

Exercise 18 - Four Layers of Abstraction

This exercise is used to create a sense of distance and perspective over our thoughts. Write down a distressing thought in box 1. Now read the thought out in reverse order from 4-1.

1.



2. I am having the thought that



3. I have noticed



4. I am aware that

Notice how this provides an observer's sense of distance or perspective over the thought. It also makes the process of thinking the thought quite clunky and awkward to say. This helps to break the automatic impact of the thought. It is important to note that this is not about avoiding the thought, as trying to avoid thoughts usually backfires and increases the frequency or intensity of the unwanted thought. This defusion technique is about altering your relationship or perspective over the thought itself.