

What Are My Feelings REALLY saying?

A Guide to Finding the Root of Your Feelings



Physically write out the stressful thought or situation

- Notice the state of your body. What sensations do you feel? Are your hands sweaty, how do your shoulders, jaw, face feel?
- Where is your breath at this moment? How does it feel to breathe in your body right now? Is it shallow, fast, tense?

How do you act when you & your body feel this way?

- What behaviors manifest out of your body when you feel this way?
- What memories do you have of yourself when you've felt this way?
- Can you observe other situations where you react similarly when you feel this way?

Label it

The only way to process trauma or any stressful situation is to label it first. This allows us to begin to see things clearly and be proactive to finding a positive solution.

Which of these most resonates with you?
Detailed descriptions are below

- ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING
- OVERGENERALIZATION
- MENTAL FILTER
- DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE
- JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS
(Mind reading, Fortune Teller Error)
- MAGNIFICATION
(CATASTROPHIZING) OR
MINIMIZATION
- EMOTIONAL REASONING:
- SHOULD STATEMENTS
- LABELING AND MISLABELING
- PERSONALIZATION

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List of Cognitive Distortions

Based on "Feeling Good" By Dr. David Burns

- **ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING:** You see things in black-and-white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.

- **OVERGENERALIZATION:** You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

- **MENTAL FILTER:** You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that colors the entire beaker of water.

- **DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE:** You reject positive experiences by insisting they "don't count" for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.

- **JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS:** You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.

- a. **Mind reading.** You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don't bother to check this out.

- b. **The Fortune Teller Error.** You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.

- **MAGNIFICATION(CATASTROPHIZING)OR MINIMIZATION:** You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else's achievement),or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow's imperfections). This is also called the "binocular trick."

- **EMOTIONAL REASONING:** You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I feel it, therefore it must be true."

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- **SHOULD STATEMENTS:** You try to motivate yourself with shoulds and shouldn'ts, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. "Musts" and "oughts" are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.
- **LABELING AND MISLABELING:** This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: "I'm a loser." When someone else's behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him: "He's a goddam louse." Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.
- **PERSONALIZATION:** You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event which in fact you were not primarily responsible for.

Key Takeaways

Before you *feel* anything in your body, your brain must first interpret what it means through **thoughts**. These thoughts are cultivated by experiences both good, bad and neutral that shape how we see the world.

When you can become aware of the root of your thoughts, you can transform how they manifest in your body changing the way you see your reality.

Now that you've labeled the thought, situation or experience. How can you challenge it to transform it to be positive, productive and kind to help bring about a solution so you suffer less.

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