

Challenging Thinking Errors

Identify the Thinking Error: When you are experiencing intense emotions, this can be a sign of a thinking error. Pay attention to the thought just prior to the emotion.

Double Standard Method: Ask yourself what you would say to someone that you cared about. Now – say the same to yourself.

Evidence Method: Ask yourself if there is evidence that your thought is truth.

Alternative Interpretation Method: Is there another way to interpret the same event? Would that interpretation bring you more peace, less pain, less conflict? You can always change your interpretation.

Inquiry Method: Just ask. If you think someone intended to hurt or criticize you, you can always ask.

Cost-Benefit Method: What are the pros and cons of your present thinking error? Make a list. Then make a decision about whether your present interpretation of events is worth the price.

Experimental Method: Test your thinking. Challenge it. Is it really true? Try it out.

“Just change it” Method: If you find your thinking is bringing intense negative emotions, just change it to a healthier thought.

“What If” Method: So - what if you are right? If the very worst was to happen, could you survive? Really – could you?

Universal Law Method: Is there some universal law that says people must Probably not. Change what you have the power to change (hint – you) and let go of the rest.

“Is it Helpful” Method: Is your present way of thinking helpful? If not, you can always change.

Remember: Your negative thinking may *feel* like truth – that is only because you are familiar and “comfortable” with this way of thinking. We usually think something is true because it “feels right”. In truth, it only “feels right” because you have thought this way for a long time. It will be uncomfortable to change your thoughts. When you choose to allow yourself to feel uncomfortable that is a great sign that you are changing into a healthier self. Celebrate the fact that you don’t feel comfortable right now. Keep going. With time and familiarity, your healthy thinking will become so comfortable that you will never want to return to your negative thoughts.