



Self Defeating Thoughts

FACT SHEET

Below is a list self defeating thoughts and ways to overcome them.

Filtering: Focus to the negative to the exclusion of the positive.

Solution: When you are thinking/feeling bad, try to do the opposite.

Black & White Thinking: Things are good or bad – it's all or nothing with no middle ground

Solution: Look for the exception to your point of view – yes, but. . .

Overgeneralization: Exaggerate or take things to the extreme.

Solution: Avoid words like always, never, every, all, none, everybody, and nobody.
Question the extremes – is there any time that is not true?

Mind Reading: Making assumptions about an outcome or someone's motivation

Solution: Can you really know what's going to happen or why something happens?
How can you know for sure? What are other possibilities?

Catastrophizing: AKA awfulizing – expecting and projecting the worst

Solution: Remember that there is usually more than one possible outcome and the worst catastrophe usually does not happen.

Personalization: It's all about me – my fault – I did it wrong – they hate me – I am the only one who can do this

Solution: How do you know? Prove it, or consider other possibilities.

Control Fallacies: Either you have no control or you can control everything.

Solution: Let go of what you can't control and be realistic about what you really can control.

Fallacy of Fairness: You think everything should be fair.

Solution: Life is not fair. Accepting this will help you have more realistic expectations.

Blaming: You don't take responsibility for your choices and project fault onto others.

Solution: Take responsibility for your choices, including your feelings. Nobody else can make you feel or do anything. How you feel or react is up to you.

Shoulds: Words like should, ought and must foster impossible expectations and result in disappointment, resentment and failure.

Solution: Flexibility is the key here – give yourself and others the benefit of the doubt.

Emotional Reasoning: A belief that your emotions are based in truth.

Solution: Challenge emotions with logic – look for exceptions that are reasonable and possible.