Creating Your Own Cognitive Defusion Techniques

Practicing cognitive defusion techniques will empower you to use them as you wish.

Start with a thought you are struggling with. Write it down here:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Now, imagine a context in which those same words would not be something you had to believe or disbelieve, but would be only something you would notice. For example, when are you more likely to read, hear, or listen to words without struggling over their content? When are you more likely to read, hear, or listen to words with amusement or when their literal truth is not a big issue? Write down some examples here:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Now, construct a defusion technique that links the thought you are struggling with and your answers to the last question. Describe how you might think [write down the problem thought] in this way (e.g. the way a comedian would treat this thought): __________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Now, use this technique. Bring this problem to mind and give it a good try. Do not stop until you are sure you have done it long enough to assess its impact.

Write down what happened when you did that:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

After you used the technique:

- Were you better able to see the thought as a thought?
- Did the believability of the thought go down?
- Did the distress caused by the thought go down?

If you answered “no” to any of these questions, you might identify any thoughts that are influencing you (e.g., “This might work for other people, but not for me,” “This is dumb,” “My thoughts are true, so how could I not believe them?” etc.) and try the technique with those thoughts.

Remember, you have had a lifetime to learn to believe these unhelpful thoughts. It is reasonable to expect you will need some time to defuse from them.