

REBT

RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY



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What is REBT?

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) is a form of psychotherapy and a philosophy of living created by **Albert Ellis** in the 1950's.

REBT (pronounced R.E.B.T. - it is not pronounced rabbit) is based on the premise that whenever we become upset, it is not the events taking place in our lives that upset us; it is the beliefs that we hold that cause us to become depressed, anxious, enraged, etc. The idea that our beliefs upset us was first articulated by Epictetus around 2,000 years ago: "Men are disturbed not by events, but by the views which they take of them."

The Goal of Happiness

The vast majority of us want to be happy. We want to be happy whether we are alone or with others; we want to get along with others - especially with one or two close friends; we want to be well informed and educated; we want a good job with good pay; and we want to enjoy our leisure time.

Of course life doesn't always allow us to have what we want; our goal of being happy is often thwarted by the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune." When our goals are blocked, we can respond in ways that are healthy and helpful, or we can react in ways that are unhealthy and unhelpful.





The ABC Model

REBT posits that our reaction to having our goals blocked (or even the possibility of having them blocked) is determined by our beliefs. To illustrate this, Dr. Ellis developed a simple ABC format to teach people how their beliefs cause their emotional and behavioral responses:

- A. Something happens.
- B. You have a belief about the situation.
- C. You have an emotional reaction to the belief.

For example:

- A. Your employer falsely accuses you of taking money from her purse and threatens to fire you.
- B. You believe, "She has no right to accuse me. She's a bitch!"
- C. You feel angry.

If you had held a different belief, your emotional response would have been different:

- A. Your employer falsely accuses you of taking money from her purse and threatens to fire you.
- B. You believe, "I must not lose my job. That would be unbearable."
- C. You feel anxious.

The ABC model shows that **A** does not cause **C**. It is **B** that causes **C**. In the first example, it is not your employer's false accusation and threat that make you angry; it is your belief that she has no right to accuse you, and that she is a bitch. In the second example, it is not her accusation and threat that make you anxious; it is the belief that you must not lose your job, and that losing your job would be unbearable.

The Three Basic Musts

Although we all express ourselves differently, according to Albert Ellis and REBT, the beliefs that upset us are all variations of three common irrational beliefs. Each of the three common irrational beliefs contains a demand, either about ourselves, other people, or the world in general. These beliefs are known as “The Three Basic Musts.”

1. I must do well and win the approval of others for my performances or else I am no good.
2. Other people must treat me considerately, fairly and kindly, and in exactly the way I want them to treat me. If they don't, they are no good and they deserve to be condemned and punished.
3. I must get what I want, when I want it; and I must not get what I don't want. It's terrible if I don't get what I want, and I can't stand it.

The first belief often leads to anxiety, depression, shame, and guilt. The second belief often leads to rage, passive-aggression and acts of violence. The third belief often leads to self-pity and procrastination. It is the demanding nature of the beliefs that causes the problem. Less demanding, more flexible beliefs lead to healthy emotions and helpful behaviors.



Acceptance is not love. You love a person because he or she has lovable traits, but you accept everybody just because they're alive and human.

Albert Ellis

Disputing

The goal of REBT is to help people change their irrational beliefs into rational beliefs. Changing beliefs is the real work of therapy and is achieved by the therapist disputing the client's irrational beliefs. For example, the therapist might ask, "Why *must* you win everyone's approval?" "Where is it written that other people *must* treat you fairly?" "Just because you want something, why *must* you have it?" Disputing is the **D** of the ABC model. When the client tries to answer the therapist's questions, s/he sees that there is no reason why s/he absolutely *must* have approval, fair treatment, or anything else that s/he wants.

Insight

Albert Ellis and REBT contend that although we all think irrationally from time to time, we can work at eliminating the tendency. It's unlikely that we can ever entirely eliminate the tendency to think irrationally, but we can reduce the frequency, the duration, and the intensity of our irrational beliefs by developing three insights:

1. We don't merely *get* upset but mainly upset ourselves by holding inflexible beliefs.
2. No matter when and how we start upsetting ourselves, we continue to feel upset because we *cling* to our irrational beliefs.
3. The only way to get better is to *work hard* at changing our beliefs. It takes practice, practice, practice.



Acceptance

Emotionally healthy human beings develop an acceptance of reality, even when reality is highly unfortunate and unpleasant. REBT therapists strive to help their clients develop three types of acceptance: (1) unconditional self-acceptance; (2) unconditional other-acceptance; and (3) unconditional life-acceptance. Each of these types of acceptance is based on three core beliefs:

Unconditional self-acceptance:

1. I am a fallible human being; I have my good points and my bad points.
2. There is no reason why I must not have flaws.
3. Despite my good points and my bad points, I am no more worthy and no less worthy than any other human being.

Unconditional other-acceptance:

1. Other people will treat me unfairly from time to time.
2. There is no reason why they must treat me fairly.
3. The people who treat me unfairly are no more worthy and no less worthy than any other human being.

Unconditional life-acceptance:

1. Life doesn't always work out the way that I'd like it to.
2. There is no reason why life must go the way I want it to.
3. Life is not necessarily pleasant but it is never awful and it is nearly always bearable.



History

Precursors of certain fundamental aspects of REBT have been identified in various ancient philosophical traditions, particularly Stoicism. For example, Ellis' first major publication on rational therapy describes the philosophical basis of REBT as the principle that a person is rarely affected emotionally by outside things but rather by 'his perceptions, attitudes, or internalized sentences about outside things and events.'

This principle, which I have inducted from many psychotherapeutic sessions with scores of patients during the last several years, was originally discovered and stated by the ancient Stoic philosophers, especially Zeno of Citium (the founder of the school), Chrysippus [his most influential disciple], Panaetius of Rhodes (who introduced Stoicism into Rome), Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. The truths of Stoicism were perhaps best set forth by Epictetus, who in the first century A.D. wrote in the *Enchiridion*: "Men are disturbed not by things, but by the views which they take of them." Shakespeare, many centuries later, rephrased this thought in *Hamlet*: "There's nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so."



Theoretical assumptions

Humans, in most cases, do not merely get upset by unfortunate adversities, but also by how they construct their views of reality through their language, evaluative beliefs, meanings and philosophies about the world, themselves and others. The A-B-C model states that it normally is not merely an *A*, adversity (or activating event) that contributes to disturbed and dysfunctional emotional and behavioral *Cs*, consequences, but also what people *B*, believe about the *A*, adversity. *A*, adversity can be either an external situation or a thought or other kind of internal event, and it can refer to an event in the past, present, or future.

The *Bs*, beliefs that are most important in the *A-B-C* model are explicit and implicit philosophical meanings and assumptions about events, personal desires, and preferences. The *Bs*, beliefs that are most significant are highly evaluative and consist of interrelated and integrated cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects. According to REBT, if a person's evaluative *B*, belief about the *A*, activating event is rigid, absolutistic and dysfunctional, the *C*, the emotional and behavioral consequence, is likely to be self-defeating and destructive. Alternatively, if a person's evaluative *B*, belief is preferential, flexible and constructive, the *C*, the emotional and behavioral consequence is likely to be self-helping and constructive.

Humans have both innate rational (meaning self- and social-helping and constructive) and irrational (meaning self- and social-defeating and un-helpful) tendencies and leanings. People to a large degree consciously and unconsciously construct emotional difficulties such as self-blame, self-pity, clinical anger, hurt, guilt, shame, depression and anxiety, and behaviors and behavior tendencies like procrastination, over-compulsiveness, avoidance, addiction and withdrawal by the means of their irrational and self-defeating thinking, emoting and behaving.



I had used eclectic therapy and behavior therapy on myself at the age of 19 to get over my fear of public speaking and of approaching young women in public.

Albert Ellis



REBT is then applied as an educational process in which the therapist often active-directively teaches the client how to identify irrational and self-defeating beliefs and philosophies which in nature are rigid, extreme, unrealistic, illogical and absolutist, and then to forcefully and actively question and dispute them and replace them with more rational and self-helping ones.

By using different cognitive, emotive and behavioral methods and activities, the client, together with help from the therapist and in homework exercises, can gain a more rational, self-helping and constructive rational way of thinking, emoting and behaving.

One of the main objectives in REBT is to show the client that whenever unpleasant and unfortunate activating events occur in people's lives, they have a choice of making themselves feel healthily and self-helpingly sorry, disappointed, frustrated, and annoyed, **or** making themselves feel unhealthily and self-defeatingly horrified, terrified, panicked, depressed, self-hating, and self-pitying.

By attaining and ingraining a more rational and self-constructive philosophy of themselves, others and the world, people often are more likely to behave and emote in more life-serving and adaptive ways.

THE THREE MAJOR INSIGHTS

Insight 1

People seeing and accepting the reality that their emotional disturbances at point C only partially stem from the activating events or adversities at point A that precede C. Although A contributes to C, and although disturbed Cs (such as feelings of panic and depression) are much more likely to follow strong negative As (such as being assaulted or raped), than they are to follow weak As (such as being disliked by a stranger), the main or more direct cores of extreme and dysfunctional emotional disturbances (Cs) are people's irrational beliefs - the absolutistic musts and their accompanying inferences and attributions that people strongly believe about their undesirable activating events.



I get people to truly accept themselves unconditionally, whether or not their therapist or anyone loves them.

Albert Ellis

Insight 2

No matter how, when, and why people acquire self-defeating or irrational beliefs (i.e. beliefs which are the main cause of their dysfunctional emotional-behavioral consequences), if they are disturbed in the present, they tend to keep holding these irrational beliefs and continue upsetting themselves with these thoughts. They do so not because they held them in the past, but because they still actively hold them in the present, though often unconsciously, while continuing to reaffirm their beliefs and act as if they are still valid. In their minds and hearts they still follow the core "musturbatory" philosophies they adopted or invented long ago, or ones they recently accepted or constructed.



As a result of my philosophy, I wasn't even upset about Hitler. I was willing to go to war to knock him off, but I didn't hate him. I hated what he was doing.

[Albert Ellis](#)

Insight 3

No matter how well they have achieved insight 1 and insight 2, insight alone will rarely enable people to undo their emotional disturbances. They may feel better when they know, or think they know, how they became disturbed - since insights can give the impression of being useful and curative. But, it is unlikely that they will actually get better and stay better unless they accept insights 1 and 2, and then also go on to strongly apply insight 3: There is usually no way to get better and stay better but by: continual work and practice in looking for, and finding, one's core irrational beliefs; actively, energetically, and scientifically disputing them; replacing one's absolutist musts with flexible preferences; changing one's unhealthy feelings to healthy, self-helping emotions; and firmly acting against one's dysfunctional fears and compulsions. Only by a combined cognitive, emotive, and behavioral, as well as a quite persistent and forceful attack on one's serious emotional problems, is one likely to significantly ameliorate or remove them - and keep them removed.



I had a great many sex and love cases where people were absolutely devastated when somebody with whom they were compulsively in love didn't love them back. They were killing themselves with anxiety and depression.

Albert Ellis

HUMAN THINKING EMOTION AND BEHAVIOR

"REBT assumes that human thinking, emotion, and action are not really separate or disparate processes, but that they all significantly overlap and are rarely experienced in a pure state. Much of what we call emotion is nothing more nor less than a certain kind - a biased, prejudiced, or strongly evaluative kind - of thought. But emotions and behaviors significantly influence and affect thinking, just as thinking influences emotions and behaviors.

Evaluating is a fundamental characteristic of human organisms and seems to work in a kind of closed circuit with a feedback mechanism: Because perception biases response and then response tends to bias subsequent perception. Also, prior perceptions appear to bias subsequent perceptions, and prior responses appear to bias subsequent responses. What we call feelings almost always have a pronounced evaluating or appraisal element.

REBT then generally proposes that many of these self-defeating cognitive, emotive and behavioral tendencies are both innately biological and indoctrinated early in and during life, and further grow stronger as a person continually revisits, clings and acts on them.

REBT differs from other clinical approaches like psychoanalysis in that it places little emphasis on exploring the past, but instead focuses on changing the current evaluations and philosophical thinking-emoting and behaving in relation to themselves, others and the conditions under which people live.



Psychological dysfunction

Irrational and dysfunctional ways and patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving are contributing to much human disturbance and emotional and behavioral self- and social defeatism. REBT teaches that when people turn flexible preferences, desires and wishes into grandiose, absolutistic and fatalistic dictates, this contributes to disturbance and upsetness. There are three core beliefs or philosophies that humans tend to disturb themselves through:



<p><i>"I absolutely MUST, under practically all conditions and at all times, perform well (or outstandingly well) and win the approval (or complete love) of significant others. If I fail in these important - and sacred - respects, that is awful and I am a bad, incompetent, unworthy person, who will probably always fail and deserves to suffer."</i></p>	<p><i>"Other people with whom I relate or associate, absolutely MUST, under practically all conditions and at all times, treat me nicely, considerately and fairly. Otherwise, it is terrible and they are rotten, bad, unworthy people who will always treat me badly and do not deserve a good life and should be severely punished for acting so abominably to me."</i></p>	<p><i>"The conditions under which I live absolutely MUST, at practically all times, be favorable, safe, hassle-free, and quickly and easily enjoyable, and if they are not that way it's awful and horrible and I can't bear it. I can't ever enjoy myself at all. My life is impossible and hardly worth living."</i></p>
<p>Holding this belief when faced with adversity tends to contribute to feelings of anxiety, panic, depression, despair, and worthlessness.</p>	<p>Holding this belief when faced with adversity tends to contribute to feelings of anger, rage, fury, and vindictiveness.</p>	<p>Holding this belief when faced with adversity tends to contribute to frustration, and discomfort, intolerance, self-pity, anger, depression, and behaviors such as procrastination, avoidance, and inaction.</p>

At the core of irrational beliefs there often are explicit or implicit rigid demands and commands, and extreme derivatives like awfulizing, frustration intolerance, people deprecating, and over-generalizations are accompanied by these. The core dysfunctional philosophies in a person's evaluative emotional and behavioral belief system, are also very likely to contribute to unrealistic, arbitrary and crooked inferences and distortions in thinking. REBT therefore first teaches that when people in an insensible and devout way overuse absolutistic, dogmatic and rigid "shoulds", "musts", and "oughts", they tend to disturb and upset themselves.

Disturbed evaluations to a large degree occur through over-generalization, wherein people exaggerate and globalize events or traits, usually unwanted events or traits or behavior, out of context, while almost always ignoring the positive events or traits or behaviors. For example, awfulizing is partly mental magnification of the importance of an unwanted situation to a catastrophe, or horror, elevating the rating of something from bad to worse than it should be, to beyond totally bad, worse than bad, to the intolerable, and to a "holocaust".

The same exaggeration and overgeneralizing occurs with human rating, wherein humans come to be arbitrarily and axiomatically defined by their perceived flaws or misdeeds. Frustration and intolerance then occur when a person perceives something to be too difficult, painful or tedious, and by doing so exaggerates these qualities beyond one's ability to cope with them.

Essential to REBT theory is also the concept of secondary disturbances which people sometimes construct on top of their primary disturbance. As Ellis emphasizes:

"Because of their self-consciousness and their ability to think about their thinking, they can very easily disturb themselves about their disturbances and can also disturb themselves about their ineffective attempts to overcome their emotional disturbances."



Mental wellness

Mental wellness results from an adequate amount of self-helping, flexible, logico-empirical ways of thinking, emoting and behaving. When a perceived undesired and stressful activating event occurs, and the individual is interpreting, evaluating and reacting to the situation rationally and self-helpingly, then the resulting consequence is likely to be more healthy, constructive and functional. This does not mean that a relatively un-disturbed person never experiences negative feelings, but REBT does hope to keep debilitating and un-healthy emotions and subsequent self-defeating behavior to a minimum. To do this REBT promotes a flexible, un-dogmatic, self-helping and efficient belief system and constructive life philosophy about adversities and human desires and preferences.

REBT generally teaches and promotes:

- That the concepts and philosophies of unconditional self-acceptance, other-acceptance, and life-acceptance are effective philosophies in achieving mental wellness and mental health.
- That human beings are inherently fallible and imperfect and that they are better off accepting their and other human being's totality and humanity, while at the same time not liking some of their behaviors and characteristics. That they are better off not measuring their entire self or their "being" and give up the narrow, grandiose and ultimately destructive notion of giving themselves any global rating or report card. This is because all humans are continually evolving and are far too complex to accurately rate; all humans do both self- and social-defeating and self- and social-helping deeds, and have both beneficial and un-beneficial traits at certain times and in certain conditions. Ideas and feelings about self-worth are largely definitional and are not empirically confirmable or falsifiable.
- That people are better off accepting life with its hassles and difficulties, which is not always in accordance with their wants, while trying to change what they can change and live as elegantly as possible with what they cannot change.



REBT Intervention

REBT is a therapeutic system of both theory and practices; generally one of the goals of REBT is to help clients see the ways in which they have learned how they often needlessly upset themselves, teach them how to un-upset themselves and then how to empower themselves to lead happier and more fulfilling lives. The emphasis in therapy is generally to establish a successful collaborative therapeutic working alliance based on the REBT educational model. Although REBT teaches that the therapist or counsellor should demonstrate unconditional other-acceptance and unconditional positive regard, the therapist is not necessarily always encouraged to build a warm and caring relationship with the client. The tasks of the therapist or counsellor include understanding the client's concerns from his point of reference, and working as a facilitator, teacher and encourager.

In traditional REBT, the client together with the therapist, in a structured active-directive manner, often work through a set of target problems and establish a set of therapeutic goals. In these target problems, situational dysfunctional emotions, behaviors and beliefs are assessed in regards to the client's values and goals. After working through these problems, the client learns to generalize insights to other relevant situations. In many cases, after going through a client's different target problems, the therapist is interested in examining possible core beliefs and more deep rooted philosophical evaluations and schemas that might account for a wider array of problematic emotions and behaviors. Although much of the time REBT is used as a brief therapy, in deeper and more complex problems, longer therapy is promoted.

In therapy, the first step is often that the client acknowledges the problems, accepts emotional responsibility for these and has willingness and determination to change. This normally requires a considerable amount of insight, but as originator Albert Ellis explains:

"Humans, unlike just about all the other animals on earth, create fairly sophisticated languages which not only enable them to think about their feelings, their actions, and the results they get from doing and not doing certain things, but they also are able to think about their thinking and even think about thinking about their thinking."



Through the therapeutic process, REBT employs a wide array of forceful and active, meaning multimodal and disputing, methodologies. Central to these methods and techniques is the intent to help the client challenge, dispute and question their own destructive and self-defeating cognitions, emotions and behaviors. The methods and techniques incorporate cognitive-philosophic, emotive-evocative-dramatic, and behavioral methods for disputation of the client's irrational and self-defeating constructs, and helps the client come up with more rational and self-constructive ones. REBT seeks to acknowledge that understanding and insight are not enough; in order for clients to significantly change, they need to pinpoint their irrational and self-defeating constructs and work forcefully and actively at changing them to more functional and self-helping ones.

REBT posits that the client must work hard to get better, and in therapy this normally includes a wide array of homework exercises in day-to-day life assigned by the therapist. The assignments may for example include desensitization tasks, i.e., by having the client confront the very thing he or she is afraid of. By doing so, the client is actively acting against the belief that is often contributing significantly to the disturbance.

Another factor contributing to the brevity of REBT is that the therapist seeks to empower the client to help himself through future adversities. REBT only promotes temporary solutions if more fundamental solutions are not found. An ideal successful collaboration between the REBT therapist and a client results in changes to the client's philosophical way of evaluating him- or herself, others, and his or her life, which will likely yield effective results. The client then moves toward unconditional self-acceptance, other-acceptance and life-acceptance while striving to live a more self-fulfilling and happier life.





Anger: The High Price of Losing Your Cool

His Holiness The Dalai Lama was asked whether it was ever useful or legitimate to get angry with someone else. He sat in silence for several minutes, exactly like a chess player meditating on the consequences of all the possible moves, and then, having exhausted all the possibilities, he simply said, "No."

Alvin, a 53-year-old lawyer, came to me because of his miserable marriage. He said that he often had heated rows with his wife, Peggy, who frequently nagged him and complained. He also reported bitterly that Peggy would never keep the house clean enough or prepare meals as he would like them prepared. Upon discussion, it turned out that he judged his wife's performance by perfectionist standards. Although Alvin said he was finding his marriage intolerable, he revealed, in answer to my questions, that he most definitely did not want a divorce and was afraid that Peggy would leave him.

A Demanding Spouse

What was really wrong with Alvin's marriage? Since she frequently complained and threatened to leave, I asked Alvin what Peggy was so unhappy about.

"I don't know," he replied sullenly.

"Well," I asked him, "if she were here right now, what would *she* say was making her so unhappy?"

"That I'm always correcting her."

"And do you always correct her?"

In answer to this, Alvin irritably began again to recite his wife's shortcomings, especially her failure to clean and cook to his satisfaction. The root of Alvin's problem was his anger at his wife, which sprang from his demandingness.

Alvin was not at first aware that he was a demander. However, there was a pattern visible in his remarks about his wife. This pattern implied that he was ruler of the universe and his wife his subject. Such an outlook is, of course, ludicrous, but it was implicit in Alvin's tone of injured resentment and the uncompromising way he described the issues between them.



Made explicit, Alvin's attitude amounted to the following:

- Peggy MUST keep the house clean, and she deserves to be punished because she doesn't
- Peggy OUGHT to prepare meals just the way I want them
- Peggy SHOULD understand me (by "understanding" him, Alvin meant that she should agree with his point of view)

Underlying these demands, preferences that reflected Alvin's tastes, values, and hopes were evident:

- I WOULD LIKE the house cleaned and the food prepared to my specifications, and it's disappointing that they're not
- I PREFER that Peggy see things my way

Alvin has a legitimate right to such preferences. His preferences weren't his emotional problem. Alvin's disturbance arose when he escalated his subjective preferences into godlike commands: "Because I'd love it if you kept the house cleaner, prepared meals to my taste and didn't hassle me, you MUST do as I say!"

Alvin had an attitude very common in troubled marriages: "Why should I be the one to change? If she treated me better, I wouldn't be so upset. She SHOULD be the one to change." I persuaded Alvin - and he took a lot of persuading - that this attitude was irrelevant and impractical. If he did not want a divorce, then he was stuck with Peggy, and realistically there was no likelihood that she would start behaving according to his ideal picture of how she "should" behave.

Alvin's "musts" were without foundation. No reason exists that Peggy or anyone else MUST do as Alvin likes. If Alvin actually did run the universe, with Peggy as his slave, his demandingness would have been reasonable. You might think it was pretty crazy for Alvin to view himself - a very limited, imperfect person - as ruler of the universe. *Yet such a view is the essence of all anger.*



A Disabling Emotion

Anger is not an involuntary emotional response to a specific situation. Anger arises from a philosophy - a way of viewing the world. At its core, anger represents an outlook of grandiosity, self-righteousness, commanding, and condemning.

Many mental health professionals disagree with this view, that all kinds of anger are generally bad for you. Most therapists classify anger as “appropriate” or “inappropriate” according to context, and they usually argue that, when appropriate, it is healthy to express anger (“let it out”) and unhealthy to suppress anger (“bottle it up”).

Recent research, however, contradicts this popular view, and suggests that all anger, expressed or suppressed, is harmful to your health and damaging to your relationships with other people. Among the many difficulties associated with anger are:

- Increased likelihood of heart attack, stroke, and hypertension
- Greater difficulty in solving problems constructively
- A tendency for the anger, which may start in one area of your life, to overlap and extend into other areas
- Preoccupation with thoughts of revenge
- Adopting an antagonistic attitude which needlessly alienates other people with whom it’s advantageous to have cordial dealings
- A predisposition to violence, especially child abuse



But doesn't expressing anger help release a lot of pent-up frustration? It's true that an outburst of anger may sometimes momentarily provide relief. But psychological distress often takes its toll on the body, and some preliminary evidence suggests that expressed anger causes more physical damage than suppressed anger. There is, however, a third alternative to suppressing or expressing your anger: Don't make yourself angry in the first place!

The “expressive” approach implies that anger is something inside you, like a gallbladder. If your gallbladder bothers you, you could have it removed, and then it won’t bother you anymore. Similarly, if you can get your anger out, it won’t be inside you any more, causing distress.

This view is hopelessly mistaken. Anger is not a physical entity. It’s a feeling generated by an attitude or belief. You don’t free yourself of feelings by expressing the attitudes and beliefs that create them. That usually reaffirms and strengthens those attitudes and thus makes the feeling more likely to return.

Consider an opposite sort of feeling, like love - a feeling that we often want to continue. It’s clear that the more you express feelings of love, tenderness, and caring, the more loving, tender, and caring you are likely to become. No one would suppose that by expressing such feelings you were “letting them out” and thus losing them.

It’s exactly the same with the self-destructive feeling of anger. If you express your anger, you reaffirm and solidify your angry attitude, and make it more difficult to dispel. If you refrain from expressing your anger, this may be the first step towards avoiding anger entirely.

