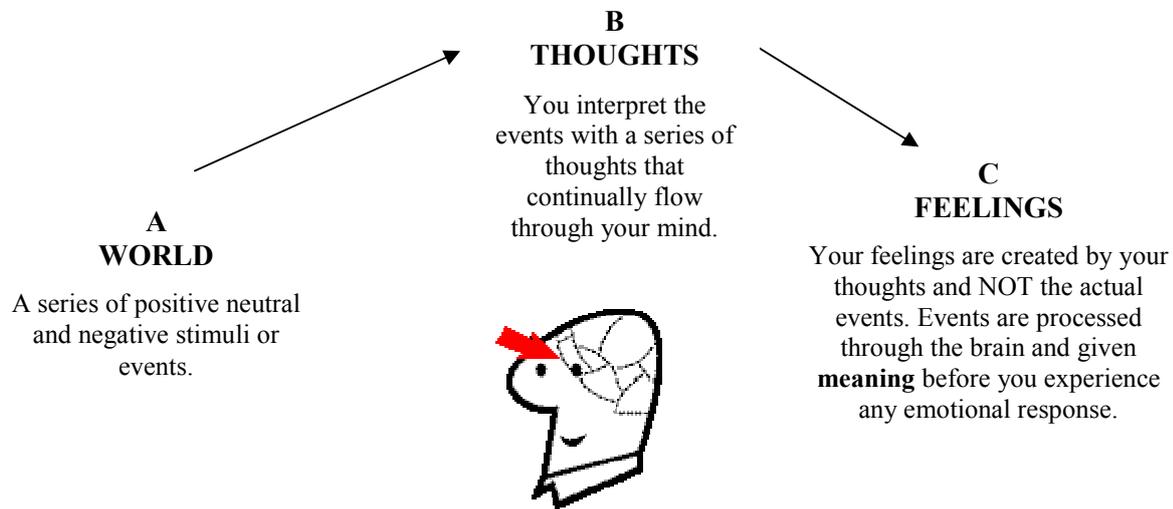


# THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY!

## COGNITIONS: THOUGHTS AND DISTORTIONS

It is important to gain an understanding of the way you **think** – your cognitions about life and work. All of us have perceptions; beliefs, attitudes and thoughts about the world we live in. In recent years **Cognitive Behaviour Therapy** has developed theories about how people can change their minds about their problems. A famous philosopher said “Men are disturbed not by things but the view they take of them” (Epictetus). Women too.... I’m sure!

All of us use our brains to make **meaningful representations** of the real world and these representations are never exact, they are **INTERPRETATIONS OF REALITY**. Your **thoughts** are not necessarily right or wrong but they will lead to your feelings and emotional states.



A	B	C
EVENT (Trigger)	BELIEF (Cognition)	EMOTION (Response)
EVENT	UNHELPFUL (Irrational)	NEGATIVE RESPONSE (Emotions: stress, Depression)
EVENT	HELPFUL (Rational)	MILDER RESPONSE (Healthier emotions)

There are identifiable “Cognitive Patterns” to how people typically transform the real world onto their internal MAPS or MODELS. Below are examples of typical problems, patterns or styles of “Automatic Negative Thinking”.

### OVER GENERALISATION

- |    |                 |                |                        |
|----|-----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. | Catastrophising | Magnification  | Jumping to conclusions |
| 2. | All or nothing  | Black or white | Polarisation           |

### DELETION

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 3. | Filtering<br>(Focus on the negative)                 | Disqualify the Positive<br>(Delete the positive) |
| 4. | Minimisation<br>(Unreasonably minimise the positive) |  |

### DISTORTION

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 5. | Labelling and Mislabelling<br>(Usually yourself, sometimes others, or situations.) |
| 6. | Personalisation      Self blame      Shoulds                                       |
| 7. | Emotional reasoning<br>(“I feel it, therefore it must be true”)                    |
| 8. | Mind reading<br>(You “think” you “know” what others are thinking)                  |
| 9. | Control facilities<br>(“If only” and “what if” thoughts)                           |

A useful exercise to gain understanding of how you think – **what your patterns are** – is to monitor you thoughts. This written exercise, 3 columns, helps to clarify an internal – largely unconscious process.

TYPICAL (AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE) THOUGHT	PATTERN	POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE (POSITIVE) THOUGHT
e.g I made a mistake, I am a failure, I am useless	All or nothing Black/White labelling	Nobody is perfect. I can correct or change that...