

CHANGE YOUR MIND CHANGE YOUR LIFE

A Guide to Helpful Thinking

Dr. Ashley Smith

PEAK MIND

THE CENTER FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL STRENGTH





Event



Thoughts

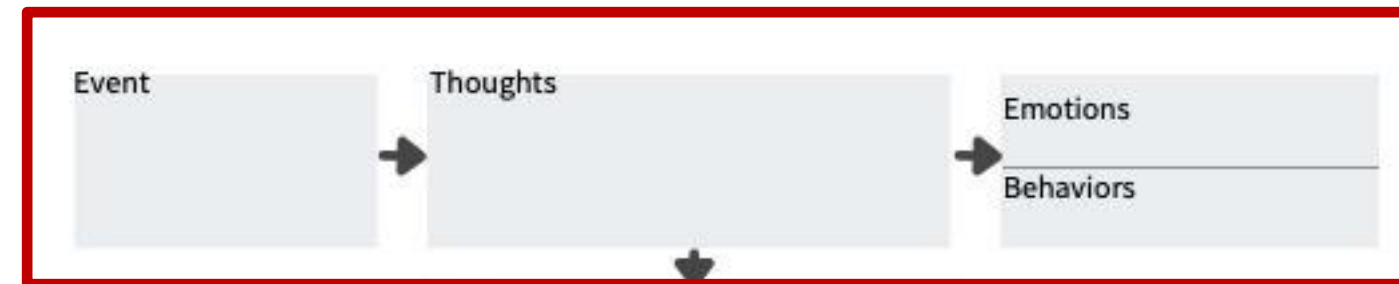


Reaction



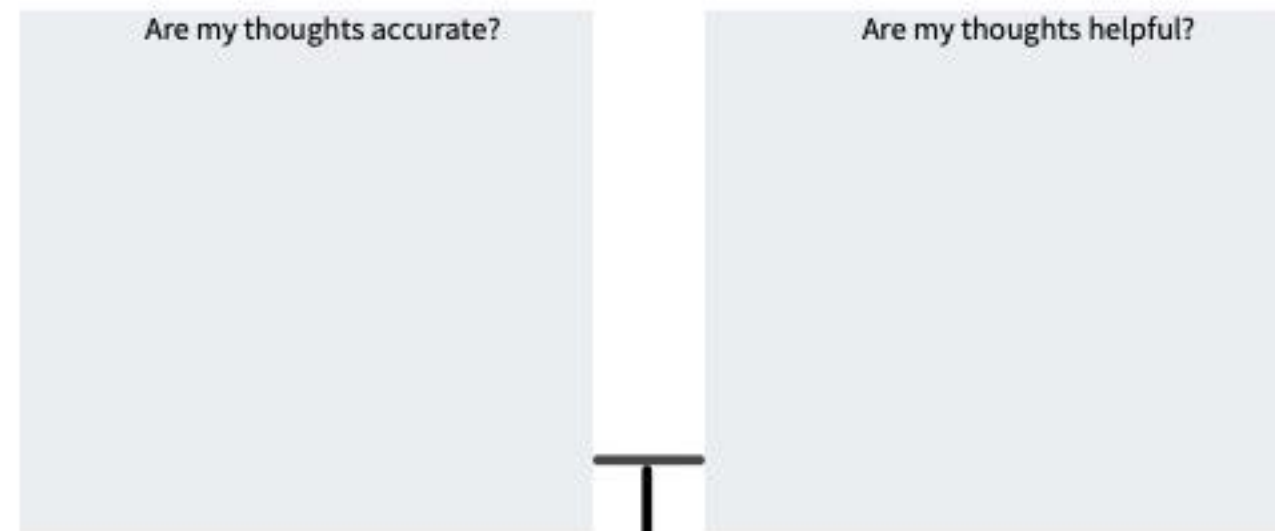
Reaction

Thought Challenging



Brain trick(s)

Evaluate your thought by asking each relevant Key Question.

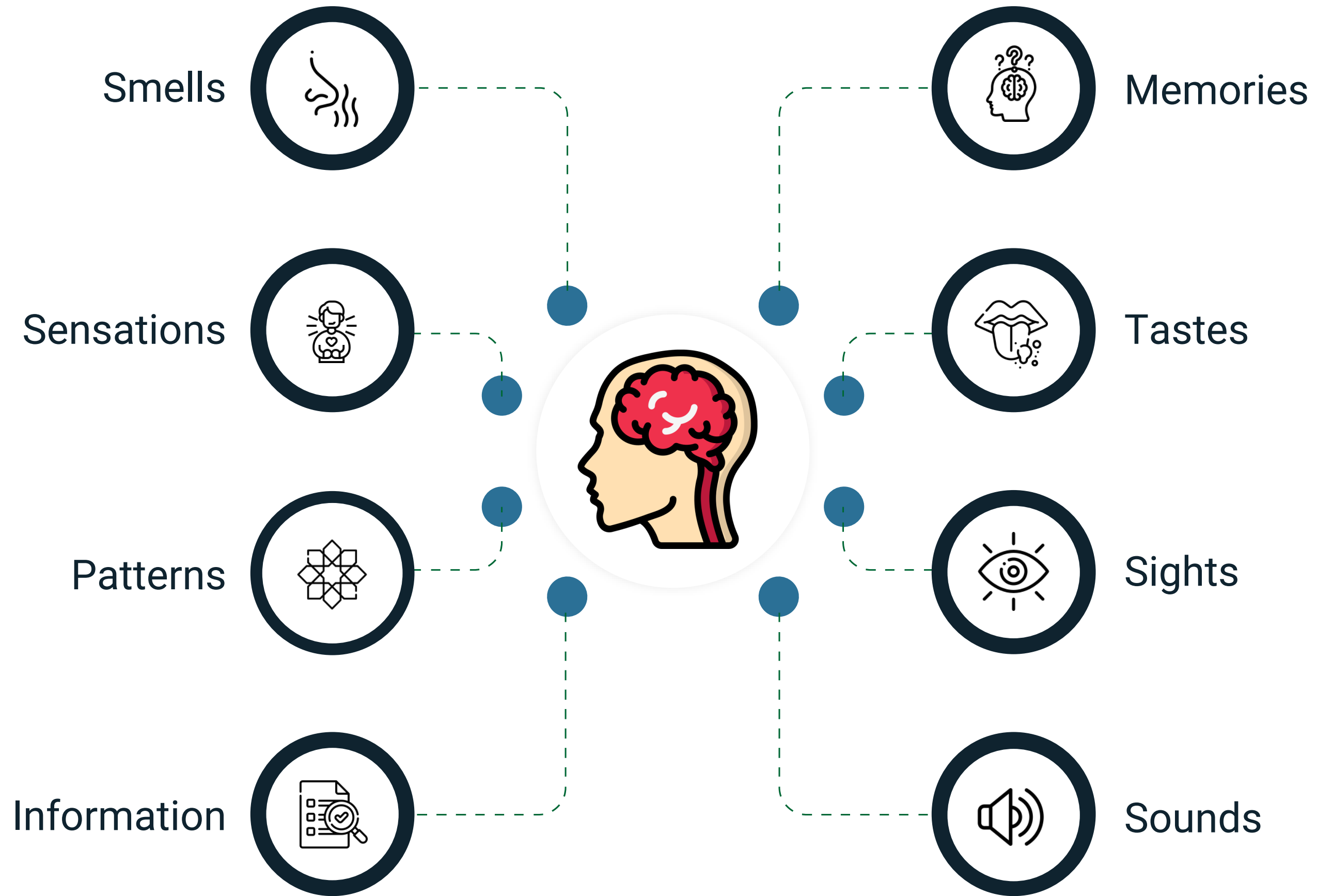


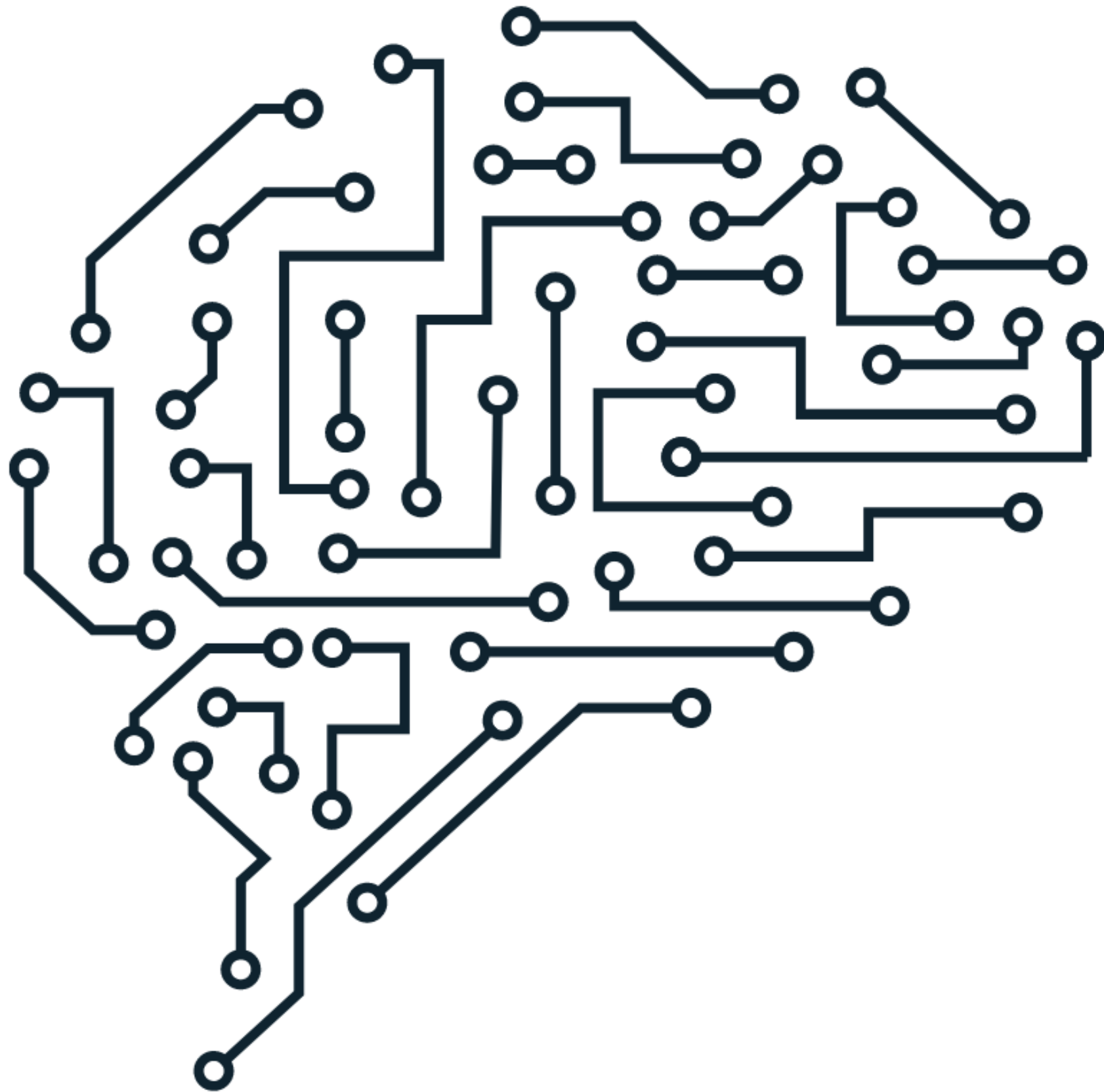
Consider your responses to the relevant Key Questions. Consider the evidence for/against your original thought as well as how helpful it is to you to think that way. Take everything together and come up with a new more accurate, helpful way to think in this situation.

Rational Response









Shortcuts

Biases

Scripts

Heuristics



THE
DIRTY DOZEN
Brain Tricks

ALL-OR-NONE THINKING

You view things in extremes
or in black-and-white terms.

Watch out for extreme language:

either/or, every, all/none, always/never





BLAMING & PERSONALIZING

You give too much responsibility to others
or yourself.



CATASTROPHIZING

You exaggerate the likelihood that something bad will happen, or you overestimate how bad it would be if it really did happen. Watch out for going to the worst case scenario or jumping from

Point A to Point Z.

DISCOUNTING THE POSITIVES

You claim that the positive things you or others do are trivial or don't count, or you minimize the positives, excusing them away.

Watch out for *Yeah, but...*



FORTUNETELLING



You predict the **future** negatively; you “know” that **something** will turn out badly.

The Ifs

WHAT IF AND IF ONLY



If only is a regret. You focus on the idea that you could or should have done differently and that doing so would have lead to different outcomes.



What if is the quintessential worry, looking for all the possible negative outcomes that could occur.

Thinking in hypotheticals rather than facts.





JUDGMENTS

You view yourself, others, and events in terms of evaluations like good/bad or better/worse, rather than simply describing, accepting, or understanding things as they objectively are.

Watch for words like *good/bad* (or any of their synonyms like *terrible, horrible, great*), *too*, and statements such as *I like this* or *I don't like things like that*.



MINDREADING

You assume you know what other people are thinking, typically skewing toward the negative or judgmental, often without sufficient evidence.

A young girl with dark curly braids is the central focus, wearing a white polo shirt and a yellow backpack. She has her hands pressed against her face, suggesting distress or embarrassment. Surrounding her are four hands from other people, all pointing towards her. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The entire image has a dark blue overlay.

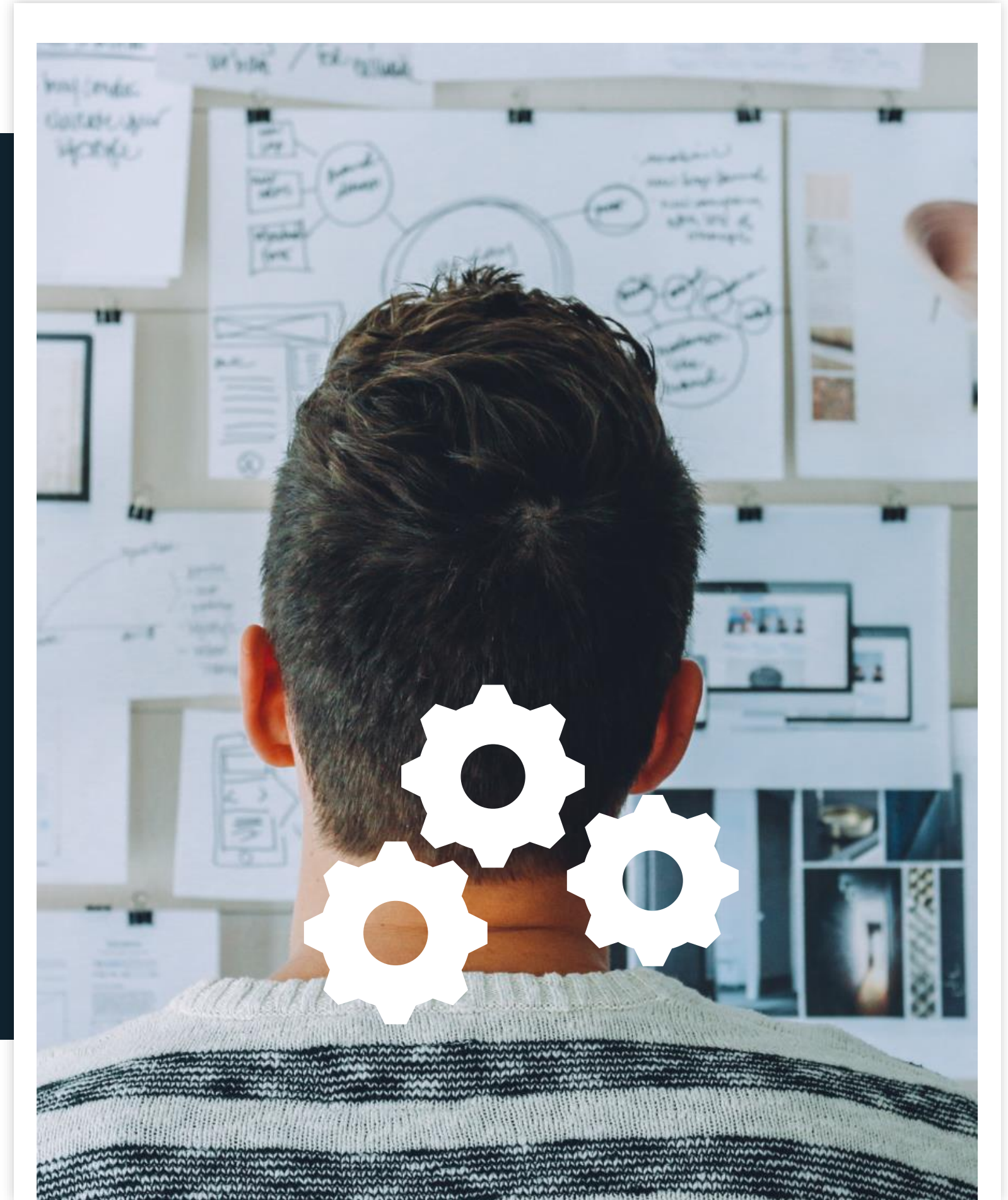
NAME CALLING

You attach negative labels to yourself or others.



OVERGENERALIZING

You draw broad conclusions about something on the basis of 1 or 2 things. Extreme words may also indicate overgeneralizing: *always, never, no one/everyone, forever.*



SHOULD

You hold firm rules or **expectations** about how things should be, rather than simply focusing on what is. They can be a denial of reality. Shoulds are expectations and one of the most harmful words in the English language. They often lead to unnecessary anxiety, anger, or guilt.

Watch for *should*, *ought*, *must*, *could*, and *have to*.





Unfair **COMPARISONS**

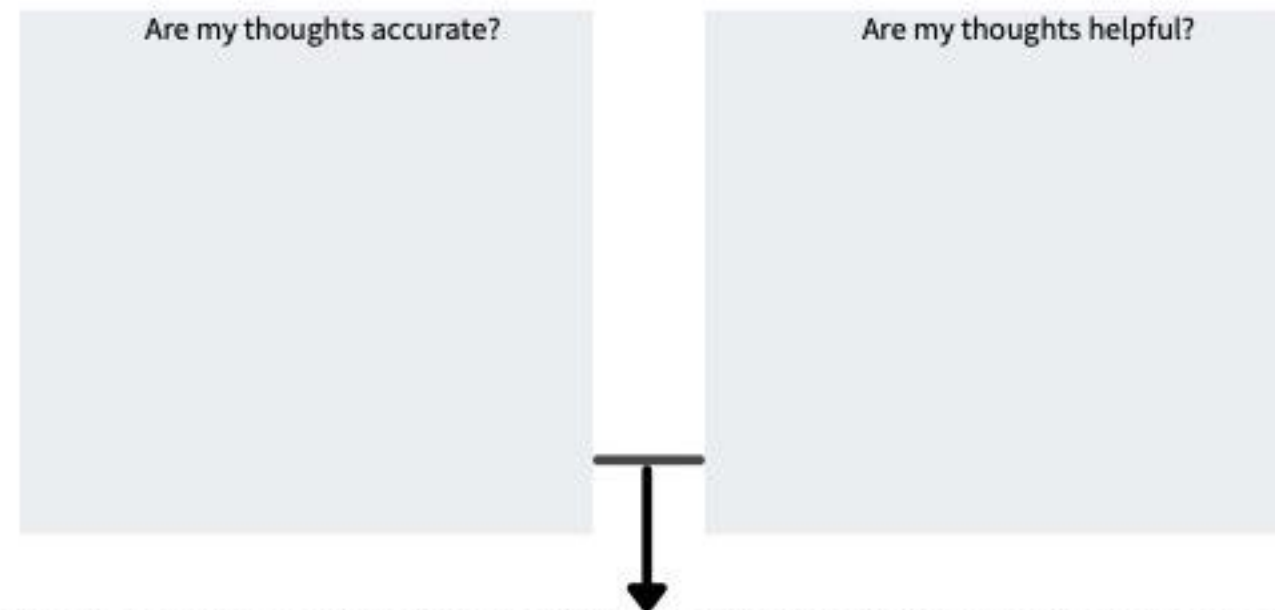


You compare yourself to others by focusing primarily on their strengths or what they do better than you and find yourself inferior in the comparison.

Thought Challenging



Evaluate your thought by asking each relevant Key Question.



Consider your responses to the relevant Key Questions. Consider the evidence for/against your original thought as well as how helpful it is to you to think that way. Take everything together and come up with a new more accurate, helpful way to think in this situation.

Rational Response

THE DIRTY DOZEN

All-or-none Thinking

Blaming/Personalizing

Catastrophizing

Discounting the Positive

Fortunetelling

Judgments

Overgeneralizing

Shoulds

Unfair Comparisons



THOUGHT CHALLENGING



FOUR STEPS OF THOUGHT CHALLENGING



01

Catch your thoughts



02

Spot the brain trick(s)



03

Evaluate your thoughts



04

Come up with a rational response

EVALUATE YOUR **THOUGHTS**

**ARE THEY ACCURATE?
ARE THEY HELPFUL?**



Key Questions

ARE MY THOUGHTS ACCURATE?

- 01 | What is the evidence for and against this thought?
- 02 | Is there an alternative explanation?
- 03 | What is the realistic worst thing that could happen? How likely is that to happen?
- 04 | What happened last time?
- 05 | Are my thoughts based on feelings or facts?
- 06 | What is the likelihood that will happen? What are all of the steps that would have to happen?
- 07 | Am I focusing too much on irrelevant facts or overlooking relevant ones?



Key Questions

ARE MY THOUGHTS HELPFUL?

- 01 | If this is true, so what? How bad would that actually be?
- 02 | Am I underestimating what I can do to handle this situation?
- 03 | Will this matter in a day, week, month, or year from now?
- 04 | What would I tell a friend?
- 05 | Does thinking this way help me reach my goals or be the kind of person I want to be?
- 06 | On the scale of bad things, is this a paper cut or a nuclear disaster?
- 07 | How would someone else think about this situation?



COME UP WITH A

RATIONAL RESPONSE

Considering your answers to key questions, what is something more **accurate** & **helpful** to think instead?

Thought Challenging



Evaluate your thought by asking each relevant Key Question.

Are my thoughts accurate?

Are my thoughts helpful?

Consider your responses to the relevant Key Questions. Consider the evidence for/against your original thought as well as how helpful it is to you to think that way. Take everything together and come up with a new more accurate, helpful way to think in this situation.

Rational Response





For more inspiration & resources

Watch Dr. Ashley's TEDx talk



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WP7Ffoa_gW0

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