ANXIETY SOLUTIONS: THE WHITEBOARD

In order to do this activity, you'll need either a whiteboard or large pad of paper and some colour markers.

Your thoughts don't necessarily reflect reality; they are created by your mind. This means that you don't have to take them too seriously or act in response to them, particularly if they are unhelpful or harmful.

By putting some distance between you and your thoughts you can begin to see them more clearly for what they are.

The next time you're having unhelpful, painful worries or thoughts that trigger your anxiety get out your whiteboard or large pad and markers.

Pick up one of the markers and write this heading: **Unhelpful Thoughts My Mind Is Telling Me About** [whatever you're worrying about].

For example: "**Unhelpful Thoughts My Mind Is Telling Me About Asking for a pay rise.**" List all of the thoughts your mind is telling you about asking for a pay rise. For example, your mind might say things such as 'I don't really need the money' or 'I should be happy to just have a job'.

Be sure to list all of your thoughts, no matter how crazy, silly, or inconsequential they might seem to be.

When you're done, put down the marker and step back a few feet from the board or pad. Tell yourself, *'These are merely my thoughts—they are not me. I am much more than these thoughts'*.

Feel the distance you have between you and these unhelpful thoughts. Try stepping back even farther to put more distance between you and these unhelpful thoughts.

How do these thoughts feel now?

By stepping back and observing your unhelpful thoughts from a distance, you get a different perspective on them. When you say to yourself, 'My mind is telling me ..'. or 'My mind is having the thought that..', the unhelpful, painful thoughts no longer seem like a part of you. They're merely thoughts, something your brain is capable of cranking out nonstop all day long.

Source: Chapter 2 Stress Less, Live More by Richard Blonna