

Cognitive Distortions and Your Body Image

Distorted thinking and negative body image go hand in hand. Here are some examples of thinking errors and poor body image. After the thinking error, provide a counterstatement – a more realistic, kinder, more positive statement to counter the distorted thought. The first three are done for you. You'll note that the type of cognitive distortion is also listed.

1) **Black-and-white thinking:** "I can only be attractive if I look as perfect as the models in the magazines."

Counterstatement: *"I can still be attractive even if I don't look perfect. Besides, the models don't even look that perfect in real life; their pictures are touched up."*

2) **Overgeneralization:** "I look terrible in that picture. I'm just a hideous person."

Counterstatement: *"That one picture of me is unflattering, but other pictures of me have turned out fine. No one looks great in every single picture."*

3) **Mental filter/Discounting the positives:** "I can't enjoy a day at the beach because I'm too ashamed of how I look in a bathing suit."

Counterstatement: *"I don't have to look like a swimsuit model - I still have the right to enjoy this time with my wonderful family and this beautiful beach and this nice sunny day."*

4) **Jumping to conclusions/Mind-reading/Fortune-telling:** "I know when I meet my internet date in person he/she is going to be so disappointed by how I look."

Counterstatement: _____

5) **Magnification/Minimization:** "If I gain ten more pounds, my life is over."

Counterstatement: _____

6) **Emotional reasoning:** "I feel disgusting today, I must be really unattractive."

Counterstatement: _____

7) **"Shoulds" and "musts":** "I absolutely must lose 30 pounds before my brother's wedding, or I shouldn't even go to the wedding."

Counterstatement: _____

8) **Labeling:** "I'm just pathetic because my nose is so big."

Counterstatement: _____

9) **Personalization and blame:** "If only I hadn't gained so much weight last year, my marriage wouldn't have fallen apart."

Counterstatement: _____

10) **Now identify a cognitive distortion about your own body image:**

Counterstatement: _____

In the space below, write down five additional distorted thoughts you have about your body, and the rational counterstatements.

Distorted Thoughts About Your Body	Rational (Realistic) Counterstatements