

AnchorQuest – Joke Book

A Spark & Anvil joke book. Groan-worthy puns, tricky riddles, silly nonsense, and real fun facts from the world of AnchorQuest – read them out loud and make someone laugh.

Why is a thought not a fact?

Because your mind narrates constantly, and not every headline it writes is actually true.

How to use this book

Read a joke, pause at the question, and try to guess the answer before you read on. Best of all: read them out loud to a friend, a grown-up, or your class. A good laugh makes the tricky stuff easier – that's real science.

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[How to use this book](#)

[Puns](#)

[Riddles](#)

[Silly Stuff](#)

[Fun Facts](#)

Keep laughing

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Puns

Why is a thought not a fact?

💡 Because your mind narrates constantly, and not every headline it writes is actually true.

Why did catastrophizing exhaust everyone?

💡 Because it took a small setback and wrote a nine-part disaster movie about it.

Why is "mind-reading" a losing game?

💡 Because assuming you know what others think of you is usually just your worry writing their script.

Why is all-or-nothing thinking so unfair?

💡 Because it turns one B-minus into "I'm a total failure," skipping the entire middle of reality.

Why did naming the thinking trap help?

💡 Because once you can label it -- "oh, that's catastrophizing" -- it loses a lot of its grip.

Why is a thought like a passing bus?

💡 Because you can notice it pull up without feeling obligated to climb aboard.

Why did overgeneralizing get called out?

💡 Because turning one bad day into "this ALWAYS happens to me" ignores all the days it didn't.

Why is the "kind inner voice" worth practicing?

💡 Because you talk to yourself all day -- it might as well be someone decent.

Why did reframing beat arguing with a thought?

💡 Because you don't have to win a debate with your brain -- you just have to find a more balanced view.

Why is "fortune-telling" a bad predictor?

💡 Because your anxious brain forecasts disaster with the confidence of a weather app that's usually wrong.

Why is the "mental filter" sneaky?

💡 Because it screens out ten good things to obsess over the one that went wrong.

Why did asking "what's the evidence?"

💡 " calm the panic? Because a scary thought often falls apart the moment you check it against actual facts.

Why is "should-ing" all over yourself so heavy?

💡 Because a pile of "I should already be better at this" mostly just adds guilt, not progress.

Why did the anchor image stick?

💡 Because when thoughts get stormy, coming back to your breath is like dropping an anchor in steady water.

Why is "personalizing" a trap?

💡 Because assuming everything is about you gives you responsibility for a lot of things you didn't cause.

Why did talking to yourself like a friend work better?

💡 Because you'd never tell a friend "you're worthless," so why accept it from your own inner critic?

Why is a balanced thought stronger than a fake-positive one?

💡 Because "this is hard AND I can handle hard things" is believable, while "everything's amazing!" usually isn't.

Why did curiosity beat judgment?

💡 Because asking "huh, why did I think that?" gets you further than "ugh, why am I like this?"

Why is noticing a thought "just a thought" so freeing?

💡 Because you can hold it lightly, examine it, and decide whether it deserves your belief.

Why do thinking traps lose power once you know their names?

💡 Because a pattern you can spot is a pattern you can step around.

Riddles

A thought pops up: "everyone thinks I messed up." You have no proof anyone thinks that. Which thinking trap is this?

💡 Mind-reading! Assuming you know what others are thinking -- usually the worst -- without any evidence.

You get one question wrong and instantly think "I'm going to fail everything." What thinking trap took a small event and blew it up?

💡 Catastrophizing! It leaps from a minor setback to a worst-case disaster.

"If I'm not the BEST, I'm a total failure." What trap ignores everything between perfect and disaster?

💡 All-or-nothing (black-and-white) thinking! Real life happens mostly in the gray middle it skips over.

What's the key difference between a THOUGHT and a FACT?

💡 A thought is something your mind produces; a fact is something you can check against evidence. Not every thought is true, even the loud, confident ones.

One thing goes wrong and you think "this ALWAYS happens to me." Which trap ignores all the times it DIDN'T?

💡 Overgeneralizing! It treats a single event as a never-ending pattern.

A powerful first step with any unhelpful thought is simply to do WHAT?

💡 Notice and NAME it -- "ah, that's a thinking trap." Naming a pattern loosens its grip and creates space to choose your response.

A friend doesn't text back and you conclude "they're mad at me." What's a more balanced thought?

💡 "There are lots of reasons someone might not reply yet." Considering alternatives is the antidote to mind-reading.

Your brain confidently predicts "the presentation will be a disaster." What trap is this, and how reliable is it?

💡 Fortune-telling! And it's about as reliable as any guess about the future -- which is to say, not very.

You had a good day with one awkward moment, and all you can think about is the awkward moment. Which trap filtered out the good?

💡 The "mental filter"! It screens out positives and magnifies the one negative.

A calming, useful question to ask an anxious thought is "what's the ___?" Evidence! "What's the actual evidence for and against this thought?" often shrinks a scary thought down to size.

Piling up "I SHOULD be over this by now" and "I SHOULD be better" mostly produces what?

💡 Guilt, not progress! "Should" statements set rigid rules that tend to make you feel worse rather than move forward.

A group project goes badly and you think "it's all my fault." What trap over-assigns blame to yourself?

💡 Personalizing! It takes responsibility for outcomes that had many causes beyond you.

"Reframing" a thought does NOT mean forcing fake positivity. What does it mean?

💡 Finding a more BALANCED, realistic view -- like "this is hard AND I can handle hard things" -- rather than pretending everything's great.

A thought is compared to a passing bus or a cloud. What does that image teach?

💡 That you can NOTICE a thought without automatically believing or "boarding" it. You get to choose which thoughts you act on.

Your inner critic says something you'd never say to a friend. What's the healthier move?

💡 Talk to yourself the way you'd talk to a good friend -- self-compassion is more motivating than harsh self-criticism.

Which is a more BELIEVABLE and helpful thought: "everything is amazing!" or "this is tough, but I've handled tough things before"?

💡 The second! Balanced thoughts work because part of you actually believes them.

When you catch yourself in a thinking trap, is it better to react with judgment ("why am I SO anxious?

💡 ") or curiosity ("interesting -- where did that thought come from?")? Curiosity! It creates space to examine the thought instead of piling on more stress.

When thoughts feel stormy, "dropping an anchor" often means doing what with your attention?

💡 Bringing it to the present -- your breath, your feet on the floor, five things you can see. Grounding steadies you when thoughts spin.

Naming a thinking trap is powerful, but does it mean the thought instantly disappears?

💡 No -- and that's okay! Naming it creates DISTANCE and choice; the thought may linger, but it no longer runs the show.

What's the overall skill AnchorQuest practices?

💡 Noticing a thought, recognizing if it's a common trap, and choosing a more balanced, kind response -- a skill anyone can build with practice, like a muscle.

Silly Stuff

Catastrophizing took a spilled coffee and, within four seconds, arrived at "I will be unemployed and living in a cave." The cave was fully furnished in its imagination. Impressive production values for a thought with zero evidence.

Mind-reading confidently announced that everyone in the room was silently judging a small stumble. Later it turned out most people were thinking about lunch. Mind-reading has a terrible accuracy rate and enormous confidence.

All-or-nothing thinking declared a 94 percent "basically a failure" because it wasn't 100. The other 94 percent filed a complaint. Black-and-white thinking has no room for the enormous, reasonable gray middle.

A thought insisted it was a FACT, puffed itself up, and demanded to be believed. Someone quietly asked "what's the evidence?" and the thought deflated on the spot. Turns out confidence is not the same as truth.

The "mental filter" carefully ignored ten compliments to spotlight one piece of criticism, then wondered why the day felt bad. It had built a highlight reel out of only the lowlights. No wonder.

A thought pulled up like a bus, and instead of automatically boarding, someone just... watched it drive past. The thought was baffled. It was so used to being obeyed. You are allowed to let thoughts keep driving.

Fortune-telling predicted total disaster for an event that then went completely fine, and offered no apology, and immediately began predicting disaster for the NEXT one. It has never once checked its own track record.

"Should" showed up carrying a giant sack of rules -- "you SHOULD be over this, you SHOULD be better, you SHOULD already know" -- and left the person more stuck than before. Should is heavy and rarely helps you lift anything.

Someone named a thinking trap out loud -- "ah, classic catastrophizing" -- and the trap, deeply embarrassed to be recognized, lost most of its power. Naming a pattern is like turning on the lights in a spooky room.

Personalizing took responsibility for the weather, the bus being late, AND a friend's bad mood. That's an impressive amount of blame for one person to carry for things they didn't cause. Set some of that down.

The inner critic said something so harsh that if a friend had said it, you'd never speak to them again -- yet somehow it got a free pass for being "just me." The inner critic does not deserve better manners than everyone else.

Someone tried "everything is AMAZING and I feel GREAT" and some honest part of them muttered "we both know that's not true." A balanced thought -- "this is hard but doable" -- landed instead, because it was actually believable.

A person met a spiraling thought with "huh, interesting, where did THAT come from?" instead of "why am I like this?" -- and the spiral, treated like a curiosity instead of a crime, quietly calmed down.

Overgeneralizing declared "this ALWAYS happens" about something that had happened exactly once. The word "always" was doing an enormous amount of unpaid overtime for a single Tuesday.

When the thoughts got stormy, someone dropped an anchor -- three slow breaths, feet on the floor -- and the storm didn't vanish, but the boat stopped being tossed around. You can't always stop the weather; you can steady the boat.

Fun Facts

Did you know? A thought is not a fact. Your mind produces thoughts all day long, and many of them -- even loud, confident ones -- turn out not to be true when you check them against actual evidence!

Did you know? "Thinking traps" (also called cognitive distortions) are common, well-studied patterns like catastrophizing and all-or-nothing thinking. Nearly everyone falls into them sometimes -- recognizing them is a skill you can build!

Did you know? Simply NAMING a thinking trap -- "oh, that's catastrophizing" -- reduces its power. Labeling a pattern creates mental distance, so you can respond thoughtfully instead of reacting automatically!

Did you know? "Catastrophizing" is jumping from a small setback straight to a worst-case disaster. Asking "what's the most LIKELY outcome, not the worst one?" is a simple way to bring a spiraling thought back to earth!

Did you know? "Mind-reading" -- assuming you know what others think of you -- is usually your own worry writing their script. In reality, people think about themselves far more than they think about you!

Did you know? "All-or-nothing" thinking sorts everything into perfect or failure, ignoring the enormous middle where real life actually happens. A 90 percent is not "basically a fail" -- it's a 90 percent!

Did you know? Asking "what's the evidence for and against this thought?" is a core reframing technique. Scary thoughts often shrink dramatically once you examine them like a fair-minded detective instead of just believing them!

Did you know? "Reframing" doesn't mean forcing fake positivity. A BALANCED thought like "this is hard, and I can handle hard things" works better than "everything's amazing!" because part of you actually believes it!

Did you know? You can learn to observe a thought without automatically believing it -- like watching a bus pull up without getting on. This skill, sometimes called "defusion," gives you choice over which thoughts you act on!

Did you know? Talking to yourself with "self-compassion" -- the way you'd talk to a good friend -- is actually MORE motivating than harsh self-criticism. Being kind to yourself helps you recover and try again faster!

Did you know? "Grounding" -- bringing your attention to your breath, your feet on the floor, or five things you can see -- helps steady you when thoughts feel stormy. It anchors you in the present moment!

Did you know? Meeting a difficult thought with CURIOSITY ("where did that come from?") rather than JUDGMENT ("why am I like this?") lowers stress and helps you actually examine the thought instead of piling on more!

Did you know? "Overgeneralizing" turns a single event into a permanent rule using words like "always" and "never." Catching those two words in your own thoughts is a fast way to spot the trap!

Did you know? Noticing and reframing thinking traps is a skill that improves with practice, like a muscle -- the more you catch and gently redirect an unhelpful pattern, the more automatic the healthier response becomes!

Did you know? These thinking-skills tools help with everyday stress and self-awareness -- but they're not a substitute for real support. If hard feelings ever feel like too much, talking to a trusted adult or a professional is a strong, wise move!

Keep laughing

That's **70 jokes** from AnchorQuest. Made someone laugh? Try making up your own – the best jokes are the ones you tell.

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