# Introduction to REBT

**Introduction to REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy)**

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The central idea of REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) is that our emotions and behaviors (how we feel and act) are strongly influenced by how we think. Therefore, changing our thinking can be a very powerful way to change our emotions and behaviors.
The following is a brief overview of how we can go about changing our thinking.

## A – B – C Basics

**A = Activating Event:** Something Happens. These Activating Events can be major: job loss, serious illness, death of a loved one, failing at something very important. They can also be a series of minor annoyances that add-up
over time: spilled coffee, broken shoelaces, a long line at the bank or grocery store. Activating Events always have something to do with your goals (what you want) being either aided or interfered with.
**B = Beliefs:** Thoughts, & Attitudes about "A." These Beliefs can be RATIONAL (Reality Based, Logical & Self Helping) These Beliefs can be IRRATIONAL (Demand & Wishful Thinking Based Illogical and Self-Defeating)
**C = Consequences:** The Emotions (Mad, Sad, Scared & Glad) and Behaviors that are the results of A (Activating Event) + B (Beliefs)
**D = Disputes:** Arguments against irrational beliefs

**E = Effects:** of the disputes. New emotions and behaviors that result from replacing irrational beliefs with rational ones
People can change how they feel (Emotional Consequences) and what they do
(Behavioral Consequences) by changing their Beliefs.
Sometimes you can change A (Activating Events) and it is a good idea to do so. However, it is not always possible to change A (Activating Events). If you think you can, I want you to CONTROL the weather for the next 2 weeks.
IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO CHANGE BELIEFS!
A + B = C Activating Event, Beliefs, Emotional & Behavioral Consequences,
**A – Something Happens**
**B – Thoughts, Attitudes about A**
**C – How we feel & what we do as a result of A + B**

IMPORTANT! What happens to you does not, by itself, cause how you feel or what you do. People do not make you angry. You make yourself angry about what people do. Bad things do not make you feel sad or depressed. You make yourself feel sad or depressed. Dangerous situations do not make you scared. You make yourself scared. People or things do not make you happy. You do! It is what happens to you AND what you believe it means to you or about you that results in how you feel and what you do. This is pretty good news because it gives you a lot of freedom.
If you are happy with how you are feeling and what you are doing is working well for you, go no further.
However, if you are feeling miserable or doing things that do not get the results you want, you just might want to change some of your thinking. Here is where the D and E come in.

### D E Arguments against the irrational beliefs

New Emotions & New Behaviors can result from replacing irrational beliefs with rational ones.

This process may involve your challenging (D – Disputing) some very old, deeply held, habitual beliefs about how you, other people and the world should be. As these beliefs are so habitual, it may take some time just to recognize them.
Then it takes even more time to challenge them and replace them with new beliefs (E – Effective Beliefs) that work better for you.
In the long run, all this effort is well worth it!