

1. Doing the "If" part of our belief and seeing whether the "then" part happens or not

Mike experienced a lot of anxiety in social situations. When he was in work meetings, he avoided eye contact, hoping that his supervisor wouldn't call on him to speak. At parties, he wanted to meet other people, but felt very shy and stayed on the edges of the crowd, because he was afraid of looking or sounding foolish. He identified his underlying assumption as:

| ASSUMPTION TESTED | | <i>If I say something, then I will sound stupid, and people will make fun of me or say something negative.</i> | | | |
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| Experiment | Prediction | Possible problems | Strategies to overcome these problems | Outcome of experiment | What have I learned from this experiment about this assumption? |
| <i>Talk about my weekend plans with three store clerks.</i> | <i>I will sound stupid, and at least two of the clerks will make fun of me or say something negative.</i> | <i>I will feel too nervous and avoid doing it. I may avoid eye contact and not get the evidence I need.</i> | <i>Remind myself that it is important to test my assumption. It is OK to be nervous, and this will be over in a few minutes. My therapist told me that being nervous means I am on the right track. Make sure I look at the clerk while I'm talking.</i> | <i>First clerk: Smiled and told me her plans for the weekend. Second clerk: Seemed to listen but did not say much back. Third clerk: Joked with me, but it did not seem like he was making fun of me. He was just being friendly.</i> | <i>Even though I was nervous, nothing happened that supported my prediction that I would sound stupid. None of the clerks laughed at me or said anything negative. Two clerks seemed to enjoy talking with me.</i> |
| ALTERNATIVE ASSUMPTION THAT FITS WITH THE OUTCOME(S) OF MY EXPERIMENT(S) | | <i>If I talk to people, some of the time they seem genuinely interested, and they don't look like they are criticizing me.</i> | | | |