Being conscious of these tendencies may help you reframe negative thoughts.

Over-generalizing	Viewing a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of failure (e.g., when a colleague critiques your work, you think, "There's no satisfying him. He always puts me down.")
All-or-nothing/black-and-white thinking	Viewing the world in stark terms (e.g., you have a bad day trying to master new software and you conclude, "I'll never learn this program.")
Jumping to conclusions	Jumping to conclusions includes o "Mindreading" (arbitrarily putting a negative spin on how people react to you, e.g., "I know she hates me.") o "Fortune-telling" (predicting things will turn out badly, e.g., "I know I won't be considered for promotion.")
Discounting the positive	Insisting positive experiences "don't count" (e.g., when a manager praises you for being thorough and conscientious, then suggests you should try to work a bit faster, you feel completely unappreciated and that work is a total drag.)
Magnifying problems	Exaggerating the importance of your shortcomings and minimizing the importance of your strengths (e.g., "It doesn't matter how sincerely motivated I am, I'm not smart enough to do the work.")
Letting feelings – not evidence – shape your sense of reality	Assuming that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are (e.g., a friend tells you that "you look really nice today," but because you "feel ugly," you brush her off as insincere.)
Labeling	Related to all-or-nothing thinking, labels can stem from and lead to other kinds of negative feelings (e.g., instead of telling yourself, "I made a mistake," you say, "I'm a loser;" instead of saying that someone who disagrees with you has a different point of view, you say, "She's clueless!")
Assigning blame	Habitually refusing to see your role in causing things to happen and taking no responsibility (e.g., you procrastinate and are behind schedule. Instead of assuming responsibility for this, you blame your children for distracting you.)

Use a five-step approach for analyzing and reframing your thoughts.

1. Describe a situation that triggered negative thoughts/moods. (Who, what, when, where?)

2. Examine the evidence that supports these thoughts/moods.

3. Examine the evidence that does not support these thoughts and moods.

4. Construct a fair, balanced statement about the situation.

5. Consider how you might use this fair, balanced statement to reframe your thinking around the situation so that is it more reality-based.

Suggested Resources

Burns, David D., <u>The Feeling Good Handbook</u>
     Offers techniques and exercises to help you cope with everyday problems

Greenberger, Dennis, and Christine A. Padesky, <u>Mind Over Mood: Change How You Feel by Changing the Way You Think</u>
     Outlines methods to manage stress and help with depression and anxiety

Bourne, Edmund J., <u>The Anxiety & Phobia Workbook</u>
     Presents practical, step-by-step directions for mastering relaxation, overcoming negative self-talk, and changing mistaken beliefs (and many other topics)