Anger Distortions: Thinking that makes you Mad

Anger-triggering thoughts often distort our view of reality. Here are some of the most common cognitive distortions that feed anger:

1. **Blaming**. The belief that someone else is responsible for our pain, and that you can do nothing about it. By blaming others, you discount that you have the power to make choices that impact your situation. You feel powerless, helpless, and stuck. You expect someone else to fix things.

2. **Magnifying**. The tendency to view "molehills" as "mountains" – to make an uncomfortable situation much worse. Using words like "awful," "terrible," "unbearable," or "horrible" provoke an exaggerated angry response.

3. **Global labels**. The use of sweeping judgments and black-and-white thinking that inflame anger – seeing a person as "totally evil" or "completely selfish" and ignoring the good bits.

4. **Misattributions**. Jumping to conclusions and mind-reading; assigning negative motivation to the actions of others. You don't ask for clarifications or feedback because you think you already know.

5. **Overgeneralization**. Closely related to global labels, this one involved the use of "always," "never," "nobody," and "everybody." Thoughts like "she's ALWAYS late" or "he NEVER listens" make a single incident into an intolerable situation.

6. **Demanding/commanding**. Imposing your own values and needs on others who may have very different values and needs. Feeling that your "needs" require other's compliance.

Sample Coping Thoughts

1. **Blaming**: ""What can I do to change the situation?" "I can do something about this."
2. **Magnifying**: "How bad is this really?" "This is irritating but I can handle it."
3. **Global Labels**: "This is a problem, but he/she is not a monster."
4. **Misattributions**: "I can't read minds-I need more facts." "What else might be going on?"
5. **Overgeneralization**: "How often does this really happen?"
6. **Demanding/Commanding**: "I would rather things were different, but I can get through this." "Not getting what I want is not the end of the world."