Thinking In Full Color

Black and white thinking, sometimes called "absolute thinking" or "all or nothing thinking," is very common, even though this type of thinking can lead to lots of trouble and unhappiness. When you think in black and white terms you substantially limit the possibility for understanding yourself and others, and as you limit your thinking, you limit your choices.

When it comes to our emotional and social lives there are very few things that are black and white. For example, a 25 year woman who was left by her boyfriend said to a friend, "I'll *never* find anyone to love again." A 55 year old businessman laid off from his job thought, "My life is ruined. Employers will *only* see me as an old man." A 17 year old star football player who ended his hopes of getting a college scholarship when he broke his knee told his parents, "If I can't play football, there is *nothing* I can do really well."

Can you see the problem with this type of thinking? When you hear yourself say words like "always," "never," "every," "all" or "no one ," you can know immediately that you are thinking in black and white instead of thinking in full color.

So how do you change your thinking? Look at these examples of how thinking in full color opens up possibilities.

Black and White Thinking	Full Color Thinking
"I'll *never* find anyone to love again."	"I'm having a difficult time being alone, but I'm young and with patience I can find someone else to love."
"My life is ruined. Employers will *only* see me as an old man."	"There are many companies that could benefit from my experience. There are also many resources for people my age to help me find a job. Or I could always start something on my own business!"
"If I can't play football, there is *nothing* I can do really well."	"I became good at football because I worked hard loved the sport and practiced all of the time. I can find other things that I love to do, and if I practice hard, I can excel at those things too."

Write down a problem you are having below. Then on the next page write down black and white thoughts and full color thoughts about your problem.

_____

Black & White Thoughts

Full Color Thoughts