



# Working Down The Worry

When you are in a time of waiting, perhaps in this case, waiting for the opportunity to take the next pregnancy test, or waiting to see the fertility consultant for news on a round of fertility treatment, it is likely that your mind will take you through a range of scenarios to find possible outcomes.

As humans, we crave certainty. Certainty provides assurance of a guaranteed outcome and a sense of having control.

Waiting is hard, and it can be that in order to find that certainty, 'what if's...' come in to play. 'What if's' are about exploring the outcomes of the uncertainty, but they are rarely hopeful. Even more, they are often the start of a series of spiralling thoughts (also called catastrophising), and can quickly lead to the worst possible outcome. For example, a 'What if ...' thought spiral could be:

'What if my next pregnancy test turns out negative...'  
'... and then the next one might also be...'  
'... and then I might need to have fertility treatment...'  
'...and what if that doesn't work...'  
'...I will never become a parent!'

To stop catastrophising to the worst possible outcome, and enter uncertainty with more curiosity and less fear, it's important to disrupt the thought spiral. In order to do this, we want to work down the worry:

- 1.Name the worry that is in front of you (if using the example above, the uncertainty of the pregnancy test, rather than the fear of never conceiving).
- 2.How likely is it that your worry will come true?
- 3.If it does come true, what's the worst that could happen?
- 4.If it does come true, what's most likely to happen?
- 5.If it does come true, what resources do you have to help you cope? And what are the chances of you being OK, 1 month, 3 months, 1 year?
- 6.Some affirmations that support me in my current state of worry:
  - a.I choose to hold curiosity over fear
  - b.Curiosity helps me to see a range of possible outcomes
  - c.I have power over my thoughts
  - d.Thoughts are not facts; I choose to hold them lightly to protect
- 7.A reframe (an alternative way of thinking) for my worry.



Tilia Therapy