



Recognising Tension-Provoking Beliefs: 7b

ADVANCED TACTICAL COMPOSURE

Some beliefs, which may have formed over-time to help protect us, can become outdated and contribute to internal tension and pressure. Below are a few lists of quite common human beliefs, that, once examined could be 'reframed' towards a more helpful and constructive belief.

List of Shoulds, Musts, Have-tos.

- ☐ I ought to have done better.
- ☐ Life (i.e., the world and other people) should be fair.
- ☐ I must get all of these tasks done today.
- ☐ She/He should be more polite.
- ☐ I should be living in a better house by now.
- ☐ I should be earning more money.
- ☐ I must not make a mistake.
- ☐ I must cope with everything.
- ☐ I must be in control of all situations.
- ☐ Things must go well.
- ☐ Others must always treat us well.

An experiment in unhooking from tension-provoking beliefs.

- After identifying and noting which of them happen for you. Make a note of how you might react when this belief is triggered for example, the situations that might trigger it, and how you might think feel and behave?
- Then just like a curious scientist, next time you notice this belief is activated in the same sort of situations, just settle back and observe without responding in the usual way.
- This is a short-term tactic to help loosen up our connection to the belief to help 'un-hook' from its intensity and not get carried away by it, on automatic pilot.

An experiment in examining the helpfulness (unhelpfulness) of the beliefs

After observing the core beliefs and perhaps what re-triggers them, you can examine how helpful (functional, rational) they are. Questions to ask yourself:

- *What are the main beliefs that stand out as most frequent or intense for me?*
- *Where did this belief come from and is it outdated for me now?*
- *Are they (the beliefs) 100% true all the time? Are they helpful, functional, rational?*
- *Would I let a good friend carry those same beliefs around without saying something?*

You may wish to share and debrief your answers with a close friend, buddy/supporter or professional.

10 Very Human, Common (dysfunctional) Beliefs

Tension Provoking (auto-pilot)	Tension Reducing (conscious, reframed)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I must have the love or approval from all people I find important. 2. I must be thoroughly competent, adequate and achieving. 3. People who act unfairly are bad, wicked or rotten individuals. 4. Things are awful, terrible and catastrophic when I get seriously frustrated, treated unfairly or rejected. 5. Emotional misery comes from external pressures and I have little ability to control or change my feelings. 6. If something seems fearsome, I must think about it all the time and make myself cautious about it. 7. It is easier to avoid or run away from many life difficulties and responsibilities rather than to be self-disciplined. 8. My past remains all important and it has to keep determining my feelings and behaviours today. 9. All things are horrible and awful if I don't find good solutions to life's challenging realities. 10. I can achieve maximum happiness by inertia and inaction or by passively and uncommittedly "enjoying myself". 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I don't necessarily need love and approval to survive. It is most desirable to concentrate on self-acceptance and on loving instead of on being loved. 2. It is more advisable to accept myself as an important human being with limitations and fallibilities. It is often better to do that than to do well. 3. People often behave stupidly and unfairly, it would be better if they were helped to change their ways, rather than punishing or condemning them severely. 4. While it is undesirable to fail to get what I want, it is seldom awful and intolerable. 5. Because I contribute to my own emotional upsets, I can change them by thinking more rationally. 6. Worrying will not make things disappear, I will do my best to deal with potentially stressful events and when this proves impossible, I will accept the inevitable. 7. In the long run, the long and undisciplined way is less rewarding than is the longer-range approach to pleasure and enjoyment. 8. Continual rethinking of my old assumptions and reworking of my past can reduce the negative influences from my childhood and adolescence. 9. Whether I like it or not, reality exists and I should learn to accept its existence before I start changing it. 10. Getting involved in long term interesting tasks and activities will force me to act against my own inertia.

Source: Albert Ellis, founder of Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET).

Your Tactical Composure Coach or Program Facilitator can help explain the science behind this area, should you be curious.