



## **Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy Dispute the Irrational Belief**



In the last session we looked at our irrational beliefs a little closer. When we use the ABC model to explore our beliefs about a situation, it is extremely helpful to learn how to classify them as "rational" beliefs or "irrational" beliefs.

Rational Beliefs are reality based, realistic and helpful. Irrational Beliefs are not reality-based; they do not match the reality of actuality, and they are not helpful.

When we start to understand some of the irrational thought patterns that can lead us into emotional reactions, we can start to challenge and change them.

Below are some examples of some common Irrational Beliefs:

- Things should always be the way I think they should be. If they aren't things are terrible!
- If I make a mistake I am a failure.
- Everyone should think well of me, and like me, at all times.
- As a parent, I am 100% responsible for the way my children turn out.
- I must never feel sad or unhappy, anxious or upset.
- Everyone will judge me negatively if they know that my loved one has a problem with drugs.
- I've given my loved one everything, now he/she owes it to me to be a good person.
- If my loved one really loved and respected me, he/she would not use drugs.
- Using drugs means someone is a "bad" person.
- Children should respect their parents, and do exactly as I say.
- If I don't keep pointing out how bad for my loved ones drug use is, it will never stop.
- If I leave my loved one or ask my loved one to leave, everything will fall apart.
- I can make someone else change their behavior.
- Drug users are "helpless victims" who have no control over their behavior what so ever.



## Challenging Unhelpful Thinking

The Greek philosopher Epictetus said "People are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them" and the first step in challenging our unhelpful thoughts is simply to become aware of them.

It is important to note at this point that we are not referring to "positive thinking" where a "negative" thought or belief is replaced by an opposite "positive" thought or belief.

Instead we are attempting to learn how to recognize and identify unhelpful thoughts, and then challenge them in order to create more helpful thoughts.

The steps involved with this are:

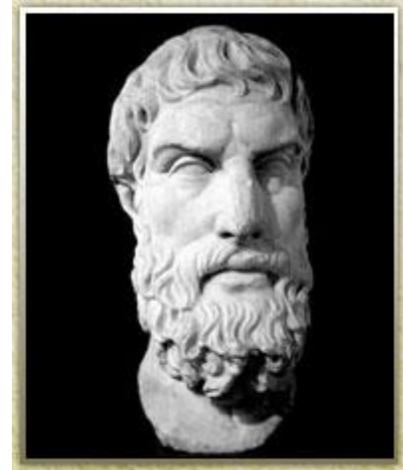
- Become aware of your thoughts, beliefs, perceptions and catch them in action.
- Evaluate them, are they helpful or unhelpful, rational or irrational?
- If you judge them to be unhelpful or irrational, name them as such.
- Challenge or dispute unhelpful beliefs with more helpful or rational thoughts.

Once the thought has been labeled as unhelpful, or irrational, you can challenge your beliefs using disputing questions to ascertain their validity in your life. Disputing is done in the form of asking questions about the belief. We can dispute our beliefs using facts, logic and practical considerations.

## Scientific/Evidence-Based

Here's where we examine the objective reality of a situation. Some evidence-based disputations include:

- Where's the evidence that supports this belief?
- Do I have proof of this?
- Even if this is true, is it possible for me not to upset myself over it?
- What would I Lose of value if I didn't continue to believe this?



### Logical

This type of disputation is used to investigate the Logic of the belief, to see if the belief is consistent with valid reasoning.

- Does it follow that if X happens, that Y is true?
- Could I be over-generalizing?
- How do I know this is a fact?
- What's wrong with the notion here that I'm so special that this only applies to me?
- Why must this be so?

### Practical/Functional/Pragmatic

A practical disputation addresses the emotional/behavioral reaction itself. Some common Practical disputations include:

- Will my belief help me to resolve this issue?
- Does this belief help me to reach my goal?
- Why hold on to a belief that causes me so much trouble?
- Is it possible for me to think differently about this?

One thing all these have in common is the basic question: Can I PROVE this belief to be rational?

When you are accountable for your thoughts, your feelings and your actions, you take away the power that others have over you. In doing so, you make it almost impossible for them to manipulate you and create emotions you no longer wish to entertain.

In the next session we will take a look at the five ways in which we upset ourselves, creating our emotional reactions, due to the irrational thoughts and beliefs we have now identified and challenged.