# Calming the Mind
# Calming the Body

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## The Obsessive-Compulsive Personality

- Control
  - Own feelings, behavior, sense of identity
  - Other's opinions, attitudes, and actions toward them
  - Miscellaneous events in life – even death
- Perfectionism
  - Striving for perfection vs. attaining perfection
  - May not extend to all parts of life
  - Identifying what needs to be "perfect"
- Hoarding
  - Storing items in excess
  - Can refer to emotions as well as material possessions
- Orderliness
  - Following a prescribed course of action
    - Punctuality
    - List making
    - Record Retention
- Conscientiousness
  - Sum of ingrained values and traditions of society
    - Can lead to self-righteousness and obsession on others' "improper behavior"

**"Man is not disturbed by events, but by the view he takes of them."**

**--Epictetus**

## Scenario: Tapping at the window during the night

- Perceptions

1. It's a burglar. Someone's trying to break in! They may kill me!
2. It's rain tapping on the window. It's soothing and relaxing.

## Thoughts can become automatic responses.

- Driving a car
- Playing a scale
- Reading music
- Sight-singing

## Words are powerful!

- Words can elicit emotions.
  - "Never" vs. "not yet"
  - "Horrible" instead of "inconvenient"

## Comparing Emotional Content of our Words

- My double tonguing is terrible! I'll never be able to play this piece!
- My double tonguing is weak. I'll work to improve my articulation before I play this piece in public.

## Top 10 Irrational Beliefs:

1. It is an absolute necessity for an adult to have love and approval from peers, family, and friends.
2. You must be unfailingly competent and almost perfect in all you undertake.
3. Certain people are evil, wicked and villainous, and should be punished.
4. It is horrible when people and things are not the way you would like them to be.
5. External events cause most human misery. People simply react as events trigger their emotions.
6. You should feel fear or anxiety about anything that is unknown, uncertain, or potentially dangerous.
7. It is easier to avoid than to face life difficulties and responsibilities.
8. You need something other or stronger or greater than yourself to rely on.
9. The past has a lot to do with determining the present.
10. Happiness can be achieved by inaction, passivity, and endless leisure.

## The ABC's of Irrational Behavior

- A = Activating Event (What happened?)
- C = Consequences (How did you feel?)
- B = Beliefs (Conscious Thoughts and Unconscious Beliefs and Attitudes)
- D = Disputing Irrational Thoughts
- E = Establishing More Rational Thinking

## UNCOVERING IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

A. ACTIVATING EVENT (What happened or what were you doing?)

*While practicing for my recital one day, I kept missing five notes in the third octave.*

B. BELIEFS

1) Conscious Thoughts

*If I miss these notes, the entire piece will be ruined. (2,3,4)*

*If I can't play better than this, I'll never advance in my field. (1,2,3,4)*

2) Unconscious Beliefs and Attitudes

*Why can't I get this right?! → I must always play every note perfectly. (2)*

C. CONSEQUENCES (How did you feel?) (What did you do?)

*Angry, Tense, Hopeless, Depressed.*

*I stopped practicing and considered cancelling the recital*

D. DISPUTING AND CHALLENGING THE IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

1. Is my thought or belief based on misunderstanding the situation, jumping to conclusions, or formulating an opinion?
2. Am I being perfectionistic or using absolute terms?
3. Am I making something an absolute necessity?
4. Am I catastrophizing?

E. ESTABLISHING A MORE RATIONAL WAY OF THINKING AND BEHAVING

More Rational Thoughts (What is a more rational way to think in this situation?)

*I would like to play every passage perfectly, but if I don't, I won't be the first person to make a mistake. The entire piece will not be ruined. It won't be perfect, but the integrity of the piece is not dependent on my absolute perfection. If that were the case, then no one would ever perform. My entire career does not hinge on one passage in one piece in one recital. I will not cancel my recital because of this passage.*

More Rational Behavior (What would be a more rational way to behave?)

*I will not allow my frustration to build into physical tension. I will take a short break, breathe deeply, and concentrate on relaxing my muscles. When I return, I will reevaluate practice strategies for playing this passage. If I still cannot master it today, I will move on to another piece and try again tomorrow.*

More Rational Consequences (If you think and act more rationally, how would you feel?)

*Mildly frustrated*

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A. ACTIVATING EVENT (What happened or what were you doing?)

B. BELIEFS

1) Conscious Thoughts

2) Unconscious Beliefs and Attitudes

C. CONSEQUENCES (How did you feel?) (What did you do?)

D. DISPUTING AND CHALLENGING THE IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

1. Is my thought or belief based on misunderstanding the situation, jumping to conclusions, or formulating an opinion?
2. Am I being perfectionistic or using absolute terms?
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E. ESTABLISHING A MORE RATIONAL WAY OF THINKING AND BEHAVING

More Rational Thoughts (What is a more rational way to think in this situation?)

More Rational Behavior (What would be a more rational way to behave?)

More Rational Consequences (If you think and act more rationally, how would you feel?)

## Suggested Reading List


Ellis, A. (2001). *Overcoming destructive beliefs, feelings, and behaviors: New directions for rational emotive behavior therapy.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Ellis, A. (2004). *The road to tolerance: The philosophy of rational emotive behavior therapy*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

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Monat, A., Lazarus, R. S., Reevy, G. (Eds.). (2007). *The Praeger handbook on stress and coping* (Vols. 1-2). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

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