

## **Disputing exaggerated, unrealistic thoughts**

Some useful leads to help challenge irrational beliefs:

1. "What evidence do I have for this thought?" "Is there an alternative way of looking at the situation?"
2. "How would someone else think about the situation?"
3. "Are my judgements based on how I felt rather than what I did?" (Feelings are not facts!)
4. "Am I setting myself an unrealistic or unobtainable standard? "
5. "Am I forgetting relevant facts or over-focusing on irrelevant facts?"
6. "Am I thinking in all-or-nothing terms?"
7. "Am I over-estimating how responsible I am for the way things work out?"  
"Am I over-estimating how much control I have over how things work out?"
8. "What if it happens?" "What would be so bad about that?"
9. "How will things be in X days/months/years time?"
10. "Am I over-estimating how likely an event is?"
11. "Am I underestimating what I can do to deal with the problem/situation?"
12. "Am I thinking in absolutes ... 'should', 'must', 'ought', 'always', 'never' ?

## Daily Stress and Tension Log Example

Ratings 1 = very relaxed  
10 = very distressed

Date & time	Description of situation	Initial stress rating	Stress-producing Thoughts	Rational Evaluations / Alternative Thoughts	Final stress rating	Other responses
Monday p.m.	Deadline pressure for report to be finished by 4 p.m.	6	My colleagues will be furious at me if it is not ready. I will lose face with my boss and workmates.	If I continue to upset myself like this it won't help me get the report done by 4. If I work steadily and calmly it will probably be done. Even if it is not done, I can discuss the situation with my boss. I'm not going to lose my job over this.	3	Felt calmer, more relaxed but keyed up enough to work efficiently.

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