



Thinking Traps

Overestimating Negative Probability- example: you believe you are in danger of being fired when there is no indication to support your belief.

Catastrophizing-(worst case scenario thinking) overestimating the consequences of something negative happening

All or nothing thinking- seeing things in black and white (always/never)

Should statements-rigid rules for how you and the world should operate and how you and others should think, feel, and behave.

Personalization- Overestimating your influence on negative events or taking things personally.

Mind Reading and Fortune Telling-assuming you know what people are thinking or what will happen.

"It's Not Fair"-over-focusing on whether things are just, fair, or right.

If only...-over-focusing on imagined outcome as the solution to all your problems. If only I had my dream job, then I'd be happy

Emotional Reasoning-basing your interpretation solely on your emotional reactions. If I'm scared it means something bad will happen.

Thoughts as fact-treating your thoughts as absolute truth

After you identify your thinking traps, remember to PAUSE and BREATHE and DISTANCE remembering you are NOT your thoughts or feelings.

DISTANCE from the thinking trap

- Try this: say to yourself "I am noticing a thinking trap",
- name it if you can,
- then say "this is only a thought, it is not the truth".
- Distancing is reminding yourself that you are not your thoughts. Thoughts are like waves, they come and go. You are the ocean...much more complex and vast than any thought.

CHALLENGE your thinking trap.

- What would you say to your best friend or your child if they told you they were having this thought?
- What evidence do you have to support your thoughts?
- How could you look at this in a different way?

BE GENTLE with yourself.

- All humans have thinking traps
- Having difficult thinking is a protection mechanism
- You have developed thinking traps over years of living. It will take practice and effort to break the habit.
- When you notice you have been stuck in a thinking trap, don't criticize yourself, speak to yourself like you would a beloved child who is learning a new skill...because that's what you are doing, and you are BELOVED.