**UNHELPFUL THINKING PATTERNS**

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**Black & White**

*If I’m not perfect I have failed*

*Either I do it right, or not at all*

Imperfection can still equal success – forgetting an item on a grocery list does not mean the trip was a complete bust.

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****Mental Filter**

*Focusing on a critical comment while ignoring all the compliments you’ve received.*

Only paying attention to certain types of evidence & dismissing anything that doesn’t ‘fit.’ Noticing failures and not seeing successes.

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**Mind reading**

*An acquaintance seems less friendly than usual – “he must be angry with me.”*

Thinking you know what others are thinking / how they feel about you.

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**Fortune Telling**

*Before going to a social gathering you have an image of people reacting negatively to you and you assume that you will be devastated.*

Predicting that things will turn out badly and you will not be able to cope.

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**Emotional Reasoning**

*I feel anxious so I must be in danger. I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot.*

Assuming that how you feel is an accurate reflection of how things are. Feelings are simply a reaction to thoughts.

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**Labeling**

An extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking which can be damaging to our self esteem and relationships.

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**Overgeneralizing**

*Nothing good ever happens.*

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw.

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**Disqualifying the Positive**

*Oh that? That doesn’t matter, that was nothing.*

Discounting the good things that have happened.

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**Catastrophizing / (Magnification)**

*What if….the worst??*

You expect, even visualize disaster. Imagining and believing that the worst possible thing will happen.

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**Should & Must**

Often leads to feelings of guilt. Language implies that we have already failed. Adds pressure and unrealistic expectations. You have a list of ironclad rules about how you and other people ‘should’ act. Anger and guilt appear when the rules of your making have been violated.

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**Personalization**

*The same person who noticed the acquaintance was not being as friendly as usual thinks, “I must have done something wrong.”*

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn’t entirely under your control. You assume that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. Comparing yourself to others comes in here.