

Exercise

Thinking About Thinking

Our brains are quick to provide a response when something happens. The problem is that sometimes this can be unhelpful. It can be useful to identify when your brain is using unhelpful thinking to provide you with a thought.

Read through the following descriptions and mark any of the ones that are familiar to you.

You could stick this page somewhere you look at regularly, such as on your fridge door and if you struggle with your thoughts, consider if these unhelpful thought types are having an impact.

Mental Filter

When we notice only what the filter wants or allows us to notice, and we dismiss anything that doesn't **fit**. Like looking through dark blinkers or **gloomy specs**, or only catching the negative stuff in our **kitchen strainers** whilst anything more positive or realistic is dismissed.



Judgements

Making evaluations or judgements about events, ourselves, others, or the world, rather than describing what we actually see and have evidence for.



Mind Reading

Assuming we know what others are thinking (usually about us).



Prediction

Believing we know what is going to happen in the future.



Emotional Reasoning

I feel bad so it must be bad! I feel anxious, so I must be in danger.



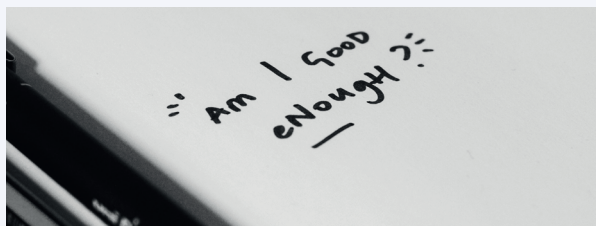
Mountains and molehills

Exaggerating the risk of danger, or the negatives. Minimising the odds of how things are most likely to turn out, or minimising positives.



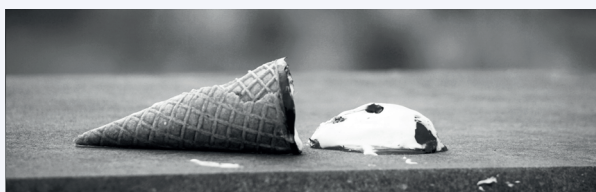
Compare and despair

Seeing only the good and positive aspects in others, and comparing ourselves negatively against them.



Catastrophising

Imagining and believing that the worst possible thing will happen.



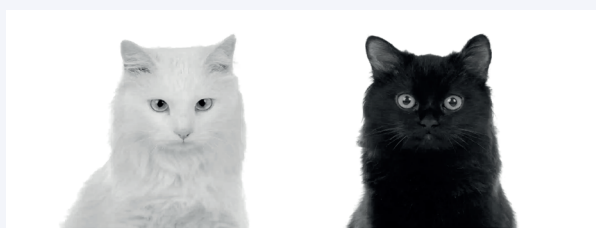
Critical self

Putting ourselves down, self-criticism, blaming ourselves for events or situations that are not (totally) our responsibility.



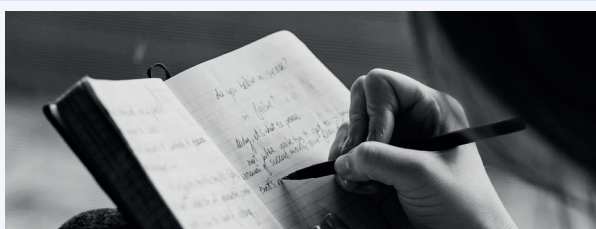
Black and white thinking

Believing that something or someone can be only good or bad, right or wrong, rather than anything in between or **shades of grey**.



Shoulds and musts

Thinking or saying **I should** (or should not) and **I must** puts pressure on ourselves, and sets up unrealistic expectations.



Memories

Current situations and events can trigger upsetting memories, leading us to believe that the danger is here and now, rather than in past, causing us distress right now.

