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| **Chart for Exercise 38**  **Challenging Negative Self Talk**  (*Developing Habits for Relationship Success v. 5.0)*  **Name: Date:** | | |
| 1. You can do this exercise anytime you’d like, or just when you’re noticing that you’re beating yourself up. | | |
| 1. In the first column, write your “automatic thought.” That’s your negative self-talk, that crappy, mean little voice in your head. You can be as brief or detailed as you’d like. Yours might read, *My workday was the worst! My presentation bombed, my boss hates me, and I’ll probably get fired.* | | |
| **Automatic Thought** | **Specific Cognitive Distortion(s)** | **Rational Response** |
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| 1. Now read your statement aloud and look for the cognitive distortions to write in the second column. There may be just one or more than one. Here’s the list of distortions you get to choose from: 2. **All or nothing thinking.**When you see things in black and white instead of in shades of gray. Example: *I’m a bad person.* 3. **Overgeneralization.** When you extend a negative thought so it reaches even further. Example: *I never do anything right.* 4. **Mental filter.**When you filter out all the good stuff to focus on the bad. Example: *I didn’t accomplish anything today.* 5. **Disqualifying the positive.**When you believe a good or positive thing “doesn’t count” toward your larger pattern of failure and negativity. Example: *I guess I survived the talk — even broken clocks are right twice a day.* 6. **Jumping to conclusions.**When you extrapolate an even bigger and broader negative thought from a small negative experience. Example: *He said he didn’t want to go out with me. I must be an unlovable person.* 7. **Magnification or minimization.**When you exaggerate your own mistakes (or other people’s accomplishments or happiness) while minimizing your own accomplishments and others’ flaws. Example: *Everyone saw me mess up at the game, while Susan had a perfect night on the field.* 8. **Emotional reasoning.**When you assume your negative feelings reflect the truth. Example: *I felt embarrassed, therefore I must have been acting in an embarrassing manner.* 9. **Should statements.**When you beat yourself up for not doing things differently. Example: *I should’ve kept my mouth shut.* 10. **Labeling and mislabeling.**When you use a small negative event or feeling to give yourself a huge, general label. Example: *I forgot to do the report. I’m a total idiot.* | | |
| 1. Finally, in the third column, write your “rational response.” This is when you think logically about what you’re feeling and rewrite your automatic thought. Using our example, you might write, *“My presentation could’ve gone better, but I’ve had lots of successful presentations in the past and I can learn from this one. My boss was confident enough to have me lead the presentation, and I can talk to her tomorrow about how it could’ve gone better. There’s no evidence at all that this one subpar day at work would get me fired*.” | | |