

From *Anger: How to Live With and Without It* by Albert Ellis

A + B = C

A = Activating event or experience

B = Belief system

C = Emotional or behavioral consequence

D = Disputing and debating

Example:

Activating Event = Someone has ignored or discounted you.

Rational Belief = "I find her action deplorable and unfortunate."

Irrational Belief = "How awful! She should not, must not treat me in that manner."

Appropriate Consequence = Frustration and displeasure.

Inappropriate Consequence = Anger and rage.

Disputing and Debating = Detect your irrational beliefs; then begin disputing and debating them: ask questions that challenge your interpretations or beliefs regarding people's treatment of you (see page 2 for examples).

Cognitive Effect = "I can see no reason why she accept my ideas even though I would definitely prefer it;" or, even simpler, "I wish she'd accepted my ideas."

Behavioral Effect = Loss of anger, relief, and return to the appropriate consequence (minimized feelings of frustration and displeasure).

Four main irrational statements **about others** (leads to **anger**):

1. "How awful of you to..."
2. "I can't stand your having..."
3. "You should not, must not..."
4. "You're a terrible person because..."

Four main irrational statements **about self** (leads to **anxiety**):

1. "How awful if I can't..."
2. "I couldn't stand my own poor methods..."
3. "I should have the ability to..."
4. "If I don't cope, I'm inferior and deserve what I get..."

The same pattern of thinking **about conditions** can lead to **depression**.

Common Irrational Ideas:

1. I must do well and win the approval of others for my performances, or else I will rate as a rotten person; I should:
 - Have love, approval,
 - Be thoroughly competent,
 - Avoid unpleasantness,
 - Never encounter danger,
 - Always think, feel, behave as in the past,
 - Have a high degree of order and certainty,
 - Rely on other people,
 - Understand the nature and secrets of the universe,
 - Never make myself depressed, anxious, ashamed, or angry,
 - Never question authorities.

2. Others must treat me considerately and kindly in exactly the way I want them to; if not, they should be blamed, damned, punished; they should:
 - Be fair, considerate,
 - Never be incompetent, stupid,
 - Not avoid responsibilities,
 - Not unjustly criticize me.

3. I must get everything I want when I want it, quickly and easily, and never what I don't want.
 - I need what I want.
 - I must control or change fearsome people or things.
 - I need immediate comfort.
 - I can't stand it if others act badly.
 - Justice, fairness, equality, and democracy must prevail.
 - I must find correct and perfect solutions to my own and others' problems.
 - I must remain a helpless victim.
 - It's completely unfair to die.
 - My life must have unusual meaning or purpose.
 - I can't stand the discomfort of anxiety, depression, guilt, shame, or other emotional upset.