

# Challenge All Or Nothin Thinking

The function of this worksheet is to develop an understanding of what all or nothing or black and white thinking is, understand why this can be harmful, recognize it in your own thinking, and practice reframing these thoughts for yourself.

## What Is All Or Nothing Thinking?

Black and white thinking, also known as all-or-nothing thinking, is a cognitive distortion that involves seeing things in extreme categories, such as success or failure, good or bad, and right or wrong, without any shades of gray or nuance.

## Examples of All Or Nothing Thinking

- "I'm a failure if I don't get the job, I'll never get hired."
- "I'm lazy if I don't exercise 5 days a week."
- "As are the only grades that are acceptable."
- "If I can't stick to healthy eating 100% of the time, I'm not going to try at all."

*Use this space to write down some of your "all or nothing" thoughts*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



*Use this space to write down more of your “all or nothing” thoughts*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

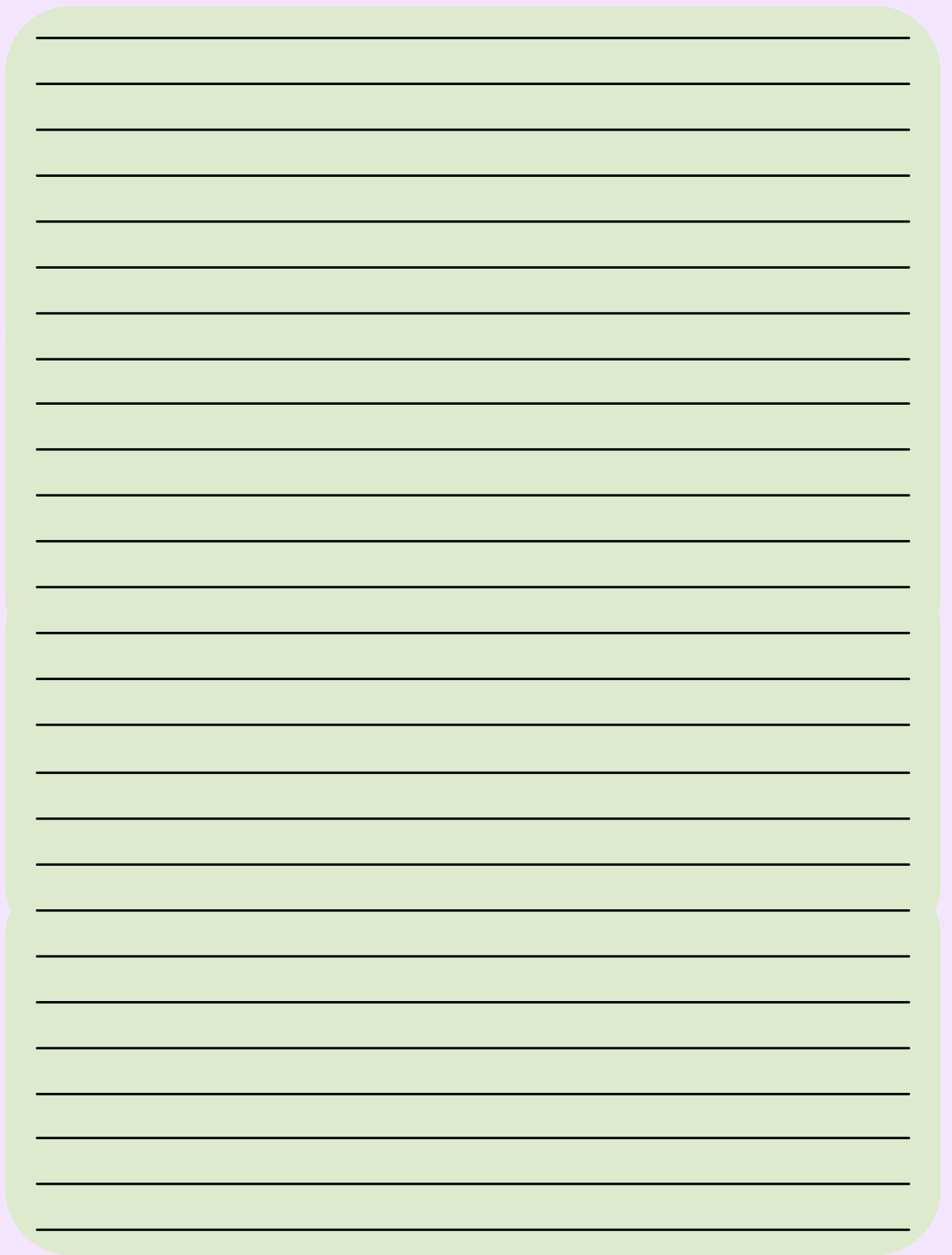
---

***Ways all or nothing thinking can negatively impact you.***

- Cause misunderstandings and missed opportunities for compromise and resolution of conflicts in my relationships?
- Prevent me from learning and achieving my full potential? Do my thoughts limit opportunities and hinder collaboration and progress in the workplace?
- Disrupt my eating and movement habits or goals by creating rigid dietary restrictions and unhealthy relationships with food and exercise.
- Create negative thoughts and emotions and self-sabotaging behaviors.
- Make decisions without considering the impact on myself and others.
- Make decisions based too much in the impact on others and neglect your own needs.
- Idealize and devalue others, causing emotional upheaval in my relationships.
- Make assumptions without verifying facts.
- Filter out positive or objective information and only focus on the negative or information that supports all or nothing thought.
- Cause anxiety by exaggerating the probability of the negative happening.

*After reading some of the ways all or nothing thinking can impact you in unhelpful ways, use this space to reflect on ways that you've noticed all or nothing thinking has impacted you in your life.*

Lined writing area for reflection.





*Before we go about changing or challenging thought patterns, it can often be important to understand the function and origins of a behavior or thinking pattern. It can be difficult or ineffective to challenge and change things if we don't first address and provide space for the fears or internalized beliefs that might be there for us and that the behavior might be acting as a "protector" from.*



***What The Protective Function Of All Or Nothing Thinking?***

Many behaviors that seem maladaptive at first glance often serve important protective functions. For example, anxiety, though often

debilitating, can act as a warning system, heightening our awareness of potential dangers. Similarly, avoidance behaviors might prevent distress by steering us away from potentially harmful situations. Even self-isolation can be a defense mechanism to protect against perceived social threats. These behaviors, while potentially hindering in excess, are rooted in our survival instincts, illustrating the complex balance our minds strive to maintain between safety and functionality. Understanding the protective origins of these behaviors can pave the way for more compassionate and effective interventions.



***Questions to ask yourself to help you determine if it's all or nothing thinking***

Is the thought overly simplistic or extreme?

Does the thought involve rigid "should" or "must" statements?

Does the thought involve thinking in absolutes, such as "always" or "never"?

Is there no room for nuance or complexity in the thought?

Does the thought involve jumping to conclusions without considering all the evidence?

Are there other possible explanations or perspectives that the thought ignores?

Does the thought involve personalizing or globalizing an event?

Does the thought involve catastrophizing or minimizing the situation?


Does the thought involve discounting the positive or exaggerating the negative?

Does the thought involve focusing on one aspect of the situation and ignoring the others?

Does the thought involve making assumptions without verifying the facts?

Does the thought involve overgeneralizing from one negative experience?





## ***Why is it important to challenge all or nothing thinking?***

The next step after understanding our all or nothing thinking is challenging. All or nothing thoughts can lead to and exacerbate unrealistic expectations, stress, anxiety, depression, and stress. By addressing and reframing this type of thinking, individuals can:

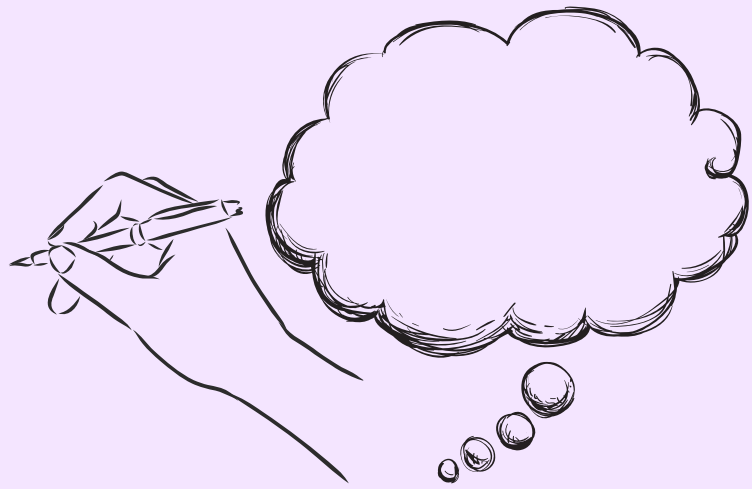
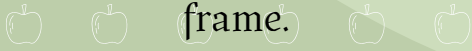
1. **Reduce Stress and Anxiety:** Recognizing that most situations are not entirely good or bad can help alleviate pressure and reduce feelings of anxiety.
2. **Improve Relationships:** Understanding that people and situations are complex allows for more compassionate and realistic interactions, fostering healthier and more supportive relationships.
3. **Enhance Problem-Solving Skills:** Seeing the middle ground opens up more options and solutions, promoting better decision-making and creative problem-solving.
4. **Boost Self-Esteem:** Accepting that perfection is unattainable and valuing incremental progress can lead to a more positive self-image and greater self-acceptance.
5. **Increase Resilience:** Adopting a more balanced perspective helps build resilience, as individuals are better equipped to cope with setbacks and view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than as failures.

By actively challenging all-or-nothing thinking, we cultivate a more balanced, realistic, and compassionate outlook on life, paving the way for greater emotional and psychological well-being.





Putting the information into practice--below are sections to write the “all or nothing thought” and transform it into a more flexible thought, or a “re frame.”



All or Nothing Thought

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Re Frame

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



All or Nothing  
Thought

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Re Frame

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



All or Nothing  
Thought

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Re Frame

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---