

## ***Common Thinking Styles***

### ***1. All or Nothing thinking***

This is when you evaluate yourself in black or white terms. E.g. if you are not perfect you are a failure – “I did that really badly, I might just as well not bother”.

### ***2. Overgeneralisation***

Occurs when people see a single negative event or incident as a recurring and never-ending pattern. You will make use of words like ‘always’, ‘never’, ‘everything’, ‘nothing’, ‘everyone’ and ‘no-one’. E.g. “I had to rush, out of the restaurant, I’ll never be able to cope with eating in public”.

### ***3. Catastrophising***

This is when you exaggerate the importance of your mistakes, imperfections or fears out of proportion. E.g. “I really made a fool of myself in the supermarket – I know I’ll never be able to live it down”.

### ***4. Emotional reasoning***

This is the way in which individuals assume that their negative emotions reflect the way that things really are. Whereas in fact this is probably very far from the truth. E.g. “I feel a failure, therefore I am a failure”.

### ***5. Personalisation***

This is when you take all responsibility for negative events, even though there is no basis for this. E.g. “It is my fault that the dinner party was a flop, if only I’d been able to talk more to people”.

### ***6. Mental Filter***

Picking out a single negative detail and dwelling on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened. E.g. “I am a bad parent because I forgot to pick up my son this afternoon”.

### **7. *Labelling and Mislabelling***

This is an extreme form of overgeneralisation. When you make a mistake you will attach a negative label to yourself. E.g. “I am a loser”.

### **8. *Disqualifying the Positive***

When you describe your success as luck, or a ‘fluke’. E.g. “She complimented me on my shoes just because she felt sorry for me, she must have noticed how my hands were shaking”.

### **9. *Jumping to conclusions***

When you automatically assume that someone is reacting negatively to you. E.g. “She did not smile at me today, I must have done something wrong”.

Or

Jumping to conclusions in terms of a forthcoming event. E.g. “I know I won’t be able to cope”.

### **10. *Should statements***

The way you think in terms of ‘shoulds’ and ‘oughts’ and then try to motivate yourself in this way. E.g. “This is not good enough, I should have completed everything I planned to do by now”.

**Home task:** Complete the thought diary throughout the week, and see if you can identify any particular thinking style, and the impact it had on your feelings/emotions.

[illegible]