

# humantold

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## Noticing Your Thoughts (Part 1)

Although thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are connected they are still separate. Many people believe that if we think a thought, not only is it based in fact, but it has power to make us do things. Our thoughts often result in a behavioral urge and depending on the intensity we can feel like there is no time between the feeling, the urge, and the action. For example, you might have the urge to say something mean to your friend, and without even pausing or thinking, it just comes out of your mouth. Or you might have the thought, no one wants to date me, and then when someone does ask you out, you say no because you think they are asking you out of pity—all because of that thought.

In short, your thoughts end up leading to urges and behaviors that then confirm to you that your thoughts were true. However this does not need to be the case, it is a skill to understand your thoughts and how you choose to respond to your thoughts.

**Activity:** Pick a thought that has resulted in an action you did not want. Or try this in real time after something has happened.

1. Pick a negative thought that has resulted in an action that you did not want:

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2. What do you notice or how do you feel when you have this thought?

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3. Now add the words “I’m having the thought that…” in front of that thought (*Question 2*) and write out the sentence:

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4. What do you notice or how do you feel when you have this new thought?

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5. Now add “I’m noticing that I’m having the thought that…” in front of the original thought (*Question 1*):

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6. What do you notice or how do you feel when you have this in your thoughts:

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Now let's try with an urge.

Write an urge you were having:

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Now add "I'm noticing that I'm having the urge to..." in front of the urge:

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How did you feel when thinking this way about an urge:

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This may not seem like much but simple phrases that help you step out of your automatic thinking stone and start seeing your thoughts just as thoughts instead of believing they are true and acting on them can go a long way.

The more you can take a step back and create distance between your urges and your actions will allow you more freedom and flexibility with your thoughts.

Hutt, R. L. (2019). *Feeling better. Cbt workbook for teens: Essential skills and activities to help you manage moods, boost self-esteem, and conquer anxiety*. Althea Press.