








## Black and White Thinking

	<b>Objective:</b> To develop a more balanced, less polarized view of anger-causing situations.
	<b>Time Requirements:</b> a. Preparation: 0-5 minutes b. Activity: 5-10 minutes
	<b>Items:</b> a. Black and White Thinking Handout
	<b>Learning Outcomes:</b> a. Enhanced ability to reappraise demanding situations less reactively, and from a more balanced perspective (EI Subskill 2: Managing Own Emotions)
	<b>Key Learning Point:</b> Black-and-white thinking prevents us from seeing an unpleasant situation more objectively.
Self-Disclosure: ***	
<b>Difficulty:</b> Intermediate	

### Instructions

1. Start of the activity by asking participants to recall a situation where someone made them angry. They don't have to share this particular experience, but try to get the participants to remember how the incident made them feel, what thoughts were running through their minds, and how they responded to the event.
2. Distribute the Black and White Thinking Handout to participants. Ask them to complete Section A first, filling in the blanks with details about the situation that they recall made them feel angry. Give participants about 5 minutes for this.
3. Pause after 5 minutes. Give participants about 30 seconds to compose themselves before telling them to complete Section B. Give participants the final 5 minutes to complete Section B.
4. Upon completion of the activity, ask participants if they felt a little differently when completing Sections A and B. If so, ask them to think of why. Tell participants that the narratives for Section A are structured to provoke participants to think in absolutes, while the narratives for Section B are written in less absolute terms. Introduce the concept of 'polarized thinking;' get participants to think about how anger makes them think in absolutes. Finally, ask them to consider how they can think in less absolute terms in order to reduce their anger. Taking some accountability for the anger-causing situation is one way to reappraise the anger-inducing situation.

	<b>Reflection Questions:</b> a. Was there a difference in your emotions when completing Sections A and B? If so, why do you think was the cause of these different sets of emotions?
	<b>Further Reading and References:</b> a. Lerner, J. S., Goldberg, J. H., & Tetlock, P. E. (1998). Sober second thought: The effects of accountability, anger, and authoritarianism on attributions of responsibility. <i>Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin</i> , 24(6), 563-574. doi: 10.1177/0146167298246001