

Unhelpful Thinking Styles



Read these names for different unhelpful thinking styles:

Over-generalising

Mind reading

Labelling

'Should' thinking

Fortune telling

Magnification

Personalisation

Mental filtering

Ignoring the positive

Emotional reasoning

All or nothing thinking

Read the descriptions of unhelpful thinking styles below and try labelling each one with the names above.

Using a single event to make assumptions about life in general.
e.g. 'Everything always goes wrong' or 'I never do well at anything'.
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Assuming that because we feel a certain way, our thoughts must be true.
e.g. 'I feel embarrassed so I must be stupid'
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Using critical words like 'must' and 'should' to set expectations, making us feel we have failed.
e.g. 'I should know how to do this'
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Forgetting or discounting all the good things that have happened or successes you've had.
e.g. 'That doesn't count' or 'That was different, because...'
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Blowing things out of proportion and making them seem a bigger deal.
e.g. 'This is so terrible!' or 'This is an utter nightmare!'
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Assigning labels to ourselves or others (perhaps based on one event or for no reason at all).
e.g. 'I'm such a loser' or 'They are selfish'
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Thinking in extreme contrasts. Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'.
e.g. 'I'm not perfect so I'm a failure' or 'If I can't get 100%, there's no point in doing it at all'
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Only paying attention to certain details or evidence, filtering out other factors.
e.g. Focusing on the one negative comment on a marked piece of work.
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Imagining or assuming we know what others are thinking.
e.g. 'They think my new glasses look rubbish'
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Predicting what will happen.
e.g. 'I'll forget my lines and everyone will laugh'
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Taking full responsibility for something that wasn't your fault and blaming yourself.
e.g. 'Losing the match was completely my fault'
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