

NEGATIVE THOUGHT SCHEMATIC LENS COGNITIVE-EMOTIVE FILTER(S)

We all know that how we think can have profound influence on our moods. It can also change our perception of reality because in a way the world reflects our thinking. Our mental lens can color how we see the world. When events in life don't go your way, we can become self-critical with negative inner chatter to the point of creating negative beliefs about ourselves.

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Overgeneration - you take a negative event as a pattern of your life. We naturally relate new experiences to our old ones. So, we commonly generalize based on our past experience. Over-generalizations also make up many of our stereotypes of other people. It's like taking something that happened before and thinking that it will always happen again i.e. "*I always screw up.*" You need to recognize that the past does not create the future. If you examine more closely your over-generalization, you will recognize that it's based on a simplification when reality is far too complex for over-generalizations. Some words to be cautious of in this category would be "always," "every" or "never."

Polarized Thinking - (false choice, dichotomy, primal thinking, false dilemma, black and white thinking): This is the fallacy of thinking that things are either black or white, good or bad, all or nothing. This fallacy can lead to rigid and harmful rules based on primal thinking when it is efficient to compress complex information into simplistic categories for rapid decision making during times of stress, conflict, or threat. Polarized thinking can also lead to unhelpful forms of perfectionism. The reality often lies in the sizeable middle ground between these extreme poles. Recognize and reject the false dichotomy. The words "either / or" are a reliable signal alerting us to a false

dichotomy. Find other alternatives that provide a constructive solution. Dialogue is a powerful tool for moving beyond a false dichotomy.

Filtering also known as Selectivity - This is a failure to consider all the evidence in a balanced and objective assessment. We go where our attention is, and our attention is inherently limited. Selectivity is a failure to consider a neutral, or balanced, point of view. It can have two basic forms. The first is considering only the negative details and magnifying them while filtering out all the positive aspects of a situation. The second is taking the positive details and magnifying them while filtering out all the negative aspects of a situation. In any case evidence that supports your bias is selected, favored, or weighted more heavily than evidence contrary to your bias. Find the realistic balance between the optimistic and pessimistic points of view. Seek out, carefully consider, and assimilate *all* the evidence.

Mind Reading: You conclude, incorrectly and without considering other alternatives or testing your assumptions, that you understand how another person is thinking and what their reasons and motives are for taking an action. This is an example of the Fundamental Attribution Error where you incorrectly attribute an action or intent to an agent. One example of this is drawing a negative conclusion in the absence of supporting information. Focusing only on evidence that supports a negative position, while neglecting to consider alternative positive explanations is the fallacy of not considering representative evidence. It is false to conclude the "he must hate me because he didn't say 'hi' to me." There are many plausible explanations for why he neglected to say "hi".

Personalization (Egocentric bias, self-reference): This is the fallacy of incorrectly thinking that everything people say or do is a reaction to you. It is an egocentric viewpoint where you attribute personal meaning to everything that happens. Face, it, you are not really that important nor influential. This point-of-view often causes the predator to view himself as the true victim; their cause is just and is not to be thwarted. It also often results in a set of self-centered rules.

Global Labeling: This is the fallacy of overgeneralization, combined with an unrepresentative stereotype. Suspend judgement until you have an opportunity to meet and understand a person as an individual. Do not generalize one or two qualities into a negative judgment about a person or group. The **symbol** is not the person.

Self-blame is a cognitive process in which an individual attribute the occurrence of a stressful event to oneself. The direction of blame often has implications for individuals' emotions and behaviors during and following stressful situations. Self-blame is a common reaction to stressful events and has certain effects on how individuals adapt. Types of self-blame are hypothesized to contribute to depression, and self-blame is a component of self-directed emotions like guilt and self-disgust