

CATCHING COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS
with **THE DAILY THREE COLUMN TECHNIQUE**

STEP ONE: DESCRIBE THE UPSETTING EVENT

STEP TWO: RECORD YOUR NEGATIVE FEELINGS. RATE STRENGTH 0-

100% such as emotion: angry – rating- 80% (**Sad**, blue, depressed, down, unhappy, **Anxious**, worried, panicky, nervous, frightened, **Guilty**, remorseful, bad, ashamed, **Inferior**, worthless, inadequate, defective, incompetent, **Lonely**, unloved, unwanted, rejected, alone, abandoned, **Embarrassed**, foolish, humiliated, self-conscious, **Frustrated**, stuck, thwarted, defeated, **Angry**, mad, resentful, annoyed, irritated, upset, furious, **Hopeless**, discouraged, pessimistic, despairing)

Emotion	Rating	Emotion	Rating	Emotion	Rating
1.		3.		5.	
2.		4.		6.	

STEP THREE: THE TRIPLE-COLUMN TECHNIQUE

Automatic Thoughts Write your negative thoughts and estimate your belief in each one (0%-100%).	Distortions Identify the distortions in each Automatic Thought. See List on back of sheet	Rational Responses Substitute more realistic thoughts and estimate your belief in each one (0%-100%)

Most Common Mind Traps or Cognitive Distortions
Both Positive +Negative

1. All-or-nothing thinking. You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories. There is no such thing as a perfectly clean wall, no such person as a perfectly, good one. There is no such thing as a perfectly dirty floor or a completely bad person. Everything and everyone is measured in degrees or percentages.
2. Overgeneralization. You take one single event and you generalize it to your entire life. Negative events become never ending or a positive event, a chain of endless successes.
3. Mental filter. You dwell on the positives such as how great tasting donuts are and forget how fattening they can be or you dwell on the negatives, your shortcomings, your errors and ignore your positive qualities.
4. Discounting reality. You ignore positive or negative facts, telling yourself that they don't count, so you can insist you are inferior or worthless, or so you can insist you're are superior.
5. Jumping to conclusions. You jump to conclusions not warranted by the facts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind-reading. You assume that people are reacting negatively to you. No body can read another's mind! • Fortune-telling. You predict that things will turn out badly. No one can tell the future.
6. Magnification or minimization. You blow things way out of proportion or shrink them. It is called the binocular trick because it's like looking through the two ends of a binocular, so things either look much bigger, or much smaller than they really are.
7. Emotional reasoning. You reason from your feelings, thinking that your feelings mirror reality. In point of fact, your feelings are created from your thoughts, which are not necessarily true: "I feel like an idiot, so I must be one." Feelings do not have brains!
8. Should statements. Self-Directed Shoulds such as "I should" or "I shouldn't" cause feelings of guilt, shame, depression, and worthlessness. Other-Directed Shoulds such as " He/she should" or "He/she shouldn't" cause feelings of anger and trigger interpersonal conflict. World-Directed Shoulds such as "Life should be fair" "Everyone should be or shouldn't be" cause feelings of frustration and entitlement.
9. Labeling. Instead of saying, "I made a mistake," you tell yourself, "I'm a mistake. I'm a jerk" or "I'm a loser." Instead of sayng, "I did really well on that one," you tell yourself, "I'm the best. I'm a winner."
10. Self-blame and other-blame. Instead of realizing that, " It takes two to tango" or that in a conflict you are still part of the problem, no matter how little or how great, you take all the responsibility or you don't take any. You might be 1% responsible or 99% responsible or it could be 50-50. It is not important to figure out the percentage you or the other person are responsible for. It is important to admit that you or another person are somewhat responsible to a certain degree, so don't self-blame and don't other-blame.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-blame. You blame yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for. • Other-blame. You blame others and overlook ways you contributed to the problem.

