

Week 3 Module 3 – List of Typical Cognitive Distortions

Here are some typical thinking errors, or cognitive distortions, and their definitions.

1. All-or-Nothing Thinking. You see things only in two categories. Things are black or white, with no shades of gray. “I have to do a great job on everything.”
2. Fortune-Telling: You make negative predictions about what will happen when other outcomes are more likely. “I’ll always have trouble figuring out my thoughts.”
3. Labeling. You put a globally negative label on yourself. “I’m a failure for making a mistake.”
4. Emotional reasoning. You believe something must be true because it “feels” true. “I must be incompetent.”
5. Selective abstraction. You pay attention only to the negative aspects of situations instead of considering the entire experience. “I made so many mistakes.”
6. Overgeneralization. You draw a general conclusion on the basis of a small amount of evidence. “I do everything wrong.”
7. Mind reading. You are sure you know what others are thinking. “They probably think I’m foolish.”
8. Personalization. You take others’ actions personally when they actually have other intentions. “They did that to me on purpose.”
9. Imperatives. You have an unreasonably rigid idea about how you or others should or must behave. “I should always do my absolute best.”
10. Magnification and minimization. You magnify the negatives or minimize the positives. “I’m no good at figuring out what to do.” “It doesn’t matter than I have good common sense.”

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