

Thoughts & Patterns

What are Unhelpful Thinking Styles?

Unhelpful thinking styles are mental habits that distort how we see things — especially when we're stressed or struggling. Common ones include:

- **Catastrophising** – assuming the worst will happen
- **Black-and-white thinking** – seeing things as all good or all bad
- **Mind reading** – assuming others are thinking negatively about you

Learning to spot these patterns is the first step toward softening them.

How do I Identify and Challenge Negative Thoughts?

Start by noticing your inner dialogue — especially during moments of stress or shame.

Then ask:

- *Is this thought 100% true?*
- *What evidence do I have for and against it?*
- *Would I say this to a friend?*

You don't need to turn every thought positive — just more balanced, kind, and realistic.

What is the Inner Critic?

The inner critic is the harsh voice inside that tells you you're not good enough, smart enough, or trying hard enough.

It usually forms from past experiences — trying to protect you from failure or rejection.

You can quiet it by naming it, talking back with compassion, and reminding yourself: *I'm allowed to be learning and growing.*

What is Self-Compassion & how do I practice It?

Self-compassion means treating yourself with the same kindness you'd offer a loved one. It has three parts:

- **Mindfulness** – noticing you're in pain without pushing it away
- **Common humanity** – remembering you're not alone in your struggle
- **Self-kindness** – offering gentle words or care instead of criticism

It's not self-pity or weakness — it's a skill that builds resilience and emotional safety.

Why do I believe my thoughts, even when they hurt me?

Your brain is wired to keep you safe — not necessarily happy.

When it senses threat (like rejection or failure), it often jumps to negative conclusions to protect you from disappointment.

But just because a thought *feels* true, doesn't mean it *is* true.

You can learn to question your thoughts, not believe everything you think, and respond with curiosity instead of fear.