EXERCISE: Experiments to Test Your Underlying Assumptions

Earlier in this chapter, you identified a series of underlying assumptions that guide your behavior (see **Worksheet 11.1**). Choose one of those assumptions that you think it would be helpful to test. Think of what kind of experiment you would be willing to try to test your assumption:

1. Does "then . . . " always follow "If . . . "?

2. Observe others and see if your "If . . . then . . . " rule applies to them.

3. Do the opposite and see what happens.

Or maybe you will think of a different type of experiment to test your assumption. For example, instead of observing other people, you might decide to interview some close friends and find out if they follow the same "If . . . then . . . " rule as you do.

The important thing about experiments is that you either make observations or do something to test whether or not your underlying assumption's predictions come true in a variety of situations. In order to make a fair test, it's usually best to do at least three behavioral experiments before drawing a conclusion. So it is helpful to think of small experiments that are easy to do on a daily basis.

On **Worksheet 11.2**, write the underlying assumption that you are testing at the top of three copies of the worksheet. In the first column of each page, describe one of the experiments you plan to do. You might do the same experiment three times or describe three different experiments on the three worksheets. In the next column of each worksheet, write your predictions of what will happen, based on your underlying assumption. Then identify any possible problems that might interfere with your doing the experiment, as well as your plan for what you can do to overcome these problems.

Once you have completed these first four columns, do the experiments and write down in as much detail as possible what actually happens, so you can compare these outcomes to your predictions. Answer the following questions in the "Outcomes . . . " column:

- What happened (compared to your predictions)?

- Do the outcomes match what you predicted?

- Did anything unexpected happen?

- If things didn't turn out as you wanted, how well did you handle it?

After doing each experiment, write what you learned in the final column.

Experiments to Test an Underlying Assumption

ASSUMPTION TESTED					
Experiment	**Predictions**	**Possible problems**	**Strategies to overcome these problems**	**Outcome of experiment**	**What have I learned from this experiment about this assumption?**
				What happened (compared to your predictions)? Do the outcomes match what you predicted? Did anything unexpected happen? If things didn't turn out as you wanted, how well did you handle it?	
ALTERNATIVE ASSUMPTION THAT FITS WITH THE OUTCOME(S) OF MY EXPERIMENT(S)					