

# AFTER THE CALL



## MIND YOURSELF

It is no secret that we change throughout our development. We are noticeably taller, heavier, and have different voices than when we were younger. We know as well that our brain changes. But, sometimes it is hard to pinpoint how. How are you different from last week? What about a week before that? Unless something drastic has occurred it is hard to suggest what might be different.

Through the years we have been gently guided into certain “ways to think”. Some of these are beneficial, in that they save our brain power for other things (think about the last time you were driving and then suddenly realized you had covered a few kilometers...). But, other times they can be limiting.

In order to *Think Differently* you need to be able to identify barriers to thinking:

### 1. Take it or Leave it : “It’s black or white to me”

This type of thinking reflects our inability to live in “**the greys**” of life. We know, for instance, that not everything is so cut and dry. Try and remember the last time you decided that you had no ability to compromise with your thinking. You find yourself thinking, “that is just the type of thinker I am”. But, given enough reflection, you will tend to find that you use this type of reasoning about certain things and not others.

### 2. Patterning : “ You always get what you want”

Sometimes we find ourselves deciding upon a pattern of behavior based on one outcome. They were late for their appointment turns into “they are always late”. We like to generalize, so be careful around using “**always**” and “**never**” especially to describe others or ourselves.

### 3. The Should Show : “I should have tried harder”

Criticism is difficult for us to turn off, especially when we are being told to perform better and be more efficient. But, mind yourself when you realize you are using words like “should” and “must”. After all, are you a mind-reader? “I should have” statements, more often than not, come after we’ve acquired a bit more information. Moreover, if we start telling others what they “should” do, we will tend to find ourselves frustrated when they do not fit into that mold.

### 4. Read the Label: “I’m a moron”.

Much the same as criticisms, assigning ourselves and others a label can be equally damaging. When we engage in this type of thinking we are identifying ourselves AS our problem. You are not a “cold” when you have one, yet we find ourselves suggesting “they are an angry person”, or “I am an idiot”. What you might feel is embarrassed because of a mistake that you feel you have made. What you might see is them when they are angry, but are not around or unable (filtering what we want to see is another distortion) to see that they show other emotions.

Try and *Think Differently*. If you are finding that you’re growing angry and irritable more often, check what type of lens you are seeing the world through. Try and identify when you might be falling victim to using cognitive distortions!