

# EMPOWER



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### SESSION 1

Ground Zero

### SESSION 2

Dealing with Disaster

### SESSION 3

Brace for Impact

### SESSION 4

Healthy Foundations

### SESSION 5

Emotional Alarm Bells

### SESSION 6

Snakes and Ladders

### SESSION 7

Thought Court

### SESSION 8

Cross Examined

### SESSION 9

Meaning Making

### SESSION 10

Purpose from Pain

### SESSION 11

Reconciliation to the  
Rescue

### SESSION 12

Certainty Amid  
Uncertainty

# Thought Court

## ACTIVITY SHEET



Impaired mental ability can be frustrating and lead to mental distortions. You'll possibly find yourself catastrophising your circumstance and letting your mind play out the worst possible scenarios. As a result, you may end up drawing conclusions about your situation based on worry rather than wisdom.



### SESSION OBJECTIVES

**This session is designed to help you understand:**

- (a)** how distorted thinking can lead to mental 'strongholds'
- (b)** the way counterfeit thinking influences emotions and actions
- (c)** battle strategies for mastering your mind

# Trains of Thought

Everyone is vulnerable to destructive thoughts at times. However, if you're not mindful of the information being fed to your soul, faulty thoughts have a sneaky way of influencing what you believe. Left unchecked, your mind can end up playing tricks on you – distorting your reality. For this reason, it's important to be mindful of the trains of thought you hop on and off, as well as be intentional about the direction in which you're headed.



Connect the following thought trains with their likely destination:

## Trains of thought

“My friend’s romantic partner is so much more loving and caring. I deserve better.”

“There are so many others qualified looking for work. How can I possibly compete?”

“Where is God in all of this pain. What kind of ‘good’ God lets ‘bad’ things happen?”

“Really, who cares anymore? Everyone else is doing it, so it can’t be that big of a deal”

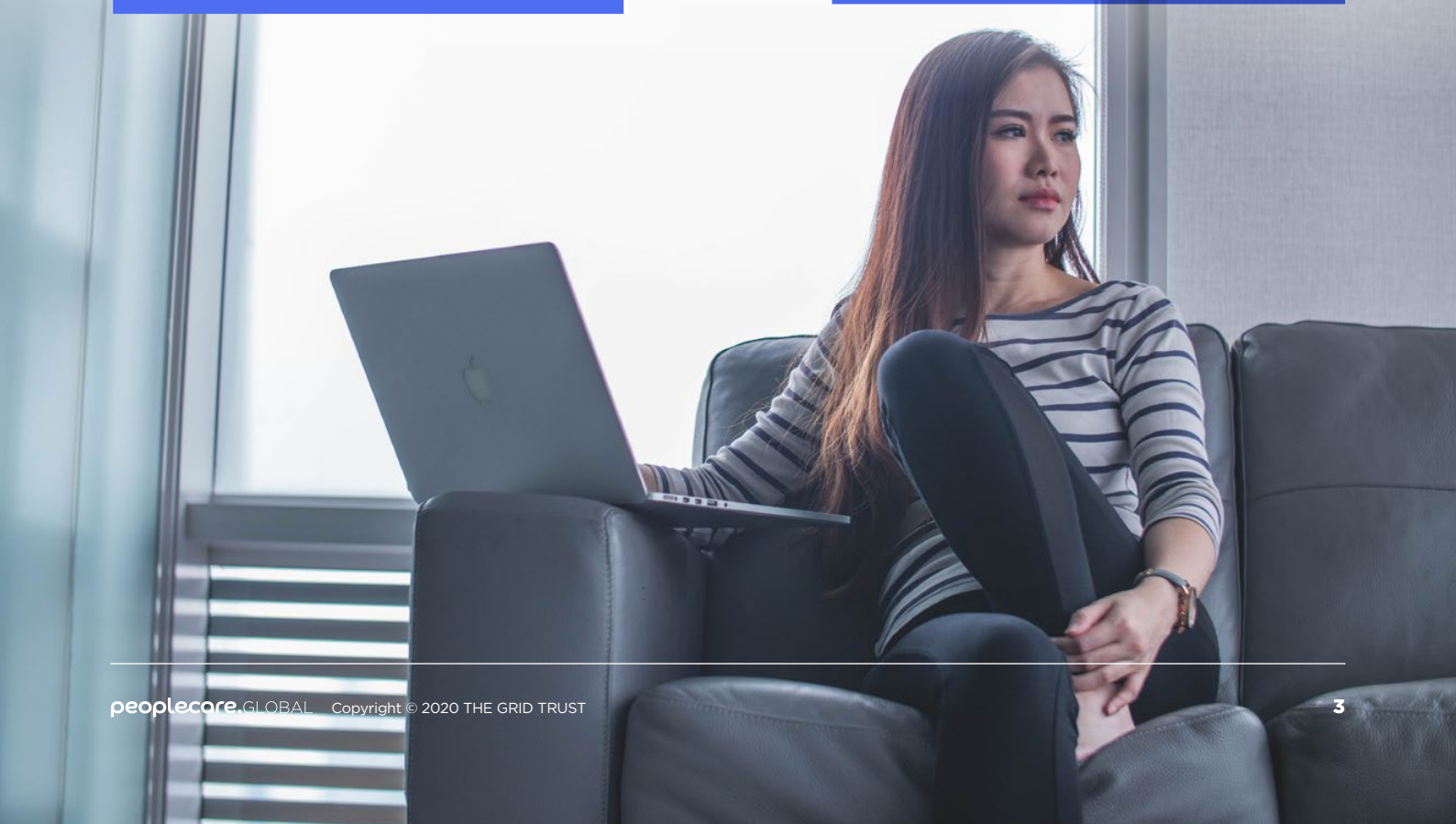
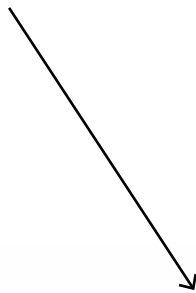
## Destination

IMMORAL CHOICES

LONG TERM UNEMPLOYMENT

RELATIONSHIP CRISIS

LOSS OF FAITH



# Story Time

Thoughts influence how you feel. Subconscious thoughts are good at telling you stories (ranging in genre from horror to hope). Like any good story, you can get so caught up in it that you forget it's just that; a story. The stories you allow your mind to tell yourself during hard times have the capacity to shape perceptions of your past and future.



**In each scenario, what's the likely story that's influencing past and future perceptions?**

Perception of Past	Story Time	Perception of Future
"I got the flu (influenza) last year. I must have a weak immune system"	"You have a weak immune system. You'll probably get the flu every year"	"I'll likely get the flu (influenza) this year. I must have a weak immune system"
"God has rescued me before; He's gotten me out of the worst kind of trouble"		"God can rescue me again; There's no trouble too great for Him to handle"
"People have spread rumours about me that have hurt my reputation"		"I wouldn't be surprised if they gossip about me behind my back to tarnish my reputation"
"Bad things always happen to coincide with my poor choices - when God's angry with me"		"If I do something wrong, God will punish me again; He lets bad things happen to me"
"I failed my last test"		"I'll likely fail my next test"
"I've lost my jobs in the past, but God's always helped me find new ones that are better"		"If I lose my Job, God must have something better in store. He never lets me down"
"I've prayed, but God clearly doesn't listen or care. I've been forsaken and betrayed"		"What's the point in praying. It's not like God listens or cares. I'll only get hurt again"

Thoughts from the pit of despair are not typically in line with the mind of Christ. Therefore, be on guard against the enemy's whisper. The enemy of your mind would love to enchant you with the idea; 'God's Word and ways are unreliable'.

# The Sheriff of Your Mind

We know from scripture; unseen spiritual forces endeavour to set up mental strongholds. A stronghold is just a fancy way of saying mental bondage, blockage or oppression. In other words, states of mind that cause you to get stuck in your thinking. Fortunately, both science and scripture articulate key strategies for you to exercise authority over wayward thoughts.

## AWARENESS

Subconscious conversations have the power to either strengthen your faith or weaken your fight. Before you can arrest these thoughts and take them off to ‘thought court’, you first need to become aware of their existence and how they may be influencing you.



The following common thoughts are linked with painful emotions. Identify which, if any, of the following thoughts you may be susceptible to in times of adversity:

### Sadness

“No one cares about me”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Nothing good ever happens”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“God has abandoned me”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Everyone always leaves”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“No one understands”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I’m all alone”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I’m a failure”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I’m always overlooked”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I’m not good enough”	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Hopelessness

“What’s the point in trying?”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“There’s nothing to look forward to”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Things are never going to get better”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“There’s no point anymore”	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Worry</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
“What if _____ happens?”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“How am I going to cope?”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I can’t trust anyone”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“The world is a dangerous place”	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Shame

“I’m defective and flawed”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I’m such a useless _____”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“It’s all my fault”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I am weak and pathetic”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I’m not worthy”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I’m a mistake”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“I’m a total idiot”	<input type="checkbox"/>

### ✓ Anger

“It’s not fair”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“What did I do to deserve this?”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“It’s all your fault”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“It’s all my fault”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Where is God?”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“Why hasn’t God helped me yet?”	<input type="checkbox"/>
“People just let you down”	<input type="checkbox"/>

Take some time to consider what other kinds of thoughts you may be having. What situation has triggered these thoughts? How do these thoughts impact the way you feel and react? Left unchecked, what's the likely outcome?



Plot your situation-thought-emotion-reaction-outcome flow-on effect below:

SITUATION	THOUGHT	EMOTION	REACTION	OUTCOME
Example: Major argument with a loved one	"They always do this. I'm so sick and tired of being let down."	Anger and frustration	Withdrawal; engaging passive-aggressive behaviour	Fractured relationship; emotional distress



**TO 'LAY HOLD EVERY THOUGHT CAPTIVE FOR CHRIST' MEANS TO ARREST YOUR WAYWARD THOUGHTS (PROHIBITING THEM FROM ROAMING WILD IN YOUR MIND); REQUIRING THEM TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT IN SUBMISSION TO THE HONOURABLE SUPREME COURT JUDGE.**