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# How Your Mind Ticks



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BY RHONDA

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### Two types of unhealthy mindsets

We absolutely enjoy the conversations that develop around this topic!

### **Black and White thinking:**

This type of mindset is often found in families of paternalistic or legalistic families. Dad lays down the law, mum follows it and it becomes, "my way or the highway!" (dad) in family culture, even in the generations to come.

With such immovable and set minds, others are either in the "right" category or the "wrong" black category. People acceptable to these mindsets are therefore in the "white" category (the goodies as opposed to the baddies!) and these include people who correspond to that person's values, culture or history.

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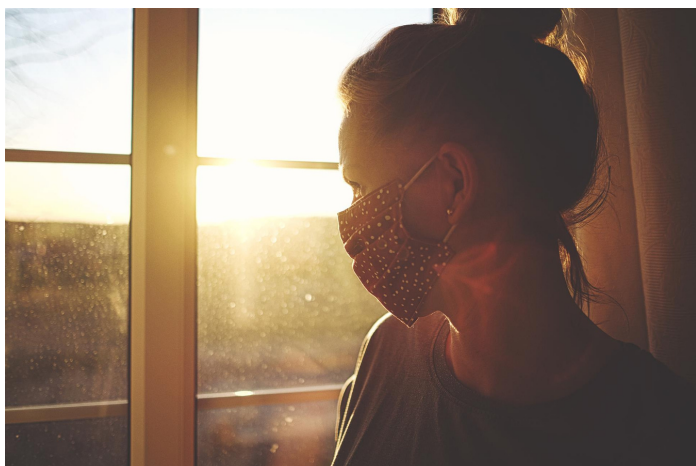
The “Bra Brothers” may accept only those who come from the same background as themselves. The Brahmins in Indian culture will only find those of similar status to themselves as acceptable. My sub-Continental father was of the ilk that if you weren’t “educated”, you weren’t going to add up to much later in life - which fortunately, isn’t the truth today!

There is obviously no space to move in this type of thinking and ‘shades of grey’ are not a consideration to them. “Different vs Correct / Incorrect?” should actually be the questions someone with fixed opinions needs to consider.

“Is this my preference or my prejudice speaking, or is it that I am not understanding what’s being put in front of me?” is another obvious question.

Rigid thinkers stand the chance of alienating themselves from change of any kind or from even their more contemporary loved ones in relationships. It is still humanly possible to have grey areas of thought, where no decision is reached at all. The questions that need to be asked as mentioned previously will challenge that mindset to include other points of view as well as differing information and evidence to that of theirs.

The Ku Klux Klan is a frightening example of what can go wrong when rigid thinking snowballs.



## Catastrophising:

Remember Henny Penny squawking, “The sky is falling down!?” That is catastrophising at its best. This mindset is again passed down from one generation to another, where we find ourselves “frozen” when faced with certain circumstances. It is more imagined danger than the actual impending calamity, but this mindset escalates to the highest level of irrational fear even before there is only a whiff of it.

A strong gale in the catastrophising mind morphs into a typhoon even before the weather forecast is on television. A toddler by the pool’s edge is already condemned in grandma’s mind to death by drowning before it’s even wet. This thought pattern fails to rely on hard evidence or ‘proof of life’ to determine the reality of the catastrophe.

As above, this habit pattern of thinking can be adjusted with some simple self-questioning:

“Why am I thinking like this?”

“Is this line of thought accurate or is it just mum/dad / grandma-of-the-past talking?”

Deep breathing and relaxation exercises, and a DELIBERATE positive re-jigging of one’s default thinking patterns will help greatly.

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