

Reframing Failure with the A-B-C-D-E Model

Use this worksheet to work through setbacks, unhelpful beliefs, or moments of self-doubt.

The A-B-C-D-E Model helps you move from automatic negative thinking to learning and growth.

Fill out each section with honesty and detail.

A – Activating Event

What happened?

Describe the situation objectively, without interpretation or judgment.

Example: *I pitched a new idea at the team meeting, and it was rejected.*

B – Belief

What belief did you form about the event?

Write down the automatic thought or belief you had in response.

Example: “I always mess up when I share ideas.”

C – Consequence

How did you feel and act as a result?

List your emotional and behavioural responses.

Example: I felt embarrassed and discouraged. I stopped contributing ideas in meetings.

D – Dispute

Challenge the belief. Is it really true? What else could be true?

Ask yourself:

- Is this belief based on facts or assumptions?
- Have there been times when things went differently?
- What evidence supports or contradicts this belief?

Example: Is it true I always mess up? I've had several ideas accepted before. Maybe this idea just wasn't the right fit this time.

E – Effective New Behaviour

What constructive response can you choose instead?

Decide on a new, more helpful action or perspective.

- What can you learn from this experience?
- What will you do differently next time?
- How can you reframe the event as a lesson?

Example: I'll ask for feedback on how to improve my ideas. Next time, I'll prepare differently and remember that one rejection doesn't define my abilities.

Reflection Prompts

- What did you notice about your thinking patterns as you completed this worksheet?
- How did disputing your belief change your feelings about the event?
- What small step can you take today to put your new behaviour or mindset into practice?

Tip:

Repeat this exercise whenever you face a setback or feel stuck in negative thinking. Over time, you'll build resilience and a growth-oriented mindset.