

Practical information

THOUGHTS PSYCHOEDUCATION



My automatic thoughts

Automatic notifications = Internal dialogue = Spontaneous thoughts

During a situation, automatic thoughts are:

- Spontaneous thoughts, with no intentional effort
- Fleeting, rapid, unchecked thoughts
- Thoughts coming in a cascade one after the other
- Thoughts without reasoning, irrational thoughts
- Thoughts that nonetheless seem plausible
- Thoughts accepted without questioning

They are very important because they

- Determine our emotions
- Often lead to a skewed interpretation of the situation
- Sometimes lead to counterproductive reactions

My distorted thoughts

We look at everything that happens to us through glasses that often distort what we see. There are several types of glasses that result in:

- Black and white thinking
- A blinkered view
- Over-generalising
- Believing you know what others are thinking
- Jumping to conclusions

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- Catastrophising
- Self-blame
- Maximising the negative
- Emotional reasoning

My core beliefs

What I firmly believe.

My core beliefs are derived from:

- My experiences with others of security or of loss
- My character, my temperament
- My family, the beliefs I grew up with

Fortunately, there are many positive beliefs, but there are many negative ones that cause us to suffer. They are three types of negative belief:

- Beliefs about ourselves
- Beliefs about others
- Beliefs about the world

My head is telling me that...

You can opt for the metaphor that feels most relevant to you (they are all equivalent) or find another one.

- My inner dialogue
- My mental radio (mental FM)
- My mental hamster wheel
- My thought engine

My distorting glasses

Black and white thinking

- You have an all-or-nothing approach, black or white, good or bad!
- There is no room for middle ground, for nuance, for taking the context into account.
- "It's either perfect or a disaster!"
- "People are either friendly or hostile!"
- "People are either honest or massive liars!"
- "They love me or hate me..."

A blinkered view

- You can become fixated on a negative, often insignificant detail and no longer see the broader picture, which might contradict your interpretation.
- Your attention is selective. This leads to a very limited view of reality.
- "My guests loved my meal, but all I remember is that I forgot to put the decoration I wanted to on the plate."
- "My husband didn't give me a kiss this morning, he doesn't love me any more." (Even though he was attentive the rest of the time).

Overgeneralising

- You may consider that a failure, difficulty or problem in a given area will inevitably lead to the same thing in the future or even in other areas.
- "He was assaulted by a Black man, so all Black men are aggressive."
- "She cancelled her visit, she will never come again and nobody wants to see me."

Believing you know what others are thinking

- You are convinced that you know what the other person is thinking. You are certain of this and you do not seek to counterbalance it.
- "If she looks at her watch while she's with me, she's obviously bored and wants to cut it short." (When in fact she might want to have lunch together or be late for an important meeting.).

Jumping to hasty conclusions

- You tend to quickly jump to negative conclusions without really having any evidence for them.
- "I'm sure everyone can see that I'm anxious."
- "I didn't understand any of the class, I will never understand anything."

Catastrophising

- You constantly overestimate the percentage risk of a negative event occurring or exaggerate its potential consequences.
- "Society is so dangerous, I have a 90% chance of being stabbed again."

Self-blame

- You are often convinced that you are personally responsible for the cause or consequence of a negative event, when in fact it has little to do with you or your behaviour.
- This very often leads to inappropriate feelings of guilt.
- "It's my fault, if I hadn't been there..."

Maximising the negative

- You give too much importance to the negatives and exaggerate your faults and mistakes.
- "I missed my appointment, it's an unforgivable disaster."

Emotional reasoning

- You use your emotions to reach a conclusion.
- You see emotions as proof of your thoughts.
- "I was scared, so the situation was extremely dangerous."