

Don't Let Perfectionism Ruin Your Holidays

Untwist your Perfectionist Thoughts Worksheet

Perfectionist thoughts tend to be rigid, all-or-nothing thoughts that dictate how you and others **should** behave. When you're stuck in perfectionist thinking, you can only see one right way to do things, you have unrealistically high expectations, and any change in plans is upsetting. This can make the holidays stressful for you and difficult for your loved ones. Try using the exercise below, based on my book *The CBT Workbook for Perfectionism*, to untwist your perfectionist thoughts. This will allow you to relax, be more flexible and forgiving, and enjoy the holidays even though they aren't perfect.

Record your perfectionist thoughts: *Everyone needs to get along. Arguing will ruin Christmas.*

Check for cognitive distortions: *all-or-nothing thinking should statement, catastrophizing*

Challenge the distortion: *I don't have to see things in such absolutes. An argument doesn't necessarily mean Christmas is ruined. There's still a lot to enjoy even if Dad and Tony get into an argument.*

Replace with more realistic thoughts: *My Dad and brother usually get into an argument after they've had a few drinks. I can't change that, but it doesn't have to ruin Christmas. I know I can remove myself from the situation and take care of myself. Most importantly, I can choose to focus on the parts of Christmas I enjoy even if things don't go exactly the way I want.*

Record your perfectionist thoughts:

Check for cognitive distortions:

Challenge the distortion:

Replace with more realistic thoughts:

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Check for cognitive distortions:

Challenge the distortion:

Replace with more realistic thoughts:

Types of Cognitive Distortions

Overgeneralizing - You see a constant, negative pattern based on one event.

Blaming/Denying - You blame others for your problems or mistakes OR you blame yourself when it wasn't entirely your fault.

Should statements - You have a rigid code of conduct dictating how you and others should behave. You criticize yourself harshly when you fail to follow these rules.

All or nothing thinking - You see things as absolutes.

Negativity bias - You notice all of the negatives, but fail to notice the positives.

Catastrophizing - You expect the worst.

Labeling - You label yourself negatively. (I'm lazy, clumsy, an idiot, etc.)

Magical thinking - You think everything will be better when ____ (you're thinner, smarter, richer, get a new job).

Over-personalizing - You make things personal, when they aren't. You believe other people's opinions are facts. You think what other people do/say is a statement about you.

Mind reading - You make assumptions about what others are thinking.

Double standard - You hold yourself to a higher standard than everyone else.