

# Fifteen Ways To Untwist Your Thinking\*

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Method	Description
Identify the Distortions	Write down your negative thoughts so you can see which of the cognitive distortions you're involved in. This will make it easier to think about the problem in a more positive and realistic way.
The Straightforward Approach	Substitute a more positive and realistic thought.
The Cost-Benefit Analysis	List the advantages and disadvantages of a negative feeling (i.e., like getting angry when your plane is late), thought (i.e., "No matter how hard I try, I always screw up"), belief (i.e., "I must always be perfect"), or behavior (overeating and lying around in bed when depressed).
Examine the Evidence	Instead of assuming that a Negative Thought is true, examine the actual evidence for it. For example, if you think that you never do anything right, you could list several things that you have done successfully.
The Survey Method	Do a survey to find out if your thoughts and attitudes are realistic. Ask people questions to find out if your thoughts and attitudes are realistic.
The Experimental Method	Do an experiment to test the accuracy of your Negative Thought.
The Double-Standard Technique	Talk to yourself in the same compassionate way you might talk to a dear friend who was upset. Instead of putting yourself down, be nice.
The Pleasure-Predicting Method	Predict how satisfying activities will be, from 0% to 100%. Record how satisfying they turn out to be.
The Vertical Arrow Technique	Draw a vertical arrow under your Negative Thought and ask why it would be upsetting if it was true.
Thinking in Shades of Gray	Instead of thinking about your problems in black-and-white categories, evaluate things in shades of gray. Instead of thinking of your problems in all-or-nothing extremes, evaluate things on a range of 0-100. When things don't work out as well as you hoped, think about the experience as a partial success rather than a complete failure.
Define Terms	When you label yourself as "inferior" or "a loser," ask yourself what you mean by these labels. You may be surprised when you discover that there is no such thing!
Be Specific	Stick with reality and avoid judgments about reality.
The Semantic Method	Substitute language that is less emotionally loaded; this method is helpful for "should" statements. Instead of telling yourself "I <i>shouldn't</i> have made that mistake", you can say, "It would be better if I hadn't made that mistake".
Reattribution	Instead of blaming yourself for a problem, think about all the factors that may have contributed to it. Focus on solving the problem instead of using up all your energy blaming yourself and feeling guilty.
The Acceptance Paradox	Instead of defending yourself against your own self-criticisms, find truth in them and accept them.