



Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions are thinking patterns that are not always accurate but can fool you into believing they are. We all sometimes engage in cognitive distortions, but it becomes a problem though when they dominate our judgment and end up making us feel worse instead of better.

Magnification and Minimization: Exaggerating or minimizing how important something is. For example, we belittle or diminish our achievements and think of them as unimportant, or we highlight our mistakes and put too much weight on them.

Catastrophizing: Seeing or anticipating the worst-case scenario of any situation. Expecting that one thing will inevitably lead to a "catastrophe" or to a major problem or ordeal.

Overgeneralization: Assuming that the result of one situation will always apply to all situations. "I didn't do well on my math test. I'm not going to do well on the rest of my exams." or "I couldn't close the deal with that client. I won't be able to close any deal with any clients."

Magical Thinking: Making a connection between situations we're in with unrelated causes. "I'm a good person. I don't deserve being robbed."

Personalization: Believing that we are always responsible or to be blamed for things out of our control. "My friend does not wish to take calls. I must have done something to upset her."

Blaming: When you're always trying to put the blame on others so you would not have to take responsibility for making a change or so that you wouldn't have to tolerate the pain of messing up.

Labeling: Assigning yourself a negative trait that you assume is true about you all around. "I'm stupid. I'm a loser."

Jumping to Conclusions: Making assumptions with little or no evidence.

Mind Reading: Assuming that we can what others are thinking or feeling without little or no proof. "She probably thinks I'm awkward" or "They don't like my presentation."

Fortune Telling: Expecting or predicting that things won't go well without enough proof. "I'm going to choke on my words" or "The interview will go badly."

Emotional Reasoning: Thinking that if I feel or think something, it must be true. "I feel lonely" = "I am lonely." Or "I feel stupid, then I must be stupid."

Disqualifying the Positive: Only acknowledging and believing negative inputs about self or situations while ignoring or disregarding the positive ones. For example, believing negative feedback, but when I receive positive feedback, I discard it as "they're just trying to make me feel better." Or belittling an achievement by highlighting the flaw in it. "I submitted my report" (achievement) "but only in the last minute." (flaw)

"Should" Statements: When we impose pressures or rules on ourselves by believing that things should be a certain way according to a set of rigid or unreasonable rules "I should always be friendly so that people like me."

Unfair comparisons: Always comparing yourself to others in a way that makes you feel less - often within unreasonable standards.

All-or-Nothing / Black or White Thinking: When we always assume it's either 0 or 100. No in-between. "I wanted to walk every day for a week. I walked 5 days. I failed." Or thinking in absolutes like "I never do a good enough job on anything." or "I am always late to work."

