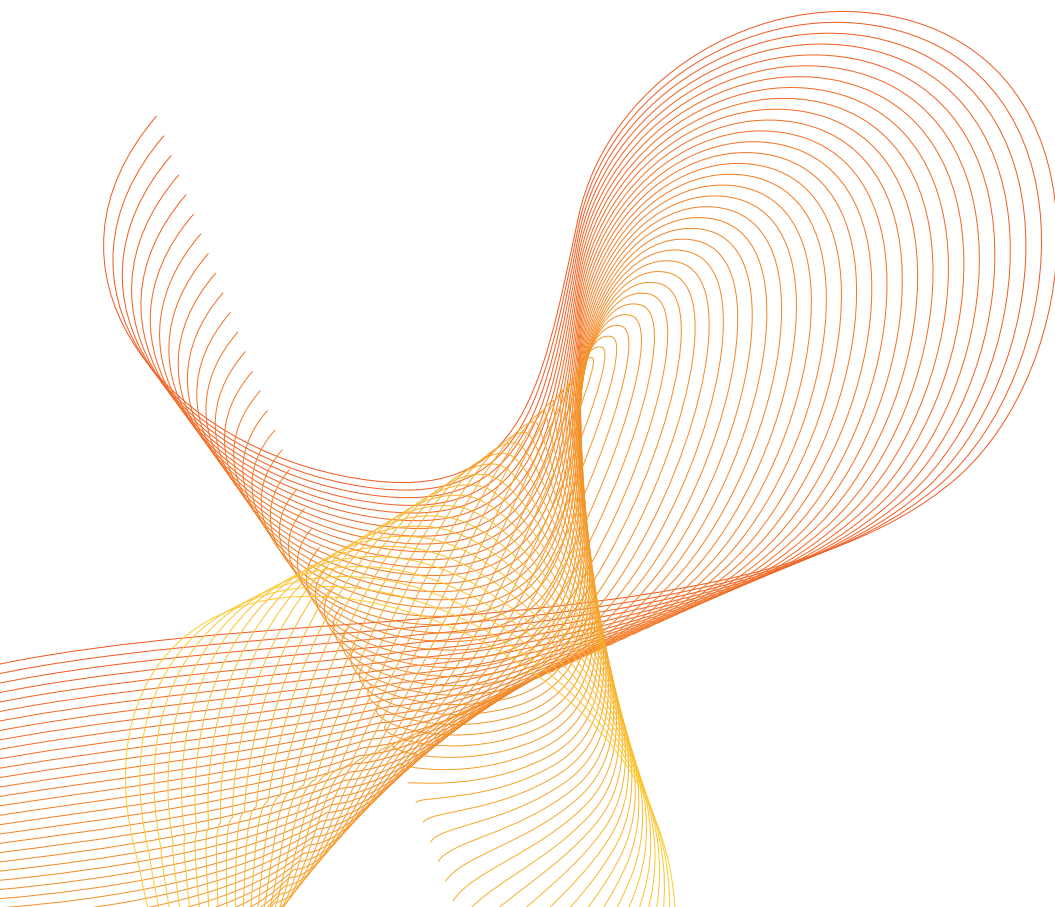


COMMON COGNITIVE ERRORS



WE ALL HAVE PATTERNS OF THINKING,

and this may impact our emotional state and behavior. Sometimes our patterns are less than accurate. These are cognitive errors or cognitive distortions, and they typically fall into certain categories. Learning to recognize our own cognitive errors increases our ability to ignore the negative thought or actively change it, which enables us to intentionally change our emotions and our behaviors. The following is a list of the most common cognitive distortions:



1. ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING

Putting experiences in one of two categories

Examples: 1) People are all good or all bad. 2) Projects are perfect or failures. 3) I am a sinner, or I am a saint.

2. OVERGENERALIZING

Believing that something will always happen because it happened once

Examples: 1) I will never be able to make friends at a party because I once made an awkward statement to someone, and they didn't want to be my friend. 2) I will never be able to speak in public because I once had a panic attack before giving a speech.

3. DISCOUNTING THE POSITIVE

Deciding that if a good thing happens, it must not be important or doesn't count

Examples: 1) I passed the exam this time, but it was a fluke. 2) I didn't have a panic attack today, but it's only because I was too busy to be worried.

4. JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

Deciding how to respond to a situation without having all the information

Examples: 1) The man/woman I am interested in never called me back because he thinks I'm stupid. 2) That person cut me off in traffic because he/she is a jerk!

5. MIND READING

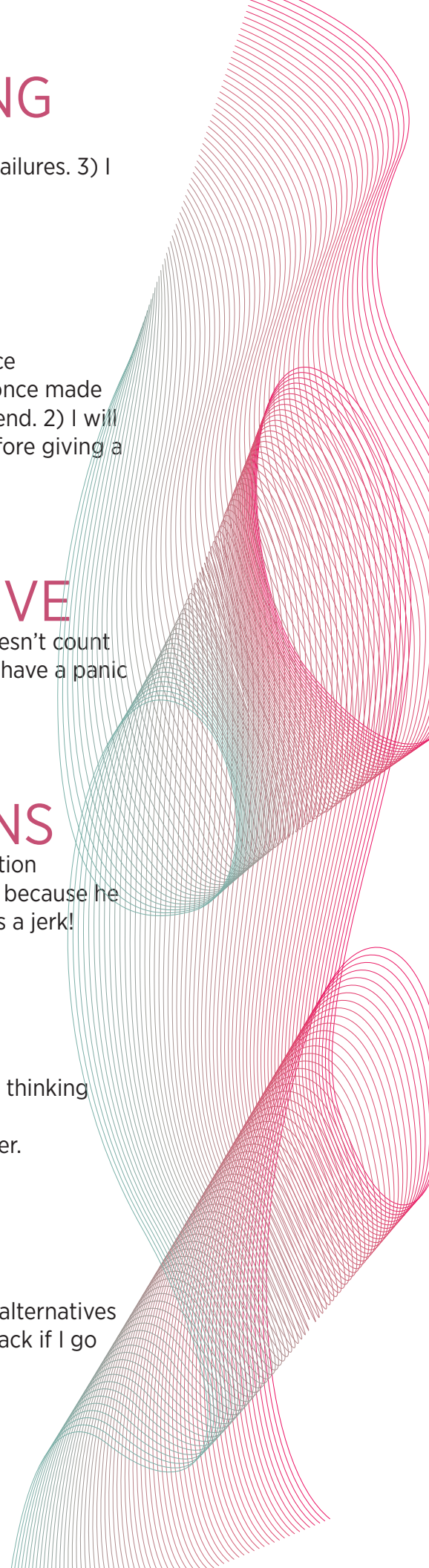
Believing that you know how someone else is feeling or what they are thinking without any evidence

Examples: 1) I know she hates my guts. 2) That person thinks I'm a loser.

6. FORTUNETELLING

Believing that you can predict a future outcome, while ignoring other alternatives

Examples: 1) I'm going to fail this test. 2) I'm going to have a panic attack if I go out in public.



7. MAGNIFYING (CATASTROPHIZING) OR MINIMIZING

Distorting the importance of positive and negative events

Examples: 1) I said the wrong thing so I will never have a boyfriend/girlfriend. 2) My nose is so big that no one will ever love me. 3) It doesn't matter if I'm smart because I will never be attractive, athletic, popular, rich, etc. 4) Making a mountain out of a molehill

8. EMOTIONAL REASONING

Believing something to be true because it feels true. Examples: 1) I am a failure because I feel like a failure. 2) I am worthless because I feel worthless.

9. "SHOULD-Y" THINKING

Telling yourself you should, should not, or should have done something when it is more accurate to say that you would have preferred or wished you had or had not done something
Examples: 1) I should be perfect. 2) I should never make mistakes. 3) I should not be anxious. 4) I should have done something to help.

10. LABELING (OR MIS-LABELING)

Using a label to describe a behavior or error

Examples: 1) He's a bad person (instead of "He made a mistake when he lied.") 2) I'm stupid (instead of "I didn't study for my test, and I failed it.")

11. PERSONALIZATION

Taking blame for some negative event even though you were not responsible, you could not have known to do differently, there were extenuating circumstances, or other people were involved.

Examples: 1) It's my fault he hits me. 2) My mother is unhappy because of me.