

# AI-01916 Thinking Error-The Fixer

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**What kind of thinking error is the following. Me and my wife retired early at age 55 in 2021 and relocated from TX to Cebu Philippines. We left our house and cars in TX with our RN daughter who is now 32. Today she sent me a picture of the Carrier AC thermostat controller saying with fault code 84. As the owner of the house since 1996 when we built it, I have the thinking to fix it for her but with a Pacific Ocean separating us. I normally take care of any house issues when I was still living there. Explain my thinking error and the best method to train her with the anti-fragility skillsets.**

This sounds like a classic case of the "fixer" mindset or over-responsibility. As the original owner and "fixer" of the house, you've developed a deep-seated habit of being the one to solve problems. Even though you're now thousands of miles away, your brain automatically defaults to that familiar role. This is a cognitive shortcut based on your past experiences, not the current reality of the situation.

## **Here are a few ways to break down the thinking error:**

1. The "Locus of Control" Shift: When you lived in the house, you had direct control over the problems. You were the one who could physically inspect, diagnose, and repair things. Now, the locus of control has shifted entirely to your daughter. Your thinking hasn't caught up with this reality. You still feel a sense of ownership and responsibility for a situation where you have no direct control.
2. The "Anchor" of Past Behavior: You've anchored your identity as the problem-solver for that house. This is a powerful cognitive bias. You're trying to apply a

solution (your problem-solving ability) to a problem that is fundamentally different (a problem that is physically inaccessible to you).

3. "All-or-Nothing" Thinking: You see the problem as something you must fix, or it won't get fixed properly. This thinking doesn't account for your daughter's ability to learn and handle the situation herself.

### **Training Your Daughter with Anti-Fragility Skillsets**

Anti-fragility, a concept popularized by Nassim Nicholas Taleb, means that something doesn't just withstand stress; it gains from it. In this context, the goal is for your daughter to not just solve this problem, but to become more competent and confident because of it.

Here's a step-by-step method to train her with these skillsets:

1. Shift Your Role from "Fixer" to "Coach"  
Instead of jumping in with the answer, your new role is to guide her through the process. Your communication should change from "I need to fix this" to "Let's figure out how you can fix this."
2. Immediate Action: Don't tell her the solution. Ask her, "What have you tried so far?" or "What's the first step you think we should take?"
3. Focus on Process, Not Just the Outcome  
The goal isn't just to get the AC working again; the goal is for her to learn how to deal with any future AC problem.

### **Step-by-Step Guidance: Help her break down the problem into manageable chunks.**

- **Phase 1: Diagnosis & Information Gathering:** "Okay, the code is 84. What's the first thing we should do to understand what that means?" This will lead her to search the Carrier manual or the internet for "Carrier AC fault code 84."
- **Phase 2: Troubleshooting:** "The manual says code 84 is a high-pressure fault. What are the common causes of that?" Guide her through checking basic things like a dirty filter, blocked outdoor unit, or low refrigerant.

- **Phase 3: Decision-Making:** "Based on what you've found, do you think this is something you can handle yourself, or do we need to call a professional?"
- **Phase 4: Action & Follow-Up:** "If you call a professional, what questions should you ask them? How will you verify their work?"

### **Provide Resources, Not Solutions**

This is a crucial distinction. Instead of saying, "You need to clean the condenser coil," say, "A common cause of this code is a dirty condenser coil. I can email you the manual for the AC unit, or you can find it online. Can you locate the unit and see if the coils look dirty?"

1. Empower Her with Tools: Send her links to YouTube videos on basic AC maintenance, a digital copy of the AC manual, or even the name of a reliable local HVAC company you trust.
2. Introduce the "What's the Worst That Could Happen?" Framework  
This helps reduce her fear of making a mistake. For many non-technical people, the fear of "breaking it more" is a major barrier.
3. Risk Analysis: "What's the worst that could happen if you try to reset the thermostat?" (Answer: it might not work). "What's the worst that could happen if you try to clean the filter?" (Answer: you'll get a little dirty). "What's the worst that could happen if you call a few different companies for a quote?" (Answer: you'll spend a little time on the phone). This helps her realize that most actions have very low stakes.
4. Reinforce and Celebrate Her Success  
When she successfully completes a step, no matter how small, acknowledge her effort and her accomplishment.
5. Positive Reinforcement: "That's great that you found the manual and figured out what the code means! You're already halfway there." or "I'm so proud of how you handled that. You didn't just fix the AC, you learned a new skill."

By following this method, you're not just fixing an AC unit; you're building her competence, confidence, and ability to handle life's inevitable challenges—the very definition of anti-fragility. And in the process, you'll be freeing yourself from a burden you can no longer physically carry.

