

INTRODUCTION:

This technique can help you cut down on unhelpful thinking. By focusing more on the facts of the situation as they are (often referred to as being mindful), you can reduce unnecessary distress and approach decision-making from a clearer, calmer state.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Level 1: Describe the situation/context/trigger. Then, write down all the thoughts that went through your mind and everything you said to yourself. You can dig a little deeper into some of the subconscious thoughts by asking yourself questions like “What does this mean to me, about me, or for me?” or “What’s bad about that?”

Then, go through and **cross out any Fictions, leaving Just The Facts**. See the next page for a description of both.

Level 2: Make your mind do some work to become more flexible! Start by writing the situation and Just The Facts. Then, come up with two alternative ways to spin those facts. It doesn't matter if these alternatives are helpful or accurate. It's just important to make your mind do the work of coming up with alternatives because this process will unlock rigid thinking and promote creative problem-solving.

Finally, come up with one additional alternative. This one needs to be realistic and helpful, meaning that is believable to you. This version should also be one that, if you knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that it was absolutely true, would help you feel more confident or take more effective action. This version is the one you act on.

Answer the wrap-up questions before moving on.

FACTS

- Things you can know:
 - for sure
 - right now
 - through your five senses
 - see
 - hear
 - smell
 - taste
 - touch

NARRATIVES

- Things created by your mind:
 - predictions
 - assumptions
 - expectations
 - interpretations
 - judgments
 - meanings



CONTROLLING THE NARRATIVE

LEVEL 1

Situation/context/trigger:

Thoughts/what went through your mind:

Now, go through and cross out all of the fictions so that you are left with JUST THE FACTS.

Do JUST THE FACTS seem more helpful?



CONTROLLING THE NARRATIVE

LEVEL 2

Situation & Just the Facts:

Alternative 1:

Alternative 2:

Alternative 3: Realistic and Helpful Version You Wish Were True

Which narrative do you want to hold on to?

What action steps can you take that are in line with that version? What experiments can you run to test out whether it is true? How can you tap into curiosity and openness to help?

LEVEL 1

Situation/context/trigger:

I just got a memo about new policy going into effect next month.

Thoughts/what went through your mind:

What is this? Jeez. A new policy? My team isn't going to like this. Why do I have to be the messenger here? They're going to be upset, and I'm going to have to make it all ok. It's dumb, and I don't want to do this.

Now, go through and cross out all of the narratives so that you are left with JUST THE FACTS.

Do JUST THE FACTS seem more helpful?

LEVEL 1

Situation/context/trigger:

I just got a memo about new policy going into effect next month.

Thoughts/what went through your mind:

What is this? Jeez. A new policy? My team isn't going to like this. Why do I have to be the messenger here? They're going to be upset, and I'm going to have to make it all ok. It's dumb, and I don't want to do this.

Now, go through and cross out all of the narratives so that you are left with JUST THE FACTS.

Do JUST THE FACTS seem more helpful?

Situation & Just the Facts

I just got a memo about new policy going into effect next month.

Alternative 1:

Yay! A new policy! This is exactly what I was hoping for. My team is going to love this, and I am looking forward to communicating this news to them and making sure implementation goes smoothly!

Alternative 2:

What is this? Another new policy? What idiot decided on this? They're ruining the company. I better dust off the resume and get ready to start looking for a new position somewhere else.

Alternative 3: Realistic and Helpful Version You Wish Were True

What is this? A new policy? I wonder what led to this? Let me take a minute to read it over and think it through. I may not fully understand why we're doing this, but I know that our leadership really does want what's best for the company. I'm sure they had a strong reason for this and that, once I and my team get used to it, we'll be glad for the change.

Which narrative do you want to hold on to?

The last one for sure. It's the way I want to feel and think about my company, and it will help me be open and flexible in the face of change.

What action steps can you take that are in line with that version? What experiments can you run to test out whether it is true? How can you tap into curiosity and openness to help?

I can ask leadership to help me understand the rationale for the new policy and what we're hoping to accomplish with it. I can frame it to my team as a way that we are trying to be more effective in our efforts and tie the change back to our team and company values. I can keep an open mind and see what happens in a few months. That way, I can collect some data about how this change actually affects us rather than just jumping to conclusions.