



COMMON ADDICTION DISTORTIONS

Below are some common cognitive distortions which may help you in this exercise.

1. **THE MENTAL FILTER:** You take the negative details and magnify them while filtering out all positive aspects of a situation.

e.g. using alcohol is so incredible. It is the most pleasurable thing I know. (filtering out all the negative effects, physical, emotional and financial).

2. **POLARIZED THINKING:** Things are black and white, good or bad. You are perfect or a complete failure. There is no middle ground.

e.g. My life will be void of pleasure without alcohol.

3. **OVERGENERALIZATION.** To overgeneralize is to come to a general conclusion based on a single incident or piece of evidence. If something bad happens once or twice, you expect it to happen all the time. *e.g. "alcohol has made for some great nights with buddies. I must have alcohol in order to truly captiloze on the potential for fun."*

4. **MIND READING:** Without their saying so, you know what people are feeling and why they act the way they do. In particular, you are able to define how people are feeling toward you.

e.g. People will not like me if I give up alcohol. There is a side of me that comes out that is very attractive to them. .

5. **CATASTROPHIC EXAGGERATION:** You expect disaster, and disaster means the end of the world.

e.g. I won't be able to tolerate the discomfort of sobriety

6. **I AM CONTROLLED:** You feel externally controlled, you see yourself as helpless and a victim of fate.

e.g. The alcohol makes my days tolerable, without it, I'll not be able to function.

7. **I MUST CONTROL:** You feel that control is an all or nothing thing. Any ease on the reins will result in a fall so disastrous you will never regain control.

e.g. Without alcohol I may get depressed, and I will never be able to come out of it.

8. **BLAMING:** You hold other people responsible for your pain.

e.g. If I give up my drinking, I will be a bare wire, forced to face my abuse riddled past.