

Common Lawyer Thinking Errors

Black & White Thinking	This involves seeing only one extreme or the other. You are right or wrong, good or bad, etc. There is no grey area.
Mental Filter	This involves a “filtering in” and “filtering out” process, focusing on only one part and ignoring the rest. Usually means only looking at the negative parts of a situations and forgetting the positive parts.
“Should-ing” & “Must-ing”	Sometimes by saying “I should” or “I must” you can put unreasonable demands or pressure on yourself and others. Sometimes such statements can be helpful, but they can also sometimes create unrealistic expectations.
Catastrophizing	Catastrophizing occurs when we “blow things out of proportion” and we view a situation as awful, dreadful, horrible, even though the facts don’t support this.
Labelling	We label ourselves and others when we make global statements based on behavior in specific situations. We tend to use this label even though there are many more examples that aren’t consistent with this label.
Jumping to Conclusions	We jump to conclusions when we assume that we know what someone else is thinking and when we make predictions about what will happen in the future.
Magnification & Minimization	You magnify the positive attributes of other people and minimize your own positive attributes.

* Adapted from Center for Clinical Interventions