

## 36 Thinking Errors

### 1. ENERGY

I am very energetic, I want action, I want to move when I am bored, I have a **HIGH LEVEL** of mental activity directed to a flow of ideas about what would make my life more exciting. I do not know how to cope with **BOREDOM**.

### 2. FEAR

My fears are widespread, persistent, and intense, especially fear of being caught for something, fear of injury or death, and fear of being put down or rejected.

### 3. ZERO STATE

This is a periodic experience of feeling like I am an absolute nothing, a zero; feeling absolute worthlessness, hopelessness, and futility. My greatest fear is that I am a nothing and I compensate by attempting to prove that I am everything.

### 4. ANGER

To work with me is like a war against anger. I respond with anger to anything or anyone I see as opposing what I want for myself. Anger is a major way of controlling people and situations.

### 5. PRIDE

Unhealthy pride is an unrealistically high evaluation of oneself. I think I am better than anyone else, even when this is clearly not the case. This pride preserves my rigid self-image as a powerful, totally self-determined person. "**If I bend, I break.**" This sums up the thinking of risking everything over a trivial matter. Threats of consequences may mean nothing to me when I see myself having to choose between compromising (backing down) or maintaining my criminal pride.

### 6. POWER THRUST

I need power and control over others, especially to bring myself out of a "zero state". I spend my life seeking power over others instead of spending life improving myself. My greatest power excitement is doing the forbidden and getting away with it. I seek power, control, and dominance in all areas of my life.

### 7. SENTIMENTALITY

I may express a lot of sentiment (nice words, nice thoughts) about mothers, old people, invalids, babies, animals, etc, but my sentiments are not backed up by responsible, caring behavior. The people I say that "I love" are often those I hurt the most, and are often the people who are easiest for me to control and dominate.

### 8. RELIGIOSITY

I may be very active in religion but it is isolated – I do not practice its principles in my daily behavior. Like sentimentality, my religious beliefs do not stop me from unhealthy thinking or unhealthy activities. Instead they support my self-image as a “good and decent person.” which enables me to continue acting out as I see fit.

### **9. CONCRETE THINKING**

I miss the point. I focus on particular objects and events and do not understand abstract principles or see larger patterns and general concepts. I may misuse words, not understanding their abstract meaning, such as “love”, “friendship”, “trust”, etc. I pay attention to the surface and superficial without abstracting deeper meanings. My interpretations are literal and utilitarian. I interpret situations and events such that it confirms my viewpoint on life. I refuse to see anything in a light other than what I already know and viewing information at a surface level enables me to do so.

### **10. FRAGMENTATION**

Extreme changes in my mental state occur within short periods of time. There is a pattern of starting something, then changing my mind. I go with whatever I’m thinking about at the moment, “forgetting” anything that might contradict my plan. Fragmentations is used to dismiss sentimentality and religion when they do not fit with current desires or plans.

### **11. UNIQUENESS**

I consider myself to be special, one-of-a-kind, and totally different from others, especially other unhealthy individuals. I want to be “above” the rest and stress my “unique” set of circumstances. I think my circumstances and/or situation are different from others.

### **12. PERFECTIONISM**

I have extreme standards of perfectionism but do not apply them consistently. I may apply my high standards to others, then criticize them when they fall short in any way I deem important. My perfectionism depends on what I value, usually something I want to do at the moment. I use perfectionism to avoid a difficult task because I might not succeed “perfectly”.

### **13. SUGGESTIBILITY**

I am easily swayed to any behavior I like, especially when I am **bored** and looking for **action/excitement**. I may take huge risks with behavior that leads to something I want. I am not “**suggestible**” to responsible thinking and behavior and do not look towards responsible people for role models; I do not want to be like them.

### **14. LONERISM**

I lead a secretive life, I’m against the world. I feel I am apart from others even if I am socially active. Although I voice sentimentality, I am never so tight with anyone that I cannot get up and go at a moment’s notice if something more exciting comes along. I am willing to **jeopardize relationships** by viewing or doing immoral, deviant and risky sexual acts.

### **15. SEXUALITY**

My fantasies run towards deviant behaviors involving abuse, domination, power and control. My sexuality is motivated by manipulating someone to my will, through coercion, manipulation, grooming, intimidation or force of all kinds. Conquest is essential and the “partner” is merely a possession and/or object.

### **16. LYING**

Lying is a way of life for me – it is another way to gain power and to save me from consequences. More common than premeditated lying is automatic, habitual lying or deception. I lie by omitting important facts or distorting them. Lying defines my reality and helps me maintain control by depriving others of information.

### **17. CLOSED CHANNEL**

Secrecy equals powers. I do not give out information about myself willingly. I have a closed mind and do not take in messages that contradict **my way of thinking**. I am not receptive to challenges to my perspective – I do not hear what I do not want to hear.

### **18. “I CAN’T”**

I use “I can’t” when I mean “I won’t”, when I am not willing to do something. I use this to excuse myself, justify and escape responsibility, but at the same time I believe there is nothing I cannot do if I wanted to.

### **19. VICTIM STANCE**

When I am held accountable for my actions, I blame others and portray myself as a victim. Having no regard for the rights of others, I expect total respect for my rights and desires from everyone. If I do not get what I want or feel I am entitled to, I see myself as poorly treated and thus a victim. I see how I have always been a victim but not how I have victimized others (**Note:** A person who refuses to give up the victim stance will not change, according to Samenow and Yochelson, this particular error is the single best predictor regarding the change process).

### **20. LACK OF TIME PERSPECTIVE**

I demand immediate success and possession of what I want. I do not use the past to learn from experience, nor do I learn to make realistic plans or predictions of my future. I want everything now.

### **21. FAILURE TO PUT ONESELF IN ANOTHER’S POSITION**

While I demand every break and consideration for myself, I do not stop to think about what other people think, feel, or expect. I may disregard another’s position, I may even ignore their existence in planning to get my way. I do not recognize how many people are affected by my actions, nor how each is affected.

### **22. FAILURE TO CONSIDER INJURY TO OTHERS**

My life has involved extensive injury to those around me, but I do not view myself as hurting others. When held accountable I see myself as the injured party. I can witness tears, physical and verbal resistance, and even physical symptoms of injury and still deny that I hurt anyone.

### **23. FAILURE TO ASSUME OBLIGATION**

I have no sense of real obligation and use any excuse for failure in this area. Obligations interfere with what I want to do. Obligation is seen as a position of weakness vulnerability to others' control. Obligations are irritating to me and, if pushed, I will respond with resentment and anger.

### **24. FAILURE TO ASSUME RESPONSIBLE INITIATIVES**

I do not want to assume responsible initiatives (planning and starting projects) because (a) they fail to provide the excitement and power thrust of forbidden activities, (b) they do not guarantee success or triumph, and (c) I am often afraid that taking on responsible tasks will expose my lack of knowledge and ineptness. I am a "get-by-artist", expecting others to figure out everything that needs to be done, tell me how, and make it easy for me to accomplish.

### **25. OWNERSHIP**

I do not really recognize that there is such a thing as "theft" – if I am looking at it, want it, it is mine (including human beings). I do not recognize that other people own things. I consider myself as a decent person with a right to have anything that suits me – I "deserve" to have it. I see people as pawns or checkers waiting to be dealt with as I wish. I justify taking something from someone by saying they do not need it as much as I do, they do not deserve it, or they don't care if I have it, etc...

### **26. FEAR OF FEAR**

I am afraid that fear will keep me from doing things. Fear is my enemy and I am angry about it. Sometimes I use drugs or alcohol to eliminate fear. When I see fear in others I point it out, scorn it, and am ready to pounce. When I myself experience fear (including doubt, concern, apprehension, anxiety) I deny it or consider it a put down.

### **27. LACK OF TRUST**

Trusting someone shows weakness, to me. Although I refuse to trust others, I demand that they trust me, even though my behavior clearly shows I am not trustworthy. Trust, to me, means someone will back me up in crime. "Trusting God" means that if I pray at the right time, God will get me out of a spot. I rely on control, not trust. My favorite victims are those who are the most trusting, those I have manipulated to believe I have their best interests at heart while I actually exploit their trust.

### **28. REFUSAL TO BE DEPENDENT**

Like anyone else, I am dependent upon others for some things in life. But I do not see myself this way. To me, dependence equals weakness and makes me vulnerable. I do not understand the concept of interdependence. I like others to depend on me even though I am not dependable.

### **29. LACK OF INTEREST IN RESPONSIBLE PERFORMANCE**

I do not experience the feeling of satisfaction that comes from doing a task responsibly or putting out long term effort. Responsible performances look dull and boring because it doesn't guarantee immediate excitement. When I do become interested in a responsible project, my interest is short lived unless I feel the excitement of being noticed a lot.

### **30. PRETENTIOUSNESS**

I have tremendously over-rated ideas about myself. I think I am the best, I will be the best, but not that I will do my best. I may like to flash money, drive a big truck, or appear superior to others, feeling I do not need to put forth the same effort as others to be a success or get what I want. I set unrealistic goals but I am not willing to follow through with the real work involved in honest achievement.

### **31. FAILURE TO MAKE AN EFFORT OR ENDURE ADVERSITY**

"EFFORT" means doing what one does not want to do, or not doing what one does want to do. I put out little effort but I may put out a lot of energy doing things I want to do. Instead of putting up with the adversity of life, I escape into immoral thoughts and actions. Adversity is anything that is not going my way, which I see as a failure to control, and I refuse to accept this.

### **32. POOR DECISION-MAKING FOR RESPONSIBLE LIVING**

I do not use sound reasoning, fact-finding, or consideration of costs, risks, or options. I am reluctant to ask questions to learn facts before making decisions. If my pretensions or desires are contradicted by the facts, I do not want to hear them.

### **33. CORROSION AND CUT-OFF**

I may stop myself from an unhealthy activity because of my conscience, a sincere wish to change, sentimental or religious thinking, or fear of getting caught. I overcome the inhibitions by the process of corrosion and cut-off. Corrosion is a mental process in which I gradually drown out my conscience by repeating and increasing my thoughts of sex, until my desire to commit to acting out out-weighs the other thoughts which might have stopped me. Cut-off is a mental process that gets rid of my conscience thoughts quickly and completely – I use fragmentation to block out the conscience and shift my entire focus onto the sexual act itself. I block out the memory of how bad I will feel later.

### **34. BUILDING UP THE OPINION OF ONESELF AS A GOOD PERSON**

I convince myself that I am really a good and decent person and reject that I am addict even though I have clearly committed immoral acts, which are not "good and decent". The false image of myself as a good guy gives me a license to continue acting out. I minimize the harm I have caused and may refer to a planned, serious acting out as a "mistake". My addictions may lead to lifetimes of devastation, pain or even death for victims, but I will view the fact that I have done some good deeds as "canceling out" the harm I have done.

**35. DEFERMENT**

I am going to stop my sexual acting out or assault cycle and I am going to do my hardest work – tomorrow. But today I cannot. I think that one day it will be easier to change, but that day never comes.

**36. SUPER-OPTIMISM**

If I decided I want to do something, I consider it as good as done. As I approach a sexual activity I reach a state of absolute certainty that I will not get caught, no matter how unrealistic my plan is. I do not examine reasonable doubts about anything if I want it done. If someone tells me “maybe” I regard it as a “yes”. If I decided to become a responsible person, I am sure of my success and consider the change to have already happened just because I want it that way. I use super-optimism to convince myself that I do not really have to do any work to make things turn out alright. – this applies to release, future job, future relationships, etc...”

**Adapted from “Criminal Personalities” - by Samenow and Yochelson**