Feelings Versus Thoughts

An important aspect of thinking rationally is to know the difference between

a “feeling” and a “thought”.

Sound simple?
For many it’s not.

Next time someone asks you “how you feel about something”, take notice whether you answer in basically one word. If not, you most likely are relating what you think.

An example: How do you feel about pollution?
Bet you start to say something like “it is devastating our planet”… but now that is a thought or belief, not a feeling. To relate a feeling about that question would be to answer, “I feel worried” or “I feel angry”.

The contrary can be true also where one gives a feeling when asked what they think.

So to “beef up” your ABC’s and other rational thinking … Practice differentiating between Thoughts and Feelings!

A Common Misconception

In my experience of conveying the principals of REBT and SMART, I have repeatedly come across the argument “That we are trying to eliminate emotional responses to situations… That Emotions are a ‘Bad’ thing.” Quite the contrary!

The first effort I took was to get COMPLETELY in touch with my emotions. It was important for me to have a complete and clear appreciation for what I WAS feeling and differentiate

between what was a Thought and what was a Feeling. The quote “negative” emotions are the “Warning Signs” that the mind/body gives to alert to problems in life, real or imagined. By tuning my awareness to these IMPORTANT emotional alerts, I became more in tune with My reality.

In doing this I discovered that I was actually limited in my emotional responses to situations. By rational perspective of situational events and a broader selection of emotions, I am able to experience the APROPRIATE emotion for a given situation.

To some the initial “feel” is that emotions were eliminated. Before, the emotions were few but INTENSE. After, they are less intense, varied and appropriate. Therefore, it may “seem” like emotions are eliminated by comparison. There are few things in life that DEMAND an INTENSE emotional reaction. These efforts in no way eliminated emotions. I have, in fact, Broadened and Enhanced my emotional repertoire.

Something to Think About

For many, addiction in whatever form it takes, is a matter of Coping. One of the coping difficulties may be centered on emotions. In the process of “getting to know” your feelings, the developing coping skill is put to the test. This is inevitable. The two go hand-in-hand. We find ourselves actively pursuing the very thing that for years we have been addictively avoiding. Anticipate that it “Just Might” be uncomfortable at times. Remember, have patience, persevere but don’t push. Each day, each month, will provide ample opportunity to Grow. Take reward in each step taken.