



Thinking styles 101

Learn to recognize helpful and unhelpful thinking styles.

Unhelpful thinking style

Unhelpful thought

Reframed as a helpful thought

All or nothing
AKA, black and white thinking.

People are either good, or they're bad.

People are complicated. Sometimes they follow the rules, and sometimes they don't.

Filtering (mental filters)
Only paying attention to the negative information, not positive information.

I got a high rating in my performance review, but I didn't get promoted. I'm doing a terrible job.

I wish I'd gotten promoted this cycle, but I'm glad to see my hard work paid off with a high-rating.

Jumping to conclusions
Thinking you can read people's minds.

He canceled the meeting because he doesn't like me.

I know he's really busy... I'll ask if we can find another time.

Emotional reasoning
Mistaking feelings for facts—"I feel it, so it must be true"

I feel angry right now, so they must have done something wrong.

I'm feeling hurt. What do I need right now?

Labeling
Being judgmental or "awfulizing" someone or something in an extreme way.

Our new hire is totally incompetent.

I wonder how I can support her work.



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Over-generalizing

Seeing a single example as the norm.

Nobody at work likes me. They always exclude me.

I know they try to cap the meetings to people who are directly involved in the project. I'll ask for the meeting notes.

Catastrophizing

Exaggerating the negative, minimizing the positive.

The conclusion to my paper wasn't tight enough. The whole thing is terrible!

I wish I'd had more time to edit my conclusion. But I feel really good about the rest of the paper!

Should-ing and must-ing

Being critical of ourselves and others.

He should always keep his promises.

I wish he could've kept his promise.

Personalization

Taking things personally and blaming yourself for things you're not responsible for.

They didn't enjoy the offsite—it's all my fault, I should've ordered better food.

Making sure everyone enjoyed the offsite was a group effort. The rain didn't help!