The following are some cognitive distortions that are at the root of anxiety based on the work of CBT pioneers Aaron Beck and David Burns:

1. **ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING**: You see things in black-and-white categories. If you make a mistake, you might think that you “failed” or are a “failure.”

2. **OVERGENERALIZATION**: You generalize from a specific. You think in absolutes, like always and never, and see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern.

3. **MENTAL FILTER**: You pick out a single negative event and dwell on it, like a drop of ink that discolors a whole glass of water.

4. **MAGNIFICATION or MINIMIZATION**: You either blow things out of proportion or deny that something is a problem when it is. Examples: “I am the worst mother ever” or “It’s nothing—no big deal” (when it really is a big deal to you).

5. **“SHOULD” STATEMENTS**: You have preconceived ideas about how you and other people “should” be. Judgmental and unforgiving expectations create a lot of anxiety.

6. **PERSONALIZATION**: You are self-conscious and think things are about you when that is just your interpretation. When someone behaves negatively, you think that that behavior is a response to you, and then blame yourself.

7. **PLAYING THE COMPARISON GAME**: You compare yourself to others and feel the need to keep up with or outshine others to feel good about yourself. Example: “He is so much smarter than me; I’m stupid.”

8. **FORTUNE TELLING**: You think that you can predict the future, and you convince yourself that bad things will happen. Example: “I will always have these problems!”

9. **LABELING**: You label yourself or others by terms such as lazy, fat, stupid, loser, and jerk, stating them as if they were facts. A label becomes an erroneous evaluation of self-worth.

Now, write some examples of your own anxiety-producing thoughts in the left column. In the right-hand column, identify the types of distortions for each thought.
### The Anxiety Solution

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