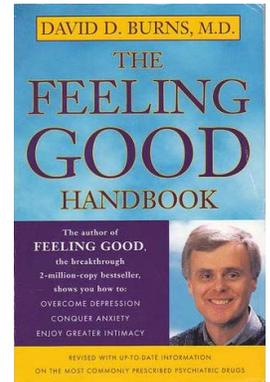


# TWISTED BREAKUP THINKING

So often, our thoughts affect our moods. This is such a common thing among folks that there's even a name for these snarky and often problematic thoughts: **Cognitive Distortions.**

My IRL clients love (questionable) my shtick about how this retro book cover from graduate school makes me reminiscent about the days where mall glamour shots were a thing. I'll spare you the details and certainly am not going to show you my headshot from this era. Point is, David Burns, MD - the brain behind this timeless headshot - has created language to help us recognize and reevaluate these thoughts. Below is Burns' language paired with my breakup/relational twist. Do any of these sound familiar? Since our thoughts often affect our feelings, let's make sure those thoughts are twisted, but rather rooted in reality. Take a look:



1. **All or Nothing Thinking:** Using absolutes such as "every," "always," "never," etc. I always mess up relationships. I'll never be happy.
2. **Overgeneralization:** Interpreting one event, and applying it to many or all events. I felt so stupid and blindsided when he broke up with me. Ughhh I'm such a stupid person.
3. **Negative Mental Filter:** You pick out a sole negative detail and dwell on it, totally negating the good stuff. Obsessing over the hurtful thing said in the breakup, forgetting all the wonderful things you've got going for you.
4. **Discounting the Positive:** Similar to the above, you "reject positive experiences by insisting they don't count." When on a date with a new person, someone may share all the things they like about you, and also share the differences they observe. You focus on these differences only, and assume it's a negative thing.
5. **Jumping to Conclusions:** Making meaning of a situation without any evidence to back it up.
  - a. **Mind Reading:** Interpreting thoughts or beliefs of others with nothing to back it up. "She didn't text me back. She probably hates me or is on a date with someone else right now."
  - b. **Fortune-Telling:** "Knowing" that a situation will end poorly, with zero evidence to suggest as much.

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## TWISTED BREAKUP THINKING (CONTINUED)

6. **Magnification and Minimization:** Exaggerating or minimizing the importance of events, problems, etc. We ended the night without a kiss. This thing is donezo.
7. **Emotional Reasoning:** The false belief that our emotions are indicative of the way things really are. Emotions are helpful, but not always reality based. "I feel like a lousy/unattentive/boring/etc partner, therefor I must be a bad/etc partner."
8. **Should Statements:** The belief that things should be the way you want them or expect them to be. Not how it works.I should be over this by now. I'm not supposed to feel this bad about this.
9. **Personalization and Blame:** Essentially, giving yourself too much responsibility, believing that you're responsible for things outside of your control. If I was a better partner, he'd be happier.
10. **Labeling:** Burns describes labeling as "an extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking. "When you label, you're making meaning and personalizing an action. Ugh, I called her yesterday when I shouldn't have. I'm an idiot. ← No, you're not an idiot. You did a thing that may or may not have been that helpful. Big difference. Be nice to yourself!

**Familiarize yourself with these common thought distortions. Learn to recognize them so you can adjust, and in turn, give yourself a fair shot at coping with this breakup.**

**We all have a "go to" way of twisted thinking (I usually disqualify the positive. Meh.).**

**Which one/s jumped out for you? Let me know!**

**Inspiration and conceptualization of Thought Distortions come from "The Feeling Good Handbook" by David D. Burns, M.D.**

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