

Cognitive Reframing to Transform Your Thinking

These are stressful, chaotic, unpredictable times. It's natural to feel out of control, overwhelmed, even scared of what's ahead. But when you're about to go through it -- how do you want to get through it?

Do you want to TEAR (boohoo) through it or TEAR (rip) through it?

I would like to share with you a framework for facing your fears and frustrations and creating the life that you want and deserve.

When I was 20 years old, I was faced with a situation that seemed insurmountable. The night it all came to a head, I was pretty sure I was going to die.

I made a deal with God. If He (or She) allowed me to live through that night, I promised I would think differently about the situation. My rationale being...if He wants me here, He'll take the deal.

Clearly, I made it through. When I saw the sunrise the next morning, I kept my end of the bargain and changed my mind. I didn't know then that this "reframing" was a tool used in Cognitive Therapy. I would later study this in graduate school, and have since used it daily to transform my life for the better.

What is Cognitive Reframing?

Cognitive Reframing identifies and alters unhelpful ways of thinking. It originated in the 1960s under psychiatrist Aaron Temkin Beck, the founder of Cognitive Therapy. Reframing gives you back control over your life. There are many ways to apply it.

Over my years of teaching this tool, I've developed a simple framework to help others leverage its power and experience positive effects quickly. I'm confident it could be quite useful to you amid our current environment. If it helps you, please share it to benefit others.

Let's start with understanding how our brains work.



Kevin Walsh, Psy.D., PCC

Nearly all (up to 95%) of our day-to-day actions and decisions are made by our subconscious. Sit with this fact for a moment. **Seriously, sit with that.**

If we want to take control of our lives we have to *take control of our brains*.

Here's how:

- ✱ Our subconscious is filled with millions of "file folders" based on our life experiences.
- ✱ Our brain is a **"Meaning Making Machine."** It makes meaning out of every situation we encounter and interprets all of what we experience.
- ✱ With every new situation we face, our brain searches our subconscious and grabs a relevant "file folder".
- ✱ When the file folder opens, out pops a *Thought* and an *Emotion*.
- ✱ Our thoughts and emotions send us into *Action*.
- ✱ Our actions leave us with our *Results*. We end up with results that we do, or do not want.

For example, recently I was annoyed with how a loved one reacted to a situation. I decided to suggest, "How about we shut our mouths for a minute." The result of that action? A miserable weekend.

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So, in any given situation, your brain is working like this:

T - Thought

E - Emotion

A - Action

R - Result

We have to pull back from the situation and look at the results that we want. As Steven Covey says, "Begin with the end in mind!"

What result do you want?

Do your Thoughts provide you with the Emotions which will align your Actions and get you that specific Result?

TEAR (boohoo) - is the way that you are going through a situation that is causing thoughts, emotions, actions and results that you ultimately don't want.

TEAR (rip through) - you identify the Result that you want. Then take control. Change your Thought and Emotions to prompt the Actions that will get you the Result you desire.

Consider this:

My current situation - The Covid-19 social distancing lockdown is causing clients to postpone Executive Retreats.

My Thought: My business that I've worked so hard for is *doomed!*

My Emotions: Frustrated, Scared

My Action: Watch the news obsessively and eat cookies. (Pecan/Coconut cookies from Sprouts, BTW...yum!)

My Results: Become more scared and gain weight.

This is the TEAR (Boohoo).

By the way, there is NOTHING wrong with this.

We all need this from time to time! (I, admittedly, did this for almost a full day!)

But as soon as I wanted to change my Results, I had to change my Thought.

What is the Result that I want?

I want to use this time wisely, be productive and create new ways to work with clients to help them through this crisis, and stay in shape. In other words, TEAR it up!

Thought (aligned) - This is an opportunity to do all of the things I have been putting off and create identify new ways of working out.

Emotion (aligned) - Empowered, Excited

Actions (aligned) - Write Articles, Executive Coach and Create Online Trainings

Results (aligned) - Incredible Productivity (Collaborate with other Consultants, Develop an Emotional Intelligence At-Home Training for Leading Remote Teams, Add 3 Executive Coaching Clients, Create a Home-Based Tabata Obstacle Course)

Listen, if you are faced with a situation that you can change or influence - do that.

But if it is out of your hands and you're going to go through it anyway? Use this model and share it with others. Change the way you think and feel in order to take action that will get you the outcome you desire.

BTW - KIDS ARE AMAZING AT REFRAMING!

If you are going to go through it -- how do you want to get through it?

Do you want to TEAR (boohoo) through it or TEAR (rip) through it?

It's up to you.