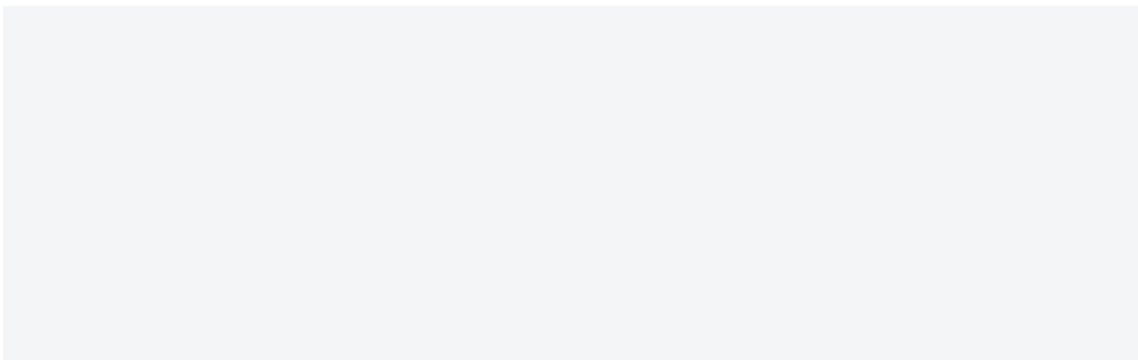


## ACT Defusion Metaphors

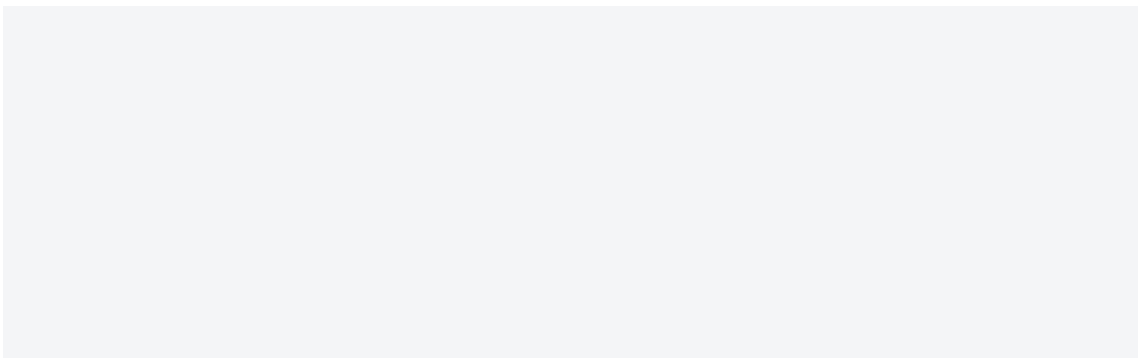
Sometimes we are so habituated to our thinking processes that we cannot identify unhelpful thinking patterns or thoughts when they arise. To help make this distinction when a thought arises that is uncomfortable in some way, ask yourself the following questions:

### Helpful Questions for Unhelpful Thoughts

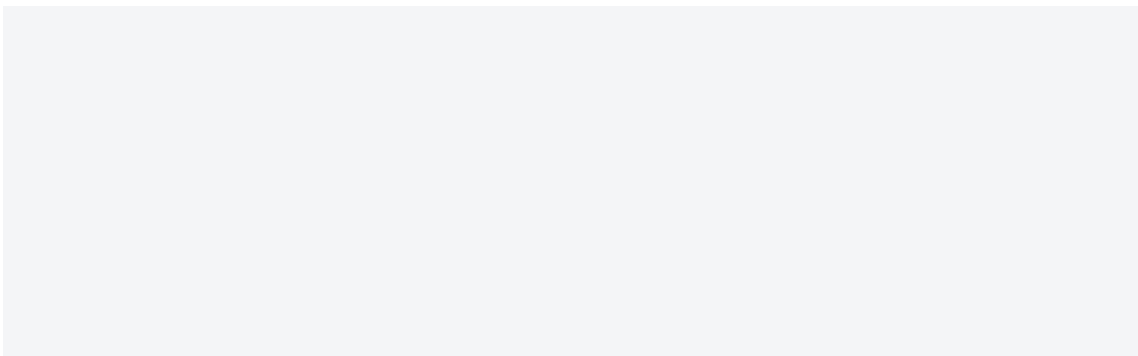
- Is this thought in any way helpful or useful?



- Is this thought an old story? Have I heard it before?



- What do I get for buying into this story (thought)?



- Does this thought help me take effective action?

- Am I going to trust my mind or my experience?

- Could this be helpful, or is my mind just babbling on?

Bear these questions in mind when experiencing a thought you find uncomfortable, self-defeating, self-limiting, frightening, threatening, compulsive, oppressive, or bullying.

When you apply cognitive defusion techniques to unhelpful thoughts, you see thoughts as merely 'words inside your head'. Then, by refusing to take them literally (as true, real, serious, wise, or whatever), you choose how to respond to them.

Below are some metaphors you might find helpful as on-the-spot cognitive defusion techniques.

Thoughts are like...

Clouds floating, or birds flying, across the sky. They come and go.



Waves arising from the sea, then falling back in. You can watch the waves from the shore without being swept away.



Leaves and sticks floating down a stream. You don't have to dive in. You can watch from a bridge.



A passing parade. You can watch the floats pass by. You don't have to climb on board.



Trains coming and going while you stand watching from the platform.



A waterfall. You are standing behind it, not under it.



Guests entering a hotel. You can be the doorman. You greet the guests, but you don't follow them into their rooms.



Cars passing by while you wait at a junction.



Suitcases dropping onto a conveyor belt at the airport. You can watch them pass by, without having to pick them up.



People passing you in the street. You can nod and say hello, but you don't have to stop and have a conversation with them.

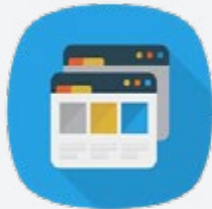


Bubbles rising in a champagne bottle. They rise to the surface and then disappear.

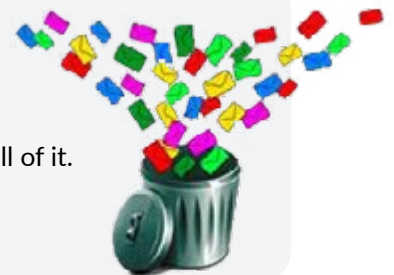
Actors on a stage. You can watch the play, but you don't have to get on stage and perform.



'Pop-ups' on the internet.



Junk email. You can't stop it from coming in, but you don't have to read all of it.



Dr. Jo Nash