

FACT OR OPINION

FACT

- Evidence to support its truth
- Indisputable
- Driven by rational thought
- Head

OPINION

- Based upon a belief or personal view
- Arguable
- Driven by and reinforced by emotion
- Heart

At stressful times, we tend to be driven by our emotions and opinions, which create a vicious cycle by fueling each other. Our emotions strengthen our opinions, which in turn, intensify our emotions.

This leads to impulsive acts and unhelpful longer term consequences, which help to maintain the overall problem.

Realizing that many thoughts are opinion rather than fact makes it less likely that we'll be distressed by them, and more able to make wise and calm decisions about the best action to take.

It is helpful to ask ourselves whether our thoughts are FACT or OPINION.

- If OPINION, then we can look at the facts – what we do know about the situation.
- If FACT, then we can make choices about the best thing to do.



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EXAMPLE

What words might we use to describe this picture?

FACT

Evidence-based

- Clown
- Painted face
- Colorful
- Circus performer
- Smiling



OPINION

Varies, Personal View

- Funny
- Weird hair
- Scary
- Happy
- Ugly

In the same way, individuals can have many varied opinions about the same event or situation. If someone we know walked past us without saying hello, we might think, “they deliberately ignored me”, “she’s being snooty and rude”, “they didn’t want to talk to me because they don’t like me” and so on.

This might lead us to feel upset, and react in ways that are unhelpful.

The only fact is that the person walked past, anything else is opinion – our own personal interpretation of the event. The reality is that they just didn’t see us.

Get into the habit of asking yourself:

FACT OR OPINION?



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