



Cognitive Therapy Workbook

Congratulations on taking your first step
toward a better life!

May every day be better than the last!

- Jill

Use these worksheets consistently and often. I look forward to hearing your progress!

Step 1: Rank How You Feel. On a scale from 1 – 10, where 10 is the best, and 1 is the worst, rank how you feel.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>									
Terrible 😞									Great! 😊

Step 2: Start Writing.

Put pen to paper, and start writing – anything. Let your stream of consciousness spill out onto the paper. Don't worry about what comes out. Sometimes writing with your eyes closed can help the process along. After a short while, you will start to notice that specific thoughts are showing up – thoughts that you probably didn't realize you had.

Keep writing until your pen stops, and your mind is empty of thoughts. Leave nothing unwritten. Add pages; write on the back of this sheet – whatever you need to do to get everything out of your head and onto the page.

Tip: This worksheet is designed as a .pdf form so that you have the option to fill it out on the computer, but it is best to put pen to paper because writing directly engages your brain. It will be more cathartic; it will also access more of your thoughts, and there will be no screen to dilute your attention.

Step 3: Find Your Cognitive Distortions.

Compare all that you have just written to the thought patterns in the [Cognitive Distortion Checklist](#), and circle each one that applies. You will likely find that you hit most, if not all, of them.

If you haven't yet downloaded the checklist, you can also find it at the end of this workbook.

- Magnification
- Negative Self-Labeling
- Catastrophizing
- Always/Never
- Personalization/Overestimated Control and Responsibility
- Superstition
- Mind-Reading
- Fear of Judgement/Need for Approval
- No-Win Situation
- Imposter Syndrome
- Generalized Unworthiness/Inferiority
- Comparing to Others

- Should Have/Shouldn't Have
- All or Nothing/Perfectionism
- Hoops Before Happiness

Step 4: Argue with yourself. (Optional)

I say this one is optional because when I am slipping, I have a hard time arguing with myself. For one thing, I always lose the argument! ;) My brain has gotten skilled at distorting my thoughts, so it easily has a comeback when I argue over their substance. I find it easier to go over its head ;) with Step 5.

If you do feel that you can safely argue with your brain, though, do it! Next to all of the distortions you circled above, write how your brain is lying to you.

Step 5: Ask Yourself if The Thoughts/Feelings are Useful. *This is my favorite step because there can be no internal argument. Of course my thoughts are not useful.*

Answer the following questions:

- Will thinking these thoughts change the situation?
- Will it make it easier or harder to go forward/solve problems/improve my life?
- Will it help me in any way?
- Will it hurt me?

- Will it help the people I care about?
- Will it hurt them?
- Will it help others around me?
- Will it hurt them?

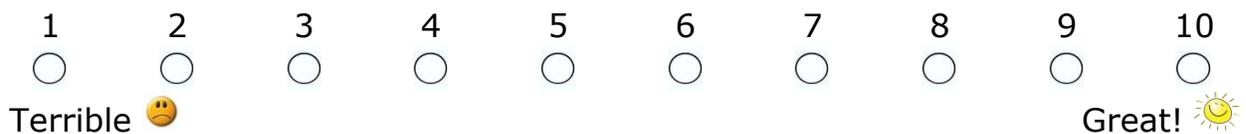
Step 6: Make a Deal.

Even when you recognize the futility of your thoughts, it can still be difficult to move on from them. If it is, make a deal with yourself that you will stop thinking about them just for now, and pick a time at which you will come back to them if you still believe they are important.

Most often, you will never get back to them because your brain will have moved on. If you do wind up going back to them, though, give yourself 10 minutes to work on solutions. If you can't find any, go back to Step 5.

Step 7: Rate How You Feel.

Again, feel free to use fractions in between – I always do!



If you moved up the scale, *even the slightest bit*, **CELEBRATE!**

If you didn't move up the scale, don't worry! Nobody does every time – including me. Give yourself credit! You are learning ways to control your emotions, and you will get there.

Keep it up, and you are on your way to a better, more joyful life!

Remember, everyone is different. If you are having difficulty with this (or any other exercise on the site), try tweaking it to better fit you. If you would like my help, contact me for a complimentary session of “Coffee and Conversation”, and we can work on it together.

Step 8: Let Me Know Your Scores!

I want to hear how you are doing! Let me know in the comments how it went. If you're having trouble, I can help, and if it's working, we can cheer you on!

Addendum 1

Comparison Sheet

When you finish the exercise, use this page to keep a record of your changes. Keep these sheets as a reminder that you can take back your power! Leave yourself proof that you are not at the mercy of your thoughts!

How You Felt Before the Exercise

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>									
Terrible 😞									Great! 😊

How you felt After the Exercise

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="radio"/>									
Terrible 😞									Great! 😊

Addendum 2

Cognitive Distortion Checklist

1) Magnification. Zooming in on the negative to the exclusion of the rest of the picture.

Distortion: You are not seeing the whole picture.

2) Negative Self-Labeling. "I'm stupid." "I'm a failure." "I'm worthless."

Distortion: You are habitually hard on yourself.

3) Catastrophizing. Expecting the worst-case scenario.

Distortion: Worst case scenarios rarely happen, and worrying about them doesn't prevent them.

4) Always/Never. "I always say the wrong thing." "This always happens to me." "People are always mean." "I can never rely on anyone."

Distortion: There is "always" an exception. ;)

5) Personalization/Overestimated Control and Responsibility. "If someone is unhappy, it must be my fault." "Because I didn't make him study more, he failed his test."

Distortion: We have very little control over other people's lives – including those we love.

6) Superstition. "If I expect something good to happen, it won't come true."

Distortion: If anything, it's the opposite. Our thoughts become self-fulfilling prophecies.

7) Mind-Reading. "My friend hasn't called; she must not like me."

Distortion: You can't know for sure. There have been times you have been wrong.

8) Fear of Judgement/Need for Approval. "I better not try because if I fail, I'll look foolish."

Distortion: Most people are too concerned with themselves to judge you, and worrying about it will always backfire.

9) No-Win Situation. "I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't."

Distortion: These are generally false choices based on overestimated importance and urgency.

10) Imposter Syndrome. "If I let them see the real me, they will know I'm a fraud."

Distortion: This is a syndrome that only affects the smart and successful. You are better than you think.

11) Generalized Unworthiness/Inferiority. "I will never feel happiness because I don't deserve it." "Everyone else is better than I am."

Distortion: This is an automatic feeling, unrelated to reality.

12) Comparing to Others. "Look how happy they are. Why don't I have that in my life?"

Distortion: "...we compare our behind the scenes with everyone else's highlight reel." - Steve Furtick

13) Should Have/Shouldn't have. "I should have studied more." "I shouldn't said that."

Distortion: We never know where past actions will lead us. For example, you shouldn't have been late, but maybe if you were on time, you would have been in an accident.

14) All or Nothing/Perfectionism. "If I'm not the best, I'm the worst." Life is amazing, or it is terrible.

Distortion: Life is rarely black and white.

15) Hoops before Happiness. "I'll be happy when I lose the weight." "I'll be happy when I make more money." "I'll be happy when I get an 'A'."

Distortion: No one ever gets there. There will always be another hoop.