

AI-01918 Thinking Error-Mind Reading

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What kind of thinking error is the following. Me and my wife retired early at age 55 in 2021 and relocated from TX to Cebu Philippines. We left our house and cars in TX with our RN daughter who is now 32.

While troubleshooting her AC not starting issue with code 84 4H and her boyfriend washing the outdoor AC unit as part of the troubleshooting task and after determining that the AC is actually dead (will not come alive), the bf was putting back the water hose and trying to untangle the hose and put it together nicely and perfectly when I overheard my daughter telling the bf just to leave it as is then I overheard a gentle and mild argument about the bf saying "I'll take care of it" and then daughter was a little bit annoyed and bossy and mentioned to just leave it and then the back and forth argument started to spark. I ask my daughter what is going on and she said that the water hose has kinks and needs to be fixed. I told her that the hose needs to be uncoiled and placed in the wall hanger untangled every use. The bf wants to fix it but the daughter said "leave it". So my analysis is "it's not about the water hose". It's about something else! So my thinking is I need to lecture them about working together and not argue on little stuff. They are still in the "forming stage " of a relationship and I want to kinda' shed lights on what to do in adversity without yelling at each other or arguing.

Explain my thinking error and the best method to train her with smooth handling of other humans.

Based on what you've described, the thinking error you're exhibiting is a form of mind reading.

You've observed a disagreement about a water hose and concluded that "it's not

about the water hose" but about some deeper, unstated issue in their relationship. You've then jumped to the conclusion that they need a lecture from you about working together and not arguing over "little stuff."

This is a thinking error because you're assuming you know their internal thoughts, feelings, and the true meaning behind their actions without any direct evidence. You're creating a narrative for them based on a very small slice of their interaction. While their disagreement might be related to other things, you can't know that for sure, and inserting yourself with a lecture based on this assumption will likely be perceived as an overreach and could create more tension rather than resolving it.

The Best Method to Train Her

Instead of lecturing, a much more effective and respectful approach is to use the Socratic method. This involves asking questions to guide her to her own conclusions, rather than directly telling her what to do. This method empowers her to think critically and solve her own problems, which is a much more valuable skill in the long run.

Here are the key steps to this method:

1. Start with Observation, Not Assumption: Focus on what you actually saw and heard. For example, you can say, "I noticed you and your boyfriend had a disagreement about the water hose."
2. Ask Open-Ended Questions: Instead of making statements, ask questions that encourage her to reflect.
 - "What was that disagreement really about?"
 - "How did that situation make you feel?"
 - "How did you feel about his response?"
 - "In a similar situation in the future, what's a different way you could have handled it?"
3. Validate Her Feelings: Listen to her answers without judgment. Even if you think the argument was trivial, her feelings about it are valid to her. Acknowledge this by saying things like, "I can see why that was frustrating for you."

4. Offer Support, Not Solutions: You're there as a resource, not a manager. Frame your support in a way that respects her autonomy.

- "If you'd like to talk more about it, I'm here to listen."
- "It sounds like you're navigating some new challenges. That's a normal part of any relationship."

By using this approach, you're not a lecturer, but a wise and trusted advisor. You're giving her the tools to analyze her own situations and interactions, which is the ultimate goal of effective training. It also models the kind of calm, non-confrontational communication that you want her to learn.

Do you have any thoughts on how you might rephrase what you want to say to your daughter using this method?

Are there books written about "Thinking Errors"?

Yes, there are many excellent books written about "thinking errors," often referred to in psychology as **cognitive biases** or **cognitive distortions**. These books explore the systematic ways our brains deviate from rational judgment, leading us to make predictable mistakes in thinking, decision-making, and perceiving reality.

Here are some of the most influential and popular books on the topic:

Highly Recommended & Classic Reads:

- **"Thinking, Fast and Slow" by Daniel Kahneman:** This is arguably the most seminal work on cognitive biases. Kahneman, a Nobel laureate in Economics, explains how our minds operate on two systems: "System 1" (fast, intuitive, emotional) and "System 2" (slower, more deliberate, logical). He details numerous biases that arise from System 1's shortcuts and how they impact our judgments and decisions.
- **"The Art of Thinking Clearly" by Rolf Dobelli:** This book offers a very accessible and digestible overview of common cognitive biases, each presented in a short, easy-to-understand chapter with real-world examples. It's a great starting point for anyone new to the topic.
- **"Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions" by Dan Ariely:** Ariely, a behavioral economist, explores how irrationality is not random but systematic and predictable. He uses fascinating experiments to

illustrate how our biases influence everything from money and love to work and habits.

- **"You Are Not So Smart" by David McRaney:** Based on his popular blog, this book (and its sequel "You Are Now Less Dumb") breaks down various cognitive biases and logical fallacies in an engaging and often humorous way, showing how our self-delusions and flawed reasoning affect our daily lives.

Other Notable Books:

- **"Mistakes Were Made (But Not by Me)" by Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson:** This book delves into the psychology of self-justification and cognitive dissonance, explaining why people cling to false beliefs and justify their actions, even when confronted with evidence to the contrary.
- **"The Invisible Gorilla: And Other Ways Our Intuitions Deceive Us" by Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons:** This book explores various cognitive illusions and biases, including inattention blindness (like the famous "invisible gorilla" experiment), demonstrating how our perceptions are often flawed.
- **"The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable" by Nassim Nicholas Taleb:** While broader than just thinking errors, Taleb's work emphasizes our tendency to underestimate the impact of rare, unpredictable events and our biased attempts to rationalize them after they occur.
- **"Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" by Robert B. Cialdini:** This classic book details the six universal principles of persuasion, many of which exploit common cognitive biases to influence people's behavior.
- **"The Psychology of Money" by Morgan Housel:** This book applies principles of behavioral psychology to personal finance, illustrating how our emotional biases and thinking errors often lead to poor financial decisions.
- **"Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy" by David D. Burns:** This is a highly popular self-help book based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which directly addresses "cognitive distortions" – unhelpful thinking patterns that contribute to anxiety and depression. It provides practical strategies for identifying and challenging these errors.

These books can be incredibly insightful for understanding not only your own thinking but also the thinking of others. They offer valuable perspectives on why people behave the way they do and can help you develop strategies for more rational and effective interactions.