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The world's most valuable skill:  
  
Clarity of thought.

The problem? There's no school  
for this.

It takes time, patience and a lot  
of early career fumbling.

Here are 10 cognitive distortions  
I faced early in my career and an  
insight on how to break through  
each one:

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First - what is a cognitive distortion?

In its simplest form - cognitive distortions are irrational thoughts.

We face cognitive distortions every day.

Breaking free from these thoughts is key to accelerating in your career.

Alright let's dig into the list...

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## CD #1: Ambiguity Effect

This is the tendency to choose an action in which you know the exact probability vs. an action where the probability is unknown.

Junior people do this ALL the time.

Lesson: Be bold. Too little risk = short term comfort, long term pain.

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## CD #2: "Just World" Fallacy

The belief that good things happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people.

Unfortunately, this isn't how the world works.

Most people brush this off or worse, live in denial.

Lesson: Actively accept it and you can do something about it.

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## CD #3: Framing Effect

When you evaluate evidence and make a choice depending on how something is framed.

This one is dangerous.

The better story isn't the better decision.

Lesson: Cut through style and dig into the substance.

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## CD #4: Entrenchment Effect

When presented with evidence that disproves your position, you dig your heels in and form a greater attachment to the idea.

We all do this. Why? Because we want to be right.

Lesson: Leave your ego at the door and value the truth above all else.

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## CD #5: All or Nothing Thinking

This is when you see things in absolute terms:

- Good / Bad
- Right / Wrong
- Fair / Unfair

Experience teaches you that complicated decisions are filled with imperfection.

Lesson: Find the tradeoffs.  
Write them down. Prioritize what matters.

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## CD #6: Emotional Seesaw

You'll have days when you feel like nothing can stop you and days where it feels like the world is falling apart.

Most people get sucked into their emotions.

Lesson: Harness your emotions. The highs to create momentum and lows to create conviction.

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## CD #7: Input-Output Effect

When you believe outputs are solely a function of inputs.

It's complicated.

✗ Bad input, bad output =  
Incompetence

✗ Bad input, good output =  
Luck

✓ Good input, good output =  
Repeatable

✓ Good input, bad output =  
Push On

Lesson: Focus on inputs.

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## CD #8: Simon Cowell Effect

Most of us are really terrible at receiving feedback. We're our harshest critics.

We focus on the 2% that's negative and ignore the 98% that's positive.

Lesson: Value feedback proportionately. When you do that, you'll aggressively seek for more.

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## CD #9: Heaven's Reward Fallacy

The feeling that there will be a reward for the sacrifice you make.

A lot of early career work is thankless.

The more you seek affirmation, the more resentful you'll become.

Lesson: Expect greatness from yourself, expect nothing from others.

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CD **#10**: Mr. Know It All + Mr.  
Say It All

These are 2 different ones, but  
they grow from the same  
branch.

Early in your career you want to  
prove you have knowledge.

You'll soon learn this is  
insecurity.

Lesson: Listen more, talk less.  
When you talk, make it  
impactful.

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