MindTraps

Habitual Styles of Thinking

* **Catastrophizing** – Amplifies anxiety, expects disaster and automatically imagines the worst possible outcome.
* **Exaggerating the negative and discounting the positive** – Positive experiences are downplayed or not acknowledged while negative details are magnified (“I’m doing better in class, but I’m still making mistakes.”).
* **Mind reading** – Convincing yourself that you know what other people are thinking and feeling and why they act the way they do, *without actual evidence*.
* **Being the eternal expert –** Leads to heightened stress because it necessitates always being at attention, being wrong isn’t an option so you feel the constant need to defend your opinions and actions.
* **The “shoulds” –** Having a list of unbreakable rules for yourself or others, breaking them brings about guilt and when others break them you’re likely to become angry or resentful.
* **Blaming –** Holding others responsible for your own pain or holding yourself responsible for the problems of others – but we generally can’t change others and may not be able to change circumstances, we can only hope to change ourselves. If you perceive that the solution lies outside of you, you deprive yourself of the power to effect change.