

Cognitive Defusion Script

Written for ACT therapists who want several defusion techniques in one sitting: the “I am having the thought that” distancing, word repetition, changing the voice, thanking your mind and naming the story. Eight minutes built around one thought the client picks at the start and rates twice, with a closing line that stops the exercise sliding into thought suppression — which is the way it usually goes wrong.

8 min · 6 segments

01. Choosing the thought

1 min 15

[normal conversational pace here — this is set-up, not practice, and slowing it down makes it sound weightier than it is]

Before we start we need something to work with. Bring to mind a thought that has been sticking to you lately. Not the worst one you have. Something in the middle: the one that turns up on the way to work, or at eleven at night. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

Get it into words. A short sentence, in the form your mind actually uses. Not the tidy version you would say out loud to someone, the blunt one. Say it to yourself once, silently, exactly as it comes. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

Now give it two quick numbers out of ten. First, how believable it feels right now. Second, how much it bothers you. Do not think hard about them. The first numbers are the useful ones. Hold on to both. We come back to them at the end. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

02. I am having the thought that

1 min 30

[leave the whole pause after each instruction — the client has to actually say the sentence, and that takes longer than you expect]

Say your sentence to yourself again, plain. Just the thought, as it comes. *[pause for 10 seconds]*

Now say it again with some words in front of it. I am having the thought that. And then your sentence. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

Once more, with a longer run-up. I notice I am having the thought that. And then your sentence. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

Nothing about the thought has changed. The words are the same words. What may have changed is how far away it sits, and whether there is now someone here noticing it. If it sounds no different, leave it. We have other ways in. *[pause for 10 seconds]*

03. Saying it until it comes apart

2 min

[say the demonstration word out loud yourself, briskly, for the full twenty seconds — if you do not model it, almost nobody does it properly]

Pick the single word in your sentence that carries most of the sting. One word. Usually a noun or an adjective. Failure. Useless. Alone. Whatever yours is. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

First listen to me do it with an ordinary word, so it feels less strange when you do it. Milk. Milk. Milk. Milk. Milk. *[repeat the word aloud, briskly, for a full 20 seconds]*

By now milk has probably stopped being milk and become a shape your mouth makes. Do the same with your word. Out loud if you can, under your breath if you cannot. Fast, and keep going after it starts to feel ridiculous. The ridiculous part is where it works. *[silence for 40 seconds while they repeat the word — do not speak over it]*

Stop. Sit with the word a moment. Some people find it thins out into a noise. Some find it holds its meaning completely. Either result tells you something about that word, and neither one is the wrong answer. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

04. Changing the voice

1 min 15

[keep your own delivery straight — perform the silly voices yourself and it becomes your joke rather than their experiment]

Take the whole sentence again. This time hear it in a voice that is not yours. A cartoon character. A football commentator. Someone reading the shipping forecast. Run the sentence through in that voice, start to finish. *[pause for 25 seconds]*

Now hear it sung. Any tune you like. Happy Birthday works, and is hard to take seriously. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

This is not about mocking the thought or making light of what it points at. What it points at may be entirely worth your attention. The point is that a sentence you can sing is a sentence, and you can hold it at arm's length while you decide what to do about it.

05. Thanking your mind, naming the story

1 min 15

[say the thank-you line without irony — read sarcastically it teaches the opposite of what it is for]

Your mind produced this sentence for a reason. It is doing the job it was built for: looking ahead, checking what could go wrong, keeping you out of trouble. It is simply not very good at telling you when it has finished.

So thank it. Silently, in whatever words you would use. Thanks, mind. I can see what you are doing. Say it the way you would to a colleague who is trying to help and has slightly overdone it. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

Then give the thought a title, the way you would title a film. The not good enough story. The they will find me out story. Short, and a bit familiar, because you have sat through this one before. *[pause for 20 seconds]*

06. Checking back

45 sec

[ask for the numbers before you close — the comparison is the part clients still remember a week later]

Bring the original sentence back. Say it to yourself once more, plainly. *[pause for 10 seconds]*

Two numbers again, out of ten. How believable. How much it bothers you. Set them beside the ones you started with. Whatever the numbers have done, notice that you are the one taking the reading. *[pause for 15 seconds]*

One last thing, and it is the thing that keeps this worth doing. None of that was an attempt to get rid of the thought. If getting rid of it becomes the aim, this stops being defusion and turns into one more way of struggling. The thought can stay. You are just no longer holding it an inch from your face.

USAGE

Record it, publish it, and monetise it — no credit required. You may not resell the script itself as a text product.

Record it with Hilite — hellohilite.com

Studio-quality audio from your laptop mic. Free to start.