

Thinking Errors questionnaire

Thinking errors are faulty patterns of thinking that are not helpful. They happen when your thinking doesn't match reality. You may not even realise you doing it! If the way you think is making you stressed and unhappy it's time to do something about it. Use this questionnaire to find out which thinking errors you use most often.

Tick the relevant box for each Thinking Error. How often do you think in this way?

Thinking Errors If you need more explanation see page 3	All the time	Often	Some times	Never
	3 points	2 points	1 point	Zero
All or nothing thinking: You view things in extreme terms without any shades of grey.				
Labelling: You rate yourself and others 'globally' rather than thinking about specific skills or behaviours.				
Focusing on the negative: You focus on negative aspects, instead of keeping things in perspective.				
Discounting the positive: You look at anything positive as less important than other things.				
Mind-reading: You assume people are thinking or reacting negatively towards you because of their behaviour, rather than any facts you've gathered.				
Fortune-telling: You predict the worst-case scenario using very little information to come to this conclusion.				
Magnification: You tend to take events and blow them out of proportion. You often make mountains out of molehills.				
Minimisation: You judge yourself for your flaws and make excuses for your strengths or successes.				
Emotional reasoning: You assess situations by how you feel, rather than the facts.				
Blame: You blame others for problems, instead of taking responsibility yourself.				
Overgeneralisation: You predict how something will turn out every time based on how it went only once before.				
Personalisation: You blame yourself unfairly for things that you're not responsible for.				
Scores in each column				
Total Score:				

How often do you have Thinking Errors? Use these scores:

Never – scores 0/zero

Sometimes – scores 1

Often – scores 2

All the time – scores 3

Total scores	What your score means
0-9	You have very few thinking errors and think quite objectively. You are probably fairly calm and might be quite enjoying life. You might find yourself overplaying something once in a while, but it doesn't bother you too much.
9 - 18	You don't have many Thinking Errors and are generally quite objective in the way you see the world. However there may be one or too that you fall into using. Focus on your highest scores/the ones you use more often. Start becoming aware of when you use them. Are you under stress? Is it with certain people? Write down the Thinking Errors and then re-frame them to be more positive.
19 – 27	You worry quite a lot and may beat yourself up for things that aren't your fault. Look at which Thinking Errors you use most often. When you notice yourself using one write it down. Then stop, reflect and change the words to make them more positive. Ask others to help you as they might spot them more easily than you do.
28 - 36	It's likely that you are quite stressed, anxious and tend to beat yourself up a lot. Your thinking may be subjective and not reflect reality so try noting down when you catch a thinking error. Stop, reflect and try and re-frame the same thought in a more positive way. Because you spend a lot of time thinking subjectively ask friends or family to help you. Get them to watch out for when you use Thinking Errors.

See examples of Thinking Errors on the next page

Examples of Thinking Errors:

All-or-nothing thinking – *“If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing really well” or “My supplier always makes the same mistakes.”*

Labelling – *“Because I didn’t win that new business, this proves I am a total failure.” Or, “She’s late again. That proves that she’s totally incompetent.”*

Focusing on the negative – *“Projects never complete on time in my business.” Or, “My contractors are always causing me problems.”*

Discounting the positive – *“When my customers give me positive feedback they are only saying it to be nice. They don’t really mean it.”*

Mind-reading – *“I’m sure my Bank Manager thinks this project won’t be successful.” Or, “My Business Partner has ignored me again. What have I done to upset her?”*

Fortune-telling – *“We won’t hit the deadline. It will all go wrong.” Or “What’s the point in going on holiday? The business will suffer whilst I’m away and there’ll be too much to catch up on.”*

Magnification – *“If we don’t launch by the end of the month, the outcome will be terrible.” Or, “If my employees leave, it will be the end of my business.”*

Minimisation – *“Getting the contract was nothing really. I’m not a good salesperson.” Or, “Launching the new product was simple. It was just luck.”*

Emotional reasoning – *“I feel so angry, it proves that my clients treat me badly.” Or, “I feel so anxious about flying to the meeting, it must be dangerous to fly.”*

Blame – *“It’s all my Business Partner’s fault: he shouldn’t have given me so much work.” Or, “Where are the contracts? Who has moved them?”*

Overgeneralisation – *“I’ve got off to a bad start today. That means the rest of the day will be terrible too!” Or, “There is no point in applying for the loan as the bank has already turned me down once before.”*

Personalisation – *“The team didn’t reach the target. It’s all my fault.” Or, “Our new service is doing badly. It’s not down to the economy – I’m totally to blame.”*

Adapted from “How to Deal with Stress” – Stephen Palmer and Cary Cooper