

Common Self-Defeating Beliefs*

Achievement	Depression
<p>1. Perfectionism. I must never fail or make a mistake.</p> <p>2. Perceived Perfectionism. People will not love and accept me as a flawed and vulnerable human being.</p> <p>3. Achievement Addiction. My worthiness depends on my achievements, intelligence, talent, status, income, or looks.</p>	<p>13. Hopelessness. My problems could never be solved. I could never feel truly happy or fulfilled.</p> <p>14. Worthlessness / Inferiority. I'm basically worthless, defective, and inferior to others.</p>
	Anxiety
Love	<p>15. Emotional Perfectionism. I should always feel happy, confident, and in control.</p> <p>16. Anger Phobia. Anger is dangerous and should be avoided at all costs.</p> <p>17. Emotophobia. I should never feel sad, anxious, inadequate, jealous or vulnerable. I should sweep my feelings under the rug and not upset anyone.</p> <p>18. Perceived Narcissism. The people I care about are demanding, manipulative, and powerful.</p>
<p>4. Approval Addiction. I need everyone's approval to be worthwhile.</p> <p>5. Love Addiction. I can't feel happy and fulfilled without being loved.</p> <p>6. Fear of Rejection. If you reject me, it proves that there's something wrong with me. If I'm alone, I'm bound to feel miserable and worthless.</p>	<p>19. Brushfire Fallacy. People are clones who all think alike. If one person looks down on me, the word will spread like brushfire and soon everyone will look down on me.</p> <p>20. Spotlight Fallacy. Talking to people feels like having to perform under a bright spotlight on a stage. If I don't impress people by being sophisticated, witty, or interesting, they won't like me.</p>
Submissiveness	<p>21. Magical Thinking. If I worry enough, everything will turn out okay.</p>
<p>7. Pleasing Others. I should always try to please others, even if I make myself miserable in the process.</p> <p>8. Conflict Phobia. People who love each other shouldn't fight.</p> <p>9. Self-Blame. The problems in my relationships are bound to be my fault.</p>	
Demandingness	Other
<p>10. Other-Blame. The problems in my relationships are the other person's fault.</p> <p>11. Entitlement. You should always treat me in the way I expect.</p> <p>12. Truth. I'm right and you're wrong.</p>	<p>22. Low Frustration Tolerance. I should never be frustrated. Life should be easy.</p> <p>23. Superman / Superwoman. I should always be strong and never be weak.</p>

Cognitive Distortions

From "Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy" by David D. Burns, MD

Usage	Distortion	Description				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	All or Nothing Thinking	You see things in black and white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Overgeneralization	You see a single negative event as a never ending pattern of defeat.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Mental Filter	You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors the entire beaker of water.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Disqualifying the Positive	You reject positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Jumping to Conclusions	<p>You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="716 779 1490 982"> <tr> <td data-bbox="716 779 915 884">Mind Reading</td> <td data-bbox="915 779 1490 884">You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you and you don't bother to check this out.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="716 884 915 982">The Fortune Teller Error</td> <td data-bbox="915 884 1490 982">You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.</td> </tr> </table>	Mind Reading	You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you and you don't bother to check this out.	The Fortune Teller Error	You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.
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The Fortune Teller Error	You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.					
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization	You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof up or someone else's achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick".				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Emotional Reasoning	You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it; therefore, it must be true."				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Should Statements	You try to motivate yourself with should and shouldn'ts, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration and resentment.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Labeling and Mislabeled	This is an extreme form of over generalization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him: "He's a jerk." Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes	Personalization and Blame	With personalization, you see yourself as the cause of some negative external event which in fact you were not primarily responsible. With blame, you blame other people or your circumstances for problems, and overlook ways that you might be contributing to the problem.				

The Ladder of Emotions

Our emotions are neither good nor bad. They are only an indicator of where we are on any given subject. Imagine that each emotion below is a rung on a ladder. We understand that it is not possible for us to stand at the bottom of a 22 foot ladder and reach the top rung in one step. The same is true for the emotional scale. We have to climb the ladder rung by rung. Sometimes we can skip a rung or two but we usually can't skip ten. So if you were jealous and now feel anger, acknowledge that you are moving in the right direction.

One more note about the emotional scale. You may notice that there are more "negative" emotions than positives. When we feel good, we don't really need the exact word to describe how we feel. But, when we don't feel so good, there is a big difference between our emotions and we sometimes need just the right word to explain it.

Ways to use this emotional scale:

At first, just become familiar with what you are feeling. Identify any thoughts or beliefs that may have led up to the feeling.

Once you get skilled at identifying your self defeating beliefs and your cognitive distortions then you can begin to "reach for a better feeling thought." First, identify where you are then identify where you want to be. Next, reach for a better feeling thought by changing the story you are telling yourself. If the thought makes sense to you, keep going. When you feel like the thought doesn't make sense, or isn't realistic, pause at that feeling for a bit. Once you feel ready, keep reaching for a better feeling thought. Remember: beliefs contribute to thoughts and thoughts result in feelings and feelings shape experiences.

Beliefs → Thoughts → Feelings → Experiences

Emotional Scale

1. Joy -- Knowledge -- Freedom -- Love -- Appreciation
2. Passion
3. Enthusiasm -- Eagerness -- Happiness
4. Positive Expectation -- Belief
5. Optimism
6. Hopefulness
7. Contentment
8. Boredom
9. Pessimism
10. Frustration -- Irritation -- Impatience
11. Overwhelm
12. Disappointment
13. Doubt
14. Worry
15. Blame
16. Discouragement
17. Anger
18. Revenge
19. Hatred -- Rage
20. Jealousy
21. Insecurity -- Guilt -- Unworthiness
22. Fear -- Grief -- Depression -- Despair -- Powerlessness

The list is from "Ask and It is Given" by Esther and Jerry Hicks

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Identifying New Beliefs and Thoughts

For each situation that comes up, fill out a chart with the following information:

What I told myself:	What did I feel?	Identify Self Defeating Beliefs and/or Cognitive Distortion	What I could have told myself instead: