**Self-Therapy: Disputation as REBT’s Primary Change Process**

**Identification stage:**

1. Look for the demand, the rigid attitude. Look for the absolute should, look for the absolute must.

**Disputation of the rigid attitude stage:**

1. Examine the functional impact of the rigid attitude. – Is this rigid attitude impacting me in a negative way? How is it impacting me in a negative way?
2. Seek evidence that supports the rigid attitude. Where is the evidence for my absolute should, my absolute must? If there is no evidence that supports it acknowledge this and acknowledge what you prefer, wish, your desire.

**Reformulation of unhealthy attitude into a healthy attitude stage:**

1. Create a healthy, flexible alternative attitude. Express that as a wish and negate the demand for this wish (e.g., I want to have certainty that I will remain healthy, but I do not absolutely have to have certainty that I will remain healthy. I want her love, but I do not absolutely have to have her love.)

**Disputation of healthy attitude stage:**

1. Examine the functional impact of the flexible attitude. – Will the flexible attitude impact me in a good way? If I hold this flexible attitude, how will it impact me in a good way? Is there a functional downside to the healthy attitude?
2. Find evidence that supports the validity of the flexible attitude.

**Address doubts, reservations, and objections to adoption of the healthy attitude stage:**

1. Step back and resolve doubts, reservations, and objections to adopting the flexible attitude. Are there any doubts, reservations, and objections to adopting the flexible attitude? How can I resolve any if they exist?

**Rehearsal with Implementation stage:**

1. Rehearse the flexible idea often so that it goes from being explicitly subvocalized to automatically subvocalized. By rehearsing the flexible attitude, it will become the new default attitude and eventually subvocal and dominant in your mind.
2. Now commit to living in a way that is consistent with the flexible attitude and continue to rehearse it.

**Remember the bottom-line lesson of REBT:** No matter how strongly I want something, I never absolutely have to have it. Remember as the strength of my desire increases it is easier for my mind to jump to the erroneous conclusion that I absolutely must have it. However, it is still false to think that because I want something very strongly that therefore I absolutely have to have it, absolutely should get it, absolutely must get it. Ask yourself, ***“Can I live with not getting what I strongly want? Answer: Yes, and I still can have some happiness although not quite as much as I would have if I were able to get what I strongly want. That is life.”***