

# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

**All-or-nothing:** Thinking in extremes, all good or all bad.

**Awfulizing:** Imagining something to be the worst possible situation.

**Blaming:** Blaming others for negative situations that are not completely their fault, ignoring any personal responsibility.

**Catastrophizing:** Making things out to be a catastrophe when they may just be difficult. Expecting the worst possible situation.

**Disqualifying the positive:** Ignoring positive experiences, giving them less value.

**Dramatizing:** Describing events in very dramatic ways that make the situation seem worse. (This may be good for tv, movies and writing stories but it delays healing).

**Emotional reasoning:** Assuming that something is true or real if it is felt emotionally. Our thoughts, emotions and sensations can play tricks on us at times, making us think there is something wrong when there isn't.

**Filtering:** Filtering out other information to support a negative belief. Dwelling on the negative can make everything seem bad.

**Fortune-telling:** predicting a negative outcome without considering all possible variables.

**Globalizing:** Using definitive terms such as always, never, or forever (E.g. "I'll never get it." or "she always gets mad.")

**Jumping to conclusions:** Making negative conclusions without adequate evidence.

**Labeling & mislabeling:** Calling yourself a loser, a failure, stupid, etc.

**Magnifying & minimizing:** Making negative things bigger than they actually are. Minimizing good things about yourself or a situation.

**Mind reading:** Making assumptions that you know what someone is thinking or feeling without any evidence to support it, such as, automatically thinking someone doesn't like you or hates you.

**Over-generalizing:** You generalize that if a single negative event occurs then this "proves" that you are no good or doomed in all circumstances.

**Personalizing:** Blaming yourself for something that was not your fault or couldn't possibly be your fault.

**Shoulding:** Expecting yourself or others to do what they "should" do based on your personal views can be distressing. When "shoulding" on yourself, it can lead to guilt if you don't meet your own expectations. When "shoulding" on others, it can lead to anger, frustration and resentment. Albert Ellis called this "musturbation" and Michael C. Graham describes this as "expecting the world to be different than it is".

**For more on Cognitive Distortions see "Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy" (1980) by David D. Burns**