

THE ABC OF REAPPRAISAL

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Reappraisal also called cognitive reframing is one of the most powerful emotional-regulation tools: by changing the way you interpret an event, you can change how you feel about it. Use this three-step ABC framework to turn automatic, stress-fueling thoughts into deliberate, resilience-building perspectives.

A

AWARENESS OF THE TRIGGER

1. What it is:

Noticing the moment when a negative emotion or unhelpful thought pattern begins.

2. Why it matters:

You can't reframe what you don't first recognize. By tuning into early warning signs, racing heart, sweaty palms, or recurring self-talk, you catch destructive loops before they escalate.

How to practice:

Daily "Emotion Check-In": Set an alarm two or three times a day. Pause for 30 seconds and ask yourself, "What am I feeling right now?"

Trigger Journal: Whenever you notice a strong emotion (anger, anxiety, shame), jot down:

- The situation (**Who? What? Where?**)
- Your immediate thought ("*They must think I'm incompetent.*")
- Physical sensations (*tight chest, clenched jaw*).

Quick exercise:

After a tense meeting today, take 2 minutes to write down:

What happened, How you felt, Where you felt it in your body

B

BELIEF ASSESSMENT

► What it is:

Identifying the underlying belief or story you're telling yourself about the trigger.

► Why it matters:

Our beliefs shape reality. A simple event ("My boss asked for revisions") can mean "They don't value me" or "They want me to improve." The first belief breeds stress; the second fuels growth.

How to practice: ↩

Three-Question Drill:

- What am I telling myself? (the specific thought)
- Is it 100% true? (challenge its accuracy)
- What's a more balanced way to see this?

Belief Mapping: Draw two columns on one page. Label them "Automatic Belief" and "Evidence For/Against." Under each belief, list concrete facts that support or contradict it.

Quick exercise:

Next time you catch a "catastrophic thought" ("I'm going to fail"), ask:

1. "Do I know for certain that I will fail?"
2. "What past successes contradict this?"

C

COGNITIVE REFRAMING

What it is:

Actively replacing the old, unhelpful belief with a new, adaptive one.

Why it matters:

Deliberate reappraisal changes your emotional trajectory: what once sparked panic now becomes a challenge or even an opportunity.

How to practice: ↩

Reframe Template: For each negative belief, write:

- Old Thought: "I'm not good enough."
- Reframe Question: "What's another way to look at this?"
- New Thought: "I'm learning. Every step counts toward mastery."

Perspective-Shift Technique: Ask, "If a friend told me this same story, what would I say to encourage them?"

Quick exercise:

Take today's trigger journal entry and craft one reappraisal statement. For example:

- **Old Thought:** "They think I'm incompetent."
- **New Thought:** "They gave feedback so I can grow. This is a sign they see potential."

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Step	What You Do	Why It Works
A	Notice the emotion/triggers	Catches stress early
B	Examine the underlying belief	Exposes distortions
C	Replace with balanced perspective	Builds resilience and calm

Tips for Mastery

- **Practice Daily:** Build a "micro habit" by spending 1-2 minutes each evening on your ABC entries.
- **Buddy Up:** Share your journal prompts with an accountability partner; swap reframings each week.
- **Celebrate Wins:** Track how many times per week you successfully reappraised a situation and reward yourself.