











How do we make effective decisions?

Don't react	Don't react or be impulsive— spend time gathering facts
Don't base	Don't base your decision on emotion- look at the whole picture
Make	Make a pro/con list and weight the answers--What is most important? Why? Who does this decision effect?
Talk	Talk to someone you trust – seek wise counsel, LISTEN
Pray	Pray about it.
Trust	Trust your decision.
Realize	Realize nothing is forever, and you may be able to tweak things moving forward.
Walk	If it becomes too overwhelming, take a break and do something you enjoy, and come back to it later!

Finding Alternative Thoughts

Unhelpful Thinking Habit	Alternative more balanced thought
Mental Filter 	<i>Am I only noticing the bad stuff? Am I filtering out the positives? Am I wearing those 'gloomy specs'? What would be more realistic?</i>
 Mind-Reading	<i>Am I assuming I know what others are thinking? What's the evidence? Those are my own thoughts, not theirs. Is there another, more balanced way of looking at it?</i>
Prediction 	<i>Am I thinking that I can predict the future? How likely is it that that might really happen?</i>
 Compare & despair	<i>Am I doing that 'compare and despair' thing? What would be a more balanced and helpful way of looking at it?</i>
Critical self	<i>There I go, that internal bully's at it again. Would most people who really know me say that about me? Is this something that I am totally responsible for?</i>
 Shoulds and musts	<i>Am I putting more pressure on myself, setting up expectations of myself that are almost impossible? What would be more realistic?</i>
Judgements 	<i>I'm making an evaluation about the situation or person. It's how I make sense of the world, but that doesn't mean my judgements are always right or helpful. Is there another perspective?</i>
 Emotional Reasoning	<i>Just because it feels bad, doesn't necessary mean it is bad. My feelings are just a reaction to my thoughts - and thoughts are just automatic brain reflexes</i>
Mountains and molehills	<i>Am I exaggerating the risk of danger? Or am I exaggerating the negative and minimising the positives? How would someone else see it? What's the bigger picture?</i>
 Catastrophising	<i>OK, thinking that the worst possible thing will definitely happen isn't really helpful right now. What's most likely to happen?</i>
Black and white thinking 	<i>Things aren't either totally white or totally black - there are shades of grey. Where is this on the spectrum?</i>
 Memories	<i>This is just a reminder of the past. That was then, and this is now. Even though this memory makes me <u>feel</u> upset, it's not <u>actually</u> happening again right now.</i>

How to Stop Over-Thinking

By Sharon Martin, LCSW

- Plan a specific time to think about it.
- Put a time limit on it. Don't allow over-thinking to continue endlessly.
- Distract yourself.
- Firmly tell yourself to stop thinking about it.
- Write it down.
- Limit your choices. Fewer choices makes deciding easier.
- Let go of perfection. Strive for "good enough" rather than perfect.
- Embrace mistakes. Mistakes and disagreements are part of the growth process.
- Stay present-focused. Don't spend time in "what if land".