

Common Self-Defeating Beliefs*

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