

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE



SLOWING THE
SPIRAL THOUGHTS

THOUGHT DEFUSION









COGNITIVE DISTANCING TECHNIQUES

Thoughts, especially distressing ones, can consume our attention, making it difficult to focus on other things. This absorption in a thought is referred to as thought fusion. To break free from this cycle, techniques for thought defusion can be helpful. By shifting focus from the content of the thoughts to the process of thinking, these methods can reduce the power thoughts hold over you.

USE THOUGHT DEFUSION WHEN...

- **You feel triggered.**
A thought spikes your anxiety or worsens your mood.
- **Your thoughts are one-sided.**
You lose perspective or are fixated on a thought.
- **You're lost in thought.**
You're preoccupied and not present to what's happening.

DEFUSION TECHNIQUES

 PUT YOUR THOUGHTS ON CLOUDS	 USE A SILLY VOICE
<p>Picture tossing your thoughts onto fluffy clouds floating high above. See them lazily drift away into the horizon. Just like those wispy clouds, remember that thoughts are fleeting visitors with no real weight as they breeze in and out of your mind.</p>	<p>Pen down that pesky thought, then belt it out loud ten times in a wacky voice! Channel your inner cartoon character or mimic your beloved actor. The goofier, the merrier!</p>
 FILE YOUR THOUGHTS AWAY	 NAME THE STORY
<p>Imagine your mind as a bustling office with folders labeled "predicting," "regretting," "comparing," "doubting," and more. Shine a spotlight on your thoughts and neatly organize them into their rightful mental folders.</p>	<p>Imagine those repetitive thoughts as old worn-out records stuck on repeat. Tune in and notice the hits like the "I'm-a-failure" jam, the "no-one-likes-me" tune, or the classic "my-life-is-horrible" hit. It's like a broken record, right?</p>
 CLICK THE "X" BUTTON	 SCREEN YOUR THOUGHTS
<p>Imagine your mind as a chaotic computer screen with tons of open browser tabs. Now picture yourself hitting the "X" on each one, watching those thoughts vanish into thin air, one by one!</p>	<p>Picture this: your mind's chatter turned into a blockbuster movie! Grab some popcorn, take a seat in the back row, and enjoy the show. Can you resist jumping into the screen and just enjoy the movie from afar?</p>
 SAY "I'M HAVING THE THOUGHT THAT..."	 ZOOM OUT
<p>When a gloomy thought creeps in, simply slap on the phrase "I'm having the thought that..." in front of it. Watch as the thought squirms a bit, realizing it's been caught red-handed, losing its power over you.</p>	<p>Imagine being one with your thoughts, then envision yourself soaring high above the planet. From space, see how small your worries appear. Does that troublesome thought still feel colossal from way up here?</p>

STOP OVERTHINKING!

TIPS FOR BETTER DECISION-MAKING

Life is filled with numerous decisions, ranging from major to minor. Overthinking occurs when you spend excessive time and effort striving for perfection in decision-making, resulting in anxiety and indecision. To overcome overthinking and handle decisions more effectively, keep the following tips in mind:

SETTLE FOR “GOOD ENOUGH” OVER “PERFECT.”

The harsh reality is that decisions often need to be made with incomplete information. It's impossible to analyze every angle within the limited time available. Seeking an abundance of information to achieve a flawless decision can lead to confusion and delays in your thought process.

Try it out: *Set limits on how long to research or analyze. Then make a decision, even if it feels imperfect.*

TRUST YOURSELF OVER THE OPINIONS OF OTHERS.

Seeking advice can be beneficial up to a certain extent. While others may have your best interests at heart, they could prioritize different goals or values. Relying too heavily on external input for decision-making might lead to a lack of confidence in your own intuition.

Try it out: *Instead of asking someone what to do, use the conversation to clarify what feels right to you.*

DISTINGUISH BETWEEN LIKELY AND UNLIKELY OUTCOMES.

Making decisions can be overwhelming when you focus on the countless things that could go awry, though most probably won't. Save your energy and achieve clarity faster by concentrating on the probable scenarios.

Try it out: *Write down possible outcomes for a decision you face. Cross out any that are unlikely to happen. Then circle the two or three most likely scenarios. Keep your focus on those as you decide.*

MAKE UNIMPORTANT DECISIONS MORE QUICKLY.

Frivolous choices, such as selecting a toothbrush, are not worth your valuable time and energy. Mastering the art of quickly making small decisions will enhance your ability to tackle more significant ones effectively.

Try it out: *When obsessing about a decision, stop and ask yourself if it will matter in a week or a month. If not, go ahead and make it quickly. Then reward yourself for upping your decision-making game!*

USE YOUR VALUES AS A ROADMAP.

Overthinking frequently occurs when you depend excessively on analysis. For significant decisions, consulting your values can be a valuable method to gain clarity.

Try it out: *List your top five values. When indecisive, consider which option would best honor these values.*

STOP OVERTHINKING!

TIPS FOR BETTER DECISION-MAKING

REALIZE THAT NOT DECIDING IS A DECISION.

It can be tempting to delay difficult or uncomfortable decisions. This may seem like a way of avoiding a bad outcome. But what you're really doing is allowing life to decide for you, which can make you feel passive and powerless.

Try it out: Write down the consequences of endlessly delaying a decision. What might you miss out on?

RECOGNIZE THAT SOME DECISIONS MAY NOT FEEL GOOD.

It's unrealistic to expect every decision to give you warm fuzzies. Many daily choices are likely to feel neutral, while big dilemmas can feel incredibly difficult, regardless of what you decide.

Try it out: Write down the emotion you struggle with most when making decisions. List three ways you can cope with this feeling rather than overthinking or procrastinating.

ACCEPT THAT RISK IS UNAVOIDABLE.

Every decision comes with some risk. Avoiding obviously dangerous decisions makes sense, but taking reasonable risks to move toward your goals is necessary to learn, grow, and thrive.

Try it out: When faced with a tough decision, ask if it will bring you closer to a cherished goal or value. Is the risk worth the potential reward? What would be the risk of doing nothing?

KNOW THAT EVERY DECISION INVOLVES LOSS AND COMPROMISE.

Loss is an inevitable part of decision-making. By choosing one path, you're forgoing another. If you choose to move to New York, you're choosing *not* to live in Seattle. But maybe part of you really wanted to live in Seattle. And that can be a heartbreaker.

Try it out: After making a decision, acknowledge what you had to give up, but embrace the path you chose.

RESIST REVERSING DECISIONS OUT OF DOUBT.

You make a decision and then feel overcome by doubt. Sound familiar? It's tempting to reverse a decision to alleviate anxiety, but this rarely works. In fact, you'll probably want to reverse the reversal!

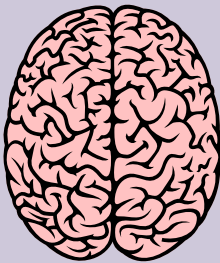
Try it out: When feeling doubt, ask if there's something truly new to consider. If not, stay the course.

UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES

EXPLORING INGRAINED AND SUBCONSCIOUS
COGNITIVE BIASES CAN ASSIST IN LESSENING EMOTIONAL
DISTRESS AND ACHIEVING A MORE BALANCED MINDSET.

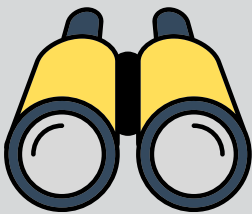
MENTAL FILTER

Concentrating solely on one aspect of a situation, typically negative, while neglecting other positive aspects, leading to tunnel vision.



CATASTROPHISING

Exaggerating a situation in the negative.



MAGNIFICATION AND MINIMISATION

Highlighting the strengths of others while downplaying your own.

EMOTIONAL REASONING

Examining situations based on your current emotions, where feelings are perceived as reality.

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Assuming outcomes without evidence to back it up can fall into two categories:

- Mind reading:
Assuming we understand someone else's thoughts or the reasoning behind their actions.

Predictive thinking:
Forecasting results, often with an inclination towards overestimating negative emotions or outcomes.

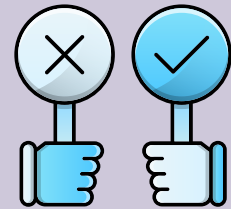


SHOULD-HAVE AND MUST-HAVE STATEMENTS

Putting unreasonable expectations on oneself.

ALL OR NOTHING

Absolute thinking involves focusing solely on one extreme and disregarding any middle ground.



PERSONALISATION

Holding oneself responsible for external negative occurrences unnecessarily.

LABELLING

Making broad, pessimistic statements about yourself or others.

OVERGENERALISING

Viewing a solitary negative event as the standard or a persistent trend.



COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

Cognitive distortions are irrational thoughts that influence your perception of the world, your emotions, and your behavior. While it's common to experience these thoughts from time to time, they can be detrimental if they occur frequently or intensively.

Magnification and minimization: Exaggerating or downplaying the significance of events can occur. You may perceive your accomplishments as insignificant or your errors as overly critical.

Catastrophizing: Focusing solely on the most negative potential results of a situation.

Overgeneralization: Drawing sweeping conclusions based on isolated incidents. For example, feeling awkward during a job interview and immediately assuming, "I am always so awkward."

Magical thinking: The belief that thoughts, actions, or emotions can impact unrelated circumstances is illustrated in the statement, "If I hadn't wished for something bad to happen to him, he wouldn't have had an accident."

Personalization: Thinking that you are accountable for circumstances beyond your influence. For example, "My mom is constantly upset. If only I did more to assist her, she would be okay."

Jumping to conclusions: Understanding the significance of a situation with minimal or lacking evidence.

Mind reading: Jumping to conclusions by assuming the thoughts and opinions of others without substantial evidence. For instance, "She declined a date with me, so she must believe I'm unattractive."

Fortune telling: Anticipating a negative outcome without sufficient evidence.

Emotional reasoning: The assumption that emotions accurately portray reality, such as thinking, "I feel like a bad friend, so I must be one."

Disqualifying the positive: Focusing solely on the negative aspects of a situation and disregarding the positive ones. For instance, you could receive numerous compliments during an evaluation, yet concentrate on one piece of negative feedback.

"Should" statements: The belief that things should be a certain way. "I should always be perfect."

All-or-nothing thinking: Avoid thinking in absolutes like "always," "never," or "every." For instance, saying "I never do a good enough job on anything" can be limiting and discouraging.

THE WHOLE PICTURE OF ANXIETY

PART I

MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS:

WHERE DO I FEEL
ANXIETY IN MY BODY?

CIRCLE WORDS
THAT RESONATE

FEAR FRIGHT	DREAD
APPREHENSION	TERROR
HYPERVIGILANT	UNEASY
NERVOUS PANIC	WORRY
EDGINESS	HORROR

MARK LEVEL OF ANXIETY:



ACTIONS/BEHAVIORS CAUSED BY ANXIETY:

THE EFFECTS OF MY ANXIOUS SENSATIONS, THOUGHTS, AND ACTIONS:

THE WHOLE PICTURE OF ANXIETY

PART 2

AN ALTERNATIVE THOUGHT THAT COULD REDUCE MY ANXIETY:

WHAT COULD I DO TO CALM MY BODY SENSATIONS:

ACTIONS I COULD TAKE TO SLOW DOWN OR REDUCE MY ANXIETY:

MARK THE LEVEL OF ANXIETY AFTER IMPLEMENTING THESE THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS.



RESULTS FROM MY CALMING THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS:

ANXIETY IN CONTROL

Anxiety is frequently linked to the concept of control. At times, we attempt to control situations that are beyond our reach or control. Conversely, there are instances where we fail to take adequate control of matters within our sphere of influence. Both scenarios can result in distress.

Please utilize the worksheet below to distinguish between aspects within your control and those outside of your control in a current life situation:

- Write what you can control inside the circle and what is beyond your control outside of the circle.
- At the bottom of the page, select certain uncontrollable factors and devise acceptance statements to aid in embracing the release of control.

Select one controllable aspect and outline three actionable steps to instigate change.



I CAN'T
CONTROL:

ITEM

STATEMENT

ONE PROBLEM IN MY CONTROL:

STEPS TO CREATE CHANGE:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

