

How we interpret events (cognitions) determines how we feel (emotions). Below are ten categories of automatic thoughts that are often negative. In each of the categories that applies to you, list an example of a recent automatic thought.

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 (my college diploma was stroke of luck...really, it was).

5. Jumping to conclusions: You conclude things are bad without any definite evidence.
 - a. mind-reading (assuming that people are reacting negatively to you)
 - b. fortune-telling (predicting that things will always turn out badly)

6. Magnification/catastrophizing 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 aka "musterbation": You criticize yourself or other people with "shoulds," "shouldn'ts," "musts," "oughts," and "have-tos."

9. Labeling: Instead of identifying behavior, e.g. "I made a mistake," you tell yourself, "I'm 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.