



A Guide to Thinking Errors

“Thoughts aren’t facts, so don’t take them seriously.”

—Ruby Wax—

Thinking errors are the types of thoughts that can hinder healing. Everyone has them sometimes, but it’s important to recognize them for what they are and replace them with healthier thoughts.

Common Thinking Errors

- 1. All-or-Nothing Thinking.** Instead of seeing things just in black and white, it can help to recognize the shades of gray.
- 2. Filtering out the Positive.** If you tend to focus on the one bad thing, try to focus on the five positive things instead.
- 3. Mind-Reading.** Don’t assume that you know what anyone else is thinking about you, especially if it’s negative. And the reverse, don’t assume others can read your mind either.
- 4. Catastrophizing.** This is when you create the worst-case scenario in your head when something small happens.
- 5. Emotional Reasoning.** Recognize that your emotions are not always based on facts, and may not be rational for the situation.
- 6. Labeling.** Be careful labeling people or experiences. If something goes wrong it may not be a “disaster” and the person responsible may not be “an idiot.”
- 7. Fortune-telling.** “I’m going to make a fool of myself” is a thought that could set you up for failure before you even try.
- 8. Personalization.** If something bad happens it may not be because of you, so don’t take it personally.
- 9. Projection.** This is believing that what you think of yourself is what others think about you. Don’t use your own negative beliefs about yourself to interpret what others think about you.
- 10. Overgeneralizing.** Don’t let one bad experience cloud your view. Beware of thoughts that work in absolutes, such as, “I always...” or “She’ll never...”

Suggested Reading

13 Things Mentally Strong People Don’t Do
by Amy Morin.

Braving the Wilderness: The Quest for True Belonging and the Courage to Stand Alone
by Brene Brown