

A painting by Claude Monet titled 'Snow Scene at Argenteuil' (1875). The scene depicts a winter landscape with snow-covered ground and trees. In the foreground, two figures are standing on a path, looking towards the distance. The background shows a cluster of buildings and more trees, all rendered in a soft, impressionistic style with visible brushstrokes. The overall color palette is dominated by whites, greys, and muted earth tones, with some hints of red and blue in the figures and buildings.

# FROM **OVER**WHELMED TO WHELMED:

**Train Your Brain for Better Balance**

Snow Scene at Argenteuil by Claude Monet (1875). National Gallery, Room 41

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# Outline

- Introduction & check-in
- Unhelpful thinking styles & how you can learn to manage and reframe them
  - Prepare for interactive, engaging activities
- Time for questions (5-10 minutes)

# Unhelpful Thinking Styles

- All or Nothing Thinking
- Mental Filter
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Emotional Reasoning
- Labelling
- Over-generalizing
- Disqualifying the Positive
- Magnification (Catastrophizing) & Minimization
- “Should” Thinking
- Personalization



# All or Nothing Thinking

- Also called ‘black & white thinking’
- *“If I’m not perfect, I’ve failed”*

## Maximization/ Minimization

- Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), OR
- Inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important



“Your problems are caused by all-or-nothing thinking. It’s either that, or you don’t have any problems.”



# Personalization

- “*This is all my fault*”
- Blaming yourself/taking responsibility for something not completely your fault.
- Conversely, can involve blaming others for something that was your fault



# Over Generalizing

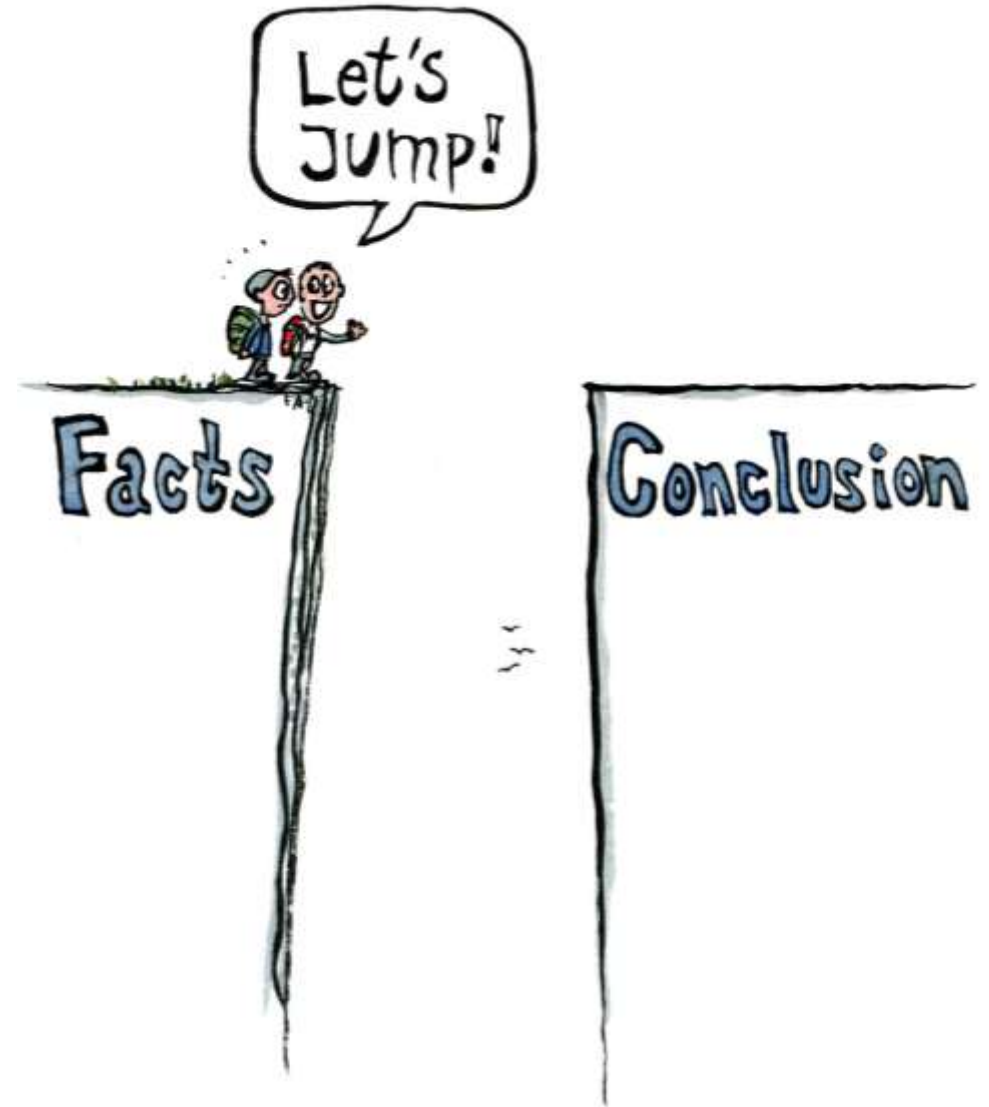
- Seeing a pattern based upon a single event or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw.
- “*Nothing good ever happens*”



# Jumping to Conclusions

- There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:
  - Mind reading – Imagining that we know what others are thinking
  - Fortune Telling – Predicting the future

**Think to yourself:** Have you experienced any of these thinking styles in your individual lives?



# Character Example: Riley Andersen



- Which unhelpful thinking style(s) might Riley be experiencing in this scene?

*Inside Out 2* (2024). [https://youtu.be/RwtAu-Cowil?si=HD\\_3kUnSYXxMPBEq&t=62](https://youtu.be/RwtAu-Cowil?si=HD_3kUnSYXxMPBEq&t=62) (1:02-2:57)

# Character Example: Spider-Man



- Which unhelpful thinking style(s) might Peter Parker be experiencing in this scene?

*Spider-Man 2* (2004) [https://youtu.be/w7PqGUABOqk?si=A-Yb3Kz\\_Bj7CtdAg&t=75](https://youtu.be/w7PqGUABOqk?si=A-Yb3Kz_Bj7CtdAg&t=75)  
(1:15-2:23)

# Character Example: Charlie Brown

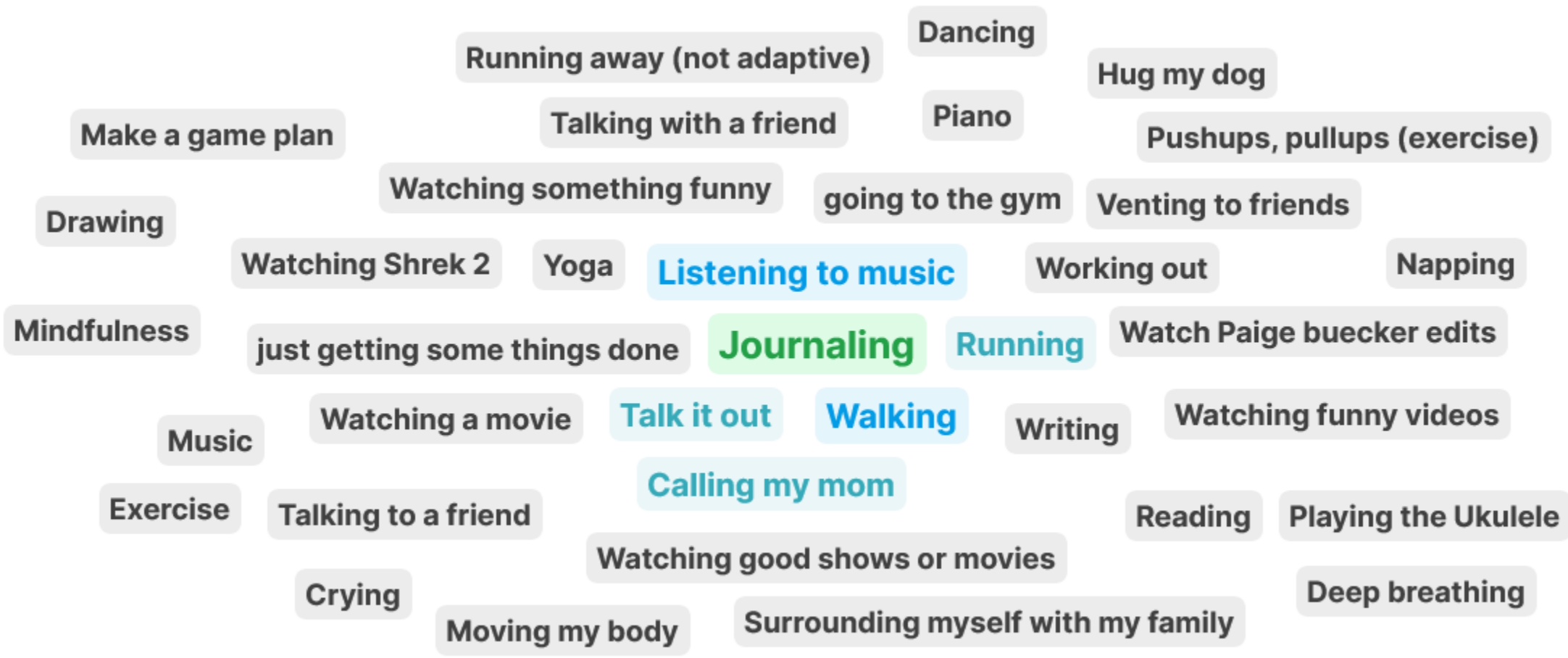


- Which unhelpful thinking style(s) might Charlie Brown be experiencing in this scene?

*A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965).  
[https://youtu.be/BGZHkZC9Jo0?si=y4bl\\_uzbJVQN8cUO&t=6](https://youtu.be/BGZHkZC9Jo0?si=y4bl_uzbJVQN8cUO&t=6) (0:06-0:42)



**When you feel overwhelmed, what activities do you find most helpful?**



# Reframing Your Thinking

- **Identify the Unhelpful Thinking Style**
  - Notice the thought
  - Label the type of thought
- **Challenge the Thought**
  - What facts support this thought? What facts contradict it?
  - Look for exceptions – find instances where the thought wasn't true
  - What's another way to look at this? What would a friend say?
  - Avoid Absolutes
- **Introduce a New Thought**
  - Develop a more realistic and helpful thought





# Small Groups & Breakout Rooms

Please get into small groups or breakout rooms and discuss these unhelpful thinking styles. If you are comfortable sharing from your personal life, please feel free to share. If you prefer not to share, discuss one of the characters we've talked about. Talk your group through the steps of the reframing process: **Identify, Challenge, New Thought.**

## **Unhelpful thinking styles:**

- All or Nothing Thinking
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Over-generalizing
- Magnification (Catastrophizing) & Minimization
- Personalization

# Labelling

- Assigning labels to ourselves or other people
- *“I’m a loser”*

# Mental Filter

- Only paying attention to certain types of evidence
- Noticing your failures but not seeing your successes



Downplaying  
achievements



Believing criticism over  
compliments



Replaying negative  
moments



One bad thing =  
complete failure

# “Should” Thinking

- Don’t “should” all over yourself!
- Using critical words like ‘*should*,’ ‘*must*,’ or ‘*ought*’ can make us feel guilty or like we have already failed
- Result is often frustration

**Think to yourself:** This particular unhelpful thinking style is extremely common. Have you experienced “should” thinking recently?



# Disqualifying the Positive

- Discounting the good things that you have done or that have happened to you
- *“That doesn’t count”*

# Emotional Reasoning

- Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.
- *“I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot”*



# Character Example: Mr. Fox



- Which unhelpful thinking style(s) might Mr. Fox be experiencing in this scene?
- What new thought ...

*Fantastic Mr. Fox* (2009). <https://youtu.be/kXNx5U-QnZw?si=fNXpKX3RfqzD8bJc>  
(0:00-0:55)

# Character Example: Barbie



- Which unhelpful thinking style(s) might Barbie be experiencing in this scene?
- What could she do to reframe her negative thoughts?

*Barbie*(2023). [https://youtu.be/la\\_-SbwAwlE?si=lY1emn0ACcPpvB-F](https://youtu.be/la_-SbwAwlE?si=lY1emn0ACcPpvB-F) (0:00-0:48)

# Character Example: Mia Dolan



- Which unhelpful thinking style(s) might Mia be experiencing in this scene?
- What could Mia do to reframe her negative thoughts?

*La La Land* (2016). [https://youtu.be/b65C\\_muXajk?si=ByENotlsgi0qGP4P&t=66](https://youtu.be/b65C_muXajk?si=ByENotlsgi0qGP4P&t=66) (1:06-2:00)

# Resources

- [Cognitive Distortions Handout](#)
- UConn Student Health and Wellness: <https://studenthealth.uconn.edu/>
- Dean of Students Office: <https://dos.uconn.edu/>

## Fear-Setting

- Why you should define your fears instead of your goals | Tim Ferriss | TED: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5J6jAC6XxAI>
- Fear-Setting: The Most Valuable Exercise I Do Every Month: <https://tim.blog/2017/05/15/fear-setting/>
- How to Conquer Your Fears and Take Action: <https://mindfulambition.net/fear-setting-tim-ferriss/>
- Fear Setting Worksheet: [Fear-Setting-with-Tim-Ferriss.pdf](#) [Fear-Setting-with-Tim-Ferriss.pdf](#)

