

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING
Rational Emotive Philosophy
Irrational Philosophic Assumptions

It is maintained that there are irrational philosophic assumptions or fallacious ideas which, when accepted and reinforced by continuous self-indoctrination, lead to emotional disturbance because they cannot be lived up to. Once a human being believes the kind of nonsense included in these notions, he will inevitably tend to become inhibited, hostile, defensive, guilty, ineffective, inert, uncontrolled, and unhappy. If, on the other hand, he could become thoroughly released from all these fundamental kinds of illogical thinking, it would be exceptionally difficult for him to become intensely upset, or at least to sustain his disturbance for any extended period.

1. It is a dire necessity for an adult human being to be loved or approved by virtually every significant other person in his community.
2. One should be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects if one is to consider oneself worthwhile.
3. Certain people are bad, wicked, and villainous and they should be severely blamed and punished for their villainy.
4. It is awful and catastrophic when things are not the way one would very much like them to be.
5. Human unhappiness is externally caused and people have little or no ability to control their sorrows and disturbances.
6. If something is or may be dangerous or fearsome, one should be terribly concerned about it and should keep dwelling on the possibility of it occurring.
7. It is easier to avoid than to face certain life difficulties and self-responsibilities.
8. One should be dependent on others and need someone stronger than oneself on whom to rely.
9. One's past history is an all-important determiner of one's present behavior and because something once strongly affected one's life, it should indefinitely have a similar effect.
10. One should become quite upset over other peoples' problems and disturbances.
11. There is always a right or perfect solution to every problem and it must be found or the results will be catastrophic.

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Rational Alternatives to irrational Assumptions

Listed below are some examples of rational beliefs which can be substituted for irrational ideas:

1. I would like to be approved of by every significant person, but I do not need such approval. If I am not approved of by someone I would like to have like me, I can attempt to determine what it is that the person does not like about the way I behave and decide whether I want to change it. If I decide that this rejection is not based on any inappropriate behavior on my part, I can find others I can enjoy being with.
2. I would like to be perfect or best at this task, but I do not need to be. I'm still successful when I do things imperfectly. What I do doesn't have to be perfect to be good. It is impossible for anyone to be perfectly competent, achieving, etc.
3. Just because I think something is wrong, it doesn't mean it is wrong. I can tell people what they are doing has negative consequences for me, but I don't have to go so far as to punish them for their behavior.
4. I do not need to overreact to these pressures. It would be nice if things turned out the way I would like, but it isn't necessary. I will accept the reality and do the best I can.
5. I do have quite a bit of control over how I react to situations. Others also have choices in how they react to me. I am responsible for my own behaviors.
6. It's impossible to prevent a bad event from occurring by worrying about it; instead of worrying, I can think constructively and problem solve. In all likelihood, that event will not be as bad as I fear. even if it is bad, I won't grumble. I can stand it, though it will be uncomfortable.
7. Even though I get immediate relief when I avoid a disturbing situation, I feel unfulfilled and that is often frustrating. What I am avoiding will probably not be as awful as I convince myself it is.
8. I have personal strength and can take care of myself. It might be nice to have others to rely on, but I would be giving up my freedom of control.
9. I learned my present behaviors in the past because I needed them for survival, but a better option may now be available and I can unlearn old ways and learn the new ones.
10. I can influence others but I cannot control their lives.
11. Some solutions will work better than others at certain times but there is no one way for all times. I will find the best solution I can and it will serve well until a better solution is proposed.

Based on Albert Ellis' Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy