

# The Cognitive Model

## Practice Exercises

### ✓ Examples

See how two people can experience the same situation in different ways based upon their thoughts. Each example depicts a negative and rational thought, and a typical outcome of each thinking style.

**Situation:** Jason and Kurt both receive a negative evaluation at work.

#### Jason

**Negative Thought:** “I can’t do anything right. I bet I get fired because of this!”

**Emotion:** Depressed and nervous.

**Behavior:** Jason avoids his boss because he believes he’s in trouble. He feels nervous the next time he’s confronted with challenging work, and performs poorly.

#### Kurt

**Rational Thought:** “I guess I didn’t work hard enough—I’ll have to come up with a better plan for next time.”

**Emotion:** Disappointed but motivated.

**Behavior:** Kurt seeks out his boss to talk about how he can improve. He approaches his next task as a challenge and gradually improves.

**Situation:** Gwen and Shirley both have an argument with a close friend.

#### Gwen

**Negative Thought:** “We *always* argue! Why can’t she ever see my side? This is so unfair.”

**Emotion:** Angry and blaming.

**Behavior:** Gwen stays angry at her friend and does not reach out to repair the relationship. Over time, Gwen’s friendship becomes more and more toxic.

#### Shirley

**Rational Thought:** “That was rough—I should apologize. We can both be stubborn sometimes.”

**Emotion:** Forgiving and regretful.

**Behavior:** Shirley accepts a portion of the responsibility and apologizes to her friend. They communicate and continue to strengthen their relationship.

# The Cognitive Model

## Practice Exercises

### Practice

Write down an alternative *rational* thought for each situation. What do you think the resulting emotion and behavior might be?

**Situation:** Emily is cut off by another driver and has to quickly hit her brakes.

**Negative Thought:** “What a jerk! They don’t care about *anyone* but themselves. I could’ve crashed!”

**Emotion:** Angry

**Behavior:** Emily drives aggressively to provoke the driver who cut her off. Emily is still angry when she gets home, and yells at her family.

**Rational Thought:**

**New Emotion and Behavior:**

**Situation:** Travis notices his wife hasn’t helped around the house for a week.

**Negative Thought:** “Does she even care? She knows I’ll clean up, so she abuses my kindness!”

**Emotion:** Angry and sad.

**Behavior:** Travis lets the dishes pile up and doesn’t say anything to his wife. He doesn’t ask why she hasn’t helped, and becomes angrier when he assumes she’s just selfish.

**Rational Thought:**

**New Emotion and Behavior:**

# The Cognitive Model

## Practice Exercises

**Situation:** Regina is invited to a birthday party by an acquaintance.

**Negative Thought:** “I won’t know anyone at this party and I’ll just seem out of place. She probably invited me because she felt obligated.”

**Emotion:** Sad and anxious.

**Behavior:** Regina lies and tells her friend she already has plans for the night of her party. Regina and her friend fail to develop their friendship.

**Rational Thought:**

**New Emotion and Behavior:**

**Situation:** Thom notices a girl on the bus who keeps looking his direction.

**Negative Thought:** “Do I have something on my face? Is my fly down? Maybe I smell bad or something. I need to get home and take a shower.”

**Emotion:** Self-conscious and anxious.

**Behavior:** Thom avoids the girl and rushes off the bus without looking up from his shoes.

**Rational Thought:**

**New Emotion and Behavior:**