

A man in a white tank top and dark shorts stands on the peak of a rugged, layered rock cliff. The cliff face is dark and textured, with some sparse vegetation. The ocean is visible in the lower left, and the sky is filled with soft, white and grey clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

The  
*Truth*  
Shall Set  
You Free

**The power of your mind to soothe  
painful emotions and correct  
unwanted behaviour**

*By Angela Poch, CLC, CN, dip APC*

*“Buy the truth and do not sell it— wisdom,  
instruction and insight as well.”*

Proverbs 23:23, NIV.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	...5
What is cognitive behaviour therapy?	...6
The ABC's Of Thought	...7
An Example Of ABC in Real Life	...8
Cognitive Distortions or Pitfalls of Thought	...9
Now What?	...11
Sources & References:	...13

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*“Then you will know the truth, and the truth  
will set you free.”*

John 8:32, NIV.

## Introduction

The mind is incredibly powerful. There are many scientific research projects that can prove this, just one of those being the placebo effect. This is where the person's beliefs in a treatment, and not the treatment itself, give positive results. While a single, limited study in 2001 claimed the placebo effect was not real, current research suggests the placebo affect rate actually ranges from 18 up to 75%. That means in some cases, most of the benefit of a drug, treatment, or herb is because a person believes it will help them and not because the drug, herbs, treatment is actually doing anything.

But beyond that, there are some intricate chemical connections between the brain and the body. For example scientists have discovered when we deep breathe to the point where it lowers our heart rate, the heart sends a chemical messenger to the brain through neural pathways to tell it it's relaxing. This actually has a calming affect physically which produces a more relaxed state emotionally.

There are several diseases that are adversely affected by stress as well and stress management can help to alleviate some of the symptoms and even reduce the risk of these diseases.

It is all truly amazing, and the good news is we can have control over it once we are aware of the process and how it works.

We are going to look at some powerful tools that can help you with self-awareness and your thinking process. Because if we work on your thinking process we then intern can work on your emotions and behaviours. But before we do that let's talk a little bit about cognitive behaviour therapy because you're gonna hear me say that a few times and I'm going to shorten it to CBT.



*The power of the mind is not the same as positive thinking. It's also not just a New Age philosophy. Not that all New Age concepts are bad. There are some beautiful gems hidden in some of the ancient Buddhist proverbs. The Bible says "every good and perfect gift comes from God" and since we find a lot of truths in the old Eastern proverbs, one can only assume God had His hand in it. There is evidence in scripture to support this. Who came to see Jesus when He was born? The Wiseman from East, likely from one of the Eastern New Age religions.*

And in the process we can talk about how the mind works in terms of the thought emotion behaviour triangle.

Note: The next section of this book is adapted from the CBT Handout I wrote in 2018 for the Christian Health Coach program.

## **What is cognitive behaviour therapy?**

A cognition is a fancy word for thought, so CBT is basically using your thoughts as therapy to deal with problem emotions and behaviours. Our thoughts control our emotional state which influences our behaviour. CBT also frees us from self-defeating beliefs that limit our ability to be happy, do the things we want to do, and sabotage our relationships. "As a man thinketh..." Who we are is developed in our own minds and we can take that back from circumstances and situations by how we think about those experiences.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy was developed by Dr. Aaron Beck, with others who've expanded on it. The information in this lesson is from a few sources I need to give credit to: Dr. Albert Ellis, Dr. David Burns, Dr. Neil Nedley, and those who taught and inspired these men like Dr. Beck. I highly recommend the book "The Feeling Good Handbook" or if you want a smaller book,

“Feeling Good.” “Feeling Good” has been studied and shown to be effective as a self-help tool. Those who read it actually are helped with anxiety and depression as much or more than taking anti-depressants or traditional therapy. These books are found in most bookstores in North American and online at Amazon and several other bookstores. There are also free resources online, Dr. Burns has videos on Facebook and Podcasts on iTunes. His website with articles and podcast list: [www.feelinggood.com](http://www.feelinggood.com)

## **The ABC's Of Thought**

We start CBT with understanding how thoughts work to control our emotions. Dr. Albert Ellis lays out the ABC's of thought something like this:

A - Action - something happens to trigger a thought, or a thought may randomly come to mind.

B - Belief - what you believe forms the basis for your feelings. Your beliefs are made up of the things you believe combined with how you remember things that have happened to you in the past.

C - Consequences - there are consequences, good or bad, to your belief. The consequences can be physical or behavioural (crying, sweating, eating, yelling, shaking), mental or emotional (feeling depressed, worthless, anxious, worried, angry, frustrated), or a combination of both.

D - Determine/Dispute - decide what you believed was accurate or not, and determine if you should dispute, or disagree with, that thought. If you discover what you believed was wrong, or overstated in some way, you can choose to disagree with that thought and bring it back to a more realistic truth. If the thought was correct, then you can determine to what to do or think next. Here you can apply various techniques to help you re-frame your thoughts in a more realistic or positive way.

Sometimes these ABC's happen so fast, or B is so ingrained, that we think it's A to C. There is an activating event and the consequences or emotional responses just follow suit. We often

don't realize B exists until we stop to think about it. As you practice self-thought awareness, it will become more clear. It is true, we can go from A to C in an instant, for example if a 4" spider dropped in your lap, you are likely to be surprised and jump in an automatic response, but your emotions after that initial gut reaction, will be based on your belief of how dangerous you think that spider is. You may laugh because it was a toy, or get angry at the person who threw it because you think they are being mean, or you may be very anxious or stressed because you thought it was real. There are other combinations but you get the basic idea, your beliefs create a lasting response.

## **An Example Of ABC in Real Life**

**A – Action.** You are riding your bike and a dog runs out from a neighbour's driveway. You begin to make thoughts about what is going to happen. This is the A - action, a dog running out toward you.

**B - Belief.** So the dog comes toward you and you remember the last experience with a dog, or a story/video/etc., (real or imagined) about other people's experiences with dogs. Perhaps you believe the dog might bite you. That is the B or Belief.

**C – Consequences.** Because you believe the dog might bite you, you become afraid. The consequence of your thought is fear. Keep in mind this happens in milliseconds.

**D - Determine.** Is the dog really going to hurt you? Here is where you take control of your thoughts. You start thinking about the situation in a rational manner. The dog is friendly and wagging his tail. You've met him before when you visited the neighbour so you know don't need to be afraid. Now you can disagree with your first thought about the dog. Determine to think rationally. You might say "Hi, Rover, I'm just riding to the park today. You better stay home." This is called straightforward thinking. Straightforward thinking doesn't always work, but that's ok, there are well over 50 other tools we\* can use to conquer or defeat these thoughts, we'll talk about just a few of



these in the coming sections.

But what if the dog looks angry and your thoughts maybe right, that there is something to fear? What then? Get out of the situation of course! But you can still control your thoughts afterward to prevent long term emotional upset. It's a good idea to talk to someone about negative thoughts. Don't let the fear, anger, worthless sit inside you! You are still in control of how you think even if you can't control the circumstances. You may not be able to prevent the dog from coming out, but you can control how you treat your neighbour or if you will be afraid of all dogs after this. You can turn your thoughts into positive, right thinking and this will work to calm your emotions and curb negative behaviours.

## **Cognitive Distortions or Pitfalls of Thought**

How do you know if your thoughts are rational or not, distorted or not, realistic or not? Let's look at the 10 common pitfalls of poor thinking, that help us to identify thinking traps. These 10 cognitive distortions are adapted from Aaron Beck and David Burns.

1. All or Nothing thinking - Not looking at the whole situation in a relevant manner, having very black and white ideas. Pit-bulls were bred for fighting and so they are dangerous.

2. Over-generalization - Taking one event or story and using it to analyze all other events. Like taking one bad dog story/event as the basis for what all dogs will do. Dogs *never* like me.

3. Negative Mental Filter - Only remembering negative examples/stories. E.g. I know LOTS of bad dog stories, all dogs hate me or all pit bulls are mean, I can't think of one time a dog liked me, etc.

4. Disqualifying the Positive - Making light of positive examples and related situations. E.g.: The only time a dog was nice to me, my mom was there, so he had to be nice.

5. Mind Reading/Fortune Teller Error - We think we know what

someone else is thinking and we predict the outcome. E.g. That dog is looking at me with fire in his eyes, he WANTS to bite me. If I ride down that street that dog will come out because he is out to get me.

6. Magnifying the Negative - Dwelling on, or making the negative of more importance than it really is, or increasing the risk of bad circumstances past what is logical or statistically realistic. E.g. That dog could kill me and I might die! Dogs are so dangerous, lots of people get seriously hurt from them. (Not true statistically speaking, especially compared to heart disease and what lack of exercise can do to you.)

7. Emotional Reasoning - Emotions override logic. Watch for “I feel” or emotional words in your thoughts. E.g. I am scared so the dog must be bad or at least it is so stressful because dog make me anxious. Dogs don’t make you anxious, your thoughts about what they can do makes you anxious.

8. “Shoulds and musts” - Demanding others or the world be a certain way. We all say “life isn’t fair” but yet we often expect it to be. E.g. Dogs should not run out of the driveway. Dog must always be quiet and friendly. Owners should be more responsible. While it is true some people are not responsible and some dogs are aggressive, we can’t control the world around us and by getting stuck in thinking of ‘shoulds’ we become frustrated and angry.

9. Labeling and Mislabelling. E.g. That is a pit-bull and they are a mean and dangerous breed. That neighbour isn’t nice for having such a dog.

10. Blaming of others or self. E.g. If the neighbours would tie up the dog, I wouldn’t be scared of riding my bike. If dad would have bought me a faster bike, I would just fly past that dog, and he couldn’t hurt me.) If I could just ride faster... You get the idea.

Some of these are connected to some long held beliefs about ourselves and develop into what psychologist’s call schema’s or a framework for our beliefs. What makes cognitive behaviour therapy so powerful is, when you deal with the here and now, you can rewrite your future, and rethink your past. Our thoughts

move in patterns. Taking apart one, small event and your thoughts about that event, can unravel the whole pattern. Many clients have an epiphany over what seems to be one random event, which rewrites the whole schema that person holds by tackling that one event.

## **Now What?**

Ok, so you can see there is a process of A-B-C from an action to your fear, anxiety, anger, or so one, and maybe you can even identify your cognitive distortion. Now what? Sometimes just realizing your thoughts are not true is enough to affect real change. That is where the D or dispute the thought comes in. How you dispute the thought can take on many forms and there are several techniques, in fact there are up to 100. In the book “The Feeling Good Handbook” Dr. Burns walks you through several methods and activities step by step. He calls them 10 Ways to Untwist Your Thinking, here is just a very brief overview of them:

1. Identify the Distortion - we’ve talked about that already. Am I distorting the situation or how I feel? Have I confused a thought with a fact? Is my judgment based on the way I feel instead of facts?

2. Examine the Evidence - what evidence is there to prove your thought right or wrong. What is the evidence that this thought is true? What is the evidence that this it is not true? In our example: Have you ever been bit by that particular dog?

3. Double-Standard Method - would you talk to a close friend the way you are talking to yourself? What would I tell a friend if he/she had the same thought? What would a friend say about my thought?

4. The Experimental Method - do an experiment to test the thought. Stop and watch others ride by the neighbour dog, do they get bit?

5. Thinking in Shades of Grey - number the thought from 0 to 100. Instead of I hate that neighbour, as in our example. I'm afraid of the dog - 75; I dislike the dog itself - 50; I dislike the neighbour for having the dog - 30. This puts perspective on the situation and gives you a starting point to see your own progress. Am I 100% sure that \_\_\_\_\_ will happen?

6. The Survey Method - ask others questions to see if your thoughts are realistic. How many times has \_\_\_\_\_ happened before? Am I confusing "possibility" with "certainty"? It may be possible, but is it likely?

7. Define Terms - good for distortions involving labeling or blame. E.g. I'm an idiot for thinking that dog is a problem. What exactly is an idiot? Do they have to make 1 mistake a day, 10? Perhaps you could say, It would be better if I didn't fear that dog, but I'm human and it's ok to be fearful. That doesn't make me an idiot.

8. Semantic Method. Good for dealing with "should" statements. I'd prefer\_\_\_\_\_.

9. Re-attribution. Good for blame (self or others). What other factors may have contributed to this problem?

10. Cost Benefit Analysis. What are the benefits and disadvantages of believing this, e.g. Benefit: my fear of dogs keeps me from getting bit. Cost: I don't go visit my friend. You would continue to list as many as possible then give each of the two lists a rating that will equal 100. i.e. 45 benefits, 55 disadvantages to believing this.

Other questions to ponder: What is the worst that could happen? If it did happen, what could I do to cope with or handle it? Is \_\_\_\_\_ so important that my future depends on it?

Again, these are adapted from the book, "The Feeling Good Handbook" by Dr. David Burns. This book has helped millions overcome depression, anxiety, fears, panic attacks, self-defeating attitudes, marital conflicts, and helps people unleash their potential for success.

This short handout is not intended as a substitute for consulting a mental health professional. I hope, in fact, it will motivate you to seek help from a therapist who understands CBT, and better yet T.E.A.M. T.E.A.M adds a couple additional powerful components to CBT, including empathy and other proven psychodynamic techniques. Dr. Burns describes helping people in just a few sessions with T.E.A.M, people who've suffered from issues for over a decade and been to all kinds of therapists. IT WORKS, and it works pretty fast. Many therapists are now practicing forms of CBT, such as T.E.A.M., so create the you, you want to be right now. Starting with your own thoughts.

If you live in Canada I offer online video chat therapy\* and/or life coaching: [www.AngelaPoch.com](http://www.AngelaPoch.com) or health coaching to anyone worldwide. Or to find a T.E.A.M. therapist in your area visit: [www.feelinggoodinstitute.com](http://www.feelinggoodinstitute.com)

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I am also developing a course, “Positive Steps to Happiness” so be sure to sign up for my free newsletter to be notified when that comes out.

*\*If you live outside Canada or in the provinces of ON, QC, or NS we can explore life coaching options together.*

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Many other sources on the effectiveness of CBT at the end of this webpage: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive\\_behavioral\\_therapy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cognitive_behavioral_therapy)



Most health research experts agree millions die each year from preventable diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and even many cancers. Many of these diseases can even be reversed with simple lifestyle changes which is what this course is all about.

Using the blue zones as a model, combined with the latest scientific research, this course takes you through the best choices you can make for optimal health. You'll be amazed it's not just about diet and exercise. Research shows there is much more to living longer and happier than just the food you eat.

This course is absolute free. Watch it right now!  
[www.BodyMindHealthCoach.com](http://www.BodyMindHealthCoach.com)

What people are saying: "As an interfaith minister, I appreciated the concise, positive explanation of spirituality in this course, and as a long-time vegetarian mediator and yoga practitioner/instructor, I liked the pertinent information on diet and lifestyle. She touches on many topics within a short time frame to provide a good starting point for those who are beginning to get serious about their health, happiness, and hopefully longevity." *Sandra Denninger*

# The *Truth* Shall Set You Free

Discover how you can take back how you feel about the circumstances you have no control over. It's true, at times life can be very painful and unfair. It's not right we have to do the work to find healing when others have hurt us. But if you want to move forward there is hope, there is help!

## *About the Author*

I am a certified life coach and counsellor. I've been trained in stress management, grief recovery, depression & anxiety, plant-based nutrition, and spiritual faith-based therapy. I have written several books, cookbooks, and video courses on health and wellness. I've been on TV and spoken to groups across Canada and in the USA.



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