

## Making Connections

### Thoughts and Feelings

Thoughts and feelings go together. Although it maybe easier to notice one more than the other, you cannot have one without the other. In this section, you are going to read about thoughts and feelings, the way they are connected, and the way they are different.

Thoughts are the things that go through your mind when you feel sad, mad, scared, and even happy. Have you ever seen a cartoon? Do you notice the things in the bubble over the characters' heads when they do something or feel an emotion? Well, thoughts are the things in the bubble. There are many different thoughts, and people may say many different things to themselves.

An important skill you can learn is identifying or capturing the thoughts that add to unpleasant feelings. Thoughts are very difficult to catch because they are **automatic**. You are not immediately aware of every breath you take, yet you go on breathing. However, if you direct your attention to notice each breath, you become more aware and able to identify each breath.

The goal of this section is to teach you to become more **aware** of the things that go through your mind when you have painful feelings. *When you learn to capture your automatic thoughts, you can become more in charge of them.*

In order to capture your thoughts, you need to ask yourself some questions that interrupt the familiar pattern. *It is especially helpful to ask yourself these questions whenever you have strong feelings.* When your feelings change, this is a **signal** or **cue** that your thoughts have also shifted.

The following are three questions that may be helpful in catching your thoughts:

1. What is going through my mind right now?
2. What popped into my head just then?
3. What am I saying to myself right now?

Let's see how automatic thoughts and strong feelings are connected. Suppose you get a blurry picture filled with static on your TV set. Different people are likely to have different interpretations and feelings about the bad picture.

The following is an example of automatic thoughts related to the situation:

*Situation:* Static and blurry picture on the television.

## Differences Between Thoughts And Feelings

Although thoughts and feelings are connected, they are very different things. Listed below are a few ways to help you tell the difference.

1. **Thoughts** are the things that go through your mind. They usually take the form of *sentences or phrases*.  
Nobody likes me.  
I am a failure.  
My future is bleak.
2. **Feelings** are your emotions. They are usually communicated in *one word*.  
Mad  
Sad  
Scared  
Worried
3. **Feelings** are typically *objective descriptions*, while **thoughts** are *subjective judgments or evaluations*.
4. **Feelings**, since they are descriptions, are *never open to question or challenges*. **Thoughts**, since they are evaluations or judgments, are open to question because their accuracy is debatable.
5. **Feelings** are typically *associated with bodily or physical sensations*. For example, when you are feeling angry, your fists may become tight, your pulse rate may increase, and so on.

## Thoughts And Feelings Worksheet

1. When my mother yells at me, I feel...  
and I think...
2. When I don't do well in school, I feel...  
and I think...
3. When the person I've been seeing starts dating someone else, I feel...  
and I think...
4. When my parents give me a curfew, I feel...  
and I think...
5. When somebody gets too close to me, I feel...  
and I think...
6. When my friends try to talk me into something I know is wrong, I feel...  
, and I think...
7. When my parents fight, I feel...  
and I think...
8. When I receive a compliment for something I did, I feel...  
and I think...
9. When I...  
I feel happy, and I think...
10. When I...  
I feel angry, and I think...
11. When someone makes fun of me, I feel...  
and I think...
12. When someone I don't know starts to bug me, I feel...  
and I think...
13. When someone challenges me to a fight, I feel...  
and I think...