

All-or-Nothing Thinking

(Black-and-white thinking / No middle ground)

1. What It Is (Simple Definition)

All-or-nothing thinking means seeing things in **extreme categories**—as either totally good or totally bad, perfect or a failure, success or disaster—with **no in-between**.

2. Common Signs

- Using words like “**always**,” “**never**,” “**perfect**,” “**failure**”
- Believing if something isn’t perfect, it’s worthless
- Feeling discouraged quickly when things go slightly wrong
- Judging yourself or others harshly
- Difficulty seeing progress or partial success

- Overreacting to small mistakes
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3. Everyday Examples

- “If I can’t do the workout perfectly, I won’t do it at all.”
 - “I made one mistake at work—now the whole day is ruined.”
 - “If they didn’t text back immediately, they must not care.”
 - “I didn’t score full marks, so it means I’m dumb.”
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4. How It Affects You

- Increased stress and anxiety

- Feeling like you're constantly failing
 - Avoiding tasks due to fear of imperfection
 - Lower confidence and motivation
 - Relationship misunderstandings
 - Difficulty recognizing actual improvement
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5. What Helps

- Replace extremes with **balanced statements**
- Instead of "I failed," say: "I made progress; I can improve."
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Notice when you use words like always or never

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Celebrate **partial achievements**

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Remind yourself:

□ “Things can be good even if they're not perfect.”

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Ask:

□ “Is there a middle ground here?”

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Practice flexible thinking

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Accept that **mistakes are normal**, not catastrophic

6. When to Seek Help

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If all-or-nothing thinking causes:

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Constant stress or guilt

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Avoidance of tasks

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Relationship issues

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Perfectionism affecting daily life

Talking to a mental health professional can help reshape thinking patterns.