



1. **All-or-Nothing Thinking:** Viewing situations in black-and-white terms—e.g., "I'm a total failure."
2. **Mental Filtering:** Focusing only on the negative and ignoring the positives.
3. **Overgeneralization:** Making broad conclusions based on a single event—e.g., "Nothing ever works."
4. **Jumping to Conclusions:** Assuming you know what others think or predicting the worst.
5. **Catastrophizing:** Imagining the worst-case scenario and treating it as inevitable.
6. **Should/Must Statements:** Holding rigid rules—e.g., "I must always succeed."
7. **Labelling:** Assigning global labels to yourself or others—e.g., "I'm useless."
8. **Emotional Reasoning:** Believing feelings reflect facts—e.g., "I feel anxious, so something bad will happen."
9. **Magnification/Minimization:** Exaggerating flaws or minimising strengths
10. **Blaming:** Attributing all problems to others, avoiding personal responsibility.
11. **Mind Reading:** Assuming you know what others are thinking—usually something negative.
12. **Fortune Telling:** Predicting the future negatively without evidence—e.g., "I'll mess this up."
13. **Comparing:** Measuring yourself against others and feeling inferior or inadequate.
14. **Control Fallacy:** Believing you're either entirely responsible or completely powerless.
15. **Fallacy of Fairness:** Believing life should be fair, and feeling resentful when it's not.
16. **Heaven's Reward Fallacy:** Expecting that sacrifice or virtue will automatically lead to reward.
17. **External Validation Trap:** Needing others' approval to feel okay about yourself.
18. **Ruminating:** Replaying past events over and over, often with guilt or regret.
19. **Over-Identifying with Thoughts:** Treating thoughts as facts or identity—e.g., "I think I'm useless, so I must be."
20. **Tunnel Vision:** Seeing only the negative aspects of a situation or yourself.
21. **Unrealistic Expectations:** Holding yourself to perfectionistic or rigid standards.
22. **Discounting the Positive:** Ignoring or minimizing achievements, compliments, or progress

Now that you've identified your unhelpful thinking styles, try some of these ideas (The Feeling Good Handbook, Burns, D. 1989):

1. **Identify The Distortion:** Write down your negative thoughts so you can see which of the ten cognitive distortions you're involved in. This will make it easier to think about the problem in a more positive and realistic way.
2. **Examine The Evidence:** Instead of assuming that your negative thought is true, examine the actual evidence for it. For example, if you feel that you never do anything right, you could list several things you have done successfully.
3. **The Double-Standard Method:** Instead of putting yourself down in a harsh, condemning way, talk to yourself in the same compassionate way you would talk to a friend with a similar problem.
4. **The Experimental Technique:** Do an experiment to test the validity of your negative thought. For example, if during an episode of panic, you become terrified that you're about to die of a heart attack, you could jog or run up and down several flights of stairs. This will prove that your heart is healthy and strong.
5. **Thinking In Shades Of Grey:** Although this method may sound drab, the effects can be illuminating. Instead of thinking about your problems in all-or-nothing extremes, evaluate things on a scale of 0 to 100. When things don't work out as well as you hoped, think about the experience as a partial success rather than a complete failure. See what you can learn from the situation.
6. **The Survey Method:** Ask people questions to find out if your thoughts and attitudes are realistic. For example, if you feel that public speaking anxiety is abnormal and shameful, ask several friends if they ever felt nervous before they gave a talk.
7. **Define Terms:** When you label yourself 'inferior' or 'a fool' or 'a loser,' ask, "What is the definition of 'a fool'?" You will feel better when you realize that there is no such thing as 'a fool' or 'a loser.'
8. **The Semantic Method:** Simply substitute language that is less colourful and emotionally loaded. This method is helpful for 'should statements.' Instead of telling yourself, "I shouldn't have made that mistake," you can say, "It would be better if I hadn't made that mistake."
9. **Re-attribution:** Instead of automatically assuming that you are "bad" and blaming yourself entirely for a problem, think about the many factors that may have contributed to it. Focus on solving the problem instead of using up all your energy blaming yourself and feeling guilty.
10. **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** List the advantages and disadvantages of a feeling (like getting angry when your plane is late), a negative thought (like "No matter how hard I try, I always screw up"), or a behaviour pattern (like overeating and lying around in bed when you're depressed). You can also use the cost benefit analysis to modify a self-defeating belief such as, "I must always try to be perfect."