Cognitive Distortions

These are faulty or incorrect ways of thinking. By noticing and writing down your thoughts right before or during a time you are upset, you can begin to realize how often you bother yourself with your thoughts. Then you can either stop the thoughts, refuse to believe them, or replace them with thoughts that are more accurate, realistic, and helpful.

1. Overgeneralization- Nobody cares, everybody hates me, watch out for words like never, always, can’t everybody, nobody, have to, all.

2. Global labeling- All lawyers are greedy, I’m stupid, life is a rat-race, it’s hopeless.

3. Filtering- ignoring the good and focusing on the negative

4. Polarized thinking or extremism- it’s all black or it’s all white, if I make one mistake I’m no good, one strike and your out, if I don’t win this time then I’m a failure.

5. Self-blame- makes you think that every time things go wrong it must be your fault. Characterized by excessive apologizing.

6. Personalization- you think that others are blaming you for what they don’t like. When someone complains, you get defensive.

7. Mind reading- You think you know what others are thinking, it’s about you, and it’s bad.

8. Control fallacy- You think you are responsible for everything, you think you have to make others follow rules or do the right thing

9. Emotional reasoning- You think your feelings are facts and they characterize you and your life- just because you feel bad at the moment, your whole life is bad.

10. Heaven’s reward- you think you are supposed to be rewarded for living right, and maybe you think anybody who breaks the rules should be punished, that the universe is supposed to make life fair.