

Take Apart That Thought

Thoughts are not facts. This activity helps you deconstruct a thought and see that it is not necessarily true. You might want to copy the prompts on this page and keep them somewhere visible or accessible. This week, do this activity at least three times. By repeating it, your mind will begin incorporating these ways of thinking. To reap the most benefit from this activity, do it every day for a month

Take Apart That Thought: Example

The thought: My students don't respect me.	
Is it true?	Yes, I think so.
If I think it's true: How do I know it's true?	Because they won't listen to me, they talk over me, they call me names behind my back, they roll their eyes at me, they talk back when I tell them to do something.
Is there any other way to see the thought?	I don't know. Maybe they treat me this way because they just don't like me. Or maybe because they are angry that I'm holding high expectations for them. Or maybe because they don't trust teachers. I know that last year they had a number of teachers who quit or were let go. Maybe this is just how 8th graders act. Maybe I'm getting too triggered by them too quickly. Maybe I could do something different so that I don't get caught up in their attitudes. Maybe I don't respect them either.
How does this belief make me feel? What are the story lines I attach to this thought?	It makes me feel angry that they don't respect me. I don't feel valued as a teacher. I feel like the administration condones their behavior and won't do anything about it. The belief makes me feel hopeless, frustrated, and like I don't want to go to school.
What would things be like if I didn't hold this belief?	I guess I might feel better going to school. Maybe I could figure out a way to get my kids to listen to me and respond in a way that's better for all of us.
What's a different belief I could substitute for this thought when it arises?	I could tell myself that I just don't know how to manage them effectively. Or maybe that I don't know how to form a good relationship with them. I could tell myself that I just don't understand them. I could tell myself that I don't know them and they don't know me. I could tell myself that they want to be respected and want to connect with me. I could tell myself that the "problem" isn't that they don't respect me; it's that we haven't figured out how to treat each other in a way that is healthy and good. I guess I play a part in that too. I could tell myself that we can figure this out.

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Take Apart That Thought

Take-Apart 1

The thought:

Is it true?

If I think it's true: How do I know it's true?

Is there any other way to see the thought?

How does this belief make me feel? What are the story lines I attach to this thought?

What would things be like if I didn't hold this belief?

What's a different belief I could substitute for this thought when it arises?

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Take-Apart 2

The thought:

Is it true?

If I think it's true: How do I know it's true?

Is there any other way to see the thought?

How does this belief make me feel? What are the story lines I attach to this thought?

What would things be like if I didn't hold this belief?

What's a different belief I could substitute for this thought when it arises?

Take Apart That Thought

Take-Apart 3

The thought:

Is it true?

If I think it's true: How do I know it's true?

Is there any other way to see the thought?

How does this belief make me feel? What are the story lines I attach to this thought?

What would things be like if I didn't hold this belief?

What's a different belief I could substitute for this thought when it arises?

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Reflect

Which was the most useful prompt to ask yourself?

What did you learn about yourself by doing this?

