

# Your Thoughts Affect What You Feel and Do

Lots and lots of thoughts automatically run through your mind each day. Thousands, in fact.

Positive thoughts. Negative thoughts. Truths. Unrealistic ideas.

This is normal and happens to all of us. Your thoughts affect your feelings. And your feelings can lead to more thoughts.

Together, your thoughts and feelings influence how you act and what you do. But as much as you might try, you can't always control how or what you think.

Most thoughts just happen automatically. But guess what? Your thoughts may not paint an accurate picture of what's really happening.

For example, sometimes thoughts act like bad fortune tellers. Imagine you have this thought: My boss wants to meet with me. I must be getting fired.

Now imagine how you might act when you meet with your boss. You might not be your better self.

Now, you can't really control these thoughts from popping up. But you can learn to recognize unhelpful thoughts. And you can control how you react to them.

How? You can question whether the thought is really true for you. Or you can find another thought that's more helpful.

You have thousands of thoughts to choose from. You could ask yourself, What are some other reasons my boss might want to meet with me?

You could then replace that earlier thought with other possibilities like, "My boss probably wants to ask about the new schedule."

Or, I don't know why she wants to meet, but I'll find out. And who knows? Maybe I'm getting a raise.

Those thoughts probably feel a lot better. And chances are, with a raise on your mind, you may act differently with your boss.

Becoming aware of your thoughts and exploring if they're helpful—or not—is a skill.

And it's a skill you can learn to do. Like anything new, it takes some practice to learn how to question and trade a thought for a more helpful one.

Some people find it helpful to work with a counselor. And as you get the hang of it, you can start to feel better about yourself, others and how you see the world.