

Thinking Styles

- 1. All or Nothing Thinking:** You see things in either black or white categories. It is polarized thinking.
Example: “I am a total failure.”
- 2. Overgeneralization:** You can take a single negative event and believe it is something that will happen.
Example “I was rejected by this one person and everyone will reject me.”
- 3. Emotional Reasoning:** You reason with your emotions. You assume that your emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are. I feel therefore I am.
Example: “I feel terrified I will make a mistake. I will not try. I am frozen.”
- 4. Magnification/Catastrophizing:** You exaggerate the importance of your problems and shortcomings, or you minimize the importance of your desirable qualities. You expect the worst possible outcome.
Example: “I am going to have a bad day today. I just know it! Disaster is around the corner.”
- 5. Focusing on the Negative/Mental Filter:** You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, disregarding all positives.
Example: “You receive many positive comments, but one person says something mildly critical. You obsess about the negative reaction for days and ignore all positive feedback.”
- 6. Minimization/Denial:** You insist that you don’t feel hurt, angry, depressed when you really do and you may minimize the positive feelings that you do have.
Example: You received a compliment: “I did not deserve it.”
Drinking behavior of denial: “It does not impact me or others that I drink as much as I want. I can handle it.”
- 7. Jumping to Conclusion:** You interpret things negatively when there are no facts to support your conclusion.
There are two examples of this thinking style.
Mind reading: Without checking it out you automatically think someone is reacting negatively to you.

Example: “That person seemed distracted while I am talking, so they must not care about what I am saying.”

Fortune telling: You predict that things will turn out badly.

Example: “It won’t help to talk to anyone about my problems.”

8. **Should Statements**: You tell yourself that things should be the way you hoped or expected them to be. It has to be this way.

Should statements directed at you create guilt and depressed feelings.

Example: “I should not have to need help.”

Should statements directed at others create anger, frustration, resentment and depression.

Example: “You should be able to do this without asking or needing help.”

9. **Discounting the Positive**: You reject positive experiences by insisting “they don’t count” for some reason or another. This can take the joy of life and make you feel inadequate and unrewarded.

Example: “I received a compliment but I didn’t really deserve it.”

10. **Personalization and Blame**: You see yourself as the cause of any negative event.

Example: “It is my fault that happened. If something goes wrong, it is because of me.”

11. **Blaming the Situation**: You see others or the situation as the cause of your behavior or mood that isn’t entirely in your control. You blame anything or anyone for what you did or said.

Example: “If you would have been there you would have done the same thing. I was provoked.”

12. **Entitlement**: You insist you deserve to get what you want regardless of the situation or cost to others or self.

Example: “I deserve to feel good so I will gamble a lot. It does not matter. I need to escape.”