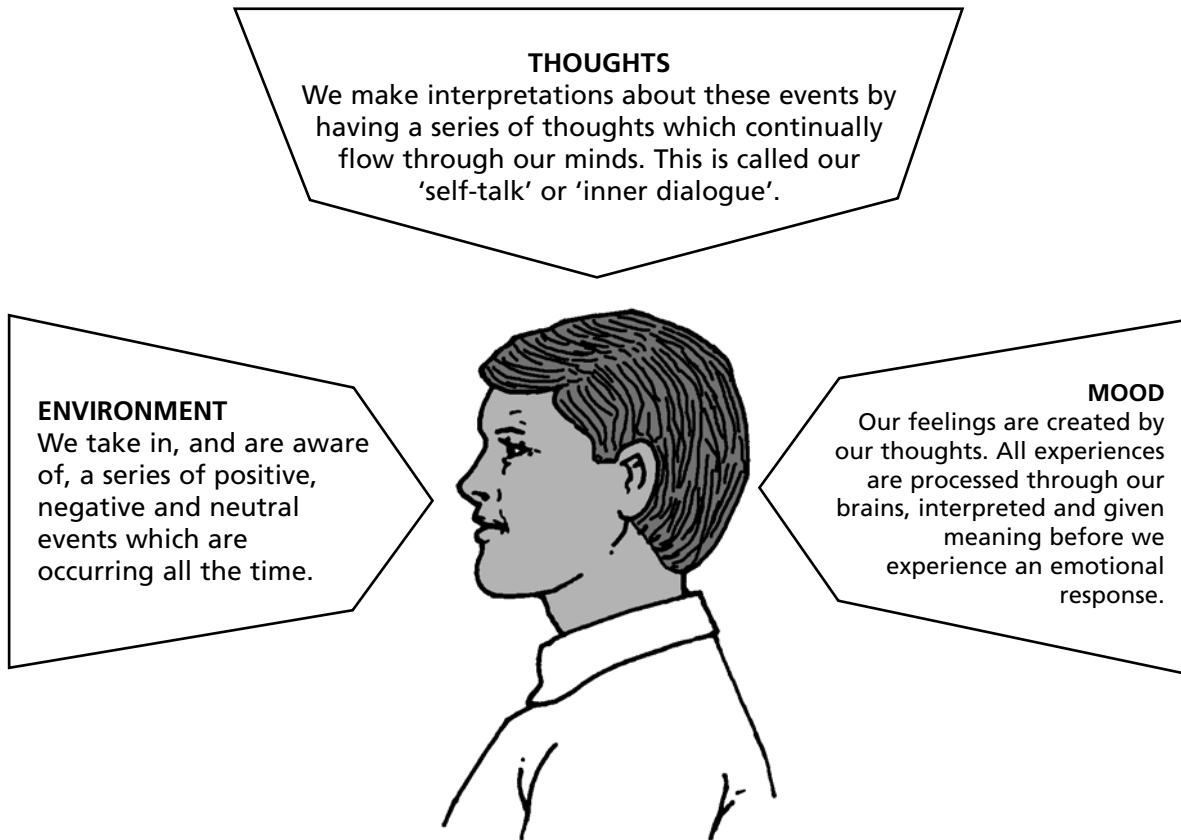


'Men are not worried by things, but by their ideas about things. When we meet with difficulties, become anxious or troubled, let us not blame others, but rather ourselves, that is, our ideas about things'

– Epictetus –



- ◆ *Beliefs and thoughts.* Events themselves do not cause us to feel upset or depressed, rather it is our beliefs about these events that determine our emotional reaction. A network of fundamental beliefs influence our view of the world and our thinking patterns. It is important to be mindful about what we are thinking and to examine our underlying beliefs. We are thinking all of the time.
- ◆ *Selective bias in depression.* When we feel low in mood our thinking takes on a selective bias and we become more likely to think about negative things from the past. Low mood reactivates old negative thinking patterns. We then view the present more negatively and also view the future through a selective bias – like looking through a pair of dark glasses.
- ◆ *Recognise negative thinking.* Imagine you were feeling low in mood and when walking down the street you saw an acquaintance who just walked past you without acknowledging you. If you are feeling low you are likely to interpret this negatively – ‘I must have done something wrong – they don’t like me’. Your mind ignores other options such as ‘they might be very busy’ or ‘they might have a problem which is preoccupying them’. The challenge when you are depressed is to step back and become mindful or aware of this process. Decentre yourself from the continuous chatter of your mind and challenge the process of thinking negatively automatically.