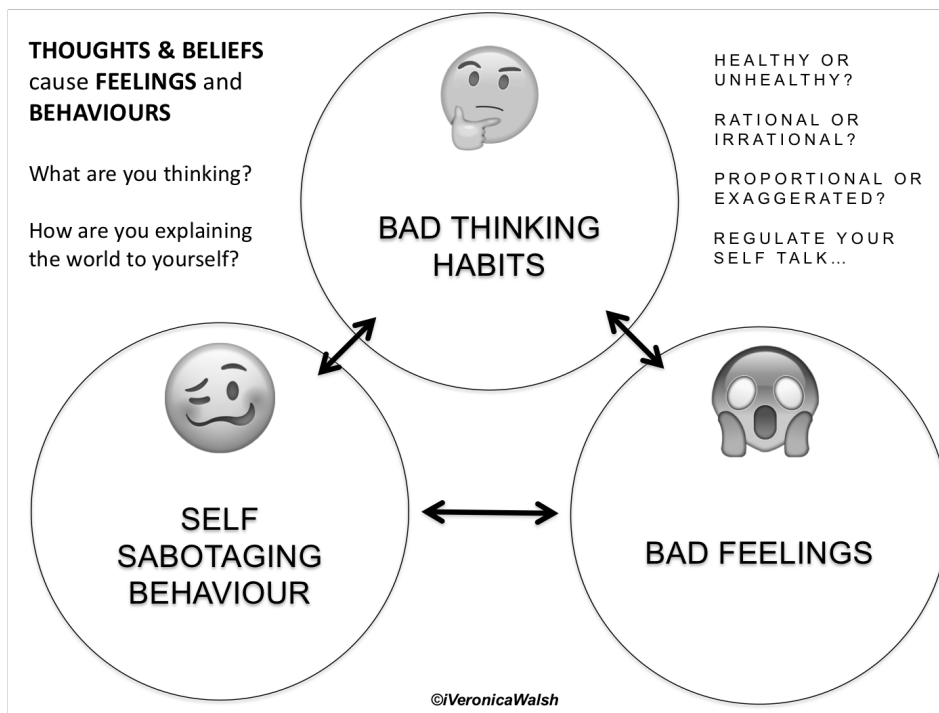


The top 10 Bad Thinking Habits

The Top Ten Bad Thinking Habits – intro to this mini-workbook

Humans: we're a bit messy. We are not glossy machines with all-knowing rational processors for brains. We are not like the wise elders in Superman. Or Confucius at the top of the mountain. We are essentially 'predicting machines', doing our best to navigate our world, with a brain that is tethered to a trippy nervous system, and a memory that is, well, not completely reliable.




Use this workbook to become familiar with the top ten bad thinking habits of messy humans (that's you and I). We all have these distorted thinking habits sometimes, but when stress becomes a disorder; we have most of them most of the time. They can be our default setting. Think of them as 'coding' with some blips and skips.

Learn to understand and recognise which habits are automatic for you. Build awareness of when and how you do them, and learn to interrupt and thought-stop them, and to edit them with rational evidence based new self-talk. Be present, be happier.


Become familiar with the bad thinking habits guide: watch out for them, and reframe.

NEGATIVE PREDICTING



'I'm not dating that person, it would be a disaster'.
'I'll never really be happy.'
'I'm going to fail that exam so there's no point in putting effort in'.
'That won't work out'.
'I'll go, but I won't enjoy myself'.
My partner is going to break up with me.
'This is going to be a bad situation for me'.
'I'm not ready yet – I'm not ready yet – I'm not ready yet.....'.
'I'll never be successful.'

NEGATIVE MIND READING



'He thinks I'm an idiot.'
'They don't really want me here'.
'They think I'm ugly'.
'They think they're better than everybody else'.
'She's a bitch. She did that out of spite and jealousy'.
'She doesn't like me, she thinks I'm boring'.
'My partner thinks I'm not good enough'.
'My boss doesn't respect me.'

MUSTY RULES FOR LIVING

*'I want, therefore I
MUST have.'*

*'Things must be
comfortable and
not frustrating, or
else I can't cope'*



*'I must be thoroughly
competent at all times,
or else I'm incompetent'*

*'You must behave
as I think you ought
to, or else I can't be
happy.'*

*'You must treat me with
respect and kindness, or
you're a very bad person
who should be punished.'*

AWFULISING / DRAMATISING

*Have a skin blemish? 'Life is
AWFUL. I'm gross'.*

*Late for work? 'This
is AWFUL, I'll be
anxious all day long
now'.*

*Asked to give a
presentation/speech:
Oh God, I'll die, this
is AWFUL..*



*Put weight on?
'OMG, this is so
AWFUL, I'm
disgusting'.*

*Friend snaps at
you? 'She's so
horrible and
AWFUL'.*

*Raining and bad
traffic? 'Oh God, this
is so AWFUL..*

I can't cope!

EMOTIONAL REASONING

'I feel bad, therefore it must be bad.'

'I feel scared so this is a bad situation.'

'You have made me so angry, therefore you must be punished.'



'I feel insecure, therefore I'm not safe in this situation.'

'I feel sick and shaky, and I trust my gut so something bad is going on.'

COMPARING AND RATING

'She's so attractive and I'm so ugly'.

'They like him, they hate me.'

'They have more friends than me.'

'I'm not good enough.'

'Everybody clicks on her posts, everybody ignores mine.'

'He's cooler than me'.



'They're really happy, but we're so unhappy.'

'She has it so easy, I have it hard.'

'He's so popular, I'm ignored.'

LOW FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE

I can not, and will not, and should not have to tolerate this thing I find frustrating!

A man is playing music on the train without headphones – No! How dare he! I won't tolerate it!

My friends have chosen a venue I hate – I'm not going...



A group is walking slowly on the kerb in front of me – aargh, get out of my way!

A friend calling over without an invitation – so rude!

A group are chatting and blocking my way on the escalator – OMG, you idiots, move!

PERSONALISING

My therapist is saying humans are irrational. How dare she? I'm perfectly rational!

Ghosted on tinder – I must have really messed up here!

No response to a tweet – I'm boring!

A friend posts a famous quote on FB about toxic people – that's a dig at me!



A friend says he's not free this weekend – I'm never inviting him out again!

My partner is withdrawn today – it's about me!

My boss is cranky today – I'm in trouble here!


INNER CRITIC

I can't cope. I never step up. I'm a bitch.
I'm very unattractive. I am negative and miserable.
I'm not really fun. There's something wrong with me. I'm so lazy.
I'm boring. I'm rubbish on social media. I'm not a nice person.
I'm an oddball. I'll never be successful. I have no style.
I'm a mess.



LABELLING

He's very cool, but his friend is a total nerd. He didn't know much about climate change – he's an idiot.
She's always late – she's rude. He's gorgeous, and his wife is ugly.
He didn't pay for dinner – he's mean. Vegans are idiots.
He's overweight – so he's a slob. A colleague was rude – she's a bitch.



Name and tame your thinking habits - catch and reframe your unhelpful self-talk.



NEGATIVE PREDICTING



NEGATIVE MIND READING



MUSTY RULES FOR LIVING



AWFULISING / DRAMATISING



EMOTIONAL REASONING



COMPARING & RATING



LOW FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE



PERSONALISING



INNER CRITIC



LABELLING

Name it and tame it.

As you become familiar with your self-talk, journal it, or brain dump key ideas into your notes app on your phone, building awareness of when and how you are using the bad thinking habits - and then review and design new self-talk to replace them, literally - using cool moderate language that you can activate when needed.

You can create a routine by wearing a coloured rubber band on your wrist – just having it there reminds you to thought-stop and reframe – and you can play with it and snap it lightly when you're reframing dramatic simplistic unhelpful thinking to rational evidence based thinking. Be your own little Buddha. **That's CBT.**

Classic tips to convert *distorted thinking* to evidence based rational thinking:



What exactly is the situation and how am I explaining it to myself?

My self-talk:

- Am I using my *Bad Thinking Habits*?
- Am I getting things out of proportion? Where is the evidence?
- Am I only looking at negatives and ignoring positives?
- Am I focussing on things I cannot control rather than things I can?
- Is that a bit overly dramatic and causing my threat response to spike?
- Is that rational or irrational, healthy or unhealthy?
- How does accepting these thoughts and beliefs make me feel and behave?
- Has thinking this way been helpful in life so far, or unhelpful?
- Does this kind of thinking cause me to miss out on great experiences?
- Does this kind of thinking stop me truly being present?
- What would I advise my best friend if they were thinking this way?
- What is the rational calm alternative view of this situation?

What is it more accurate to say?

Design new self-talk – REFRAME

The bad thinking habits table – when do you use them? Journal key ideas :

Negative Predicting	Negative Mindreading
Musty Rules for Living	Awfulising / Dramatising
Emotional Reasoning	Comparing and Rating
Low Frustration Tolerance	Personalising
Inner Critic	Labelling