**A.O.W. #7 Due: Friday! Name: Hour:**

1. Chunk the article into manageable (2 paragraphs max.) pieces. Number them. Don’t forget the title/opening!
2. Highlight at least three words you are not familiar with or that are important and define them on the graphic organizer.
3. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the left side of the text (each chunk) with questions and/or comments that demonstrate interacting with the text. You may also include any confusion you have.
4. Complete the attached graphic organizer to analyze author’s craft.

**“5 Destructive Thought Habits That Can Hold You Back From Living a Happier Life” *by* HENRIK EDBERG**

Your thoughts and mind are truly powerful. A change or a positive habit when it comes to your thinking can make a world of difference. But on the other hand, getting stuck in the same old thought habit can be that one thing that cripples you, paralyses you, causes much suffering and gets you stuck instead of getting you to move forward towards a happier and more positive life. In this article I’ll explore 5 common destructive thought habits that I have had to struggle quite bit with in the past and what I have done to overcome or at least minimize them. I hope you’ll find something helpful in this article.

**1. You see things in black and white.**

Instead of seeing life as it is, somewhat messy with a lot of exceptions to different rules, you see things in black and white. You are right and someone else is wrong. This way is good and that way is bad. Things are either this way or that way and there no exceptions or gray areas.

This makes it harder to make sense out of things, to take action in the right way and can be a way of thinking that makes you more and more inflexible as time passes. You get stuck and you can become terribly critical and unfair towards yourself and other people. You put barriers in your mind and life and this creates a lot more unhappiness and suffering than necessary.

**What to do about it:**

* **Try to understand the other side.** It’s easy to stick to your point of view. But you can gain powerful insights about the other person and yourself too by trying to understand their point of view. This also tends to decrease harshness and negativity and can make it easier to reach an understanding where both parties feel more satisfied with the solution.
* **Be aware.** Like with any habit in this article, just being aware and paying attention during your normal day can help you to discover and reduce these thought patterns by stopping that thread of thought and then changing what you focus on.
* **Find the exception.** If thoughts pop up telling you that you suck in school or that your partner never helps out at home then say stop before those thoughts become a big black cloud of anger. Pause for a second or two. Then ask yourself: what is the exception to this thought? Find one exception or more to that black and white thought you are feeding.  
  You may for example realize that your partner cooks a lot of the food at home or do many of the repairs. Or that you are pretty good at writing and geography but have some improvements to make when it comes to math.

**2. You look for problems even when there are none.**

This is a weird one. In the past I have found myself looking for problems even when there are none really. I think in part comes from snapping back into your old mindset. I used to be much more negative and see problems everywhere for many years. So the mind is conditioned to operate that way and so used to it. So on some days you sit around and suddenly realize while thinking that you are looking for a problem in a situation or area of your life where there are none.

**What to do about it:** One thing that really helped me was to have this written down on my white board on my wall to remind me each day: “There is no problem”. Nowadays, if I am faced with what I start thinking is a problem I ask myself: who cares? I most often then realize that this isn’t really a problem in the long run at all.

I also think this can come from thinking a bit too much about personal development and working on that. You become so accustomed to looking for solutions that your mind wants to find problems that it can solve. This personal development stuff is awesome. But read about and think about it in moderation and not all the time.

**3. You are addicted to your comfort zone.**

If you are always thinking about how to feel and be really, really safe then making a positive change will be impossible. The unknown and change is uncomfortable and scary to the mind because it tends to want your existence to be stable and continue to be as it has been so far.

**What to do about it:**

* **Do it in small steps.** What holds us back in our zone of comfort is often a fear or that facing that fear head on might be overwhelming. Doing things in small steps allows you to stretch your comfort zone and slowly making it less uncomfortable and frightening.
* **Focus on the positive past.** Realize it can be fun to get out of your comfort zone despite what your mind and feelings might be telling you before you get started. Think back to the previous times when you have broken out of your comfort zone. Focus on the positive memories, when you got out there, when you took a chance. And you will probably remember that it wasn’t so bad, it was actually fun and exciting and something new to you.

**4. You get stuck in envy and it poisons your life.**

Envy can be like a tiny devil on your shoulder that whisper words into your ear, gnashes on your soul and makes life into something that is often filled with suffering and much negativity. Or the envy can just be something that irritates and distracts you from time to time.

**What to do about it:**

* **Focus on yourself when it comes to comparing.**Comparing what you have to what others have is a good way to make yourself miserable. It feeds your ego when you buy a nicer car or get a better job than someone else. You feel great for a while.  
  But this mindset and the focus on comparing always winds up in you noticing someone that has more than you. That someone has an even better job or car than you. And so you don’t feel so good anymore. The thing is that there is always someone with better or more than you. So you can never “win”. You just feel good for a while and then you don’t.  
  A more useful way to compare is to just compare yourself to yourself. Look at how you have grown and what you have achieved. Appreciate what you have done and what you have. See how far you have come and what you are planning to do.  
  This will make you make you more positive and emotionally stable since you are no longer comparing and feeling envious of what the other guy have that you haven’t.
* **Be grateful for what you got.**Besides comparing yourself to yourself it can be helpful to add a regular gratitude exercise to your life to minimize the envy. So take just two minutes out of your day to focus on being grateful for all the things you got. Make a list of them in your head or write them down in journal at the beginning or end of the day.
* **Get a life.**If you find yourself sitting around too much and not having enough to do then it’s very easy to feel stuck and to get stuck in thought loops and go into a downward spiral. Simply by filling your life with more fun activities and people and the things you want out of life you won’t have time or a reason to be envious.  
  Other benefits of getting a life are that you become a lot more relaxed and less prone to overreacting about the little things. So spend less time analyzing life and more time living and exploring it in whatever way you’d like.

**5. You overthink.**

I used to be a chronic over-thinker. This makes taking action very hard, you analyze small things until they become big and scary in your head and in general overthinking things most often leads to a negative view of those things. I have however successfully reduced or almost eliminated overthinking in my life. It did take time, but on the other hand you are in the company of your mind each day so you might as well start working on a better relationship between the both of you.

**What to do about it:** How did I do it? The most important thing was probably that I focused a big part of a year in my personal development on reading/listening to books by Eckhart Tolle like Stillness Speaks, A New Earth and The Sun Will Also Die and establishing a habit of being in the present moment.

I listened to those books over and over on my mp3 player while out walking, while riding the bus and so on. This had two big benefits: I was very focused on his advice and it popped up in my head during the day which made it easier to stay aware of though patterns and Tolle became a sort positive influence in my weekly life. Just like a friend can influence you with his/her positive, negative or ambitious attitude and vibe.

Practice being present and it becomes a lot easier to minimize overthinking and to use thinking as a tool rather than letting thoughts control you.

One effective way to realign yourself with the present moment and to let go of overthought thoughts that just run around in circles in your mind is to breathe. To just sit down for 2 minutes, close your eyes if you want and take relatively deep belly breaths. Focus 100% of your attention on the air going in and out of you during these 2 minutes. This calms the mind and body and gets you back into living in the moments that are unfolding right here, right now.

1. Author’s claim (what he/she wants us to believe—OPINION + REASON)):

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1. . Text Evidence for claim *with MLA*: \*\*TE= proof: stats, facts, examples

\*\*MLA= author’s last name in parenthesis at the end of each piece of TE: “Blah-blah-blah” (Author’s LAST name).

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**(Be specific)**

1. **The author’s main audience is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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1. The author establishes a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tone (look at word choice) through the following techniques (refer to technique list, but make it **specific**) a.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,b. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and c.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. 3 words I didn’t know (or are ESSENTIAL words) WITH DEFINITIONS

a.

b.

c.

**7. Text Structure:**

**8. Connection to Caesar – two sentences on the back**