

WHAT IS FLIP ALL ABOUT?

In this cheat sheet, you will gain a better understanding of FLIP. FLIP is a model that we can use to challenge 'wonky thinking', to shift how we think about situations and ensure more positive outcomes.

FLIP helps us to become more reflective and resilient people. It helps us to become more future focused, particularly when we are having wonky thoughts.



What is wonky thinking?

Did you know that all human beings are hard-wired to be feelings-led? This means that we all have wonky, irrational thoughts, from time to time.

For example, have you ever had your bank card declined and muttered that 'it's a conspiracy against me'? Or, have two things gone wrong early in the day, and you've been convinced that a third 'disaster' is just around the corner?

One thing that we all tend to do, if we have a problem, is go to people who think like us and who will reinforce our wonky thinking. In these situations, it is often more helpful to ask someone with a different view.

HOW CAN WE CHALLENGE OUR WONKY THINKING?

FLIP is a great model to use, when challenging wonky thinking.

FOCUS:

Of course, it is always important to acknowledge our emotions – be they positive or negative. Once we have done that, it helps us to move forward if we are encouraged to focus on the facts of the matter, rather than the feelings that a situation has evoked.

IMAGINATION:

By using our imagination more, we realise that there are often many solutions to problems, rather than just the one. We are most likely to think differently, if we give ourselves a bit of time and space.

LANGUAGE:

By using positive language, which puts challenging situations into perspective, we ensure that they don't become catastrophised. Be aware that, when we are thinking irrationally, we are more likely to use language which implies a situation is permanent ('always' 'never'), or that these things only ever happen to us.

PATTERN BREAKING:

Remember that: 'If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got.'
Try blue sky thinking, risk taking and learning from mistakes to break unhelpful patterns.

Give it a go...

Identify people who think differently to you and run your ideas by them.
Encourage a devil's advocate approach.

When discussing a situation that could have gone better, make notes in two columns - 'Facts' and 'Feelings'.
Acknowledge your feelings. Then use the facts to think or talk through what led to the outcome. This will help you to be more future and solution focused.

Build up a bank of ideas and phrases, which challenge your own catastrophic thinking. For example, your inner voice might be telling you that you will 'never' be promoted. Challenge it, by asking yourself what you can do differently, in preparation for the next opportunity.

Encourage others around you to understand the concept of FLIP and regularly refer to it, e.g. What can we do to FLIP this?

CHEAT SHEET

LAUGHOLGY

FLIP - FOCUS AND LANGUAGE

In this cheat sheet, we learn how to FLIP our 'Focus' and 'Language' to achieve more positive outcomes, when faced with challenges.

We all have patterns of thinking, and sometimes these may be less than accurate. They may impact on our emotional state, the way in which we react and the way that we explain situations that have happened.

When we think about Focus and Language, our aim is to really understand what is driving our thinking and behaviours.

FOCUS

Learning to recognise 'wonky thinking' in ourselves and others increases our ability to ignore the negative thought or actively change it. For example, if we believe that we can't do a task, we might focus on feeling overwhelmed by it. By recognising this, and changing the focus to how we will succeed with the task, we are more likely to be successful.

Other common wonky thinking includes:

All or Nothing Thinking:

Putting experiences in one of two categories – 'The project will either be perfect or a failure.'

Jumping to Conclusions:

Deciding how to respond to a situation without having all of the information – 'That person interrupted me in the meeting because she's just ignorant!'

Mind Reading:

Believing that we know how someone is feeling, or what they are thinking, without any evidence – 'That person looked at me in a funny way. I know they don't like me.'

LANGUAGE

Being aware of the language that we use, when explaining a situation, will help us to understand how we are seeing it, and the wonky thoughts that we might be having. Always listen out for the pessimistic 3 Ps:

1. Pervasive and Universal - One problem generalises to all areas of life.
2. Personal/Internal – You tend to blame yourself, think it's 'all about me'.
3. Permanent – It feels like the situation will last forever.

For example: "That was a complete disaster. I never do anything right."

In this sentence, the I is personal, the never is permanent and the anything is pervasive.

We can shift our thinking and limit the impact of the negative experience by saying to ourselves:

"So, that customer was a bit tough today."

By saying and thinking this, we are not negating the experience. Instead, we are reflecting, putting the situation into perspective and helping ourselves to move forward, as the language is:

- More optimistic
- More specific
- Impersonal/External
- Temporary

Give it a go...

Check your natural first response and what you focus on when situations happen. If you are being feelings-led, FLIP your thinking by asking yourself questions like:

"What assumptions am I making about myself or the situation that are causing me to think like this?"

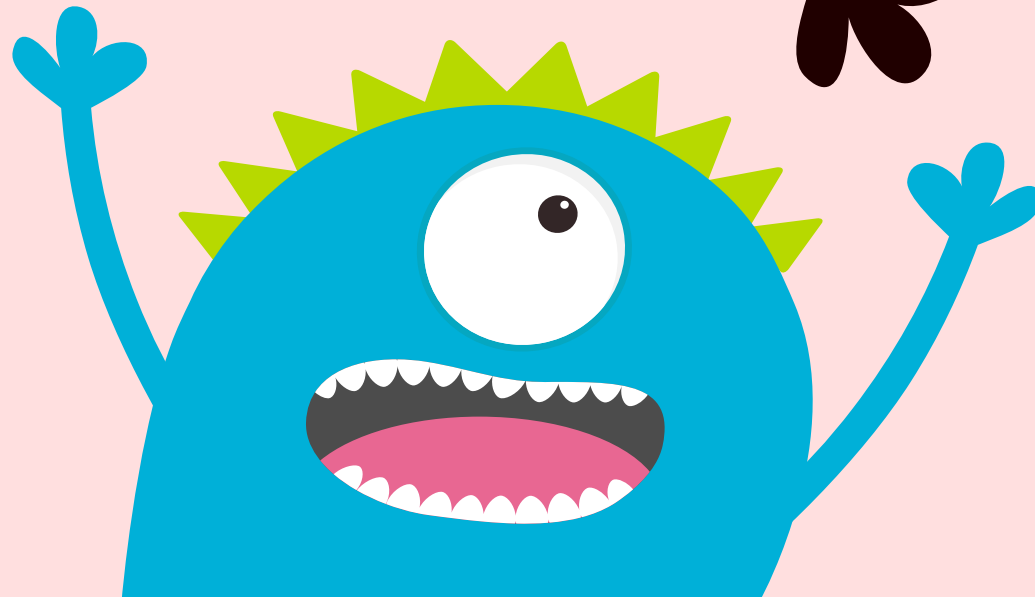
"How might someone else (or add a specific name) see the situation?"

When you are explaining a situation to someone else, ask them to note down what you say. This will help you understand language which is focused on helplessness or extreme thinking.

Challenge and reframe any pessimistic and fixed mindset thinking, e.g. Rather than saying and thinking that you are being *forced* to give up a role, ask yourself what opportunities there are to do something different.

CHEAT SHEET

LAUGH**HO**LOGY



FLIP – IMAGINATION AND PATTERN BREAKING

In this cheat sheet, we look at how we can use 'Imagination' and 'Pattern Breaking' to challenge wonky thoughts and ensure great outcomes.

IMAGINATION

Our imagination can work for us or against us. Have you ever 'feared the worst' only for it to come to fruition.

It can be helpful to anticipate future challenges, and how situations might play out. If we imagine a more positive outcome, we will be better able to face situations when they next arise. Similarly, if we think about how we could have dealt with any challenges differently, it helps the brain rehearse for *if* and *when* they happen again.

We can do this by asking ourselves questions and exploring our desired intention. For example, if we have had a tricky conversation with a customer or colleague, we could ask ourselves what it would have looked like if it had been a positive, successful interaction. What would we have said? How would we be behaving? How might the other person have reacted? How would it feel at the end?

PATTERN BREAKING

Children have amazing imaginations but, for some reason, as we get older we tend to think that we are not so imaginative any more. In actual fact, we can be just as imaginative as we were when we were young (if not more so), if we try.

When we are facing challenges, we can come up with solutions, by creating a conducive environment and asking ourselves the right questions. This, in turn, will help us to identify any helpful patterns of behaviour that we have.

As humans, we all have patterns of behaviour. Many of these work in our favour, such as avoiding situations which we know are dangerous. However, some can work against us, such as avoiding new or challenging situations because we think that we might fail.

By thinking about our habits, behaviours and language patterns, we can recognise which ones are sustaining or blocking a situation from moving forward. We can then decide what we are going to change or evolve, by thinking imaginatively and creatively.

We can also start to identify new, positive patterns that we would like to try to work on.

Give it a go...

To help us think about our own helpful and unhelpful patterns of behaviour, we can create an imaginary coach – perhaps a famous person who we admire? What questions would they ask us? How would they encourage us to adopt a more imaginative approach to problem solving?

When reflecting on situations, it helps if we think about what is working well (WWW) and what could be even better if ... (EBI). This ensures that we are constantly looking to develop ourselves and improve our practice.

When reflecting on our behaviours, it's good to regularly take stock and think about the things that we would like to STOP, START and CONTINUE.