Thoughts have a substantial impact on how we feel and behave. They influence the way we think about ourselves and the world. As we grow up and develop as individuals, we adopt certain patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. These patterns, known as cognitive distortions, can cause maladaptive emotional states and behaviors. Cognitive distortions can be categorized into several types:

- **Emotional Reasoning**: This involves reasoning based on emotions rather than facts. For example, thinking that because you feel anxious, your public speech will be a disaster.
- **Personalization**: This is the tendency to attribute negative events to yourself, even if you had no control over them. For example, if you feel that your colleagues are disinterested in your presentation, you might think, "I have to be perfect or no one will care about me.
- **Disqualifying the Positive**: This involves discounting positive experiences. For example, if you receive compliments after a presentation, you might think, "They just felt bad if they had nothing constructive to say.
- **All-or-Nothing Thinking**: This involves thinking in black-and-white terms. For example, if you make a mistake during a presentation, you might think, "I'm a complete failure.
- **Magnification/Minimization**: This involves overestimating the importance of negative events and underestimating the importance of positive events. For example, you might think, "I'll never be able to recover from this mistake.
- **Tunnel Vision**: This involves focusing on negative experiences and ignoring positive ones. For example, you might think, "No one likes me.
- **Mind Reading**: This involves assuming that others are thinking negatively about you. For example, you might think, "They are thinking how boring I am.
- **Overgeneralization**: This involves drawing broad conclusions from a single event. For example, you might think, "I'm a failure at everything.
- **Defusion**: This involves recognizing the thoughts as separate from oneself, rather than identifying with them. For example, recognizing that feeling nervous before a presentation is a thought, not a reality.
- **Labeling**: This involves using labels that are negative or unfair. For example, you might think, "I'm a failure.
- **Blaming**: This involves attributing negative events to others. For example, you might think, "They are the problem, not me.

Once you have identified your thoughts, try to recognize the distortions that might have led to them. You can do a lot with the negative thoughts and distortions, once you've identified them. You are about to learn how to do that next.

### Example:

Think about the examples that were included in the list of cognitive distortions. Those are the distortions, using the list provided above.

In the first column, list the thoughts that accompany or precede each situation. In the second column, list any physical sensations that accompanied those thoughts. In the third column, try to analyze your thoughts, and decide whether they are rational, based on real evidence, as well as positive and helpful, or irrational. Try to name the cognitive distortions.

**Thesis:**

Extremes and incorrect perceptions, or cognitive distortions, of these negative thoughts inevitably lead to more flexible and fulfilling emotional, as well as behavioral experiences. Furthermore, addressing your cognitive distortions in a systematic and structured way will help you to start seeing the patterns in your behavior.