

Self-talk and Stress

How do you feel about flying? Some people find it relaxing. Some people find it to be anxiety-ridden. How can two people be seated in the same airplane, at the same time, going to the same destination, have two completely different reactions to the experience of flying? It's all in what they believe, think and feel about the experience.

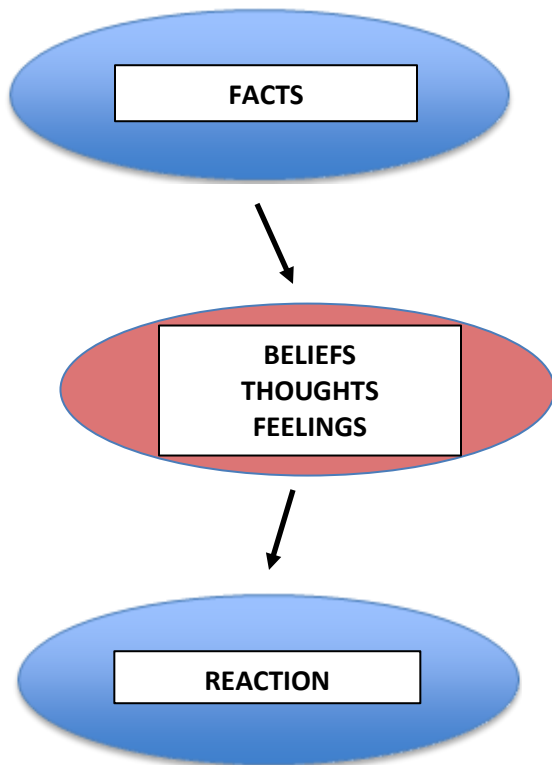


What do you say to yourself when you fly on an airplane?

"The plane may crash?" or "The pilot is in control, so I can sit back and relax!"

One of the most powerful predictors of how we respond to stressful events is what we say to ourselves about the event. The facts about a situation are not the primary driver of our reactions. Our reaction to the facts most often takes place only once we have processed the facts through the filter of our beliefs, thoughts and feelings. And beliefs, thoughts and feelings are manifest in what we say to ourselves and the resultant actions.

It is not without good reason that Paul instructs believers to examine and manage our thoughts *"fitting every loose thought and emotion and impulse into the structure of life shaped by Christ"* (2 Cor.10:5-6 MSG)



Scrutinize Your Self-Talk

What am I saying to myself about the facts of this situation?

What am I saying to God about the facts of this situation?

What am I saying to others about the facts of this situation?

What assumptions am I making in my self-talk about the facts? Am I sure that my assumptions are correct? How could I find out?

How does my self-talk about the facts line up with what I know to be true about God from His Word?

How does my self-talk about the facts line up with how I have seen God work in my life or the lives of others in the past?

How does my self-talk about the facts line up with what I currently observe of God's work in the world around me?

How does scrutinizing my self-talk impact my responses?

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