

## Welcome to Your Reflection Space

This worksheet was created with care—for anyone moving through something tender, uncertain, or important. Whether you're processing pain, seeking clarity, rebuilding trust, or simply needing space to breathe, you're welcome here.

These worksheets offer gentle tools for reflection—resources that meet you where you are, without pressure or expectation. They're designed to support emotional exploration at your own pace, in your own way.

The mission is simple: To make emotional support more available in a time when many are struggling. To offer free, compassionate resources with no hidden agenda. To help you reconnect with your own voice, in ways that feel safe and steady.

If this mission resonates, feel free to share it. Post it, print it, pass it along. Your share might be someone's first moment of feeling understood.

These worksheets are offered with care, for personal use only. They're here to support your healing—not to rush it. You don't need to finish every section. You don't need to have all the answers. Take what supports you. Leave what doesn't. Your pace, your process, your wellbeing—these come first.

You're not alone. Even if we've never met, this resource is offered with quiet solidarity—holding space, cheering you on, and believing in your capacity to heal.

## A Gentle Note on Safety

These worksheets are designed for personal reflection. They are not a substitute for therapy or professional treatment.

If you're in therapy, consider sharing this resource with your therapist before exploring. If you're not in therapy, please reflect in a space that feels emotionally and physically safe.

You might choose to explore alongside someone you trust—a friend, partner, or support person. If that isn't available right now, this worksheet can still be a quiet companion. Go gently. In your own time. In your own way.

## Where to Find the Worksheets

If this resource feels meaningful, please share it. Healing is communal—and your share might be someone's first step toward feeling less alone.

These worksheets are shared freely across platforms:

Website: <https://CompassionateConnectionTherapy.co.uk>

Facebook: Compassionate Connection Therapy

TikTok: @rosa.tomassi.bella

Instagram: @connectiontherapyrhyll

Let's make emotional support tools free, gentle, and accessible—together.

### **A Note on Contact**

These worksheets are shared freely, but individual support cannot be offered through messages or comments. If you need support, please speak with a therapist or someone you trust. These tools are here to guide gentle exploration—not to replace professional care. Thank you for understanding, and for sharing with kindness.

### **If You're in Crisis**

These worksheets are not for emergencies. If you feel overwhelmed or unsafe, please reach out:

- Samaritans — 116 123 (free, 24/7)
- NHS 111 — urgent mental health advice
- 999 — if you or someone else is at immediate risk

You deserve support, safety, and care.

### **Copyright and Usage**

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*You are welcome to share this resource with others for support, as long as:*

- *You credit Rosa Tomassi-Bella and Compassionate Connection Therapy*
- *You do not alter the content in any way*
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## **Don't Feed the Thought**

*A gentle worksheet for noticing, naming, and shifting Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs)*

### **Introduction: Why This Matters**

Negative Automatic Thoughts (NATs) are quick, involuntary thoughts that pop up in response to everyday moments. They often sound convincing—like they’re offering truth or protection—but they’re usually shaped by old patterns, past experiences, or unmet needs. NATs aren’t facts. They’re habits of thought that can be noticed, named, and gently shifted.

These thoughts might show up as self-criticism, fear, comparison, or pressure. They might sound like your own voice—or someone else’s. They often arrive fast, without permission, and can quietly shape how you feel, how you respond, and how you relate to others.

This worksheet isn’t about fixing your thoughts or forcing positivity. It’s about building awareness, offering compassion, and practicing new ways of responding—ways that feel more grounded, spacious, and kind. You don’t need to get it right. You’re allowed to pause, skip, return, and reflect in whatever way feels most supportive.

You’re not broken for having these thoughts. You’re human. And you’re allowed to meet your mind with curiosity, not correction.

## How to Use This Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to support reflection, not perfection. You can use it all at once or one section at a time. You can write, speak, draw, or simply think through your responses. There's no wrong way to engage—just what feels possible and supportive for you.

Here are a few ways to use it:

- **Start with one section** that feels most relevant right now. You don't need to go in order.
- **Use it in parts**—pause after a single question or sentence starter and return later.
- **Bring it into a session** to explore with a therapist, support person, or group.
- **Use it as a journaling guide**, a grounding tool, or a way to track patterns over time.
- **Skip anything that doesn't feel helpful.** You're allowed to leave blanks, revise, or come back with new insight.

Each section includes:

- A gentle **guide** to orient you
- A few “**try to finish these sentences**” prompts to get you started
- A set of **open questions** to deepen reflection
- A **sciency bit** that explains what's happening in the brain or body—in plain, human language

You don't need to do it all. You don't need to do it perfectly. You're allowed to go at your own pace, in your own way.

## 1 Noticing the Trigger

### Guide

This step is about gently slowing down and noticing what set the thought in motion.

Sometimes it's obvious—a message left unread, a sharp tone, a sudden silence. Other times, it's subtle: a shift in someone's expression, a change in energy, a memory stirred by something small.

You don't need to explain it perfectly. You don't need to justify your reaction. This is simply a space to name what happened in a way that feels honest and kind. The goal isn't to analyse—it's to notice. To gently trace the moment where something shifted inside.

This kind of noticing can feel vulnerable. That's okay. You're allowed to take your time, skip what feels too tender, and return when you're ready.

### Try to finish these sentences

These prompts are here to help you begin. You can write, speak, or just reflect quietly.

- Something happened that made me feel...
- I noticed myself reacting when...
- I started thinking differently after...
- I didn't expect to feel \_\_\_, but I did...
- I'm not sure why, but this moment felt...

## ❓ Open questions

These questions invite deeper reflection. You don't need to answer all of them—just the ones that feel meaningful or manageable right now.

- What was the moment that shifted how I felt?
- What did I notice in my body or mood right after?
- Was there a sense of threat, pressure, or uncertainty?
- What felt familiar about this situation—even if I couldn't name it at the time?
- Did I feel safe, seen, or understood in that moment—or something else?

## 🔬 Sciency bit

Our brains are wired to detect threat—especially in moments that feel emotionally loaded or uncertain. This system is fast and automatic. It doesn't wait for logic. Even small cues—a pause, a glance, a tone—can activate protective responses shaped by past experiences.

When we name the trigger, we interrupt that automatic loop. We shift from reaction to awareness. And awareness is what makes space for choice, care, and connection.

## 2 Spotting the Thought

### Guide

This step is about gently catching the thought that popped up in response to the trigger. It might have arrived quickly—like a flash—or quietly, like background noise. It might have sounded harsh, protective, doubtful, or familiar. You don’t need to judge it or push it away. Just notice it.

Sometimes the thought feels like your own voice. Sometimes it echoes someone else’s. Sometimes it’s hard to hear clearly, but you can still sense its impact. This is a space to name what showed up—without needing to explain or justify it.

You’re allowed to be unsure. You’re allowed to write down fragments, impressions, or even just a feeling the thought carried.

### Try to finish these sentences

These prompts can help you gently name the thought. You can write, speak, or reflect silently.

- The thought that showed up was...
- I found myself thinking...
- A part of me said...
- I didn’t say it out loud, but I believed...
- I wasn’t sure if it was true, but I felt...

## ❓ Open questions

These questions invite you to explore the tone, shape, and origin of the thought. You don't need to answer all of them—just the ones that feel helpful.

- What words or phrases came up automatically?
- Did the thought feel familiar or new?
- Did it sound like my voice—or someone else's?
- Was the thought trying to protect me, criticize me, or prepare me?
- Did the thought feel urgent, heavy, or sticky?

## Sciency bit

Negative Automatic Thoughts often reflect old beliefs, fears, or protective strategies—not current truth. They're shaped by emotional memory and past experiences, especially ones that felt unsafe or unpredictable. These thoughts tend to bypass logic and arrive fast—because the brain is trying to keep you safe.

Spotting the thought helps create space between reaction and response. It's the first step in shifting from automatic patterns to intentional care.

### 3 Naming the Pattern

#### 💡 Guide

This step helps you recognize the thinking style behind the thought—not to label yourself, but to notice the habit. Many thoughts follow familiar patterns: they might jump to extremes, assume what others are thinking, or predict worst-case scenarios. These patterns often show up when we feel vulnerable, uncertain, or emotionally activated.

Naming the pattern doesn't mean the thought is wrong—it just means it might be shaped by something old, automatic, or protective. When you can name the style, you begin to loosen its grip. You create space to respond with more clarity, care, and choice.

You're allowed to notice gently. You're allowed to name the pattern without needing to change it right away.

#### 📝 Try to finish these sentences

These prompts can help you gently identify the thinking style. You can write, speak, or reflect silently.

- This thought sounds like...
- I've noticed this kind of thinking before when...
- It reminds me of a pattern where I...
- I tend to think this way when I feel...
- This feels like a habit I've picked up from...

## ❓ Open questions

These questions invite you to explore the shape and function of the thought. You don't need to answer all of them—just the ones that feel helpful.

- Does this thought reflect a common distortion (like all-or-nothing, mind reading, or catastrophizing)?
- What does this thought assume about me, others, or the situation?
- Is this thought trying to protect me from something—like rejection, failure, or discomfort?
- Have I noticed this pattern in other moments or relationships?
- What emotion seems to fuel this thought—fear, shame, guilt, anger?

## 🔬 Sciency bit

Cognitive distortions are mental shortcuts the brain uses to make sense of things quickly—especially under stress. They're fast, familiar, and often shaped by past experiences. While they can feel convincing, they're usually incomplete or exaggerated.

Naming the pattern helps reduce its power. It shifts the brain from automatic reaction to reflective awareness. And that awareness is what opens the door to more balanced, compassionate thinking.

## Gently Challenging the Thought

### Guide

This step isn't about arguing with the thought or forcing yourself to "think positive." It's about wondering—gently—what else might be true. When a thought feels heavy, harsh, or absolute, it can help to pause and ask: *Is this the only way to see it?*

You're not trying to erase the thought. You're just making room for other possibilities. You're allowed to be kind, curious, and imperfect. You're allowed to hold more than one truth at once.

This is a space to practice flexibility—not because the original thought is "bad," but because you deserve more than one way to understand your experience.

### Try to finish these sentences

These prompts can help you soften the edges of the thought and explore new angles.

- Another way to look at this might be...
- If I were talking to a friend, I'd say...
- Maybe it's also possible that...
- I don't know for sure, but I wonder if...
- Even if part of that thought is true, it's also true that...

## ❓ Open questions

These questions invite you to explore the thought with more spaciousness and care. You don't need to answer all of them—just the ones that feel helpful.

- What's the evidence for and against this thought?
- What would someone who cares about me say in this moment?
- What else could this situation mean, if I zoom out a little?
- Is there a gentler or more balanced way to hold this?
- What might I believe if I felt a little safer or more supported?

## 🔬 Sciency bit

The brain tends to confirm what it already believes. This is called *confirmation bias*—a mental shortcut that helps us feel certain but often keeps us stuck. When we gently challenge a thought, we interrupt that loop. We invite the brain to consider new information, which helps build more flexible, compassionate neural pathways.

Over time, this kind of reflection supports emotional regulation, self-trust, and the ability to respond—rather than react.

## 5 Creating a Balanced Thought

### Guide

This step is about offering yourself a more grounded, compassionate alternative to the thought that showed up. The goal isn't to force a silver lining or pretend everything's okay. It's to find a thought that feels a little more spacious, a little more kind, a little more true.

Balanced thoughts don't have to feel perfect. They just need to feel *possible*. Even if you're not ready to fully believe them yet, practicing these thoughts can help loosen the hold of old patterns and make room for something gentler.

This is where you begin to shift—not by pushing the original thought away, but by adding something new beside it.

### Try to finish these sentences

These prompts can help you begin shaping a more balanced thought. Let them be soft, not forced.

- A more balanced thought could be...
- I don't know for sure, but maybe...
- I'm allowed to believe that...
- Even if part of me believes \_\_\_\_, another part of me knows...
- I'm learning to trust that...

## ❓ Open questions

These questions invite you to explore what else might be true—especially when you soften the edges of the original thought.

- What feels more true and less harsh than the original thought?
- What thought helps me feel calmer, more open, or more connected?
- What would I say to someone I care about in this situation?
- What belief do I want to practice—even if it feels unfamiliar or hard to hold?
- How would it feel to carry this new thought with me for a little while?

## 🔬 Sciency bit

Balanced thoughts help regulate the nervous system. When we shift from rigid, fear-based thinking to something more compassionate or flexible, we activate parts of the brain that support calm, connection, and emotional resilience.

This doesn't mean denying pain or pretending everything's fine. It means making space for nuance—for the possibility that more than one thing can be true. Over time, practicing balanced thoughts helps build self-trust, reduce reactivity, and support healing from old patterns.

### ⌚ Closing: You're Allowed to Practice

You don't need to be perfect to be present. You don't need to silence every negative thought or replace it with something cheerful. You're allowed to notice what shows up, name it with care, and gently shift your response—one moment at a time.

Some thoughts will feel sticky. Some patterns will take time. That's okay. This worksheet isn't a test. It's a space to practice—not perform. To explore—not fix. To meet your mind with curiosity, not correction.

You're allowed to move slowly. You're allowed to come back later. You're allowed to change your mind, revise your answers, or leave things unfinished.

Let this be a space that honours your effort, your rhythm, and your way of showing up. Let it be enough—for now.