



COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER FITNESS

STRONG MINDS ★ STRONG BODIES

Module Two: Building Mental Toughness



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Mission Statement

- Participants will learn a skill that will make them stronger individuals and better leaders by building their mental toughness. These seven skills will also develop their ability to understand the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of themselves and others.



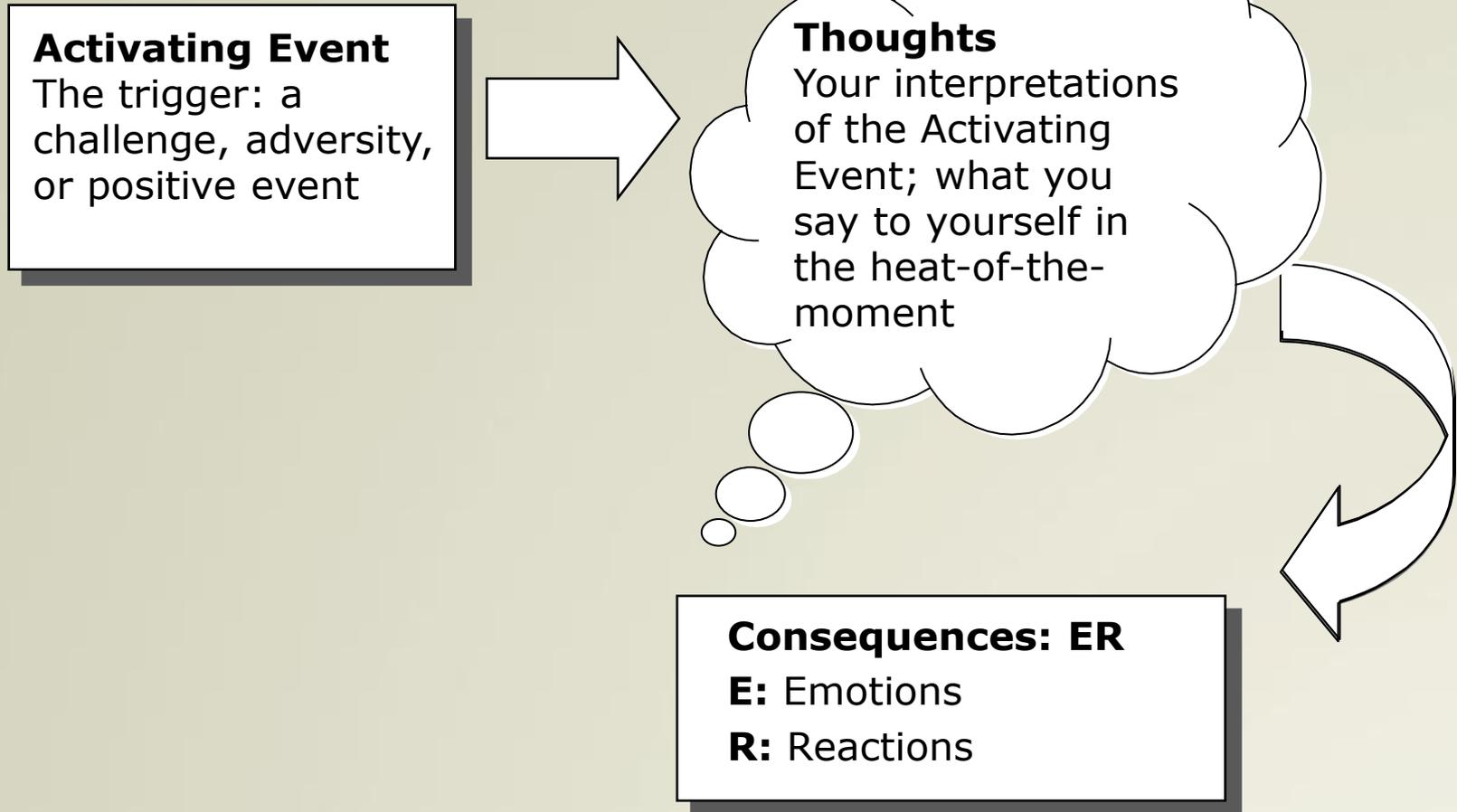
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Module Two, Unit One: ATC



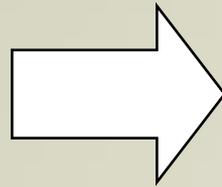


- ATC helps to build Self-awareness.
- Identify your heat-of-the-moment Thoughts about an Activating Event and the Consequences of those Thoughts so you can have greater control over your Emotions and Reactions.





Fight with
someone you
care about

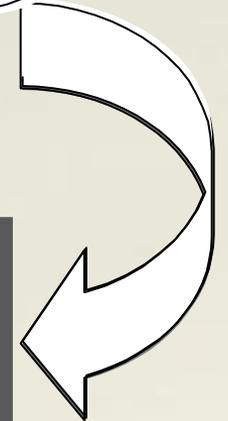


She never
listens to what I
have to say.



E: frustrated,
irritated, angry

R:





- We all have situations that we handle effectively and other situations that we don't handle as effectively as we need to.
- Identify your effectiveness in a variety of situations.
- Generate recent, meaningful, and specific examples of situations you did not handle as effectively as you needed to.



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Activating Events: Debrief

- Which situations do you already handle well?
- Which situations do you need to handle more effectively?



- Emotions are feelings and are usually accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body.
- Examples include anger, happiness, fear, love, etc.



Identifying Emotions

- Break into teams of five.
- On a flip chart, list as many feelings as possible.
- Write positive feelings (e.g., happiness) on the left-hand side and negative feelings (e.g., anger) on the right-hand side.
- Synonyms are okay.
- You have three minutes.
- Go!



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Identifying Emotions: Debrief

- What did you learn?
- Why is it important to have a variety of words for different emotions?



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Benefits of Positive Emotions Based on the work of Barb Fredrickson

- Positive Emotions...
 - increase creative thinking
 - undo the physiological effect of negative emotion
 - are contagious
 - help build resilience



Thought Themes

Emotions/Reactions

Loss: I have lost something that I value or care about.

Sadness/Withdrawal

Danger: Something bad might happen; there is a threat.

Anxiety/Agitation

Trespass: I have been harmed.

Anger/Aggression

Inflicting harm: I have caused inappropriate, unnecessary or unintentional harm.

Guilt/Apologizing

Negative comparison: I don't measure up to others or standards.

Embarrassment/Hiding

Positive contribution: I have contributed in a positive way.

Pride/Sharing, planning future achievements

Appreciating what you have received: I have received something that I value; I have been helped by others.

Gratitude/Giving back, paying forward

Positive future: Things can change for the better.

Hope/Energizing, taking action



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Thought-Consequence Connections Example AE: First Deployment

Thought Themes: Thought	Emotions/Reactions
<p>Loss: I'm not going to be able to spend time with my family. I will miss them.</p>	Sadness/Tearing up
<p>Danger: I am going to die</p>	Anxiety/Pacing
<p>Trespass: They didn't train me enough for this. I shouldn't have to go yet.</p>	Anger/Throw my cell phone
<p>Inflicting harm: I'm leaving my family all alone. I will miss my son's graduation and other important events in his life.</p>	Guilt/Apologize to son
<p>Negative comparison: I'm not going to do as well as the other Soldiers. They are all more prepared.</p>	Embarrassment/Don't interact much with other guys in my unit
<p>Positive contribution: I will be there for my battle buddies.</p>	Pride/Discuss with chain of command where to start to get ready to go
<p>Appreciating what you have received: I have received the best training to prepare for deployment.</p>	Gratitude/Helping other Soldiers get ready for deployment
<p>Positive future: When I get home I will reconnect with my family and will enjoy making up for lost time.</p>	Hope/Training to the best of my ability



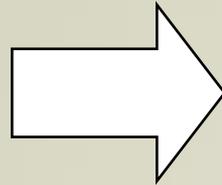
- Some people find that there is a pattern in their Thoughts/that they relate to a certain theme.
- Noticing patterns in your Thoughts can help you understand why you react in a set way across a range of events.



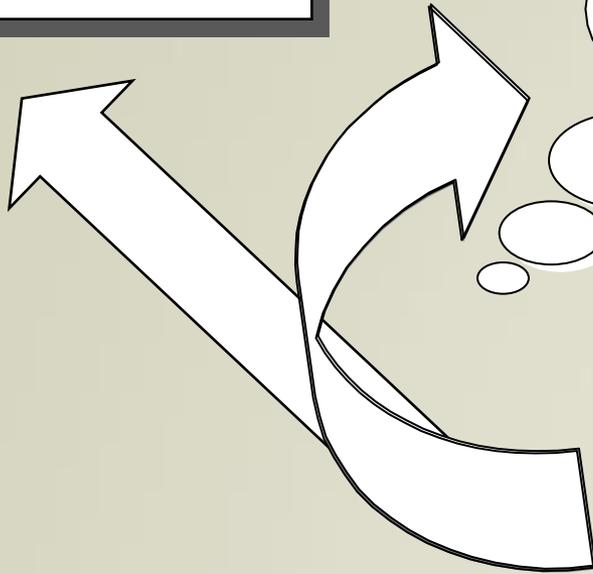


ATC is Complex

Fight with
someone you
care about

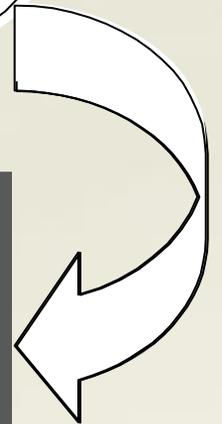


She's always
getting on my
case.



E:

R:





ATC: What's the goal?

- To separate the Activating Event, our Thoughts about it, and the Consequences
- To identify patterns in our thinking that make us weaker or decrease performance
- “Anyone can get angry—that is easy—but to get angry with the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, for the right reason, and in the right way is no longer something easy that anyone can do.”

–Aristotle



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ATC Father/Son Practice



Dad AE (who, what, when, where):

I asked my son to play basketball after returning from deployment. He said no and continued to play video games.

Thoughts:

What you said to yourself in the heat of the moment

Consequences:

ER: Emotions, Reactions

Thought: My son doesn't love me anymore.

Thought Theme: Loss

E: Sadness

R: Left room and started drinking

Thought: He's an ungrateful brat.

Thought Theme: Trespass

E: Anger

R: Yelled at son and told him to get out

Are my emotions and reactions helping or harming?

My emotions and reactions are harming me in this situation. I'm not effectively dealing with my anger or sadness by yelling at my son and leaving the room. And, my emotions and reactions are getting in my way of having time with my son, which is exactly what I want!



- **Separate A, T, C:** Separate the A from the T from the C.
 - A: Just the facts—who, what, when, where
 - T: Your interpretation, what you say to yourself in the heat of the moment
 - C: Your Consequences (ER)
- **Detect patterns:** Identify any patterns in your Ts that undercut your performance and mental toughness.
- **Self-awareness:** Self-awareness is a primary target of ATC.





- Activity:
 - ATC two recent Activating Events in Practice 1 and Practice 2.

AE: who, what, when, where	
Thoughts: What he said to himself in the heat of the moment	Consequences: ER: Emotions, Reactions
Name the uncensored, heat-of-the-moment Thought . - Label the theme of the Thought.	Identify the Emotion : what did you feel? Identify the Reaction : what did you do?
Name the uncensored, heat-of-the-moment Thought . - Label the theme of the Thought.	Identify the Emotion : what did you feel? Identify the Reaction : what did you do?



AE (who, what, when, where):

Thoughts:

What you said to yourself in the heat of the moment

Consequences:

ER: Emotions, Reactions

Ask yourself: Are my emotions and reactions helping or harming?



AE: Check for the who, what, when, where

Thoughts:

What you said to yourself in the heat of the moment

Check that it is an uncensored, heat-of-the-moment **Thought**.
Check that they labeled the **theme** of the Thought.

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Check that they labeled the **theme** of the Thought.

Consequences:

ER: Emotions, Reactions

Check that there is an **Emotion**: what did he feel?
Check that there is a **Reaction**: what did he do?

Check that there is an **Emotion**: what did he feel?
Check that there is a **Reaction**: what did he do?

- Check the T-C connection



AE (who, what, when, where):

Thoughts:

What you said to yourself in the heat of the moment

Consequences:

ER: Emotions, Reactions

Ask yourself: Are my emotions and reactions helping or harming?



- What did you learn?
- What patterns, if any, did you notice in your Thoughts and/or Consequences?
- In what ways was your reaction helping or harming you?



- How can you use ATC to enhance your performance?
- How can you use ATC to build stronger relationships?



What is the skill? ATC is a method to identify your Thoughts about an Activating Event and the Consequences of those Thoughts. Our Thoughts are under our control.

When do I use it? Use ATC anytime you're curious about your Emotions or Reactions, when you don't like your reaction, or when you're stuck in a pattern and wearing one set of glasses.

How do I use it? Describe the Activating Event objectively, identify your Thoughts, and identify your Consequences (ER: Emotions, Reactions).