



## Thinking about thinking 147

### EXERCISE 6.4: THE A, B, C, D, E OF SELF-FOCUSED ATTENTION

#### Activating Event

Describe a recent typical situation in which you were excessively self-focused:

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#### Behavior

Describe what you were doing. For example, were you checking the picture in your mind to see how you looked?

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#### ImmEDIATE Consequences

Was there any pay-off from being self-focused? Did it give you a sense that you were taking action to prevent something bad from happening?

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#### Unintended Consequences

What effect did being self-focused have? Did it make you more distressed or preoccupied with your appearance?

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## 148 OVERCOMING BODY IMAGE PROBLEMS

What effect did being self-focused have on the people around you? Did you appear to be less friendly or warm?

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### **Alternative Directions**

Could you be more externally focused on an activity that is consistent with your goals and valued directions?

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### **Effect of Alternative Directions**

What effect did following your alternative direction have?

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### **Identifying a pattern**

Can you see a pattern to the way you cope? What are the typical situations in which you are self-focused? Is there a pattern to these situations that you could change? Can you do anything to prevent such situations?

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## Thinking about thinking 149

**EXERCISE 6.5: QUESTIONING YOUR MOTIVATION  
FOR BEING SELF-FOCUSED**

**What is your motivation for being self-focused?** Do you sometimes think that being self-focused could help you? Do you feel as if it might prepare you for being humiliated or something bad happening? Try to write down your motivation in the form of an assumption. (For example, 'If I am self-focused I can prevent others from humiliating me.')

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The types of questions to ask yourself are:

- Does this assumption or rule about being self-focused help you in your goals and valued directions in life?
- Would you recommend to others checking in an internal mirror or being self-focused? If not, why not?
- Is it possible that the picture in your mind is different from how others might see you?
- What doubts do you have about being externally focused and concentrating on what you see, hear and smell?
- Can this assumption be made more flexible?
- Is the cost of being self-focused too high?

Now decide whether holding such assumptions about being self-focused is really helpful and whether you could try an alternative – being externally focused. Write down what you plan to focus on in your external environment.