Catching the thought

Session 1 of 4 in a Thought Record group. A thought record, adapted from the Thought Record.

NAME _____ DATE _____

The same situation can feel very different depending on what goes through your mind. If a friend doesn't text back, "She's busy" and "She's tired of me" lead to very different feelings. Most of the time those thoughts go by too fast to notice, and they feel like facts.

A thought record slows the moment down. You write what happened, how you felt, and what went through your mind, then look at the thought most tied to the feeling and weigh the evidence. The goal isn't positive thinking. It's a thought that fits the facts better, one you can actually believe.

How it works

1. **Work one through together.** The group takes a made-up situation as far as the hot thought.
2. **Catch one of your own.** A recent moment, how you felt, what went through your mind, and the hot thought.
3. **Notice this week.** Catch a few more moments when your mood shifted.

Before you start

- Pick a moment that matters but isn't the hardest thing you're facing. A middle-sized feeling is the best place to start.
- Nobody has to see your page. If you talk in the group, you can talk about what this was like without saying what the thought was.
- There's no wrong answer. The page is for you.

An example

THE SITUATION	Texted a friend Saturday morning about getting coffee. By evening, no reply.
FEELINGS	Hurt 70, anxious 50
THE HOT THOUGHT	"She's tired of me." Believed 80.
EVIDENCE FOR	She took a day to answer last time too. We haven't seen each other in a month.
EVIDENCE AGAINST	She asked to get together two weeks ago. She works Saturdays. She's never said anything like that.
A BALANCED THOUGHT	"She's probably busy, and I've missed her, which is why this stings." Believed 70. Hurt now 35.

For education and reflection. Not a substitute for professional care.
Free to copy for personal, clinical, and educational use. © 2026 Everyday Insight LLC · mythoughtrecord.com

1 A made-up situation

Weeks ago, Marcus told his friend Dev he'd come to Dev's birthday dinner. Of the eight people going, he only knew Dev well. At the last dinner like this, two people needed reminding of his name, and he left early. Before that, though, Dev's roommate Sam had talked with him for twenty minutes about a show they both liked. The day of the dinner, his manager pointed out a mistake he'd made, and work ran late. At 5:30, in his car outside the office, he pictured himself at the end of the table with nothing to say while everyone laughed at stories he wasn't part of. He texted Dev that he wasn't feeling well and drove home. That night Dev wrote back, "Feel better! We missed you. Sam asked if you were coming. Lunch next week?" Dev had also made the plans the last three times they got together.

THE SITUATION, JUST WHAT A CAMERA WOULD HAVE CAUGHT

HOW MARCUS MIGHT HAVE FELT

THOUGHTS MARCUS MIGHT HAVE HAD

THE HOT THOUGHT, THE ONE MOST TIED TO HOW HE FELT

2 One of your own

Pick a recent moment when your mood shifted. Stick to what a camera would have caught.

THE SITUATION

FEELINGS, ONE WORD EACH, AND HOW STRONG EACH WAS, 0 TO 100

THOUGHTS AND IMAGES THAT WENT THROUGH MY MIND

THE HOT THOUGHT, THE ONE MOST TIED TO THE STRONGEST FEELING

HOW MUCH I BELIEVE IT, 0 TO 100 _____

For education and reflection. Not a substitute for professional care.
Free to copy for personal, clinical, and educational use. © 2026 Everyday Insight LLC · mythoughtrecord.com

3 This week

Before the next session, write down a few moments when your mood shifted, how strong the feeling was, and what went through your mind. You don't have to change anything yet.

THE SITUATION	FEELING, 0 TO 100	WHAT WENT THROUGH MY MIND

For education and reflection. Not a substitute for professional care.
Free to copy for personal, clinical, and educational use. © 2026 Everyday Insight LLC · mythoughtrecord.com