

# *Negative Thinking*

The way you think (cognitions) influences the way you feel. When you perceive an event, the future or yourself inaccurately, your thoughts about it will be distorted. You will make assumptions that are irrational. This kind of thinking leads to negative feelings such as sadness, anxiety, anger and discouragement. Following are examples of ten of the most common cognitive distortions:

## **ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING**

You look at things in black and white categories.      *“Nothing ever works out for me.”*  
*“I fail at everything.”*

## **OVERGENERALIZATION**

You see a single negative event as a never ending pattern.      *“He was rude to me on the phone.”*  
*He must hate me.”*

## **MENTAL FILTER**

You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.      *“I keep thinking about that one critical remark she made, although everyone else complimented me.”*

## **DISCOUNTING THE POSITIVE**

You insist your positive qualities don't count.      *“That doesn't count because anyone could do that.”*

## **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS**

You conclude things are bad without any real evidence.      *“I know he thought I was stupid.”*

## **MAGNIFICATION (CATASTROPHIZING) OR MINIMIZATION**

You blow things out of proportion or shrink their importance.      *“I can't stand the discomfort of meeting new people.”*

## **EMOTIONAL REASONING**

You reason from how you feel.      *“I feel like a failure, so I must be one.”*

## **SHOULD STATEMENTS**

You use the word “should” to motivate yourself & others.      *“I shouldn't feel this way.”*  
*“You should do more around the house.”*

## **LABELING**

You attach names to errors rather than describing them.      *“I'm stupid because I lost my keys.”*

## **PERSONALIZATION (BLAME)**

You blame yourself as the cause of some negative event which you weren't entirely responsible for or you blame others and overlook your contribution to the problem.      *“It's all my fault that she is having these problems.”*