

The 'F' in FLIP-It
Thinking stands for

FOCUS





FOCUS - Facts or feelings?

Remember that, 97% of the time, we react using our emotional brain. This can lead us to think things like:

'My teacher has just given me a funny look, what have I done to upset her?'

It's always good to acknowledge our emotions/speak to someone about them and not to keep them bottled up. However, sometimes our feelings aren't quite right and they can escalate quickly (it's called catastrophising).

WONKY FEELINGS	FACTS
I'm feeling worried because I think I've upset my teacher.	I don't know that my teacher was giving me (or anybody else) a funny look – she could have been thinking, or chewing, or daydreaming.
She might tell my parents. Then they'll be cross with me.	I don't remember doing anything to upset my teacher.
This has ruined my week.	If I ask her if she's okay, then I'll know for sure.

Things that are in our control or things that aren't in our control?

We can't control everything – even if we really want to! There are lots of things we can control though:

- We can't control other people's words and actions, but we can control our own
- We can't control the weather, but we can choose to wear appropriate clothing, sun-cream etc depending on whether it's raining, snowing or sunny
- We can't control a global pandemic, but we can do our part to keep ourselves and our families safe
- When we feel out-of-control, it helps us to be more positive if we focus on the things that we **can** influence.

FOCUS – Negative or positive?

How can we quickly change our focus, when we know we're having negative thoughts?

The quickest way to change our focus, when we know we're thinking negatively, is to have a bank of things/memories that make us chuckle, giggle or smile.

Did you know that our brains can't tell the difference between watching something funny and remembering the same funny thing some time later? So why not try:

- Getting a family photo and sticking googly eyes on people
- Remembering something that made you laugh on a telly programme – maybe seeing people fall over on You've Been Framed?
- Watching funny baby or cat clips on YouTube
- Thinking of your favourite place



How else can we shift our focus?

There are lots of other ways that we can change our thinking, from negative to positive. These all work well:

- Distracting ourselves by doing something else for a while
- Chatting it through with someone; asking them to challenge our wonky thinking/ help us to think differently e.g. 'Are you absolutely sure that your teacher gave you a funny look? Could she just have had wind?' (It helps if the other person can make us laugh too, so that we can put any worries into perspective.)
- Doing some exercise
- Listening to music
- Drawing or painting

When you're feeling anxious, angry, or sad, work out which strategies work for you and use them – LOTS!

