

# STOP UPSETTING OR DISTRESSING THOUGHTS (FORM 3)

## Step 7: Remember that Guilt and Doubt are Enemies of Acceptance

- Guilt: After having an upsetting or distressing thought, some people can feel guilty and seek reassurance. Reassurance may make you feel better in the short term, but it adds to your suffering.
- Doubt: Every time you have an unwanted thought, you want to know for sure there is no danger. The fight for certainty is a major contributor in keeping your unwanted or distressing thoughts so intense.

## Step 8: Assign Accurate Assessments to your thoughts

- Thoughts are just thoughts and ONLY thoughts. They may feel different, but they are still only thoughts. They are not urges, impulses, messages about your character, or indications that something has happened or is about to happen. Refuse to be taken in by misleading messages. Upsetting or distressing thoughts do not have a special meaning. Identify upsetting or distressing thoughts for what they are: Just thoughts.

- Avoidance blocks learning. Instead, take action: Learn a new way of relating to your upsetting or distressing thoughts—continue doing what you want to do, despite the Intrusive Thought. Continue your life, "ignore the bully," and refuse to let a thought change your daily activities.

- Add a twist to your upsetting or distressing thought:

^ Humor can help change your upsetting or distressing thought.

^ Sing the upsetting or distressing thought to the tune of "Happy Birthday" or "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

^ Write the thought over and over

^ I am willing to take the first small step toward this goal on this day and this time: \_\_\_\_\_

^ Make a poem of the thought

^ Speak the thought out loud, over and over

^ Say the words of the thought backwards

^ Carry the written thought around with you in your pocket or tucked inside your clothing.

- Here are some phrases to help you get disentangled from the content of your upsetting or distressing thought:

^ "That's a thought"

^ "Any thought can be tolerated, even this one"

^ Change what IF to what IS and focus on what you can see/hear/smell/taste right now: "The sky is cloudy. The air feels warm. The apple tastes sweet."

