Exchange Vocabulary

Upset feelings are usually caused by the way we are thinking about the events in our lives, not by the events themselves. To change your feelings (and your behavior), try the following "Exchange Vocabulary."

This idea was given to me by a client, who related it to an exchange list for unhealthy foods. When you first try this new way of thinking, it might not feel right. The more you do it, however, the more natural these realistic beliefs will become. I think you will like the results but prove it for yourself by giving it a fair try.

Good luck.

© Robert F. Sarmiento, Ph.D.
Used here with permission.

Word Exchange Table

Instead of thinking:	*Try thinking:*
Must	**Prefer**
Should	**Choose To**
Have To	**Want**
Can't	**Choose Not To**
Ought	**Had Better**
All	**Many**
Always	**Often**
Can't Stand	**Don't Like**
Awful	**Highly Undesirable**
Bad Person	**Bad Behavior**
I am a Failure	**I Failed At**

Statements

Instead of Saying:	*Exchange With:*
I have to do well.	**I want to do well.**
You shouldn't do that.	**I prefer you not do that.**
You never help me.	**You rarely help me.**
I can't stand my job.	**I don't like my job.**
You are a bad boy.	**That behavior is undesirable.**
I'm a loser.	**I failed at this one task.**
I need love.	**I want love, but don't need it.**

Emotional Vocabulary Exchange

REBT does *not* endeavor to eliminate emotions. Quite to the contrary! Emotions are very useful and are part of the human advantage — when appropriate!

Instead of Saying:	***Exchange With:***
Anxious	**Concerned**
Depressed	**Sad**
Angry	**Annoyed**
Guilt	**Remorse**
Shame	**Regret**
Hurt	**Disappointed**
Jealous	**Concern for my relationship**