

Trap it, Map it, Zap it – Tool for handling stressful emotions and thoughts.

1) TRAP IT:

Think of a time when you were hit with Emotion. What were you feeling exactly? What was happening at the time?

*Example: **Anxiety.** I have a doctor's appt tomorrow. I'm trying to remember all the questions to ask – and afraid I might forget something. Or get bad news.*

2) MAP IT: What were you thinking as the emotion surged?

Even when an emotion seems to have come out of nowhere, there's always a thought fueling it. **"Map" your Emotion to the thought behind it.** Use the Emotion Radar chart below for reference.

Anger: "My rights have been violated."

Anxiety: "Something bad is going to happen."

Frustration: "I don't have the resources I need."

Sadness: "I've lost something."

Guilt: "I've violated someone else's rights."

Embarrassment: "I've lost standing in someone's eyes."

Shame: "I've broken my own standards."

Example: So much to remember - I'll forget something. Also, I'm going to get bad news about ____.

3) ZAP IT:

Now it's time to "Zap" the thought. Zapping is the process of challenging or examining stressful thoughts. Also called reframing, zapping is where we rewrite thoughts to serve us better, taking back control over our thoughts and emotions, which immediately dials back stress.

- Sometimes our thoughts aren't accurate, ie anxious thoughts take us all the way to the worst-case scenario. In this case, we can reframe our thoughts to be more realistic or accurate to the situation.
- Other times our thoughts are accurate—ie, we have truly been wronged or have experienced a loss—but they're leading to a response that doesn't serve us. In this case, we can reframe the thought to support us better.
- Use the following "thought zappers" to examine these thoughts:
- **Anger:** "Have my rights truly been violated? How can I get my needs met?"
Anxiety: "How likely is it that this bad thing will happen? Which aspects of the situation can I control and which can I let go of?"
Frustration: "What's one thing I have in my toolbox that I can use to gain some leverage on this problem?"
Sadness: "Have I really suffered a loss? Is it gone forever or can I get it back? Have I also had gains that I'm not focusing on right now?"
Guilt: "What do I think I owed this person and is this expectation kind and reasonable to expect of myself?"
Embarrassment: "Other people are more concerned about their own image than they are about mine."
Shame: "Is this standard that I'm expecting of myself sustainable? Is it a standard that can be met?"

Zap your thoughts. Ask yourself, "Is this thought accurate?" If no: How can you reframe the thought to be more accurate to the situation? If yes: How can you reframe the thought to better serve you i.e. to help you feel better or move forward?

Example: There is a lot to remember when you only meet your MD once a year. I prepared well and did my research, listed my questions. Maybe I'm getting more anxious as I get older about my health, that would make sense. I'm taking care of myself by getting preventative care.

Try it: Trap It, Map It, Zap It is designed to help you figure out **when and why your negative emotions are calling the shots** so you can **take back control**.

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2) Map it:

"Map" your Emotion to the thought behind it. Use the Emotion Radar chart below for reference.

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What were you thinking while your Emotion was surging?

3) Zap it:

Zap your thoughts below: Ask yourself, "Is this thought accurate?" If no: How can you reframe the thought to be more accurate to the situation? If yes: How can you reframe the thought to better serve you i.e. to help you feel better or move forward?

How would you zap or reframe your thoughts?