

# Common Self-Defeating Beliefs\*

Achievement	Depression
<p>1. <b>Perfectionism.</b> I must never fail or make a mistake.</p> <p>2. <b>Perceived Perfectionism.</b> People will not love and accept me as a flawed and vulnerable human being.</p> <p>3. <b>Achievement Addiction.</b> My worthiness depends on my achievements, intelligence, talent, status, income, or looks.</p>	<p>13. <b>Hopelessness.</b> My problems could never be solved. I could never feel truly happy or fulfilled.</p> <p>14. <b>Worthlessness / Inferiority.</b> I'm basically worthless, defective, and inferior to others.</p>
	Anxiety
Love	<p>15. <b>Emotional Perfectionism.</b> I should always feel happy, confident, and in control.</p> <p>16. <b>Anger Phobia.</b> Anger is dangerous and should be avoided at all costs.</p> <p>17. <b>Emotophobia.</b> 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. <b>Perceived Narcissism.</b> The people I care about are demanding, manipulative, and powerful.</p>
<p>4. <b>Approval Addiction.</b> I need everyone's approval to be worthwhile.</p> <p>5. <b>Love Addiction.</b> I can't feel happy and fulfilled without being loved.</p> <p>6. <b>Fear of Rejection.</b> 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. <b>Brushfire Fallacy.</b> 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. <b>Spotlight Fallacy.</b> 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. <b>Magical Thinking.</b> If I worry enough, everything will turn out okay.</p>
<p>7. <b>Pleasing Others.</b> I should always try to please others, even if I make myself miserable in the process.</p> <p>8. <b>Conflict Phobia.</b> People who love each other shouldn't fight.</p> <p>9. <b>Self-Blame.</b> The problems in my relationships are bound to be my fault.</p>	
Demandingness	Other
<p>10. <b>Other-Blame.</b> The problems in my relationships are the other person's fault.</p> <p>11. <b>Entitlement.</b> You should always treat me in the way I expect.</p> <p>12. <b>Truth.</b> I'm right and you're wrong.</p>	<p>22. <b>Low Frustration Tolerance.</b> I should never be frustrated. Life should be easy.</p> <p>23. <b>Superman / Superwoman.</b> I should always be strong and never be weak.</p>

# Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions are irrational thoughts that can influence your emotions. Everyone experiences cognitive distortions to some degree, but in their more extreme forms they can be harmful.

**Magnification and Minimization:** Exaggerating or minimizing the importance of events. One might believe their own achievements are unimportant, or that their mistakes are excessively important.

**Catastrophizing:** Seeing only the worst possible outcomes of a situation.

**Overgeneralization:** Making broad interpretations from a single or few events. “I felt awkward during my job interview. I am *always* so awkward.”

**Magical Thinking:** The belief that acts will influence unrelated situations. “I am a good person—bad things shouldn’t happen to me.”

**Personalization:** The belief that one is responsible for events outside of their own control. “My mom is always upset. She would be fine if I did more to help her.”

**Jumping to Conclusions:** Interpreting the meaning of a situation with little or no evidence.

**Mind Reading:** Interpreting the thoughts and beliefs of others without adequate evidence. “She would not go on a date with me. She probably thinks I’m ugly.”

**Fortune Telling:** The expectation that a situation will turn out badly without adequate evidence.

**Emotional Reasoning:** The assumption that emotions reflect the way things really are. “I feel like a bad friend, therefore I must be a bad friend.”

**Disqualifying the Positive:** Recognizing only the negative aspects of a situation while ignoring the positive. One might receive many compliments on an evaluation, but focus on the single piece of negative feedback.

**“Should” Statements:** The belief that things should be a certain way. “I should always be friendly.”

**All-or-Nothing Thinking:** Thinking in absolutes such as “always”, “never”, or “every”. “I *never* do a good enough job on anything.”

# 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: