

THINKING MISTAKES



1. *Black - and - White Thinking* - You tend to think of things in extremes - either you're perfect or you're a total failure. Example:

A teenage girl on a diet eats a spoonful of ice cream and says to herself, "I've blown my diet completely" She gets so distressed over 1 spoonful of ice cream that she ends up eating a whole quart.

2. *"Yes But" Thinking* - You tend to ignore the positives in your life and focus only on the negatives.

Example: A friend tells you that you look nice in your new outfit and you say to yourself, "He's just saying that to be nice. He's nice to everybody."

3. *Mind Reading* - You act as if you are able to tell what other people are thinking without checking with them first. Example: A friend doesn't return your call and you say to yourself, "He doesn't like me anymore. He thinks I'm weird."

4. *Telling the Future* - You act as if you can predict the future and know that something will turn out badly.

Example: A teenager wants to try out for the track team but says to himself, "I'll never make the team. I'll be so nervous that my running will be lousy." As a result, he doesn't even give it a try.

5. *Emotional Reasoning* - You decide how things "really" are on the basis of how you feel. Example: You feel worried about giving a report in front of your English class and say to yourself, "I feel so nervous. Everyone will see my nervousness, and something awful is going to happen during my report."

6. *Labeling* - You attach negative labels to yourself and call yourself names. Example: You miss an appointment with your doctor by accident. Instead of thinking, "I made a mistake", you say to yourself, "I'm so untrustworthy. I'm stupid"

7. *Should Statements* - You try to motivate yourself by thinking "I should do this" and "I shouldn't do that."

Example: After working all day on a drawing, a talented young artist says to herself, "I shouldn't make so many mistakes. I ought to do better after all those art classes!" Note: Beware of "must", "ought," and "have to" as well.

8. *Overgeneralizing* - You make a conclusion about something on the basis of 1 or 2 things. Example:

You find out that a girl in your History class doesn't like you, so you conclude that everybody in the class hates you.

9. *Catastrophizing* - You exaggerate the likelihood that something bad will happen, or you exaggerate how bad it would be if it really did happen. Example: A teenager is nervous about a blind date he has scheduled this weekend, and says to himself, "chances are she'll hate me, which would be awful and horrible. I could never face our mutual friends again."