

Mind Symmetry Technique

A gentle practice for balancing polarised thinking

Introduction: Why It Matters

Our mind, like nature, is always seeking balance. But **automatic thoughts** can be loud, critical, or polarised, pulling us into rigid “all-or-nothing” patterns.

This often leads to:

- Anxiety
- Avoidance
- Exhaustion

Mind Symmetry offers a compassionate approach that helps us:

- Observe thoughts without judgment
- Notice polarisation in real time
- Invite a kinder, more intentional perspective

Mind Symmetry Technique	
Automatic Thoughts + Emotions	Intentional Thoughts + Emotions
Quick judgments → irritation, frustration, envy	Considers alternatives → calm, open-minded
Cynical, rigid → anxiety, defensiveness	Curious → flexible, accepting
Assumes & projects → worry, sadness, anger	Seeks clarity → grounded, confident
Catastrophizes → fear, dread	Realistic expectations → balanced, content
Unclear boundaries → overwhelm, guilt, resentment	Clear boundaries → self-assured, centered

Step 1 – Automatic Thoughts

1. **Choose a situation** (e.g., something recent that felt frustrating, stressful, or upsetting).
Or simply pause and notice what your mind is saying right now.
2. **Write short sentences** of the thoughts that come up.
 - Keep them brief and honest.
3. On a **separate line**, note:
 - The **emotion** you feel (e.g., sad, frustrated, anxious).
 - Any **extreme or polarised thoughts** (e.g., “never,” “always,” “no one,” “everything”).

Step 2 – Intentional Thoughts

After you've captured the automatic side, pause and shift into the intentional column.

1. **Acknowledge the emotion** → don't dismiss it, just notice.
2. **Ask a curious question** → "Is there another way of looking at this?"
3. **Clarify facts vs assumptions** → what do I really know?
4. **Reframe** → what balanced or constructive perspective can I choose?
5. **Write your intentional response** in short sentences, directly beside your automatic thoughts.

Mind Symmetry Exercise sheet:

Automatic Thoughts + Emotions	Intentional Thoughts + Emotions
Assumes, Judges, Catastrophises, Harsh, Controlling	Curious, Kind, Clarifies, Alternatives, Assertive