

Thinking traps



Jumping to conclusions

Jumping to negative conclusions without looking at the facts.

Examples

- "No one is going to talk to me at the party."
- "I am going to feel anxious"
- "I can't do it"
- "nobody trusts me" (emotional reasoning)
- "Everybody is going to laugh at me"

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Can I prove this, or did I just jump to conclusions?

Fortune Telling

Believing you can predict the future. Predicting a negative outcome of an event without considering the likelihood of it happening. You don't have a crystal ball!!!

Examples

- "I couldn't find a job last summer so I won't be able to get one this summer."
- "I will never get the promotion"
- "I'm not going to lose weight"
- "If I ask them out, He/she will never go out with me"
- "That company will never hire me"
- "I'm not going to pass my test"
- "I won't succeed"
- "I'm going to fail"

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Can I tell the future?

Mind Reading

Believing you know what others are thinking (and assuming it's negative), without any real evidence. The problem: you can't read minds, so stop trying.

Examples - "They are thinking....."

- "I know they are talking about me right now. They are thinking about how weird I look."
- "Everyone is wondering what I'm doing at this party."
- "I know she thinks my gift is lame."
- "He thinks I am stupid"
- "They think I'm a failure"
- "They don't appreciate me" (mind reading)

Rethink questions to overcome Mind reading:

How do I know this? Am I a fortune teller?

Thinking traps



Black and white thinking

Thinking only of possible outcomes at either extreme. Really good or really bad.

Examples

- "I have no luck"
- "I'm either going to ace it or fail"
- "I have no friends"

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Is there anything in between?

Overgeneralizing

Making sweeping judgments about ourselves (or others) based on only one or two experiences. These thoughts typically contain the words "always" and "never." The problem: you can never be summed up in one word or base your value as a person on only one single experience!

Examples

- "Bad things always happen to me"
- "Nothing is working out for me"
- "This always happens to me"
- "I never get it right"
- "Bad things always happen to me"
- "It will never get better"
- "I always make mistakes."
- "I am never good at public speaking."

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Are there circumstances in which it wasn't so?

Is there a past event that can prove my thought wrong?

Does this always happen?

Negative Brain Filter

Focusing only on the negative without seeing any of the positive or what is going well.

Examples

- "Nothing is working out for me"
- "I can't stand it"
- "This is so unfair"

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Was there anything good besides the bad things?

Thinking traps



Labelling

Negatively labelling yourself or others. Without considering the evidence or details.

Examples

- "I'm stupid"
- "I'm a loser"
- "He's mean"
- "She is a bully"
- "This is terrible"
- "I'm a failure"
- "I am useless"
- "That's weird"

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Am I more than just this label?

Are there more alternative labels?

Does my thought label me or am I more than that?

My best friend would say

Blaming

Blaming yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for, or blaming others and disregarding your own responsibility for the situation.

Examples Personalization:

- "It's all my fault"

Examples of blaming someone or something else.

- "It's not my fault I was late, I got caught in traffic."
- "It's their fault"
- "Everybody is against me"
- "People Irritate me" (Blaming; black and white thinking; Labelling)

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Am I responsible for everything that happens?

Are there other people who may be responsible too?

What is my part in this story?

Must and shouldn't

Expecting ourselves and others to behave according to our rigid list of "must" "should not" rules.

Examples

- "I must succeed"
- "They must do as I say"
- "I should never feel anxious."
- "I must control my feelings."

Thinking traps



- "I should never make mistakes."

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Did these rules come from a rule book?

Did I just come up with my own personal rule?

Is it illegal?

Emotional reasoning

Thinking something must be true because you feel it strongly, discounting evidence to the contrary.

Examples

- "they don't care about me" (Mind reading)
- "nobody trusts me" (jumping to conclusions)
- "nobody likes/loves me"
- "They don't take me seriously" (mind reading)
- "They don't appreciate me" (mind reading)
- "They do this only to me"
- "Everybody is staring at me"
- "They are doing it to me on purpose"

Rethink questions to overcome it:

Do I have proof of what I think or is it just a feeling?

Others:

Catastrophizing- Imagining the worst-case scenario, no matter how unlikely in reality.

Over estimating- Exaggerating the likelihood that something bad will happen.

Fallacy of fairness- Being too concerned over whether everything is fair.

Self-lowering – Thinking negatively about self.