

## DISTORTED THINKING\*

1. **All-or-nothing thinking:** You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories.
2. **Overgeneralization:** You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. **Mental filter:** You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.
4. **Discounting the positives:** You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities don't count.
5. **Jumping to conclusions:** You conclude things are bad without any definite evidence.
  - (a) **Mind reading:** You assume that people are reacting negatively to you.
  - (b) **Fortune-telling:** You predict that things will turn out badly.
6. **Magnification or minimization:** You blow things way out of proportion or you shrink their importance.
7. **Emotional reasoning:** You reason from how you feel: "I feel like an idiot, so I must be one."
8. **"Should" statements:** You criticize yourself or other people with "shoulds," "shouldn'ts," "musts," "oughts," and "have-tos."
9. **Labeling:** Instead of saying, "I made a mistake," you tell yourself, "I'm a jerk" or "a loser."
10. **Blame:** You blame yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for, or you blame other people and overlook ways that you contributed to a problem.

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your Negative Thoughts. I want you to get into the habit *now* of doing this exercise with pen and paper.

Okay, here's my analysis of Tyrone's first thought, "I'm a born loser."

- All-or-nothing thinking: He's looking at himself in black-and-white categories, because he sees himself as a *total* loser.
- Overgeneralization: He lost his job, but he's generalizing to his entire self.
- Mental filter: He's dwelling on this bad event and letting it discolor his entire view of life, much like the drop of ink that discolors a beaker of water.
- Discounting the positives: He's overlooking his many good qualities.
- Magnification or minimization: He's blowing this negative event out of proportion.
- Emotional reasoning: Tyrone reasons from how he feels. He *feels* like "a born loser," so he believes he really *is* one!