

Negative Thinking Traps

Black & White / All or Nothing / Dichotomous Thinking

- Things are good or bad, safe or dangerous. There is no middle ground.
- Things are perfect or they are a total failure. There is nothing in between

Focusing on the Negatives / Negative Filter

- Focusing on in on the negative, scary or unfair things, while ignoring anything good

Over-generalization

- An "F" on one assignment means you'll never succeed at anything.
- Something bad in one area means something about all areas. Something tough about right now means your whole future will be tough.

Personalization

- Everything is about you. If your friend is upset, you assume it must be your fault. Or, if your father doesn't agree with you, you assume he's trying to make you mad.

Perfectionism / Setting Unrealistic Expectations

- Asking yourself to be perfect or not allowing yourself to make mistakes.
- This makes you feel like a failure when you do make mistakes (which is only human) and discourages you from trying anything new, preventing you from doing things you might enjoy.

Mind Reading

- Acting like you can tell what people are thinking about you. Sometimes you might be right, but most of the time you were worried or upset about a situation that never really existed

Minimizing / Discounting

- You maximize your failures and minimize your successes. "Even though I hit a home run earlier, I let my team down when I struck out later in the game."

Blaming

- Focusing on the other person as the source of the problem. When you may have had some part in it. You expect the other person to change or fix things when there are things you could do.

Catastrophizing

- Seeing only the worst possible outcome of a situation. Your friend doesn't call when he says he will. You think the friendship must be over. You forget to turn in an assignment, you think you're going to flunk out of college and not get the job you want.