automatic thoughts. One of the purposes of CBT is to bring automatic thoughts into awareness.

Awareness is the first step toward change and better problem solving. Once Vic was aware of his thoughts, a number of possibilities for change became available to him. If he decided that his thoughts were distorted or didn't work for him, he could work to change his understanding of the situation. On the other hand, if Vic concluded that his thoughts were accurate, he could talk directly to his wife to discuss his feelings and ask her to appreciate his efforts more.


How Do We Become Aware of Our Own Automatic Thoughts?

Since we are constantly thinking and imagining, we have automatic thoughts all the time. We daydream about friends or the weekend, or worry about getting errands done. These are all automatic thoughts. When we want to feel better, the automatic thoughts that are most important are the ones that help us understand our strong moods. These thoughts can be words ("I'll be fired"), images or mental pictures (Marissa might have "seen" herself as a homeless person sitting at a street corner), or memories (the memory of being hit on the hand with a ruler by her fifth-grade teacher when she made a mistake might have flashed through Marissa's mind).


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WORKSHEET 7.0. Automatic Thoughts

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**HELPFUL HINTS**   To identify automatic thoughts, notice what goes through your mind when you have a strong feeling or a strong reaction to something.

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To practice identifying automatic thoughts, write down what goes through your mind when you imagine yourself in the following situations.

1. **Situation:** You are at a shopping center and are going to buy a very special present for yourself. You saw it there a few weeks ago and have been saving your money to buy it. When you get to the store, the sales clerk tells you that they no longer carry that item.

   **Automatic thoughts:** _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. **Situation:** You cooked a dish for a neighborhood party. You are a bit nervous because you tried a new recipe. After 10 minutes, several people come up and say they think the food you made is delicious.

   **Automatic thoughts:** _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

**HELPFUL HINTS**

**Questions to Help Identify Automatic Thoughts**

- What was going through my mind just before I started to feel this way? (General)

- What images or memories do I have in this situation? (General)

- What does this mean about me? My life? My future? (Depression)

- What am I afraid might happen? (Anxiety)

- What is the worst that could happen? (Anxiety)

- What does this mean about how the other person(s) feel(s)/think(s) about me? (Anger, Shame)

- What does this mean about the other person(s) or people in general? (Anger)

- Did I break rules, hurt others, or not do something I should have done? What do I think about myself that I did this or believe I did this? (Guilt, Shame)

The four main moods:

**Depression**

For example, when we feel sad or depressed, we tend to be self-critical and have negative thoughts about our lives and futures, as described in Chapter 13. Therefore, if you are experiencing depression or similar moods, like sadness, discouragement, or disappointment, ask yourself, "What does this mean about me?" "What does this mean about my life?" "What does this mean about my future?" These questions help identify the negative automatic thoughts related to those moods.

**Anxiety**

Chapter 14 describes how, when we are anxious, we tend to imagine a series of "worstcase" events and outcomes: We overestimate danger and underestimate our ability to cope with things that go wrong. Sometimes anxious thoughts begin with "What if... ?" and end with a prediction of something terrible happening. When this occurs, in addition to writing down the "What if... ?" question, it is helpful to write down the answer you give to that question that makes you feel most anxious. For example, if you think, "What if I have a panic attack at the store?" you might write, "If I have a panic attack at the store, then I will collapse. I see an image of paramedics coming and carrying me away. Everyone is staring, and I'm so embarrassed." Therefore, when you feel anxious, scared, nervous, or similar moods, it is helpful to ask, "What am I afraid might happen? What is the worst that could happen?" When you are asking these questions, it can also be helpful to think about what you imagine your own worst responses might be to the situation (e.g., an image of losing control and running from the room screaming).

**Anger**

When we feel angry, resentful, or irritated, our thoughts are generally focused on other people and how they have harmed or hurt us. We may think (rightly or wrongly) that others are being unfair, unjust, disrespectful, or are mistreating us in some way. This is why the Helpful Hints on page 54 recommend asking yourself, "What does this mean about how the other person(s) feel(s)/think(s) about me?" and "What does this mean about the other person(s) or people in general?" Chapter 15 teaches more about the thoughts that commonly accompany anger.

**Guilt or Shame**

Guilt and shame usually are connected to thoughts about having done something wrong. Chapter 15 explains these moods in more detail. A variety of thoughts or behaviors may be associated with feeling guilty or ashamed. For example, you may have let someone down or believe that you have let the person down. You may have broken a rule or moral obligation that is important to you, or you may have had thoughts that violate what you value. Therefore, if your mood is guilt or shame, the Helpful Hints section on page 54 recommends that you ask yourself, "Did I break rules, hurt others, or not do something I should have done? What do I think about myself that I did this or believe I did this?" With shame, it also can be helpful to ask "What does this mean about how the other person(s) feel(s)/think(s) about me?" or "What might they think if they knew this about me?"

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EXERCISE: **Connecting Thoughts and Moods**

Worksheet 7.1 helps you make the connection between thoughts and specific moods as described on the previous pages. Of the five moods described (depression, anxiety, anger, guilt, shame), write on the line which mood you think is most likely to go with each thought. The first two have been completed as examples.

**WORKSHEET 7.1.  Connecting Thoughts and Moods**

|  | Depression? Anxiety? Anger? Guilt? Shame? |
|---|---|
| 1. I'm stupid and I'll never understand this. | Depression |
| 2. I'm going to lose my job because I'm so late. | Anxiety |
| 3. She is being so unfair. |  |
| 4. I shouldn't have been so hurtful. |  |
| 5. If people knew this about me, they wouldn't like me. |  |
| 6. When I give my speech, people will laugh at me. |  |
| 7. It's wrong for me to think about this. |  |
| 8. He's cheating and insulting me. |  |
| 9. There's no use in trying any more. |  |
| 10. If something goes wrong, I can't cope. |  |

Below are the answers to Worksheet 7.1.

1. I'm so stupid that I'll never understand this. ............................... Depression
2. I'm going to lose my job because I'm so late. ............................ Anxiety
3. She is being so unfair. ............................................................... Anger
4. I shouldn't have been so hurtful. ............................................ Guilt
5. If people knew this about me, they wouldn't like me. ............... Shame
6. When I give my speech, people will laugh at me. ...................... Anxiety
7. It's wrong for me to think about this. ....................................... Guilt
8. He's cheating and insulting me. ............................................... Anger
9. There's no use in trying any more. ........................................... Depression
10. If something goes wrong, I can't cope. .................................... Anxiety

EXERCISE:  **Separating Situations, Moods, and Thoughts**

Think of a time today or yesterday when you had a particularly strong mood, such as depression, anger, anxiety, guilt, or shame. If there is a particular mood you are working on as you use this book, choose a situation in which you felt that mood. Write about this experience on Worksheet 7.2, describing the situation, your moods, and your thoughts in as much detail as you can remember. This exercise is designed to help you define, separate, and understand the different parts of your experience – an important step in learning to manage your moods.

WORKSHEET 7.2.  **Separating Situations, Moods, and Thoughts**

| 1. Situation | 2. Moods | 3. Automatic Thoughts (Images) |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | **Answer the first two general questions, and then some or all of the questions specific to one of the moods you identified.** |
| | | What was going through my mind just before I started to feel this way? (General) |
| | | What images or memories do I have in this situation? (General) |
| | | What does this mean about me? My life? My future? (Depression) |
| | | What am I afraid might happen? (Anxiety) |
| | | What is the worst that could happen? (Anxiety) |
| | | What does this mean about how the other person(s) feel(s)/think(s) about me? (Anger, Shame) |
| Who were you with? | Describe each mood in one word. | What does this mean about the other person(s) or people in general? (Anger) |
| What were you doing? When was it? Where were you? | Rate intensity of mood (0–100%). | Did I break rules, hurt others, or not do something I should have done? What do I think about myself that I did this or believe I did this? (Guilt, Shame) |

Section 7 Summary

- Automatic thoughts are thoughts that come into our minds spontaneously throughout the day.
- Whenever we have strong moods, there are also automatic thoughts present that provide clues to understanding our emotional reactions.
- Automatic thoughts can be words, images, or memories.
- To identify automatic thoughts, notice what goes through your mind when you have a strong mood.
- Specific types of thoughts are linked to each mood. This chapter suggests questions you can ask to identify these mood-specific thoughts.
- Hot thoughts are automatic thoughts that carry the strongest emotional charge. These are usually the most valuable thoughts to test on a Thought Record.

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I hope you enjoyed this section of the course. It was only an introduction to the world of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy but if you decide to further pursue CBT I would highly recommend joining a support group. There are also many more interesting reads and exercises in the Mind over Mood book but you'll find it all works much better in a group environment led by a trained health professional. Keep your mind happy and fit…and stay psyched for learning!