**Remember REBT’s Rule of Three When Doing Your ABCs**

To derive maximum benefit from REBT, you need to understand the theory and core concepts of REBT. To use the ABC model of REBT, you need to identify the Adversity you are facing, and the Basic Attitudes that are largely responsible for your emotional upset. The attitudes you hold have profound Consequences for how you function. Then you need to Dispute the attitudes at the core of your emotional disturbance and transform them into healthy alternative attitudes. To do this, remember REBT’s rule of three when doing your ABCs.

**Three Categories of Adversities**

There are three general categories of Adversities:

1. Failures, losses, or undeserved burden

2. Disapproval, disrespect, rejection, acts of betrayal or insufficient recognition

3. Deprivation of pleasure or states of discomfort (physical, emotional, and the state of facing uncertainty)

Nearly all adversities fit into one of these three categories. Knowing the three groups can help you identify your Adversity when you notice you are disturbing yourself. Ask these questions:

1. "Am I disturbing myself over a failure, loss, or an undeserved burden?" Examples here would be a job loss or illness (an undeserved burden).

2. "Am I angering myself over disapproval, disrespect, rejection, or insufficient recognition?" Examples here would include your supervisor criticizing your work (disapproval), lost love (rejection), not getting promoted at work (insufficient recognition).

3. "Am I depressing myself over experiencing some deprivation from pleasure or encountering a state of discomfort?" Examples include canceling vacation plans due to the pandemic or not exercising because it requires effort or results in muscle tenderness after exercise.

**Consequences - Eight Unhealthy Negative Emotions**

Next, identify your unhealthy emotional Consequences. There are eight unhealthy emotions. They are anger, anxiety, envy, depression, guilt, hurt, jealousy, and shame.

**Musturbation – Three Rigid Musts**

Then remember the three musts at the core of emotional disturbance.

1. I must do perfectly well, do the right thing, win approval, or else I am less of a person or worthless as a person if I fail to do so.

2. You and all other people must treat me well, do the right thing, love, and approve of me or else you are a bad person if you fail to do so.

3. Life must be comfortable and easy, fun and exciting, with justice for me or it is completely bad.

Basic attitudes focus on your performance, how others treat you, or the conditions of life. You essentially "musturbate" in three directions.

**Three Extreme Secondary Attitudes Derive from Musts**

Often, not always, the above three general musts will generate extreme secondary attitudes that also contribute to your upset. The secondary derivative attitudes also come in three categories:

1. It is unbearable, too hard, too inconvenient… (attitudes of unbearability)

2. It is awful, terrible, the end of the world… (known as awfulizing)

3. Depreciation and devaluation of three targets (self "I am a loser," others "You are a jerk," or "Life wholly sucks.")

**Three General Types of Disputing Questions**

There are three general types of disputing questions you can use to challenge your self-defeating attitudes. Doing so will help you to transform your unhealthy negative emotion into a healthy negative emotion.

1. Does this attitude help me function and cope with Adversity, or does it lead to an unhealthy negative emotion or behavior?

2. What evidence exists that shows this basic attitude is false to the facts?

3. Would I teach my child the rigid and\or extreme attitude I am holding towards this adversity?

**Three Healthy and Flexible Alternative Attitudes**

The healthy and flexible alternative attitudes come in three as well:

1. I want to do perfectly well, do the right thing, win approval, but not doing so will not transform me into less of a person or worthless as a person.

2. I wish you would treat me well, do the right thing, love, and approve of me, but not doing so will not transform you into less of a person or worthless as a person.

3. I prefer life to be comfortable, uncomplicated, fair, fun, and exciting. However, when this is not the case, and it is my darkest hour, life is not transformed into a wholly negative experience.

**Three Non-Extreme Secondary Derivative Attitudes**

Finally, there are three non-extreme secondary derivative attitudes:

1. This deprivation is uncomfortable, not unbearable, or too hard to tolerate. I am willing to tolerate this discomfort as there is something for me to gain in the long run for doing so.

2. It is bad that I experienced this failure, not awful, terrible, or the end of the world. I can transcend this very bad experience.

3. The negative characteristics I possess and the things I do which are bad do not transform me into a wholly bad person, a fool, or even lesser of a person. (The negative characteristics you possess, or the things you do which are bad, do not transform you into a wholly bad person, a monster, or even lesser of a person. Finally, when life is not easy, complex, unfair, not fun, and dull, it is invalid to conclude it is wholly bad. Life is a mix of good and bad.)

**Consequences - Eight healthy Negative Emotions**

The goal of disputing your self-defeating attitudes, along with the adoption of flexible and non-extreme attitudes, is to transform your unhealthy emotions into healthy negative emotions. There are eight healthy negative emotions. These emotions will serve to motivate you to change what you can change regarding the adversity that you are facing, while acknowledging that you are not presently getting what you want. The eight healthy negative emotions are concern, disappointment, healthy anger, healthy envy, healthy jealousy, remorse, sadness, and sorrow.

**Three Types of Unconditional Acceptance**

When you hold flexible and non-extreme attitudes, you will be better able to cultivate three kinds of unconditional acceptance which will serve you well throughout your life:

1. Unconditional Self-Acceptance

2. Unconditional Other-Acceptance

3. Unconditional Life-Acceptance

To derive the most benefit from REBT philosophy, you need to understand the basic theory of three of REBT. Assume with work and practice, you can improve how to think, feel, and behave, as you address Adversity. This will help you change what you can change and accept what you cannot.

Remember the REBT rule of three. It will help you identify your ABCs and adopt healthy, flexible, and non-extreme attitudes. These will allow you to have healthy negative reactions, which will allow for some degree of happiness in the presence of ongoing Adversity. REBT works when you work it!