How to Reframe Black-and-White Thinking

And Become Less Emotionally Reactive

What is Black-and-White Thinking?

When you distort reality by ignoring the good and exaggerating the bad

Examples:

"You never do the dishes."

"Everything is awful."

"My boss is the worst communicator."

B+W words:

- Always
- Never
- Perfect
- Terrible
- Every
- Nothing
- Nobody
- Worst
- Best

Why do we do it?

1. **It justifies you**
2. **Excuse yourself from work**
3. **Protects from painful feelings (uncertainty, disappointment)**
4. **Feel powerless**
5. **Feels good (vindication)**

How to Reframe Black-and-White Thinking

One Rule: Honesty You have to be willing to admit that black-and-white thinking is a lie, and that you're lying to yourself to excuse yourself from something. If you're willing to be honest about that, then you can move on to the next steps.

Step 1: Notice when you use black-and-white words.

Step 2: Take a deep breath and slow down.

Step 3: Name an emotion: "I feel_____." (Insert just the emotion word.)

Step 4: Reframe the situation.

- Use Both/AND statements: "My wife is insensitive to me sometimes AND she also loves me a lot."
- Look for an exception to the extreme.
- Be very specific: instead of "everything is awful", describe what specifically is awful.

Step 5: Be accountable. What can you do to help the situation?

Remember, you can change your brain, improve your mood, and get better at feeling.

THERAPY IN A NUTSHELL