

Catch it, Check it, CHANGE IT

Can we change the way we think and behave to be more helpful and healthy, while also acknowledging our difficulties and challenges? This is all possible using a simple tool called *Catch it, Check it, Change it*.

Breaking a downward spiral

When we notice something negative happening, or even when we think about something going wrong, it triggers an emotion. The emotion might be frustration, anger or sadness and will lead to a behaviour. Depending on the emotion, we might lash out, berate others or withdraw. These behaviours are often unhelpful and can drive our thinking into a downward spiral where negative thoughts, emotions and behaviours reinforce each other.

One way to break the cycle is by noticing the unhelpful thought and applying *Catch it, Check it, Change it*.

Catch it

When you get upset about a situation imagine standing outside yourself and hitting the pause button. Take a deep breath then see if you can catch your thought. Name the emotions you are experiencing, and notice any impulses to behave in a certain way.

Check it

Then examine the thought and decide if there is a more helpful interpretation without denying the reality of the situation. Try to be curious about what you are thinking, rather than assuming you have all the facts. We often decide that the thought we're having is the one and only reality, whereas almost always there are a number of interpretations about what's happening, or what someone meant by what they said. Helpful questions to ask yourself are – Is this thought true? Is it helping me with my goal or the problem I am trying to solve? Is it worth it in terms of how it is making me feel or behave?

Change it

Once you have checked the thought and decided it is not helpful then change the thought. Healthier thoughts will lead to easier emotions and calmer behaviours, which will help you problem solve better. If you do discover that the situation is the worst possible scenario, at least you have given yourself breathing space to think more clearly.

Applying the above technique helps us get better at understanding how our thoughts affect our emotions and behaviours and will ensure we are less prone to depression, anxiety and angry outbursts. It's also good for our performance and productivity.

Worksheet to practise using **catch it, check it, change it** to generate more helpful thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

Catch it

When a situation occurs that upsets you, pause very briefly to notice the upset. Notice what you are thinking and how you are feeling, name the emotion if possible.

Check it

Examine what you are thinking – Is the thought true? Is it a helpful thought for

the situation you are in or for what you want to achieve?

Change it

If the thought is unhelpful or not true, change the thought. Come up with alternative ways of thinking about the situation to replace the unhelpful thought.

Information adapted from: Getselfhelp.co.uk, bbc.co.uk/health

Choose a situation and create alternative thoughts

Situation	Catch it	Check it	Change it
Write down something that happened that made you feel negative and/or stressed.	<p>What feeling does this bring up? Name the emotion if you can.</p> <p>What are you thinking about the situation that is creating those feelings / emotions?</p>	<p>Are your thoughts about the situation true? Yes / No / Maybe.</p> <p>How might these thoughts make you act?</p> <p>Will that be helpful for what you are trying to achieve? Yes / No</p>	<p>Generate some alternative thoughts.</p> <p>Notice the more helpful emotions from the alternative thoughts.</p>

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