

## THINKING TRAPS SUMMARY: Monta Vista Character Lab\*

Traps!	Mind Reading	Me	Defectiveness	Them	Catastrophizing	Helplessness
<b>Description</b>	Believing you know what another person is thinking or expecting another person to know what you are thinking.	Believing you are the sole cause of a problem/all problems.	Believing you are fundamentally bad, inferior, or useless.	Believing others, or circumstances, are the sole cause of all problems.	Believing the worst case will happen.	Believing that you have no control and that negative events will affect all areas of your life.
<b>Emotional results</b>	Frustration Decreased communication	Sadness Guilt	Shame	Anger Resentment	Anxiety Panic	Passivity
<b>Mental cues and critical questions to resist this trap</b>	How do I know? Check it out. <b>ASK.</b>	What else? Slice it up. What contributed to the situation.	What old story am I telling myself? We are all in this together.	What about me? What about their situation? What choices did they have?	One step at a time. What is my plan?	What can I control? Control the controllables. <b>Hope is not a strategy.</b>

- **Thinking Trap Triggers:**
  - **Ambiguity.** Combat this by providing “why” and asking for information.
  - **Time Pressure:** Use “urgent” sparingly.
  - **Depletion:** Prioritize rest and recovery.
- **Confirmation bias** is a tendency to pay attention to and remember information supporting our beliefs while not noticing and devaluing contradictory evidence.
- **Tips to avoid thinking traps; be a detective and figure out what is happening!**
  - Avoid depletion, be rested, get sleep!
  - Decrease ambiguity; be clear and seek clarity.
  - Create distance: **Breathe**, label, and defuse a situation.
  - Use mental cues and ask questions of yourself and others.
  - Broaden the picture: Ask yourself and others, how do we know? What are we missing? What else could be true?
- **Questions:**
  - Which traps do you tend to fall into? When and with whom?
  - What do you do to disrupt thinking traps? After this presentation, do you have any new thoughts on how to disrupt thinking traps?

\* Sources include: Judy Saltzberg (MAPP lectures), Martin Seligman (learned helplessness), David Burns (distorted thinking), Albert Ellis (irrational assumptions), Aaron Beck (errors in logic, cognitive therapy), Daniel Kahneman (System1/System 2 cognitive processing)

**HOMEWORK:** At the end of each day this week, think back and try to identify a trap you fell into and how you might examine this situation.

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
<b>What is one trap that I fall into?</b>						
<b>How could I have thought about this situation differently?</b>						

- **Mind Reading:** I assumed someone knew what I was thinking.
- **All about me:** I assumed it was my fault.
- **I am flawed:** I'm just bad at this, or useless
- **It's all you:** It's someone else's fault
- **Catastrophizing:** I assumed disaster
- **No control:** I assumed there was nothing I could do.