

## LIST OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

1. **All-or-Nothing Thinking:** You see things in black and white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.
2. **Overgeneralization:** You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern.
3. **Mental Filter:** You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors the entire beaker of water.
4. **Disqualifying the Positive:** You reject positive experience by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way, you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.
5. **Jumping to Conclusions:** You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
  - 5a. **Mind Reading:** You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don't bother to check this out.
  - 5b. **The Fortune-Teller Error:** You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.
6. **Magnification/Minimization:** You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick."
7. **Catastrophizing:** You attribute extreme and horrible consequences to the outcomes of events. A turndown for a date means a life of utter isolation. Making a mistake at work means being fired for incompetence and never getting another job.
8. **Emotional Reasoning:** You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore it must be true."
9. **"Should" Statements:** You try to motivate yourself with "shoulds" and "shouldn'ts," as if you need to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct "should" statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.
10. **Labeling and Mislableing:** This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him/her: "He's a louse." Mislableing involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.
11. **Personalization:** You see negative events as indicative of some negative characteristic of yourself or you take responsibility for events that were not your doing.

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*The List of Cognitive Distortions is adapted from Burns (1980) and Persons (1989).*