

Change the Way You Think will Change Your Life

Would you like to think in ways that will make you even happier and help you better achieve your goals? Well, if so, this newsletter will help you to see how sometimes you may be thinking in a manner that sabotages your success. You can change your thinking, creating a more satisfying and happier reality.

If you are not taking the action toward your goals as you want or making changes you desire, you may have one or more cognitive distortions going on. Dr. David Burns, author of *Feeling Good* identified 10 cognitive distortions. These are unrealistic thinking patterns.

All or Nothing Thinking: You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories.

Overgeneralization: You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

Mental Filter: You focus only on the negatives. You pick out a negative detail in any situation and dwell on it exclusively

Disqualifying the Positive: When positive exists, you find a negative way of looking at it or discount the positive.

Jumping to conclusions: You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that support your conclusion.

Magnification and Minimization: You either blow things up out of proportion or shrink things inappropriately.

Emotional Reasoning: You take your emotions as evidence for the truth which is misleading.

Labeling and Mislabeled: Creating a completely negative self-image based on your errors. I failed becomes I am a failure. You may do this to others as well.

Should statements: You motivate yourself by saying "I should" or "shouldn't" leading to feeling pressured, resentful and actually unmotivated. "Musts" and "ought tos" are also offenders.

Personalization: You assume responsibility for a negative event when there is no basis for doing so.

When you come to recognize your distortion, you will

- be open to new choices and possibilities
- see unlimited potential
- see where you can make a change in your behavior
- create more realistic and rational thoughts

What can you do?

- 1. Identify your thinking.** The more awareness the more uncomfortable you will be with it.

Throughout your week, document your thinking as it pertains to your goals. When feeling unmotivated, identify a possible distortion. When you have identified a distortion actually count the amount of times it comes up in a week.

If in doubt, ask others if they see you in any of these.

- 2. Work backwards toward the thought.** If not clear about your thinking at first, you can identify an area in your life you want to change. Now, write down any negative thoughts that come to mind about changing/improving that area. Do you hear any distortion or unrealistic thoughts taking place?
- 3. Substitute a more positive and realistic thought.** Consider a more compassionate, non-judgmental way of thinking. Give yourself permission to be imperfect, experiencing self acceptance. Or, use a talk back method in which you counter the negative thought.
- 4. Go on a fact finding hunt.** Sure, you can come up with plenty of reasons to confirm your negative thought which is why you have been able to hold on to it. Now, create a lengthy list of facts, past experiences and reasons that support why you can reach your goals. Be specific.

Coaching questions:

Imagine if you believed fully in yourself and your ability to reach your goals, aspirations and dreams.

What would your reality be? OR What would your life be like?

What would you feel as you went through your day?

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If you would like to consider hiring a coach to help you achieve your most important goals, aspirations and dreams you can contact me at (978)686-5693 or email me at lisa@baystatecoaching.com for a complimentary coaching consultation.

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