

Thoughts Are Not Facts

Notice the weather, remember the sky

Your mind produces a steady stream of thoughts, and some of them arrive feeling completely true. Learning to notice a thought as a thought, rather than a verdict, gives you room to choose how to respond.



You are the sky. Thoughts are the weather.

Some thoughts are light, some dark and heavy, and some fill the whole view for a while. But weather passes, and never becomes the sky. This ACT metaphor describes seeing thoughts as passing events, not truths about you.

What Happened, and What the Mind Added

FACT

Could be recorded; anyone present would agree.

My friend hasn't replied for a day.

I made an error in the report.

My heart is racing before the meeting.

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THOUGHT

A prediction, judgement or label the mind adds.

"She's annoyed with me."

"I'm hopeless at this job."

"I'm going to fall apart in there."

Four Gentle Steps For when a thought hooks you

1

Notice

Catch the thought as it arrives, like a cloud entering view.

"I'm having the thought that..."

2

Name the feeling

Feelings are real signals, even when the thought isn't accurate.

"Anxious, about 70 out of 100."

3

Check it

What do I know for sure? What might the thought have left out?

"This is hard, and I've coped with hard before."

4

Choose

Decide how much weight to give it, and take one step toward what matters.

"I'll send the email and see."

A thought that's been visiting me

A fuller, kinder view of the facts

You can't always choose which thoughts arrive. You can choose how tightly you hold them.