Automatic Negative Thoughts

Negative Thought 1:   "Always" Thinking

Whenever you think in words like always, never, no one, everyone, every time, or everything you create negativity for yourself.

Negative Thought 2:   Focusing on the Negative

Negative Thought 3:   Fortune-Telling

Fortune-telling underlies most anxiety disorders especially people who have panic attacks.   Predicting the worst causes an immediate rise in heart and breathing rate.   Just having the thoughts creates tension.

Negative Thought 4:   Mind Reading

This results when you think that you know what others think even when they haven't told you.   Mind reading is a common cause of trouble between people.   You know that you are mind reading when you have thoughts such as, "He doesn't like me." "They were talking about me." "They think I will never amount to much.""God is mad at me."

Mind reading can also be imposed on another.   When you believe anyone should know what you want or need without clear communication, you are expecting them to be able to "mind read".   This form of mind reading often results in conflict and hurt feelings in the relationship.

Negative Thought 5:   Thinking with your Feeling

This occurs when you believe your negative feelings without even questioning them.   Feelings are not about truth- they are about feelings.

Negative Thought 6:   Guilt Beatings

Guilt beatings often happen when you think with words like "should," "must," "ought," or "have to."   Guilt is seldom helpful and often holds you back from achieving your goals.   Substitute "guilt" works with "want" or "it would be helpful" words.

Negative Thought 7: Labeling

Whenever you attach a negative label to yourself or to someone elsek you bring your ability to take a clear and fresh look at the situation to a screeching halt.

Negative Thought 8: Personalization

Personalization occurs when innocuous events are taken to have personal meaning.   You never will fully know why people do what they do.   Try not to ever personalize another's behavior.

Negative Thought 9:   Blame

When you blame something or someone else for the problems in your life, you become a victim of circumstances and you cannot do anything to change your situation.   You create your own powerlessness.   Taking responsibility for your problems gives you the power to change your life.

Adapted from Amen, Daniel MD, *Healing the Hardware of the Soul*