

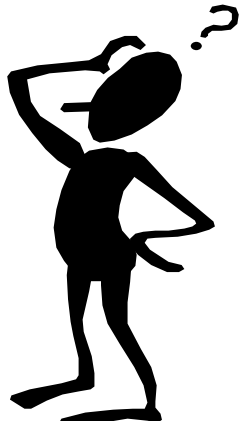
Rational-Emotive Therapy's A-B-C Theory of Emotional Disturbance

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“People are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of them.” *Epictetus*, 1st century AD
It is not the event, but rather it is our *attitudes* and *beliefs* about it, that causes our emotional reaction

A - Activating experience

Woman friend breaks the news that she is going out with another man, and therefore wishes to break off her relationship with you.



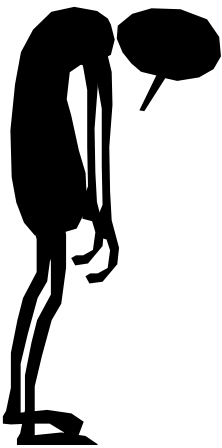
B - Irrational Beliefs about the experience

“I really must be a worthless person.”
“I’ll *never* find another great woman like her.”
“She doesn’t want me; therefore no one could possible want me.”

and/or

“This is *awful!*” “Everything happens to me!”
“That bitch!” She *shouldn’t* be that way.”
“I can’t *stand* the world being so unfair and lousy.”

C - upsetting emotional Consequences



Depression
and/or

Hostility



D - Disputing of irrational ideas

“Where’s the evidence that because this woman wishes to end our relationship, that I’m a worthless person; or that I’ll *never* be able to have a really good relationship with someone else; or even that I couldn’t be happy alone?”

“Why is it *awful* that I’m not getting what I want?”
“Why *shouldn’t* the world be full of injustices?”
“How does her rejecting me make me a bad person?”



E - new Emotional consequence or Effect

Sadness: “Well, we did have a nice relationship, and I’m sorry to see it end – but it did have its problems and now I can go out and find a new friend.”

OR...

Annoyance: “It’s annoying that she was seeing someone but it isn’t awful or intolerable.”