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CHALLENGING LIMITS & DISTORTIONS

Absolutes
Are over-generalizations typified by words such as *always, never, all, none, everyone,* and *no one.*

Imposed Limits
Are words or phrases that suggest that you have no choice. Examples of such words are *can't, must, have to, should, ought, it's necessary,* and *it's impossible*.

Imposed limits fall in two categories. The *I can't* and *it's impossible* category defines reality in such a way that certain options are absolutely excluded. The *must, should,* and *have to* category often carries the weight of a moral imperative. *Should* statements are extremely limiting because they imply that you're a bad person if you break the rules that the statements impose.

Imposed Values
When people state a generalization about the world, they make a judgment based on their personal model. Essentially they are taking values that they find appropriate to themselves and applying them to other people. You can tell that you are encountering imposed values when you hear people using these global labels: *stupid, money-hungry, corrupt, gutless, ugly*. People who rely on this language pattern are typically unaware that there is any legitimate, alternative viewpoint.

Cause & Effect Errors
Result from the belief that one person can cause another to experience some emotion or inner state and that the second person has no choice about how s/he will respond. Individuals are responsible for their feelings and each generates one's own response to events.

Mind Reading
Refers to the belief that one person can know what another is thinking or feeling without direct communication with that person. It distorts your model of the world because it invariably leads you to form beliefs which are simply untrue. Mind reading depends on a process called *projection* - the expectation that people feel and react in the same way as the mind reader. The mind reader doesn't watch or listen closely enough to notice that others are actually experiencing the world differently.