



Breaking Down Irrational Beliefs

How fears and irrational beliefs are related

To put it simply, our irrational beliefs inform our fears. What we believe must happen makes us desperately chase it. What we believe must not happen makes us desperately avoid it. We think life is completely unpleasant and miserable if we don't achieve the desired outcomes. And so we become terrified of life taking such a turn.

Example:

Lying is one of the worst actions a person can do (irrational belief).
Fear of lying or being lied to (fear).

You can also work your way backwards. Identifying our fears gives us clues about what our irrational beliefs are.

Example:

Fear of breaking up with our partner (fear.)
Breaking up with your partner is one of the worst things that could happen to someone (irrational belief).

How to write your fears and irrational beliefs as statements for breaking down

Example:

Fear of cheating on your partner (fear).
Cheating is the worst thing a person can ever do (irrational belief).
I must never be a cheater because it would mean I am rotten to my core, and I have no hope of being a better person in the future (statement for breaking down).

Questions for breaking down irrational beliefs

1. What irrational belief do you want to break down?
2. Can you prove that this belief is false?
3. Can you prove that this belief is true?
4. What is the worst case scenario if your fear comes true?
5. What good outcomes can be achieved if your fear comes true?

Example of Breaking Down Irrational Beliefs

1. What irrational belief do you want to break down?

“I must not be misunderstood or misjudged by other people.”

2. Can you prove that this belief is false?

No universal law states that I must never be misunderstood or misjudged by someone. Everyone is entitled to their opinion. I cannot control other people's thoughts and feelings about me, or how they interpret what my actions. If they misunderstand or misjudge me, it's going to be unpleasant, annoying, inconvenient or frustrating for me at best. But it will not halt the trajectory of my entire life.

3. Can you prove that this belief is true?

Not sure if it counts as evidence but the rhetoric on how to have meaningful long-lasting relationships seems to put a great emphasis on “open and honest” conversations, and my brain seems to have latched onto that. So my brain thinks that is the “evidence”.

4. What is the worst case scenario if your fear comes true?

- I will end up losing valuable people over something I consider false.
- I might have to find new people in my life.
- They might tell other people about me and I might be known as not a desirable person to talk to or be friends with.
- I might end up a lonely person with a bad reputation.
- The people who do end up staying might do so out of false pretenses while secretly not liking me, which I think is worse.
- I will end up in a cycle of figuring out who is ‘true’ and who is not.
- I might end up going from person to person, bouncing in between, desperate for answers and help.
- I'll form an image in people's eyes as a needy person who is always unhappy, and therefore I will exhaust them.
- I will lose my rationality and objectivity and maturity if thought.
- I will constantly live with guilt and shame for not being able to get better and form better relationships.

5. What good outcomes can be achieved if your fear comes true?

- Let's see. Firstly, I can meet new people I otherwise could not or did not think of earlier.
- I can rid of the expectations that came with precious relationships. So I can start afresh and work on unconditional self-acceptance even more!

- I can continue to live other aspects of my life in the same way I used to i.e go out, eat good food, read books, travel, hookup, dance, go to concerts etc.
- In fact, not having people in my life will open up a lot of free time for me to focus on passions and skills that I otherwise don't get enough time for. I can even learn a new language!
- By being abandoned by others, it might push me to make some much needed changes to my life. I will realize I really need to apply the tools and concepts I have learnt through therapy and coaching, and change the way I behave and think.
- I can form a new outlook on life, learning some hard lessons, having a more healthy mindset and lifestyle.
- I can learn to ask for help and not feel guilty about it (as I do now sometimes).
- Asking for help might actually get me some good answers, guidance and tips from people. Getting some reality checks/hard truths from them that I don't want to hear, that I would not have realized on my own.

- Make a list of all your fears.

Fears	Irrational Beliefs
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.