



## 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.