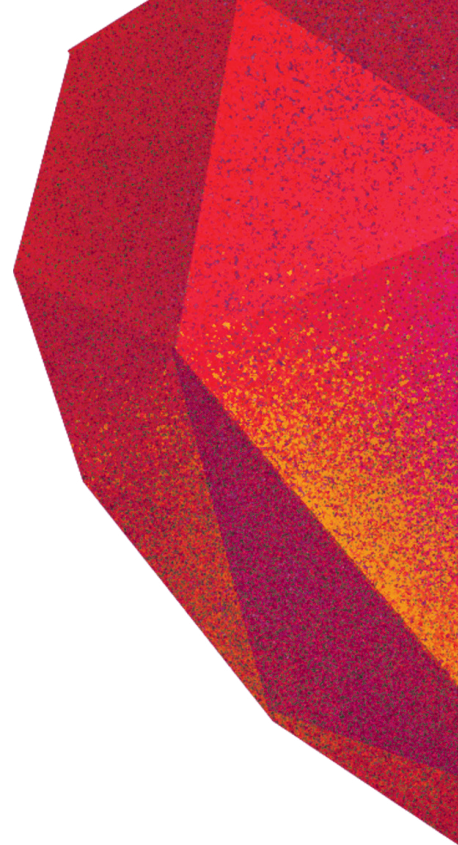


## COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

Cognitive distortions refer to patterns of biased or irrational thinking that can lead to negative emotions, maladaptive behaviors, and psychological distress. These distortions, as outlined in prominent works such as Beck's "Cognitive Therapy and the Emotional Disorders" and Burns' "Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy," involve systematic errors in perception and interpretation of reality. Individuals experiencing cognitive distortions often exhibit tendencies to misinterpret information, magnify negative aspects of situations, discount positive experiences, and engage in other faulty reasoning patterns.

These distortions can significantly impact one's mental health and well-being, contributing to conditions such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Recognizing and challenging cognitive distortions is a fundamental aspect of cognitive-behavioral therapy, a widely practiced therapeutic approach aimed at promoting more adaptive and realistic thinking patterns.

As you review these distortions, consider how they may resonate with your own thoughts and experiences. Increasing awareness of these patterns of thinking can empower you to recognize and challenge them when they arise in your daily life. By becoming attuned to cognitive distortions, you can cultivate a greater sense of mindfulness and self-awareness, enabling you to navigate challenging situations with clarity and resilience. May this list serve as a valuable tool in your journey towards healthier and more balanced thinking patterns.



### **All-or-Nothing Thinking (Polarized Thinking):**

This distortion involves viewing situations in extreme, black-and-white terms, without considering any middle ground. For instance, someone might consider themselves a complete failure if they don't achieve perfection in every aspect of their life.

Example: Believing that receiving any grade less than an A means you're a total failure academically.

### **Overgeneralization:**

Overgeneralization occurs when someone draws sweeping conclusions based on limited evidence or a single incident. For example, after experiencing a romantic rejection, someone might conclude that they're unlovable and will never find happiness in relationships. Example: Believing that failing one job interview means you'll never succeed in finding a job.

### **Mental Filtering:**

Mental filtering involves focusing exclusively on the negative aspects of a situation while ignoring any positive elements. For instance, someone might receive numerous compliments on their appearance but only remember a single negative comment, leading them to feel insecure. Example: Receiving mostly positive feedback on a project but fixating on one criticism, disregarding all the praise.

### **Discounting the Positive:**

This distortion entails dismissing positive experiences or accomplishments, often by convincing oneself that they "don't count" for some reason. For example, someone might downplay their success on a project by attributing it to luck or other external factors rather than acknowledging their own effort and skill. Example: Receiving praise for a job well done but attributing it to luck or the low standards of others.

## Jumping to Conclusions:

Jumping to conclusions involves making negative interpretations without sufficient evidence. This can manifest as mind-reading, where someone assumes they know what others are thinking, or fortune-telling, where someone predicts negative outcomes without real basis. Example: Assuming a friend is angry with you because they didn't respond to a text, without considering other possible reasons for their behavior.

## Magnification and Minimization:

Magnification involves exaggerating the importance of negative events or qualities while minimizing the significance of positive ones. For instance, someone might dwell on a minor mistake they made at work and believe it's a catastrophic failure, while ignoring all the successful projects they've completed. Example: Making a small error on a task and believing it will lead to getting fired, despite a history of successful performance.

## Emotional Reasoning:

Emotional reasoning involves believing that negative feelings reflect reality. For example, someone might feel anxious in social situations and conclude that they must be unlikeable or uninteresting. Example: Feeling guilty about taking time for yourself because it makes you feel selfish, even though self-care is essential for mental well-being.

## Should Statements (Musturbation):

Should statements involve imposing unrealistic expectations on oneself or others. For instance, someone might believe they "should" always perform perfectly in every aspect of their life, leading to feelings of guilt and frustration when they inevitably fall short. Example: Feeling like you should always put others' needs before your own, leading to burnout and resentment.

## Labeling and Mislabeleding:

Labeling involves applying harsh labels to oneself or others based on errors or shortcomings. For example, someone might make a mistake at work and label themselves as a "failure" or a "loser." Example: Calling yourself a "clumsy idiot" after dropping something, instead of recognizing that everyone makes mistakes occasionally.

## Personalization:

Personalization involves blaming oneself for events outside of one's control or attributing external events to one's actions. For example, someone might blame themselves for a friend's bad mood, assuming they must have done something to cause it. Example: Feeling responsible for a co-worker's mistake, even though you had no involvement in it.

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