

# Common Thinking Errors

## ALL-OR-NOTHING

WHEN YOU SEE EVERYTHING AS BLACK OR WHITE, WITH NO IN BETWEEN. IF SOMETHING ISN'T 100% PERFECT, THEN IT'S A TOTAL FAILURE. THIS IS AN UNREALISTIC WAY TO THINK.

## MIND-READING

THIS IS REALLY JUST BAD GUESSING! THIS IS WHEN YOU DECIDE IN YOUR MIND WHAT OTHER PEOPLE MUST BE THINKING, WITHOUT CHECKING THE FACTS, AND THEN YOU ACT ON THAT (PROBABLY INCORRECT) ASSUMPTION. THE REALITY IS, YOU SIMPLY CANNOT KNOW WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE THINKING WITHOUT THEM TELLING YOU!

## MAGNIFICATION

WHEN YOU MAKE ONE LITTLE MISTAKE, AND IT BECOMES SO HUGE IN YOUR MIND THAT IT SPOILS EVERYTHING ELSE IN YOUR DAY. THIS IS ALSO CALLED 'BLOWING THINGS OUT OF PROPORTION', OR 'MAKING MOUNTAINS OUT OF MOLEHILLS'.

## MINIMIZATION

THIS IS THE OPPOSITE OF MAGNIFICATION, BUT NOT IN A GOOD WAY! THIS IS WHEN YOU DOWNPLAY ANYTHING GOOD THAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE TOO FOCUSED ON ANY ASPECT OF THE EVENT THAT WENT WRONG. IT IS POSSIBLE TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHERE THINGS MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN PERFECT WITHOUT ALLOWING THEM TO RUIN THE OVERALL EVENT.

## OVER-GENERALIZATION

THIS IS WHEN YOU SEE ONE EVENT THAT DIDN'T TURN OUT SO WELL AS PART OF A NEVER-ENDING PATTERN OF FAILURE OR DISAPPOINTMENT. THE TRUTH MAY WELL BE THAT THE INCIDENT WAS AN ISOLATED EVENT, AND IF YOU PUT IT INTO PERSPECTIVE, IT PROBABLY WASN'T THAT BAD AT ALL.

## FORTUNE-TELLING

MAYBE THIS SHOULD BE CALLED 'MISFORTUNE TELLING'. IT IS PREDICTING THAT THINGS WILL TURN OUT BADLY, EVEN IF YOU HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO PROOF THAT THIS WILL BE THE CASE. THIS THINKING ERROR CAN LEAD TO REAL PROBLEMS, BECAUSE IF YOU THINK THINGS ARE GOING TO GO WRONG, THEN YOU MAY ACT IN A WAY THAT ALLOWS THEM TO GO WRONG.

## CATASTROPHIZING

THIS IS A VERY COMMON THINKING ERROR. IT IS WHEN YOU MAKE EXTREME JUDGEMENTS AND IMAGINE THE VERY WORST OUTCOME WILL OCCUR, EVEN IF THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THEY WILL. IN THIS WAY, IT'S A LOT LIKE FORTUNE-TELLING - THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT FORTUNE-TELLING HAS YOU THINKING THINGS WON'T TURN OUT, CATASTROPHIZING HAS YOU IMAGINE THE VERY WORST WILL HAPPEN.

Information adapted from:  
[www.beyondblue.org.au/SenseAbility](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/SenseAbility)

