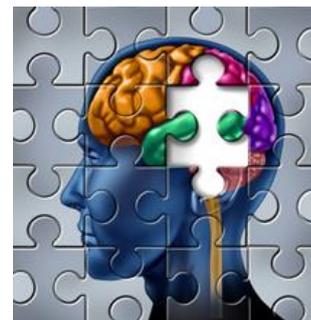


Unhelpful Thinking – Unhelpful Belief

Jumping to conclusions
 All or nothing thinking
 Mental filter
 Magnification
 Emotional reasoning
 Discounting the positive

Should statements
 Labelling
 Over generalization
 Personalization and blame



**‘uB’ = Unhelpful Belief - Unhelpful Thought – ‘Cognitive Distortion’
 Which of the Ten “Self-Defeating” Thinking might I tend to have?**

1. Jumping to a conclusion

- I interpret a thing negatively when there is limited, or no fact, to support my conclusion.
- Mind reading: Without checking it out, I arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to ME or has a certain negative motivation towards ME.
- Fortune telling: I predict that a thing will turn out badly. Before an event I may tell myself, 'I'm really going to blow it. What if I don't succeed?' If I'm depressed I may tell myself, 'I'll NEVER! get better.'
- What evidence might I REALLY have? I might choose to let it go. I might wait to experience the event – then deal with whatever the results are. How might I simply allow this to “be.”**

2. All or nothing thought

- I see a thing in a black or white category. If a thing falls a bit short of perfect, I see it as a total failure. When a young woman on a diet ate a spoonful of ice cream, she told herself, 'I've blown my diet completely.' This thought upset her so much that she gobbled down an entire quart of ice cream!
- How ‘bad’ might this be REALLY? In what way might my ice-berg, actually be an ice-cube? In what way might I suck this up and tough it out? I am not required to like it. ☺**

3. Mental filter

- I pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, so that my vision of my reality becomes darkened - allowing it to spread like a drop of ink that discolours a beaker of water. Example: I receive many positive comments about my presentation to a group of associates at work - one of them says something mildly critical. I obsess about this one reaction for days and ignore all the positive feedback.
- What might the weight of evidence be? Where might a positive be I might hold tight and build on?**

4. Magnification or Minimization

- I exaggerate the importance of my perceived problem and perceived short-coming, and/or I minimize the importance of my desirable quality. This is also called the 'binocular trick.'
- What might be a positive? What might last “forever?” What is the good I might build on?**

5. Emotional reasoning

- I assume that my negative emotion necessarily reflects the way a thing really is: 'I feel upset about going on airplanes. It MUST! be very dangerous to fly.' Or 'I feel guilty. I MUST! be a rotten person.' Or 'I feel angry. I MUST! be being treated unfairly.' Or 'I feel so inferior. I MUST! be a second-rate person.' Or 'I feel hopeless, I MUST! be really hopeless – it MUST! be hopeless.' This might affect my “healthy risk taking.”
- How reasonable is it to make my “reality” EQUAL to a feeling I have? I might use the USA tool. I might use an ABC-DE to promote my helpful Effective New Belief!**

6. Discounting the positive

- I reject a positive experience by insisting it 'doesn't count.' If I do a good job, I may tell myself that it wasn't good enough or that anyone could have done as well. Discounting the positive might take some of the joy out of my life and cause me to feel a bit inadequate and/or feel unrecognised.
- What might I say to someone I LOVE who had done this job? I might say 'Thank you!' when complimented. I might build on my success; find it; enjoy it! Progress, rather than perfection ☺**

7. "SHOULD!" statement

I tell myself that a thing **"SHOULD!"** be the way I hope or expect it to be. After playing a difficult piece on the piano, a gifted pianist told themselves, 'I shouldn't have made so many mistakes.' They feel so disgusted that they quit practicing for several days. **"MUST!" "OUGHT!"** and **"HAVE TO!"** are similar offenders. A **'SHOULD!' statement'** that I direct against myself tends to lead to guilt and frustration. A **SHOULD!** statement that I direct against another person or my life in general tends to lead to anger and frustration: 'They **SHOULDN'T!** be so stubborn and argumentative.' A person may try to motivate themselves with **SHOULD!** or **SHOULDN'T!** as if they were a delinquent who has to be punished before they might be expected to do anything. 'I **SHOULDN'T!** eat that doughnut.' This usually doesn't work because all these **SHOULD!**s and **MUST!**s tend to make me feel rebellious - I may get the urge to do just the opposite. Dr Albert Ellis has called this 'musterbation.' The 'shouldy' approach to life.

Why "SHOULD!" it? It would be "nice" if it was, however life will go on regardless. I look for the progress, rather than the perfection. I might attempt to move toward "prefer" thought and speech.

8. Labelling

Labelling is an extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking. Instead of saying 'I made a mistake' I attach a negative label to myself: 'I'm a loser.' I might also label myself 'a fool' or 'a failure' or 'a jerk.' Labelling tends to be unhelpful – why would I BE what I DO? **As a human being I occupy physical space** - 'fools,' 'losers,' and 'jerks' do not – each one is a concept. **A label might be an unhelpful abstraction** that might lead to hurt, anger, anxiety, frustration, and lower "self- esteem." I might see USA as a preference.

I may also label another. When someone does something that rubs me the wrong way, I may tell myself: 'They are a S.O.B!' Then I feel that the problem is with that person's 'character' or 'essence' **instead of with their thinking or behaviour**. I see them as totally bad. This might help me feel hostile and hopeless about improving things and leave little room for more constructive communication.

In what way is this ALL I or they are? Once I have an opinion of someone, I might cease to experience them and just experience my opinion of them. This might work for me as well, and my opinion of myself. **I might give ME and THEM a little more room to simply BE?**

What ONE WORD might speak about ALL THINGS in me or anyone else?

9. Overgeneralization

I see a single negative event, such as a romantic rejection or a career reversal as a never-ending pattern of defeat by using words such as **'ALWAYS!'** or **"NEVER!"** when I think about it. A depressed salesman became terribly upset when he noticed bird dung on the windshield of his car. He told himself, 'Just my luck! Birds are **ALWAYS!** crapping on my car!' **COMPOUNDING** is perhaps an example – piling up perceived unhelpful things, rather than treating them as independent events, and carrying them around together. **AWFULIZING!** and **CATASTROPHIZING!** are perhaps examples.

How possible is it that this might ALWAYS! or NEVER! occur? In what way might I be limiting myself with this? How useful might saying "it happens" and moving on be?

10. Personalization and blame

Personalization might occur when I hold myself personally responsible for an event that isn't entirely under my control. When a parent received a note that their child was having difficulties at school, they told themselves, **'this shows what a bad parent I am!'** They and the child might be better served by trying to pinpoint the cause of the problem so that a solution might be worked on. When a person's partner slapped them, they told themselves, **"If only I were better in bed, I wouldn't be beaten!"** Personalization tends to lead to guilt, shame, and a feeling of inadequacy. Some people do the opposite. They blame other people or their circumstance for their problem, and they overlook a way that they might be contributing to the problem: **'The reason my marriage is so lousy is because my spouse is totally unreasonable.'** Blame usually doesn't work very well because other people tend to resent being a scapegoat and they tend to toss the blame right back in my lap. It might be like a game of hot potato - no-one wants to get stuck with it.

In what way might it matter who or what caused this? What might I do now to accept it and/or work to make it more helpful for me or others?

"Blame someone else - shows my lack of maturity and my lack of education.

Blame myself - I am starting to mature and my education has begun.

Blame no-one and accept it and maybe get on with the solution, or the helpful thing I might do, or not do, as a result of the event - I have matured and my education is complete."

I might ask "What might a camera record?"

"Exchange Vocabulary" and "ABC-DE" might also be helpful.