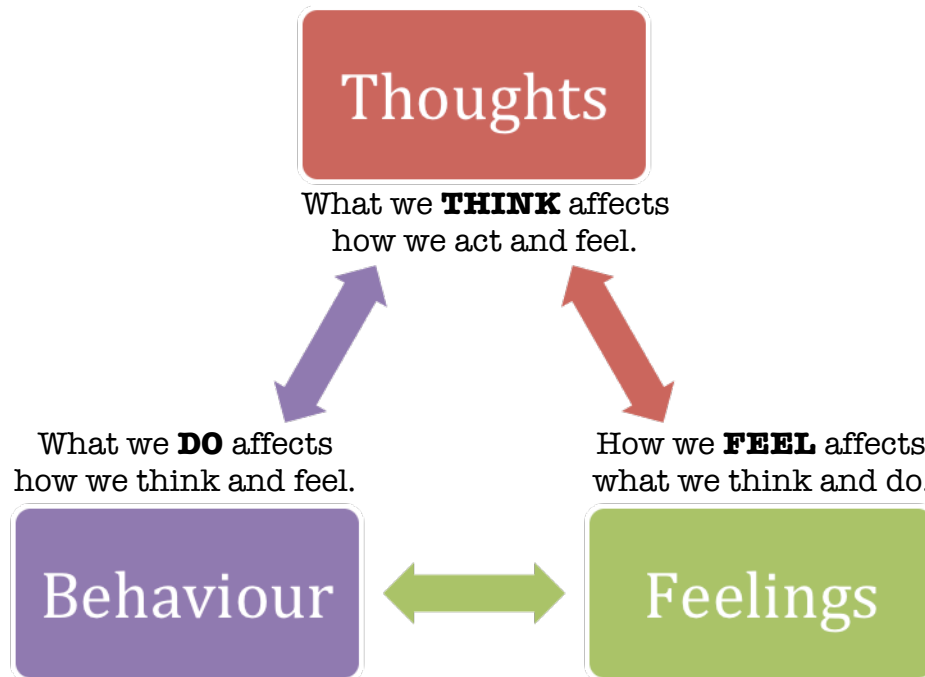


# Labelling Your Thought Patterns

\*Notice the patterns you tend to fall into.

1. **All or Nothing Thinking:** You see things in black-and-white categories. For example, if your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.
2. **Overgeneralisation:** You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. **Mental Filter:** You pick out a single negative detail (ignoring the positives) and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like a drop of ink that discolours the entire beaker of water.
4. **Discounting the Positive:** You reject positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief even though it is contradicted by your everyday experiences.
5. **Jumping to Conclusions:** You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
  - a. **Mind-Reading:** You conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don't bother to check this out. You make assumptions about what another person is thinking.
  - b. **The Fortune Teller Error:** You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already-established fact.
6. **Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization:** You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your mistake or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other person's imperfections).
7. **Emotional Reasoning:** You assume that your negative emotions reflect the way things really are. You trust your feelings as though they were facts. For example, "I feel it, therefore it must be true." "I feel stupid, so I must be."
8. **Should Statements:** You try to motivate yourself with should's, shouldn'ts and musts. The emotional consequence is guilt if you don't follow the expectation. When you direct should statements toward others, the emotional consequence is anger, frustration and/or resentment. "They should not behave that way!"
9. **Global Labelling:** This is an extreme form of overgeneralisation. This is where you generalize one or two qualities into a negative global judgment about yourself or another person. For example, instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself. When you make a mistake, you think "I'm a loser." When someone else's behaviour rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to the other person, such as "they are a horrible person!" One perceived negative event describes you or others fully, ignoring other facts to the contrary.
10. **Personalisation:** Personalization is a difficult thought pattern where you believe that everything others do or say is some kind of direct, personal reaction to you. Another difficult thought pattern in this area is seeing yourself as the cause of some negative *external* event, which, in fact, you were not primarily responsible for, or had no power to control the outcome.

# Cognitive Triangle



## Thought Balancing Steps

1. **Notice** the thought patterns that are unhelpful.
2. **Challenge** the thought patterns by asking yourself the following:
  - What **evidence** is there for this thought being true?
  - What **evidence** is there for this thought **NOT** being true?
  - Is there an alternative way of thinking that balances all the evidence?
3. Start to notice how you feel when you think the balanced thought. Do your emotions change? Does this new way of thinking and feeling affect your behaviour?