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*How to Change
the Way You Feel:
The Four Steps to Happiness*

Let's assume you want to change the way you feel. First you will need a pen or pencil. It's far better to confront your problems by writing them down than by simply thinking them through. I can't emphasize the importance of this enough, if you want positive changes in your life! You can jot down your negative thoughts whenever you feel upset—in your office, at home, on a plane or bus. Once you get in the habit, you will see in black and white just how unrealistic they are.

Many people will tell themselves, "I'll just read this book and try to think things through a little better and that will be enough." This is a real trap. When you're upset, your negative thoughts will chase each other around in your mind in endless circles. Once you get them down on paper, you develop a more objective perspective. As you read the following pages, try the techniques I describe, even if you're convinced they won't work for you. I think you'll be surprised to discover how helpful they can be.

There are four steps to becoming a happier person.

THE DAILY MOOD LOG*

STEP ONE: DESCRIBE THE UPSETTING EVENT _____

STEP TWO: RECORD YOUR NEGATIVE FEELINGS—and rate each one from 0 (the least) to 100 (the most). Use words like sad, anxious, angry, guilty, lonely, hopeless, frustrated, etc.

Emotion	Rating	Emotion	Rating	Emotion	Rating
1.		3.		5.	
2.		4.		6.	

STEP THREE: THE TRIPLE-COLUMN TECHNIQUE—

Automatic Thoughts	Distortions	Rational Responses
Write your negative thoughts and estimate your belief in each one (0–100).	Identify the distortions in each Automatic Thought.	Substitute more realistic thoughts and estimate your belief in each one (0–100).

(Continue on next page)

THE DAILY MOOD LOG* (continued)

Automatic Thoughts	Distortions	Rational Responses

STEP FOUR: OUTCOME—Re-rate your belief in each Automatic Thought from 0 to 100 and put a check in the box that describes how you now feel:

☐ not at all better ☐ somewhat better ☐ quite a bit better ☐ a lot better

CHECKLIST OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS*

1. All-or-nothing thinking: You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories.
2. Overgeneralization: You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. Mental filter: You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.
4. Discounting the positives: You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities "don't count."
5. Jumping to conclusions: (A) Mind reading—you assume that people are reacting negatively to you when there's no definite evidence for this; (B) Fortune-telling—you arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.
6. Magnification or minimization: You blow things way up out of proportion or you shrink their importance inappropriately.
7. Emotional reasoning: You reason from how you feel: "I *feel* like an idiot, so I really must be one." Or "I don't *feel* like doing this, so I'll put it off."
8. "Should statements": You criticize yourself or other people with "shoulds" or "shouldn'ts." "Musts," "oughts," and "have tos" are similar offenders.
9. Labeling: You identify with your shortcomings. Instead of saying "I made a mistake," you tell yourself, "I'm a jerk," or "a fool," or "a loser."
10. Personalization and blame: You blame yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for, or you blame other people and overlook ways that your own attitudes and behavior might contribute to a problem.

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