



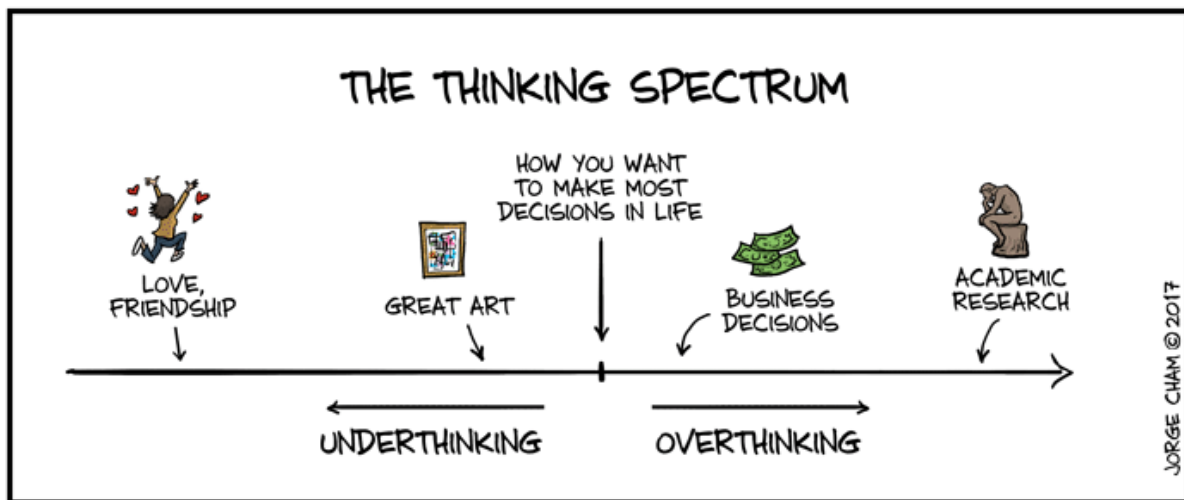
Close your eyes,
Take a breath,
Inhale calm,
Exhale stress.

Over thinking: The art of
creating new problems out of
ones that never existed –
Underthinking??????

Mindfulness@porthcawlu3a.org

Jaci & Jeff
YMCA, first and third
Tuesday, 1.30 – 3.30 pm

You've likely heard of overthinking, where you overanalyse even the most trivial of situations and are consumed by indecision. Ongoing research shows that overthinkers are at an increased risk of mental illness such as anxiety and depression but can the same be said about Under thinkers?



WWW.PHDCOMICS.COM

As the name suggests, underthinking is the habit of not giving situations very much thought at all. While overthinkers often obsess over little details, under thinkers usually don't give too much thought to the consequence of their actions. They are more likely to act impulsively without taking time to fully consider what they're doing, or how they're feeling.

Are there benefits to underthinking?

Underthinking isn't always a bad tool to have in your back pocket, or in your mindfulness parachute. Consider situations that demand us to act quickly and using our instincts, like in an emergency. Underthinking stops us from worrying or overanalysing a situation, allowing us to react to a crisis in a timely manner – this could be anything from quickly switching off the water mains when a tap breaks, to jumping in to do the Heimlich manoeuvre when someone starts choking.

Another benefit to being an under thinker is that you're less likely to stew over a dilemma or agonise over the outcome – wasting unnecessary energy and time on something you know how to handle. The decisiveness that comes with underthinking can also allow us to take charge in difficult situations, meaning we may work well under pressure, and inspire confidence in others. In general, under thinkers are more likely to think intuitively and creatively and focus on aspects of their life that are in their control, rather than those that aren't.

What are the cons of underthinking?

The other side to the coin is that jumping in too quickly could have negative consequences in the aftermath. Poor decision-making could lead to stress, as the fallout of our decisions has a negative impact on our life or causes further issues than the one we originally tried to solve.

In real terms, this might look like excitedly saying yes to going to a concert because you've been stressed and want to blow off some steam, only to become anxious in the lead up when you realise the full cost involved puts you over budget for the month. You might have to cancel other plans to accommodate it and worry about letting people down.

Relationships can become strained, or we can struggle with a knock-on effect when we put less thought into our actions and what we say, especially when we're navigating complex or difficult times. We might even get a reputation for overpromising and not following through or accidentally causing offence thanks to careless remarks. (now I read it back, I'm not sure this is a Con, but I'll leave it in?)

Helpful or Harmful - Underthinking can have a lasting impact on our lives if left unchecked. But it is possible to use it to our advantage. The most important thing is to recognise moments when we need to be reflective and contemplate our options, and when a gut reaction is safe to act on, as opposed to just taking a big jump into the deep end!

How do we manage underthinking, and make it work for us?

Prioritising decisions and putting them into categories of either low or high risk can help. Often, mundane, daily decisions don't need much thought. Deciding what to have for dinner, or what to wear, are examples where we can use underthinking to save our energy for elsewhere. Decisions we need to give more attention to are often those which will have a lasting impact on our lives. How we navigate relationships, financial decisions, and choices about our career or family life, all require introspection and thoughtful consideration before acting.

“Underthinking isn't just about ‘not thinking’ – Psychotherapists tell us that it's often a brain-based response shaped by trauma, neurobiology, and mental health conditions. Some people underthink because they don't know they should be thinking (awareness gap), while others underthink because their brain is wired for survival, and not deep reflection. Recognising these patterns is the first step in building intentional awareness, and making better, more informed choices.

Mindfulness can help us make better choices, including whether we're an Overthinker or Underthinker, we just need to pause, and reflect with a few easy steps:

- Create clear goals and priorities when decision making. Who and what is important to you, and why? Think about what you really want before acting, and ask yourself questions like: 'What will happen if I don't act right now?'
- Give yourself a time frame to make decisions. It could be 24 hours, or even a week for big, life-changing ones. But even for smaller things, counting to 10 before responding gives us time to process information first.
- Journal your initial thoughts. Or, you might want to write a pros and cons list to help make sense of your choices and analyse the consequences before committing to a course of action.
- Hopefully we all have our own Grounding Methods which help us to reconnect with our conscious thoughts, such as body scanning (focusing solely your body from top to bottom, acknowledging any and all sensations, such as pain, tension or tranquillity), or tracking (looking around the room, observing objects, and really taking note of all the details).

Underthinking can have a lasting impact on our lives if left unchecked. But it is possible to use it to our advantage. The most important thing is to recognise moments when we need to be reflective and contemplate our options, and when a gut reaction is safe to act on.

Hopefully, when we reflect on our nature, we'll find that we're a balanced mixture of both.

