

CHOOSE TO THRIVE



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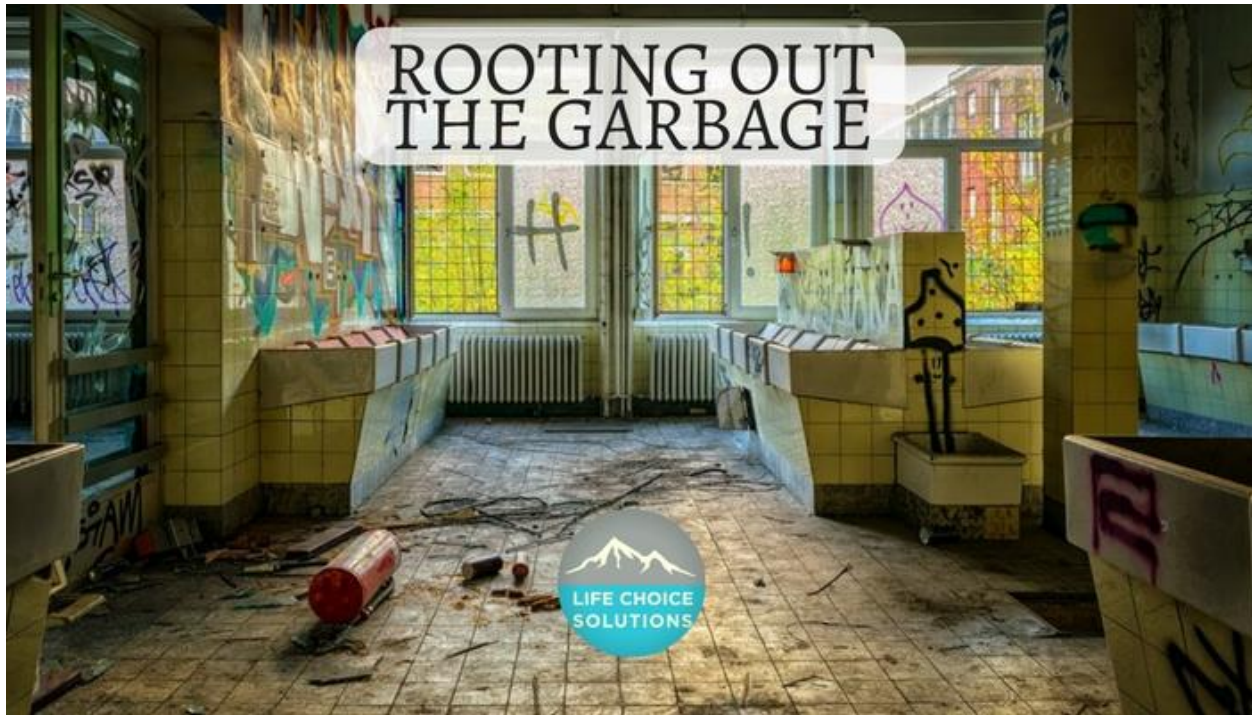


**ROOTING OUT
THE GARBAGE**

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Rooting Out The Garbage

What are my thinking habits, where did they come from and are they working for me?



by [Rob Duffy](#) on December 28th 2017

Many of us have grown up with bad habits that keep us from our ideal state of being. These thinking habits and biases are known as cognitive distortions and understanding where they may lie within us and how they arise is vital to becoming the very best version of ourselves that we can be. Thriving requires that we root out the garbage which has lived within us and looking at some of

the ways we have learned to think and challenging it is one way to get us there.

Below is a list of the kinds of distortions many of us engage in and I invite you to bring awareness to where these may exist in your life and through awareness you can decide whether you want to do something to change your thinking habits.

Much of this relates to language and how our use of language represents how we are experiencing the world. The words we allow use can sometimes have double meanings which consciously we understand but they can also work unconsciously counter to what we would like to experience emotionally. Sometimes things can become 'lost in translation'.

We each have a different model of the world and how we view the world. Sometimes we can generalise information, sometimes we delete inappropriate information and sometimes we distort it. The distortions happen when we give too much weight to, or focus on some parts of the information coming into our awareness. This is

something we all do and is a conscious and unconscious process. This is where we come up with beliefs about others, ourselves and about the world. Sometimes we make leaps and conclusions that are not so beneficial to our own interests. This is why getting to know about these distortions and how they play out is important and useful if our goal is to achieve happiness and to enable a the thriving mindset.

Top 10 Cognitive Distortions

(Highlight which of these you would like to discuss with your me in a coaching session)

1. All or Nothing Thinking

Also called splitting or dichotomous thinking, this is seeing things as black or white, wrong or right and being ambivalent about any grey areas. An example would be someone getting 99% in a test and considering it a failure.

2. **Overgeneralisations**

This distortion relates to drawing very broad conclusions based on one or two instances or experiences. Some words I recommend to watch out for here are, 'Never' and 'Always'.

Examples would be 'I will never make the team'; 'I am always getting into trouble for being late'.

3. **Minimising or Magnifications**

Also known as catastrophising, this is distortion that is popularised by the idiom 'making a mountain out of a molehill'. When people put more weight into perceived failures or less weight into perceived successes they can be said to engage in this distortion. People who are depressed often exaggerate the positive attributes of others while understating the negatives.

An example of minimising is when someone says that something didn't offend them when really on the inside it makes them angry.

A magnification would be if someone exaggerates a small thing like falling over on the street and proclaiming that they could never go outside ever again.

4. 'Shoulds'

This distortion relates to ex-post facto guilt and regrets for actions not taken. 'I should have studied harder for the test'. The anger and resentment that arises from actions not taken can elicit a 'should have done' narrative which at the end of the day just brings frustration and we are better off avoiding these wasteful regrets and berating ourselves. Learn a lesson if you can but continued 'past picking and pestering' does our mood and attitude no favours.

5. Labelling

This distortion is when we attach a negative label to our or others character for a minor reason.

An example of this would be calling someone an idiot for brushing of you on a busy street. Another

example would be if we drop a glass and we call ourselves a loser or something similar.

6. Jumping to Conclusions

The first example of this called mind reading. This is when we get the impression that we know how people are feeling towards us when they have not said so directly. An example is, 'she still hasn't told me about the date of the wedding, she isn't going to ask me to be her bridesmaid'.

The second example of this is called fortune-telling. This is where we have negative conclusions about the future and anticipate that something bad is coming. A person might be convinced that something bad is going to happen and speak like this is a fact and is written in the stars like something inevitable that will happen. An extreme example is, 'I won't be able to find a job, and I'll probably end up homeless'.

7. Discounting the Positive

By dismissing something positive that could be warranted of praise or pride this distortion comes into play. Saying that anyone could have performed a task in a certain manner, the person discounts their positive qualities or achievements.

An example of a heavy drinker who cuts down drinking every day to one glass of wine, twice a week saying, 'it doesn't count because I still drink'.

8. Blame and Personalisation

This is when a person blames themselves when they were not entirely responsible. It could also be someone blaming others and denying one's own role in the situation.

'If only they didn't yell at me, I wouldn't have been angry and hit my wife.' or 'It's not his fault he hit me, he is going through a very stressful period and I wasn't agreeing with him enough'.

9. Emotional Reasoning

This is when we believe that what we feel must be true automatically. If we feel stupid and boring, then we must be stupid and boring. This is when we assume that our negative emotions reflect the way things really are, 'I feel it, and therefore it must be true.'

10. Mental Filter

This distortion is when a person allows or dwells upon one detail or fact to spoil their experience and happiness of a situation. For example, when a person allows a hair in their soup ruin their experience of their dinner and their evening as a whole.

Exercise

- Which of these distortions are most familiar to you?

- What patterns have you noticed emerging when you consider these distortions?

- What kind of positive challenging thoughts can you think of now, that you can use when these distortions come to mind in the future?



**KEEP
CALM**

**AND REVIEW YOUR
COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS**



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