



Are you your own worst enemy when it comes to what you are thinking? Many of us are. Without realizing it, we get stuck in certain mental traps that lead us to make bad decisions. Avoid the following five common thinking mistakes, and your personal and professional experiences will be much more successful.

Mistaking Frequency with Importance

TLEX Mind Matters is an organization that specializes in mind-body training. It uses deep meditation, emotional intelligence training, and leadership development to empower people to be their best. Its research shows that the typical person has between 12,000 and 60,000 thoughts daily.

These micro-thoughts might not last an entire second. They are happening in rapid-fire succession—your brain firing electronic impulses. Research shows that as much as 90% of them are repetitive. That doesn't mean you should pay attention to them. Nearly every thought you have is nothing more than your brain and sensory network holding a discussion or processing information. Just because a thought keeps popping up doesn't mean it has any significance.

A manager repeatedly thinks, "I'm not good at leading team meetings." The thought pops up every time a meeting is scheduled. Because it's so frequent, they start believing it must be true—even though no one has given them negative feedback. As a result, they avoid opportunities to lead, which stunts their growth.

Assuming Your Thoughts Are Correct

It's hard to know what to believe with thousands of thoughts distracting you and begging for your attention. The vast majority of the autopilot ruminations you have are negative. They are the culmination of your survival instincts running "what if" games. They are wildly inaccurate and fantastical much of the time. Don't believe that your thoughts are truthful just because they are yours.

An employee assumes their new idea will be rejected because they "just know" their boss doesn't like change. Instead of proposing it in a team meeting, they keep quiet. Later, a coworker presents a similar idea—and the boss loves it.

Assuming Your Thoughts Should Be Acted Upon

If most of your thoughts are repetitive and negative and do not deal with reality, should you be acting upon them? Many people believe they are experiencing thoughts because they're supposed to pay attention to them. In actuality, you could ignore nearly every one of the many thousands of thoughts you have daily, and you would probably be much better off. You would certainly experience less stress and anxiety.

You think, "I need to check my email right now—what if I missed something urgent?" Even though you're focused on preparing for a big presentation, the urge distracts you. Acting on that impulse pulls you away from what really matters and increases your anxiety unnecessarily.

Negative Mind Reading

The mind reader believes other people are thinking something negatively about them without any evidence to prove this is the case. Your friend didn't text you immediately, so they must be angry with you. Why hasn't your boss talked to you today? You must be in trouble.

Those are examples of negative mind reading. Remember that you only know what others think once they tell you what is on their minds.

After a team meeting, a colleague doesn't respond when you say goodbye. You think, "They're upset with me." In reality, they were distracted thinking about their own deadlines. Your assumption causes unnecessary tension and overthinking.

Catastrophizing

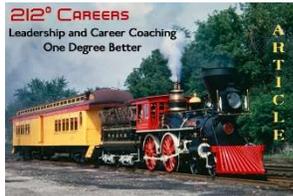
This is far too common. It involves focusing on the worst possible outcome rather than exploring what will probably happen. Don't automatically assume a bad result is inevitable. Think about the situation logically rather than with a negative mindset.

An employee receives a vague calendar invite from their manager labeled "Meeting." They immediately fear they're about to be fired. In reality, the meeting is about a new opportunity on an upcoming project. Their catastrophizing caused hours of needless stress.

Conclusion

Thoughts are not facts. By recognizing and interrupting these five common thinking mistakes, we can reduce unnecessary stress, improve our decision-making, and show up more effectively at work. Whether you're a leader, a team

member, or just navigating day-to-day tasks, greater awareness of your thinking patterns can be a powerful advantage. Pause, question your assumptions, and give your brain the space to reset. A clearer mind leads to better outcomes.



Scan the QR Code to visit 212-Careers.

