

Reprogramming Negative Thoughts

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 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. These include mind-reading (assuming that people are reacting negatively to you) and fortune-telling (predicting that things will turn out badly).
6. **Magnification or minimization:** You blow things way out of proportion or 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," "should nots," "musts," "oughts," and "have-tos."
9. **Labeling:** Instead of saying, "I made a mistake," you tell yourself, "I'm stupid" or "I'm a loser."
10. **Personalization and 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.



10 forms of twisted thinking according to David Burns, MD., author of the *Feeling Good Handbook*.

State of New Hampshire
Employee Assistance Program

