

THINKING ERRORS

Modified and adapted from the work of Stanton Samenow, Ph. D.

By

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EGOCENTRIC THINKING. Thinking only about myself and what **I want**. Thinking I should have something just because I want it. Not thinking about others or whether what I want is right, good, legal, or might hurt someone. This kind of thinking **promotes a self-centered attitude and a disregard of social obligations.**

POSSESSIVE THINKING. Thinking of people as my personal **property** to do with as I please. Tending to **objectify** people and see them as either as an **obstacle** in my way, a **vehicle** to get what I want, an **object** for my pleasure, etc. Not thinking of the person as an individual with rights or needs and deserving of respect, consideration, and dignity. This kind of thinking promotes a **dehumanizing attitude.**

(SELECTIVE INATTENTIONAL THINKING. Paying attention only to what I care about and not paying much attention to what society or someone else wants me to be more aware of. Only half-listening when someone says something I don't like. "Tuning out" someone confronting my behavior or asking me to change. This way of thinking keeps me from taking-in pro-social values and attitudes and promotes an **antisocial attitude.**

COMBATIVE THINKING. Viewing the world as a combat stage. Seeing every situation as a contest I have to win. Only seeing I win-you lose or you win-I lose scenarios. Never being willing to back down or give ground. Never being able to see that I might gain more in the long-run if I would be willing to give ground sometimes or on some things. This way of thinking makes it more likely I will fight too much, too hard, or too unnecessarily in life and promotes **defiant, and confrontational attitudes.**

DECEPTIVE (WISHFUL) THINKING. Seeing things as I want to see them, rather than as they are. Lying to myself and trying to hoodwink others so I don't have to take an honest look at things. Distorting the reality of situations so I don't have to change my point of view. This way of thinking causes me to live in a world of my own fantasies and promotes an **attitude of disregard for the truth.**

IMPULSIVE THINKING. Thinking only about what I want now. Not thinking of the long-term consequences of my behavior. Not thinking more deeply about the appropriateness of a behavior before I act. Knowing I might have after-the-fact regret, but doing what I want to do anyway. Thinking only for the moment and not thinking about consequences promotes a **devil-may-care, indifferent, uncaring or nonchalant attitude.**

EGOMANIACAL THINKING. Thinking I'm so clever, important, or bright that I can and should do whatever I please and get away with it. Thinking I'm so special that I am **entitled** to have whatever I want just because I want it. Thinking the world owes me because I am special

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and important, rather than being willing to **earn** the things I value. This way of thinking promotes **attitudes of arrogance, superiority, and entitlement**.

PRIDEFUL THINKING. Thinking I can't afford to admit a mistake because I would look bad or lose face. Not backing down, even when I know I'm wrong. Placing my image above everything else. Thinking it is wiser to try and manage others' impressions of me than to let anybody really "get my number". This way of thinking promotes **vain and pretentious attitudes**.

HEDONISTIC THINKING. Putting a premium on my pleasure, comfort, or excitement. Not tolerating discomfort or boredom. Thinking that life owes me a good time and that life without enough stimulation isn't worth living. This way of thinking leads me to "chase highs" and engage in risky thrill-seeking behaviors. It also leads to an **attitude of intolerance for pain and discomfort**.

UNREASONABLE THINKING. Expecting far too much, especially from everyone else. Expecting others to trust me before I've really earned trust. Expecting everything right away. Having no sense of balance or compromise. Expecting everything my way- every time! This kind of thinking leads to a **demanding** attitude.

IRRELEVANT THINKING. Focusing on the small, petty aspects of situations but ignoring the "big picture". Taking issue with minor things that don't really matter while not paying attention to the things that really matter. Focusing on a "technicality" or small inaccuracy while ignoring the bigger truth. This way of thinking leads to **attitudes of pettiness and thoughtlessness**.

"HARD-LUCK THINKING". Thinking of myself as a victim of circumstances instead of a person responsible for my actions and their consequences. Sitting on my own pity-pot. Feeling sorry for myself and thinking I've been dealt a raw deal in life. This kind of thinking leads to a **bitter attitude**.

END-GAME THINKING. Thinking only about outcomes. Thinking that the ends justifies the means. Thinking that as long as I succeed in getting what I want it doesn't matter what I have to do to get it. This kind of thinking also promotes **antisocial attitude**.

MISTRUSTFUL THINKING. Having no concept of how to earn or give trust. Thinking everybody else is as dishonest as I am. Thinking I have to outwit others before they outwit me. Thinking I shouldn't have to earn the trust of others by firmly and repeatedly demonstrating a commitment to principle or the truth. This kind of thinking leads to **guarded, suspicious, and wary attitudes**.

EXTERNAL THINKING. Focusing on things outside of my ability to control. Brooding about the actions or opinions of others. Brooding about situations I don't have power over. Not spending enough time or energy thinking about what I can do to make things better. This kind of thinking breeds a **pessimistic or negativistic attitude**.

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OPPORTUNISTIC THINKING. Never thinking about the rightness or wrongness of something but just wanting to profit. Thinking about how I can exploit the weakness of another or take advantage of an opportunity. This kind of thinking also promotes an **antisocial attitude**.

UNDAUNTED THINKING. Thinking that no matter what they do to me, or whatever negative consequences I experience, I shouldn't have to change my ways. Taking pride in my ability to keep doing what I want to do no matter what happens as a result. This kind of thinking leads to a **belligerent, stubborn attitude**.

DEFIANT THINKING. Thinking I shouldn't have to do anything I don't want to. Wanting to set my own rules. Doing something only if I agree I should and **not** because somebody else thinks I should. This kind of thinking leads to **attitudes of rebelliousness, disdain for authority and refusal to accept obligation**.

SHAMELESS THINKING. Having no sense of shame. Not caring how my behavior reflects on me as person. Not wanting to be embarrassed if somebody finds me out, but not caring at the time what my actions say about me. This kind of thinking fosters a **brazen attitude**.

GUILTLESS THINKING. Never thinking of the common good. Blocking out thoughts of right and wrong when I'm trying to get something I want. Rationalizing that whatever I did was okay. This kind of thinking promotes an **irresponsible attitude**.

QUICK AND EASY THINKING. Thinking everything should come the quick and easy way. Having a negative attitude toward work or labor that is not immediately self-serving or rewarding. Thinking I'm superior if I can "con" somebody out of something instead of working for it. Hating to put forth effort unless there's something in it for me. This way of thinking promotes an **attitude of disdain for labor and effort**.

REMEMBER: CERTAIN WAYS OF THINKING LEAD TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CERTAIN ATTITUDES THAT PREDISPOSE A PERSON TO ACT IN CERTAIN WAYS WITH OTHERS. THE MOST ANTISOCIAL OF THOSE ACTIONS ARE THE ONES THAT INVOLVE TACTICS USED TO MANIPULATE OTHERS, RESIST CONFORMING ONE'S OWN CONDUCT, AND THEREBY PREVENT THE INTERNALIZATION OF VALUES AND CONTROLS.

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