



Biased Thinking

From time to time, we all use what is called “Biased Thinking”. Whilst there are various types and categories of such thinking, they all can distort our reality and maintain our cycles of anxiety, fear, and/or worry, and affect our behaviour in many harmful ways (e.g., avoiding, procrastination, substance abuse, constantly seeking reassurance, becoming passive or aggressive). Being aware of the complex interaction between thoughts, feelings, and behaviours is helpful; thoughts affect feelings and vice versa; e.g., depressed mood can lead to depressed thoughts, and depressing thoughts lead to depressed mood. Such can lead to “depressed” signs of action or inaction, e.g., isolation, tiredness, and so on. Key to overcoming Biased Thinking is monitoring, reviewing, and testing with compassion and no judgment.

Types of Biased Thinking

<i>Extreme Thinking</i>	<p><u>All or nothing</u>: You see things as “black or white”, either one of two ways. E.g., if you get one mistake in an exam you see yourself as a failure, people are superior or inferior, good or bad.</p> <p><u>Blaming others</u>: Blaming others while not looking at how you contribute.</p> <p><u>Catastrophising</u>: Taking small negative events and imagining multiple disasters that “will” ensue.</p> <p><u>Low frustration tolerance</u>: Assuming something is “intolerable” just because it’s hard to tolerate.</p> <p><u>Unrealistic demands</u>: Inflexible demands (on self and others) make reality hard to cope with.</p>
<i>Selective Attention</i>	<p><u>Disqualifying the positive</u>: Reject all positive things and minimise them, e.g., that doesn’t count, the exam marker was easy.</p> <p><u>Magnifying or minimising</u>: Blow negative things out of proportion until that’s the only thing that can be seen or thought of or reducing positive things until they become insignificant.</p> <p><u>Mental filter</u>: Focussing only on the negative, ignoring positive things that happen, even when they are obvious.</p> <p><u>Overgeneralising</u>: One single negative event is a non-ending pattern of defeat.</p>
<i>Intuitive Reliance</i>	<p><u>Emotional reasoning</u>: Your emotions for the base of your logic. If you feel bad then the situation is bad. Should and Ought statements determine if you or others are good or bad people.</p> <p><u>Fortune telling</u>: Predicting something will turn out bad without giving it a fair chance.</p> <p><u>Jumping to conclusions</u>: Make assumptions without evidence.</p> <p><u>Mind reading</u>: “Knowing” what other think without asking them.</p>
<i>Self-Reproach</i>	<p><u>Labelling and mislabelling</u>: Using labels to generalise, e.g., thinking you are a loser when you don’t win the game.</p> <p><u>Personalising</u>: Blaming yourself, name-calling, and criticising while not looking at how others contribute.</p>
<i>Worrying</i>	<p><u>What if...:</u> overly concerned for the many possible negative outcomes to actions, events, or circumstances.</p>



Catching Biased Thinking

Where and when?	How did I feel?	What went through my mind?	Are there any thinking biases?	Is this understandable?	Are there reasons to worry?	Is there an alternate way of thinking?	How can I check this out?
Where, when, what was I doing?	What emotions was I Feeling? (Intensity Scale)	What thoughts or images had I? (Intensity Scale)	What types of thinking had I?	How do my fears and worries make sense?	What doesn't support the worry? How can I reassure me?	Can I see a more balanced thought? (Intensity Scale: belief)	How can I put my thought into action?

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