INTERPRETATIONS AND EVALUATIONS: TELLING THE DIFFERENCE

When identifying beliefs, there are two levels of thinking to look for:
- How you are interpreting the situation
- How you are evaluating it.
This exercise will help you distinguish between the two types.

Remember:
- **Interpretations** represent your views about the situation itself (what you think is “really going on”). Irrational interpretations are usually distortions of reality: black-and-white thinking, overgeneralizing, filtering, mind-reading, fortune-telling, emotional reasoning, and personalizing.

- **Evaluations** refer to the way you evaluate the situation in terms of what it means to you or about you. Irrational evaluations consist of catastrophizing (“It’s awful, I can’t stand it”), demanding (“It should or shouldn’t be happening”), and self- or other-rating (“This proves that I [or someone else] is no good”).

Go through the list below. Put an “I” next to the ones that are interpretations, and an “E” next to those that represent evaluations.

____  1. It’s terrible to be treated like this.
____  2. She was trying to hurt me.
____  3. I’m satisfied that things have turned out for the best.
____  4. He should consider my feelings more than he does.
____  5. It will be hard to find another job.
____  6. It’s not fair that he was promoted ahead of me.
____  7. If I can’t handle this, maybe I really am stupid.
____  8. There are too many people leeching off the system.
____  9. They were obviously planning to attack me.
____ 10. I prefer to be punctual whenever I can.
____ 11. I’m heading toward another breakdown.
____ 12. Why shouldn’t I be angry!?
____ 13. I’ll never be happy again.
____ 14. She’s probably planning to leave me.
____ 15. Without her love I’m nothing.
____ 16. He was really angry.
____ 17. I have no way of getting these debts paid off.