Automatic thought record

Automatic thoughts (Beck, 1967) are lightning fast thoughts we sometimes have that are based on deeper beliefs we hold about ourselves or others. These thoughts are fast and tricky to catch, as they lie somewhere between our conscious and unconscious mind. If we accept them, however, they can leave us feeling very unhappy.

Here are some common examples of automatic thoughts (there are many more):

Mind reading	Believing you know the thoughts of another.	*"Dan's looking at me funny. He thinks I can't do this job!"*
Fortune telling	Predicting the future (usually for the worse).	*"I'm going to make a food of myself in the presentation tomorrow."*
Catastrophizing	Imagining the absolute worst-case scenario, no matter how unlikely.	*"There was a typo on my C-suite report. I'm going to get fired and never work in town again!"*
Name calling	Assigning negative traits.	*"I'm so stupid."*
Personalizing	Assigning a disproportionate amount of blame to yourself.	*"We missed catching that project risk and now we have to clean up a mess. It's my fault."*
Blaming	Assigning a disproportionate amount of blame to other people.	*"We missed catching that project risk and now we have to clean up a mess. My team is incompetent."*
Discounting positives	Treating successes as trivial.	*"So what if that software is working now? Anyone could have done that."*
All-or-nothing	Viewing events in all-or-nothing terms.	*"Nancy either supports me or she's against me."*

Fortunately, with some practice, we can learn to recognize them for what they are, correct their logic, and change our interpretation of the situation. Doing so can change our feelings towards it.

Situation Briefly describe the event that upset you.	
Emotion Describe the feelings you were left with and rate their intensity.	
Automatic thought What do you remember went through your head at the time?	

Evidence for Identify facts that support this automatic thought.	**Evidence against** Identify facts that call this automatic thought into question.

adaptimist