

3. Observing others to see if your If ... Then ... Rule applies to others

Claudia was a single mother and worked as a waitress to support her daughter. She held herself and her daughter to perfectionistic standards. She demanded that her daughter get the best grades in school; Claudia cleaned their home every day to keep it spotless; she made sure she and her daughter were always perfectly groomed; and she raced around during the work day to make sure that all her orders were delivered quickly and without any mistakes. Although she always felt compelled to try to do her best, Claudia was often very tired, and her relationship with her daughter was becoming strained. With her therapist's prompting, Claudia identified the following underlying assumptions:

ASSUMPTION TESTED		<i>If something is not perfect, then it is worthless, and the person doing it is a failure.</i>			
Experiment	Prediction	Possible problems	Strategies to overcome these problems	Outcome of experiment	What have I learned from this experiment about this assumption?
<i>Observe other waitresses at the restaurant making mistakes or errors.</i>	<i>When waitresses make a mistake, their work is worthless, and they are failures.</i>	<i>I might be too busy myself to notice their mistakes.</i>	<i>I can ask them at break if they had any problems with their orders or customers.</i>	<i>One waitress delivered food to the wrong table. Customer pointed out it was wrong. The waitress apologized and brought the correct meal. The customer was understanding and even gave a good tip.</i>	<i>It is possible for something to be less than perfect and still have worth (she still got a good tip). Making a mistake does not mean you are a failure. That waitress laughed about her mistake, and the customer didn't seem to mind. I guess not everyone has the same rules about perfection that I do.</i>
ALTERNATIVE ASSUMPTION THAT FITS WITH THE OUTCOME(S) OF MY EXPERIMENT(S)		<i>It is possible for something to be less than perfect and still have worth. If I make a mistake, then it doesn't mean I'm a failure.</i>			