Albert Ellis’ Summary of Rational Emotive Therapy

• A fundamental proposition of RET is that the past is not crucial
• Person re-indoctrinates himself with negative philosophies of life
• Negative emotions are caused by re-indoctrination of simple exclamatory sentences
• When they talk to themselves in an illogical or irrational way, they literally create their negative feelings
  • For example: First a sane sentence: "I don't like the thing I've done. I don't like my own behavior." Second insane sentence: "And because I don't like my own behavior I am a louse, I am worthless, I am a no-goodnick." This second sentence is a statement of faith with no empirical fact, which is a kind of superstitious or dogmatically religious system that creates what we call his anxiety, depression, guilt, and self-defeatism
• In a second example Ellis rails against the absolutist, God-like, grandiose flavor of the second insane statement
  • "As Epictetus, a Roman philosopher, said many years ago, it's not what happens to us at point A that upsets us, it's B, our view of what happens to us...and in Rational Emotive Psychotherapy we go after the individual, the patient's view...."
• Three kinds of insight:
  (1) All behaviors, especially negative, have clear-cut ideological antecedents that are still believed by the person
  (2) The person continually re-indoctrinates himself with these ideologies
  (3) Even when the person sees these problematic illogical ideologies, only by work and practice can the person get better
• The person must act and do homework assignments
• Person should learn to challenge his own values and beliefs to make sure he thinks for himself
• Person applies the scientific method to his own beliefs and life, including questioning his own assumptions