

CATASTROPHIZING

Catastrophizing is taking a fairly minor negative event and blowing it completely out of proportion – imagining all sorts of disasters resulting from the one small event. For example, your new girlfriend declines an invitation to have dinner with you. Before giving her a chance to explain her reasons, you hang up on her and conclude that this is her way of telling you the relationship is over. But it doesn't end there; then you go on to imagine her calling each of her friends and telling them what a mistake she made in dating you. You decide you're never going to find another partner and will die old and lonely.

You can nip catastrophic thinking in the bud by acknowledging it for what it is – it's simply just thoughts. If you find yourself thinking about the worst case scenario, consider the following: Take your objective stance and put things in perspective. Do you know for sure that your girlfriend wanted to end the relationship or is it possible she had other valid reasons for not agreeing to dinner? Consider less terrifying explanations. What other possible reasons could there be for her saying no?

Weigh up the evidence that you have (the facts). Do you have enough information to reach the conclusion that she wants to leave you? Has she given you a reason to think this before? Look for any evidence that counteracts the assumption that you've made. Focus on what you could do to cope with the situation and the people or resources that can help you. No matter what catastrophic assumption you've reached in your mind, it's unlikely that the world is going to end even if your assumption does come to fruition. And in which case, if the worst case scenario did happen – you're most likely capable of surviving and growing stronger as an individual through it all - human beings can be very resilient.