

# THINKING MISTAKES

- 1. Black - and - White Thinking** - You tend to think of things in extremes - either you're perfect or you're a total failure. Example: A teenage girl on a diet eats a spoonful of ice cream and says to herself, "I've blown my diet completely!" She gets so distressed over 1 spoonful of ice cream that she ends up eating a whole quart.
- 2. "Yes But" Thinking** - You tend to ignore the positives in your life and focus only on the negatives. Example: A friend tells you that you look nice in your new outfit and you say to yourself, "He's just saying that to be nice. He's nice to everybody."
- 3. Mind Reading** - You act as if you are able to tell what other people are thinking without checking with them first. Example: A friend doesn't return your call and you say to yourself, "He doesn't like me anymore. He thinks I'm weird."
- 4. Telling the Future** - You act as if you can predict the future and know that something will turn out badly. Example: A teenager wants to try out for the track team but says to himself, "I'll never make the team. I'll be so nervous that my running will be lousy." As a result, he doesn't even give it a try.
- 5. Emotional Reasoning** - You decide how things "really" are on the basis of how you feel. Example: You feel worried about giving a report in front of your English class and say to yourself, "I feel so nervous. Everyone will see my nervousness, and something awful is going to happen during my report."
- 6. Labeling** - You attach negative labels to yourself and call yourself names. Example: You miss an appointment with your doctor by accident. Instead of thinking, "I made a mistake", you say to yourself, "I'm so untrustworthy. I'm stupid!"
- 7. Should Statements** - You try to motivate yourself by thinking "I should do this" and "I shouldn't do that." Example: After working all day on a drawing, a talented young artist says to herself, "I shouldn't make so many mistakes. I ought to do better after all those art classes!" Note: Beware of "must", "ought," and "have to" as well.
- 8. Overgeneralizing** - You make a conclusion about something on the basis of 1 or 2 things. Example: You find out that a girl in your History class doesn't like you, so you conclude that everybody in the class hates you.
- 9. Catastrophizing** - You exaggerate the likelihood that something bad will happen, or you exaggerate how bad it would be if it really did happen. Example: A teenager is nervous about a blind date he has scheduled this weekend, and says to himself, "chances are she'll hate me, which would be awful and horrible. I could never face our mutual friends again."