

Thirteen Problem Beliefs

1. Everybody must love me.

This refers to the belief that we need love and approval all the time and from everybody. If somebody doesn't love us, we feel awful. We think, "Nobody loves me. I must be awful!" We will do anything for love.

2. I must be good at everything.

This is the idea that we must do everything well (or even better than everyone else) in order to feel good about ourselves. We can't fail. If someone else wins, we feel awful. We say to ourselves, "I lost, so I'm no good. I failed, so I'm lousy."

3. Some people are bad and should be punished.

Some of us believe that if someone does something that we judge as wrong, that person is **bad**. We think, "She's terrible". We sometimes feel that way about ourselves also.

4. Things should be different.

This is the idea that it is awful when things are different than the way we want them to be. We think, "How terrible; things are just awful." We can't accept things the way they really are. We get upset if we can't change things to fit our ideas of what they should be.

5. It's your fault I feel this way.

This is the belief that if we are unhappy, it is because of what someone else said or did. "It's not my fault that I'm unhappy," we say. We blame our unhappiness on the behavior of another.

6. I know something bad will happen soon.

Some believe that we need to always watch out for things to go wrong. If we don't worry, something bad might happen.

7. It's easier not to even try.

This refers to the idea that it is easier to avoid difficult tasks in life than to face them. It is the belief that life is too hard so we should not try. We think, "I give up. I want it to be easy. I can't try. It's too hard. I don't want to take the responsibility."

8. I need someone stronger than me to take care of me.

Some people believe that they should depend on other people who are stronger than they are. They tell themselves, "I am weak, I can't make my own decisions. Tell me what to think and do. Take care of me." But we are different from everyone else. We will need to learn to make our own decisions because we know ourselves best.

9. I can't help being this way.

This is the idea that things happened to us when we were little, and that made us the way we are. We say, "I'll probably always be this way. The past is the most important thing. There is no hope that I could change."

10. I should get upset about your problems.

The idea that other people's problems should become our problems is often seen as showing that we care. We may believe that it is our job to solve other people's problems and to fix everything in their lives. Their problems are now our problems. We think, "I'll take care of you. I'll solve your problems."

11. There is only one good way to do things.

Many of us believe that there is one right way to do things and the other ways are no good. Or we may believe that one way is best and if we don't do something the best way, it will be awful.

12. My child must be perfect

This is the belief that we fail as parents if our children do not live up to our expectations. This belief denies the child's self-responsibility and self-determination.

13. I must give my child everything they want

This is the belief that it is our responsibility to provide our children with all their wants and needs and the fear that we will be seen as inadequate if we are unable to do so.