

RATIONAL LIVING WORKSHOP

THOUGHT DISTORTIONS

1. **SHOULD**S: You make absolute *demands* of yourself, others or the world (must, should, need, ought, have got to, etc.) instead of merely *wanting* or *desiring* good results and accepting the possibility of disappointment.
2. **POLARIZED THINKING**: You think that people and things are (all) good or (all) bad, smart or dumb, right or wrong, winners or losers. It's hard to see the gray in life.
3. **OVERGENERALIZATION**: You come to a general conclusion based upon a single event or sparse evidence, and see isolated negative events as a never-ending pattern of defeat such as, "I always fail at everything," or, "nothing ever goes right," or, "I never get any sleep!"
4. **LABELING**: You take overgeneralization a step further by equating peoples' behavior with their worth as humans, and then damn and discount them (100%) with a negative label like "idiot" or "jerk." We can accept others and ourselves as fallible human beings (FHB's).
5. **FILTERING**: You pick out single negative details that are hurtful, hopeless, unfair or threatening (while ignoring the positive) and dwell on them exclusively to reinforce your distorted and darkened vision of reality. Ex. "Another plane crashed, air travel is so unsafe."
6. **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS**: You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts to support your conclusion. **Mind Reading**: Without their saying so, you know what people are thinking or why they act the way they do, or how they really feel about you; **Crystal Ball Gazing**: You anticipate that things will turn out badly and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already-established fact.
7. **CATASTROPHIZING**: You exaggerate the importance of disappointing or unfortunate events by believing certain things to be truly awful, terrible or horrible (100% bad), and/or you frighten yourself with "what if . . ." thinking instead of showing yourself that you could cope and survive.
8. **EMOTIONAL REASONING**: You believe the way you feel is an accurate indication of the way things really are, so that if you *feel* ugly, dumb, or boring you must *be* ugly, dumb and boring. You follow your feelings (gut thinking) and often do as you feel like (and not do what you don't feel like) rather than discipline yourself with I/E (intellect over emotion).
9. **CONTROL FALLACY**: You feel externally controlled and see yourself as a helpless victim, or you assume internal control and guilt-ridden responsibility for the well-being and happiness of other people, or you magically believe that you can get others to change if only you do the right things.
10. **PERSONALIZATION**: You think that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you, or that others' unthinking or poor behavior is intentionally directed at you. You tend to immediately look at and blame yourself and easily feel hurt and bad.