

Thoughts or Feelings?

Sometimes it can be hard to tell what we're thinking and what we're feeling. A sentence that begins “I feel...” can sometimes express a thought or self-judgment as well as—or instead of—an emotion. Sorting the words can help us notice what is happening; it is not a test of whether a feeling is real or valid.

THOUGHT A prediction, image, conclusion, or judgment. A self-evaluation is also a thought.	EMOTION OR MOOD An affective state, such as scared, angry, lonely, or ashamed.	BODY SENSATION A physical experience, such as heavy, tight, numb, or a racing heart.
--	---	---

1 For each item, say whether it is a thought or a feeling.

CHOOSE ONE BOX PER ITEM

	THOUGHT	FEELING
1. I feel that something awful will happen.	☐	☐
2. I feel scared.	☐	☐
3. I feel like nothing ever goes right.	☐	☐
4. I feel so guilty.	☐	☐
5. I feel as though I'm falling apart.	☐	☐
6. I feel very angry.	☐	☐
7. I feel as if my life will never get better.	☐	☐
8. I feel lonely.	☐	☐
9. I feel panicky.	☐	☐
10. I feel so useless.	☐	☐
11. I feel like I'm a burden.	☐	☐
12. I feel ashamed.	☐	☐
13. I feel like I'm being torn apart.	☐	☐
14. I feel heavy.	☐	☐
15. I feel down.	☐	☐
16. I feel that I'm a disgusting person.	☐	☐

Answers — Thoughts: 1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 16 · Feelings: 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 14, 15.

Use more than one clue: a feeling can *often* be named in one word (scared, lonely, ashamed); a thought is a statement about yourself or the world that could be true or false. These are clues, not perfect rules. Ask: Is this an emotion word—or a prediction, image, conclusion, or judgment?

CONTEXT MATTERS

The answers show the intended CBT-learning distinction, not a verdict on anyone's experience. “Heavy” (#14) can also describe a body sensation; body, emotion, and thought can occur together.