CHALLENGING YOUR THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS: A SAMPLE RESPONSE

NAMING THE EVENT, THOUGHT OR FEELING

- What is the situation that triggered me? I bombed today’s math lesson on fractions. The kids were rolling their eyes at me and complaining that nothing I said made sense.
- What am I thinking or imagining? I am a bad teacher. I failed.
- How much do I believe it? (Rate 0-100) 80
- What does this thought make me feel? Sad, depressed, mad at myself
- How strong is this feeling? (Rate 1-100) 90

QUESTIONING THE THOUGHT

- What makes me think the thought is true or accurate? The kids’ faces. Their complaints.
- What makes me think the thought is not true or, at least, not completely true? Not everyone looked confused. Only two or three students actually complained.
- Is there another way to look at this? If so, what is it? This is the first in a series of lessons, and I haven’t taught this before. Teaching the concept of fractions can be difficult for a lot of teachers—not just me.
- What’s the worst thing that could happen? Would I still be able to live through it? They wouldn’t ever “get it.” They could all revolt. They could throw things at me. They could complain to the principal and their parents. (I guess I could live through all of that.)
- What’s the best thing that could happen? I could revisit the lesson, try a different approach, and help the kids to grasp this content. We could all learn from this.
- What will most likely happen? We’ll get there by trial and error. It may take longer than I had planned.
- What might happen if I keep repeating this thought in my head? I won’t want to keep trying. I’ll build resentment toward the kids. I’ll keep feeling badly about myself and lose confidence.
- What might happen if I changed my thinking about this? I would ease up on myself and relax a little. I might also be more responsive to my students and where they are in their learning. I might even be more creative in my approach to this lesson.
• What might I tell my friend if this happened to her or to him? Chin up. No big deal. This happens to all of us. Please don’t be so hard on yourself—you are a talented and committed teacher, and you will figure this out.

MOVING FORWARD

• How much do I still believe the negative thought now? (Rate from 0-100) 50
• How strongly do I feel the negative emotion now? (Rate from 0-100) 65
• After going through this process, is there any other action I might choose to take now? Take a break; go for a walk and get some fresh air for now. Then, talk to my colleague about a new approach/idea for this lesson.