

Common Thinking Errors

The following represent some of the most common thinking errors we observe among leaders.



For a comprehensive list of 188 thinking errors, visit:

<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/cognitive-bias-infographic.html>

All or Nothing Thinking. You dichotomize things into “black and white” categories.

After a direct report makes a mistake, you might think, “this always happens, I’m going to have to fire him.”

Thinking your colleagues are “either with me or against me” on an important issue.

Overgeneralization. You draw a conclusion about something based on just one example.

Thinking “Millenials are lazy and entitled” after a young employee fails to complete a task.

After performing poorly in front of the Board, you might think, “there goes any chance of a promotion.”

Doom and Gloom. You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.

You acquire two new accounts, but all you can think about is the prospect you lost.

Upon noticing a misspelling in your submitted report, you think, “the whole thing is a failure.”

Feelings as Facts. You believe because you feel something, it must be true.

“I feel uncomfortable delegating, so I must be a poor delegator.”

“I don’t feel like doing this, so I’ll put it off.”

“Shoulding” Yourself. You believe things “must” be a certain way.

“I should have known better than to have hired her.”

“I should have sought additional information about the leveraged debt of that acquisition.”

Mind Reading. You believe you know what others are thinking, or why they are doing something.

"They have their arms crossed. They're probably going to disagree with me."

"My colleagues didn't include me in the important meeting. I bet they think I'm useless."

Fortune Telling. You arbitrarily predict things will turn out poorly.

"I'm going to muck up this presentation."

"I can try a new approach to motivate him, but it won't work."

Fairness Fallacy. You become resentful because you know what is fair, and others do not.

"It's not fair! She has no right to say that to me."

"If they valued my work here, they'd give me a raise."

Change Fallacy. You expect others to change if you encourage/pressure them enough.

"If I just encourage my colleague to stop irritating me, I can get my job done."

"Once I get others to stop bothering me, I can start on my priorities."

Labeling. You identify your shortcomings as a character flaw versus a mistake.

Instead of saying, "I messed up," you tell yourself, "I'm a loser."

"She is always late to meetings, she is irresponsible."



If you, or others in your organization, are seeking to enhance performance and address these common errors, we can assist.

SOLVE's Executive Coaches are continually supporting leaders as they "re-program" their thinking. Check out our website (www.solve.hr/executive-coaching) or give us a call to learn more.



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