Whoops, there it goes again!

How to stay positive when the bottom drops out of your world!

Your ANT's & Thought Traps

All or nothing thinking:

You see things in extreme or in black and white.

Example: *You are on a healthy eating plan, and someone brings a cake to work. After eating a piece, you think, "I've completely blown my diet now" and so proceed to eat a bar of chocolate, two packets of crisp and a bowl of ice-cream.*

How does this thought trap show up in your life? List your "all or nothing" thoughts.

Mental filter:

You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it, viewing the whole situation as negative. You refuse to notice any positives or anything that went well/you did well.

Example: *You run a project meeting at work which is complimented and praised by 95% percent of the team - but you dwell and focus on the 5% of feedback that you could have done a slightly better job. This leaves you convinced you didn't do well enough and not only don't you recognise and enjoy the praise being offered but you decide not to participate in future events.*

How does this thought trap show up in your life?

Emotional reasoning:

You assume that your negative emotions reflect the way things really are, i.e., "I feel like a failure; therefore, I am one."

Example: "I feel overwhelmed and hopeless; therefore, my problems must be impossible to solve";

How does this thought trap show up in your life?

Disqualifying the positive:

Whenever you have a negative experience, you dwell on it and conclude, "That proves what I've known all along, I'm not good enough." In contrast, when you have a positive experience, you tell yourself, "That was a fluke. It doesn't count."

Example: *You are at a party, and someone ignores you. You will not only remember the person who ignored you, but you will also forget or downplay the others that chatted to you for hours, saying, "oh they just felt sorry for me."*

How does this thought trap show up in your life?

Should/must/ought statements:

You set yourself standards of what you perceive you and others 'should' or 'must' be doing. These standards are often too high and unrealistic. 'Should statements' can be directed against yourself causing guilt, or they can be directed at other people causing anger and frustration.

Example*: You don't like going out with a particular friend but feel as though you should, because you have known her for years*

How does this thought trap show up in your life?

Over-generalisation:

You see a single negative event as proof that other similar events will turn out the same way.

Example: *You might go on one unsuccessful date and decide you are never going to find a partner.*

How does this thought trap show up in your life?

Personalisation:

A person engaging in personalisation will automatically assume responsibility and blame for negative events that are not under their control.

Example: "*If he hadn't yelled at me, I wouldn't have been angry and wouldn't have had that car accident."*

How does this thought trap show up in your life?

Jumping to conclusions:

You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that support your conclusion.

Mind reading – you conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, but you do not check this out with them.

Fortune telling – you anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel that your prediction is an already established fact.

Example 1: *You are at a party, and people are whispering. You don't like what you are wearing, so you decide, "everyone is laughing at me"* **(mind reading).**

Example 2: *You are going to take your driving test and 'know' that you are going to fail* **(fortune-telling).**

How does this thought trap show up in your life?

Catastrophising:

You expect disaster to strike and that the disaster will be of massive proportions.

Example: *You send out the wrong letter to a client at work, and this turns into, "I will now lose my job, and then I won't be able to pay my bills, and then I will lose my house."*

How does this thought trap show up in your life?

Labelling

This is an extreme form of over generalising. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: 'I'm a loser.'

When someone else's behaviour bothers you, you attach a general label to them: 'he's an idiot.'

Example: *You make a mistake on a form you filled out, and it's sent back to you in the post. So, you decide "I'm so stupid" rather than thinking, "I made a mistake as I had a busy day when I was filling this out."*

How does this thought trap show up in your life?