Controlling Your Emotions and Behavior Regardless of How Disagreeably Others Treat You

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Introduction

Permanently gaining control over your emotions and behavior is one of the most difficult endeavors humans can undertake. We have all attempted to limit the extent to which we over react emotionally and exhibit counterproductive behavior when dealing with others. Yet, most of our attempts have been met with limited or short-term success. Dealing with others effectively over the long haul is indeed challenging and frustrating. The purpose of this program is to provide you with a system for permanently changing your emotional reactions and behavioral responses. You will learn to stubbornly refuse to make yourself miserable about anything ever again, no matter how disagreeably you perceive others treat you. This presentation is based on principles of Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET) developed by Albert Ellis.

Principles of Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET)

RET teaches individuals how to live more satisfactory lives through the application of logical, rational thinking. RET is a re-educative model in which accountability and evaluation are emphasized. The approach for promoting change is structured and systematic. Behavior assignments serve as reinforcers to integrate newly learned emotions and actions. The prime determinant of anxiety is believed to stem from internalized negative sentences, referred to as “self-talk.” Counterproductive emotional and behavioral patterns result from indoctrinating oneself with “musturbations” and “awfulizations.” Irrational, illogical thoughts are believed to distort reality and serve a self-defeating purpose. The goal of RET is to challenge the person’s belief system, point out irrational beliefs, and show how to correct mistakes in reasoning, thereby eliminating undesirable emotions and behaviors. There are four premises for using RET effectively:

1. Anything that can be learned can be unlearned.
2. The way you behave is directly influenced by how you feel.
3. The way you feel is always and only created, controlled, and maintained by the interpretations made in your mind.
4. The way you feel and behave is never caused by the way others treat you or the events that happen to you.

We have absolutely no power or control over how others treat us!
Myths of Normal Behavior

- It is possible to get others to change.
- If others won’t change, you can remove them or remove yourself from their presence.

Acquiring Irrational Beliefs

- We initially attach a correct but negative believe to a particular situation.
- If the belief proves to be correct in one situation, there is a greater likelihood that we will use it to interpret a wider range of situations.
- The concept of consistency is responsible for our use of the same belief to interpret a wider range of situations.
- As a belief become habitual, it is activated automatically, blocking the use of a more adaptive belief.

Challenging irrational beliefs requires us to think in very literal, hard-nosed, literal, precise, and accurate terms.

The Two Most Important Variables in Behavior Change

1. Forcing yourself to behave differently than how you feel: Being able to put aside the discomfort when trying something new.

2. Generating the power and intensity within yourself: Turning your intentions into reality and making the changes you want to your life.

Understanding Emotions

Physical feelings vs. psychological feelings

**Power Emotions:** hurt • inadequacy • depression • anxiety

**ANGER! The Peacock Emotion**
Four Parts to Any Experience

1. Event
2. Meaning/Interpretation
3. Feeling
4. Behavioral Response

*Events do not cause the reactions you experience. You do! No one has the power to determine your emotional and behavioral reactions but you.*

Four Irrational Thinking Styles

1. Demandingness
2. Awfulizing
3. I Can’t Stand It—it’s
4. Condemning and Damning

The sentence that drops my ____________________.

That event (whatever it was) shouldn’t have happened, it’s awful that it did, I can’t stand it, and somebody around here needs to be condemned and damned as rotten and worthless—let’s see, is it me, is it you, or is it the way the world works?
Awfulizing

Fundamental Assumptions

In order to apply principles of RET, it is necessary to understand that what is said is exactly what is meant. Here are two fundamental assumptions:

1. 100% = All
2. Negative = Bad

Here is the logical deduction of these two assumptions:

Bad (negative) things that can happen to me range from some extremely minuscule degree of “badness” up to the maximum of 100% bad. According to principles of mathematics, nothing can exceed 100%.

Transforming Awfulizing: How Bad is it?

When something negative happens to you ask yourself, “How bad is it?”

If you have a sensible scale to measure how bad things are, then you can decide that some event is approximately a certain percentage bad. After you train yourself to use the scale, you will automatically get a response that’s logical for the percentage. Then, because you won’t be over- or under-reacting, your behavior will be reasonable for the situation.

Comparing events to physical pain helps give us proper perspective on how bad a particular situation really is.
# The Physical Injury Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>4 limbs cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>3 limbs cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2 limbs cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>dominant arm cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>non-dominant arm cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70%</td>
<td>1 hand cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>1 foot cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>3 fingers cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>big toe cut off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3 broken limbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>2 broken limbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>dominant arm broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>non dominant arm broken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>broken nose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>badly sprained ankle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>laceration (6 stitches)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>cut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>bruise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>small bump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>gnate bite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>nothing</td>
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## I Can’t Stand It-it’s

Please read, sign and date the following

I fully realize and accept that fact that I’m living proof that I’ve stood everything that’s ever happened to me. I’m going to be able to stand and handle everything that’s going to happen to me except the one thing that going to kill me.

_______________________________ ( / / )

Signature Date

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Putting the Two Thinking Styles Together

☞ When “bad” thinks happen, place it on the physical injury scale.

☞ Assigning a number to how “bad” the event is acknowledges you can stand it.

Demandingness

An Important Item

Every time you get yourself over upset, you are demanding something. Please read, remember, and sign the following:

I, being of sound mind and body, do fully realize and admit that I do not, haven’t ever and won’t ever run the universe.

______________________________  (   /    /    )
Signature     Date

Placing demands on either yourself, others, or the world fails to acknowledge the reality of the situation. It is a futile attempt to try and change reality to the way you want it to be.

Defining Must

Must = “imperative requirement” = “have to” / no choice

When using the word “must,” make it live up to its definition

Example:       “I must be on time for work.”

Test Question: “Is it possible not to be on time regardless of the consequences?”
The Dichotomy

**Demandingness** is the inaccurate use of the six comrades:

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Should</th>
<th>Have to</th>
<th>Ought to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Got to</td>
<td>Need to</td>
<td>Must</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demanding words and phrases are only used to describe reality.**

**Stuff should have happened because it did happen.**

**Nondemandingness**, on the other hand, is composed of some selection of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wishing</th>
<th>Practicalities</th>
<th>Ethics</th>
<th>Probably</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wanting</td>
<td>Sensibilities</td>
<td>Morals</td>
<td>Expect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferring</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Desiring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be better if</td>
<td></td>
<td>Etiquette</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The “Must Questions**

Where are you right now?
Where must you be?
Why must you be here?
Must you be here mentally?
Must you be here physically?
How long must you stay?
“Need” versus “Want”

A “need” is something without which we will die.

A “want” is everything else.

Separating Acceptance from Approval

The difficulty separating acceptance from approval is the main reason we engage in demandingness. Here is the problem:

If we don’t approve of something, then we refuse to accept the reality of it.

Keep the following three points in mind:

1. Acceptance means acknowledging that a reality occurred.

2. We don’t have to approve of something in order to accept its reality.

3. Once we accept the reality of a situation, we can place it on the physical injury scale and determine how bad it is.

Condemning and Damning

Condemning and damning directs the other irrational thinking styles to three possible places: yourself, others, or the world.

Yourself

When you think “I must and if I don’t I won’t be able to stand it….” you’re making yourself the target of your irrational thinking.

Others

When you think “You must do something, and if you don’t I can’t stand it…” you’re making others the target of your irrational thinking.

The World

When you think “The world must….and when it doesn’t it’s awful and I can’t stand it…” you’re making the world the target of your irrational thinking.
Combating the Irrational Thinking Styles

The sentence that keeps my ________________ up.

That event (whatever it was) should have happened, and it’s about _____% bad, and I can stand a _____.

By getting rid of the other irrational thinking styles, condemning and damning disappear!
A very old Chinese Taoist story describes a farmer in a poor country village. He was considered very well-to-do, because he owned a horse which he used for plowing and for transportation. One day his horse ran away. All his neighbors exclaimed how terrible this was, but the farmer simply said “Maybe.”

A few days later the horse returned and brought two wild horses with it. The neighbors all rejoiced at his good fortune, but the farmer just said “Maybe.”

The next day the farmer’s son tried to ride one of the wild horses; the horse threw him and broke his leg. The neighbors all offered their sympathy for his misfortune, but the farmer again said “Maybe.”

The next week conscription officers came to the village to take young men for the army. They rejected the farmer’s son because of his broken leg. When the neighbors told him how lucky he was, the farmer replied “Maybe.” . . .