Example Form 8.2a: Downward Arrow: Identifying Core Automatic Thoughts

Sometimes the alternative thoughts you’re coming up with don’t seem very believable. This may because there are core automatic thoughts driving your initial negative thoughts. Use this form to explore the thoughts that might be beneath the surface of your first automatic thought.

First Automatic Thought: My boss will find the mistake I made and be upset at me.

If this were true, what would it mean about me? Why does this matter to me? What would happen if this were true? What would happen next?

Core Automatic Thought: I’m going to get fired.

If this were true, what would it mean about me? Why does this matter to me? What would happen if this were true? What would happen next?

Core Automatic Thought: I’m bad at my job.

If this were true, what would it mean about me? Why does this matter to me? What would happen if this were true? What would happen next?

Core Automatic Thought: I’ll never be successful.

If this were true, what would it mean about me? Why does this matter to me? What would happen if this were true? What would happen next?

Core Automatic Thought: I’m incompetent.