

Evidence For & Against

Examine an anxious or self-critical thought without trying to prove it wrong. The question is whether the available evidence supports the conclusion as strongly as it initially felt.

1 Name the thought -> 2 Check the evidence -> 3 Update the conclusion

COMPLETED EXAMPLE

Situation

What happened? Keep observable facts separate from your interpretation.

I sent a project proposal to my director. She replied, "Thanks - can we discuss this tomorrow?"

Thought I am examining

Write the thought as it appeared in your mind.

"She thinks the proposal is poor, and I have probably blown my chance to lead the project."

Belief before

How strongly do you believe it?
0-100%

85%

Evidence that supports it

Facts only. What genuinely points in this direction?

She did not approve the proposal in the email. One budget estimate is still rough and may need more explanation.

Evidence that does not support it

What facts, context, or alternative explanations are easy to overlook?

She called the proposal a "good start" last week. She often discusses proposals before deciding. She did not reject it or criticize my overall work.

What am I assuming?

What am I treating as known even though I do not actually know it?

I am assuming that "let us discuss" means bad news, that one weak estimate ruins the whole proposal, and that I already know her judgment.

Other plausible explanations

What else could fit the facts without pretending everything is fine?

She may want clarification, especially on the budget. She may prefer discussing decisions live. The proposal may be promising but unfinished.

Most balanced conclusion

Write the conclusion that best fits all the evidence. It can still include uncertainty or difficulty.

She wants to discuss the proposal, and one budget figure is worth preparing to explain. I do not yet know whether she will approve it or what she thinks of my ability to lead the project.

Belief now

How strongly do you believe the original thought now? 0-100%

45%

Next useful step

What is worth doing - if anything?

Prepare two questions, review the budget once, then stop.