THE NEVER-ENDING CIRCLE OF UPSETS

LIFE EVENT
(Something happens—a situation, a circumstance, somebody does something or “is” a certain way, or we didn’t “get” something)

WE TELL OURSELVES SOMETHING
We make the event mean something, (what “should” or “should not” be, or what “must” or “must not” be, or what I “am” [e.g. “I’m bad/wrong”] or what others “are” [e.g. “they’re bad/wrong”]) which turns into beliefs and images about ourselves and others. What we tell ourselves determines how we feel and how we perceive the event. This is the formation of our EGO—our self-image—and becomes the basis of our identity, feelings and perceptions (the “lens”) of subsequent events.

A NEW EVENT
The event is similar to the original event

PERCEPTION
We perceive the new event through the “lens” of our EGO, which is based on the past event and becomes the basis of the meaning we assign to the current event (what “should” or “should not” be or what “must” or “must not” be or what the event “means” about ourselves or another). The meaning we assign to the event determines how we feel in response to the event. We make the current event mean the same as the original event.

BEHAVIOR
We control, attack, blame, preach, punish, justify, judge, manipulate, dominate, avoid, “fix”, pretend or protect. The function of these behaviors serves to change the event or person (ourselves or another) into something that it is not and to change our troubling feelings into something they are not. Or it is our attempt to “get” something that is missing from our lives. The actual result of these behaviors serves to preserve the event and the way we feel, and actually prevents change from occurring. Thus, we are continually upset.

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