

# humantold

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## Labeling Thoughts

Sometimes starting with labeling your thoughts allows you to gain more influence and understanding.

1. Close your eyes, if that is comfortable, or turn your gaze down toward the floor in front of you , softening your peripheral vision and bringing attention toward your breathing.
2. Take a few deep inhales and exhales, using this opportunity to release any areas of tension from the body; release any tightness, perhaps in the muscles of the face, the jaw, neck, or shoulders. Use each exhale as a release for this stress or tension.
3. Focus on your breath as best you can, even if just for a few breaths. You may notice some thought popping up, even as you try to focus on your breathing. Each time this happens don't attribute meaning, but simply label it "thought."
  - o You can begin to get more specific such as "judgement," "planning," "remembering," etc.
4. Continue to practice noticing and labeling your thoughts that arise and observe which are difficult to let go of. The thoughts that stick around are likely the ones you are fused with. If there is less attachment they are usually easier to release.

This is a skill, try practicing this a few minutes each day or as you encounter times when you are lost in thought.

Focus on the breath, notice the thought, label it, and release.

Gustafson, C. (2019). *Reclaim your life: Acceptance & commitment therapy in 7 weeks: Strategies to manage depression, anxiety, Ptsd, Ocd, and more*. Rockridge Press.