**Rational Emotive Imagery**

**(Preparation for Future Adversity – Transformation of Unhealthy Negative Emotion into Healthy Negative Emotion)**

What it is: Rational Emotive Imagery (REI) is a way of practicing correcting your emotional reaction to some real or imagined event. You practice imagining this dreaded event and then practice experiencing an appropriate negative emotion instead of the typical, self-defeating negative emotion you normally would feel.

Rationale: Humans have the capacity to correct their emotional reactions by using their powers of imagination.

Steps:

1. **Imagine in vivid detail some negative event**, set of circumstances, etc. This dreaded event could be something that has already happened to you or something you fear could happen in the future. It could be getting rejected, the death of a loved one, failing at an important endeavor, being criticized, becoming ill, developing acne, sexual failure, being fired, being laughed at in public, losing love, serious financial loss, etc.
2. **Experience** the anxiety, anger, embarrassment, shame, depression, unhealthy anger, unhealthy jealousy, and unhealthy envy feelings that typically go with the dreaded scenario. Really imagine the scenario and get in touch with and feel the associated emotion.
3. **Next assume you can do something to change your emotion without changing the imagined dreaded scenario.** Repeat – do not change the dreaded scenario. In REBT, we talk about appropriate negative emotions. ***Transform*** your typical self-defeating negative emotion into a healthy, adaptive, self-enhancing, appropriate negative emotion. Force yourself, will yourself, choose to feel a healthy negative emotion while still imagining the dreaded event. Go from feeling anxiety, anger, embarrassment, shame, or depression to feeling only concern, annoyance, displeasure, sorrow, regret, remorse, sadness, disappointment, healthy envy, healthy jealousy, or healthy anger.
   1. Note: The most important thing is not changing the dreaded imagined scenario when you attempt to change your feeling. ***You have to hold onto the dreaded scenario but imagine feeling differently about it.***
4. In order to do this, you may have to **imagine yourself thinking differently** about the dreaded imagine scenario.
5. **Practice this once a day.** It sounds like a silly exercise but if you do it, practice choosing a different emotion in time you will see you can dictate how you feel about certain dreaded scenarios. Try this every day for one month. It takes three to five minutes to do and is not very difficult. If it works after a month you have gained quite a bit. If it doesn’t you have lost very little. Try it and see!

Note: REBT is about choosing your emotional destiny. You can choose your emotions to different scenarios. It does take practice, but it can be done.