

Easy Steps to Catch ANTs

How to Catch ANTs and Untwist Your Thinking

When you are feeling anxious, angry, or sad and you want to feel better, try these steps:

1. Identify the problem situation: what is making me feel bad?
2. **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR THOUGHTS.** If you were a cartoon character, what would be in your thought bubble? Are you having any automatic negative thoughts (ANTs)?
3. Decide if you are falling into one of those common thinking traps: jumping to conclusions, assuming the worst, etc.
4. After you catch your ANTs and thinking traps, ask yourself some questions:
 - Would a detective find any evidence that your thought(s) are true?
 - What would I tell a good friend having these thoughts?
 - If my thought did come true, how would I cope?
5. After you answer the above questions, come up with a coping thought. A coping thought is a more helpful thought. Some examples of coping thoughts are:
 - This feeling won't last forever.
 - I can learn from this and it will be easier next time.
 - It's okay to make mistakes.
 - I have done this before, I can do it again.

