

Question Your Thoughts

learn your ABCs

It is our interpretation about events, rather than the events themselves, that cause us to feel and behave the way we do. The first step to having more helpful thoughts is to identify what you are thinking right now. To better understand this, practice your ABCs.

A = Activator (what happens prior to your reaction – the event itself)
B = Belief (automatic thoughts about the event)
C = Consequences (emotional, physical and behavioral reactions to the event)

Here is an example. A previous client named Roger experienced an accident that resulted in the amputation of both of his arms in order to save his life. Let's look at his beliefs, as opposed to how others might react towards this shocking event.

	Activator	Belief	Consequences
Roger's reaction	Both arms amputated	"Despite the challenges, I know there's a positive reason for this accident."	Feelings of hope and motivation; active participation in physical rehabilitation
How others might have reacted		"My life's over. I can't do anything without my arms."	Feelings of despair; staying in bed and refusing to do physical therapy

Now you try. Think about a time when you were not as happy as you wanted to be. Determine how your beliefs about the situation affected how you felt and what you did:

Activating event	
Beliefs	
Consequences: emotions, physical sensations & behaviors	