

Exchange Vocabulary - © Robert F. Sarmiento, Ph.D.

An upset feeling appears to be more caused by the way I am thinking about what is happening or has happened, rather than the event itself. To alter a feeling of mine, and my behaviour, I might try the following 'Exchange Vocabulary' tool.

When I first try this different way of thinking and speaking, it might not 'feel' right. The more I sit with it, however, the more natural a realistic belief might become.

It has been SHOWN to help; I might attempt to prove it to myself by giving it a fair try.

Word Exchange Table

Perhaps instead of thinking - unhelpful:	I might consider Thinking or Saying - Helpful:
All	Some
Always	Often
Awful	Highly undesirable
Bad/Evil	Unhelpful
Bad Person	Unhelpful behaviour
I Can't (I can't do that)	I HAVEN'T done that YET
I Can't (I can't drink)	I CHOOSE Not To (I CHOOSE not to drink or use)
I Can't Stand	I don't like
Good	HELPFUL
I Have To	I CHOOSE to - I DESIRE - I'd LOVE to
I am a Failure	I didn't succeed at this ONE thing, yet
I Must	I prefer to
I Need To	I CHOOSE to - I DESIRE to
I Ought to	It's a Better CHOICE For Me To
I Should	I CHOOSE TO
I've got to	I get to - I'd like to - I'd love to
I WANT!	I want to

Statements

Perhaps Instead of Saying - unhelpful:	I might consider Saying or Thinking - helpful:
I can't stand my job	I don't like a part, or all, of my job – I can tolerate what I don't like, however
I have to do well	I CHOOSE TO attempt to do well
I'm a loser	I didn't succeed at this ONE task, YET
I need love	I would like love, however it isn't essential - I might GIVE love
You are a bad person	That behaviour of yours is not helpful
You never help me	I Haven't been helped by you This ONE Time
You shouldn't do that	I would prefer you do this thing

Emotional Vocabulary Exchange

Perhaps Instead of Saying – unhelpful:	I might consider Saying or Thinking - helpful:
I'm Angry	I 'feel' annoyed
I'm Anxious	I 'feel' concerned – I 'feel' EXCITED
I'm Depressed	I 'feel' sad
Guilt or Shame or Remorse	I'd rather I had not done that – as a human, I do stuff
Hurt	I 'feel' disappointed
Jealous	I 'feel' concern for our relationship
Shame	I regret that act – however I acted like a fallible human being
Day One – I Start Again	Continue; Refocus; Learn; Fine tune; Build on; Add to; Review; Acknowledge progress and gain; recommit.

REBT does not endeavour to eliminate an emotion. Quite the contrary!

An emotion tends to be a very useful part of the human advantage – especially when HELPFUL!

Another speaking or thought alteration that might be considered:

I'm sorry I'm late.	Thankyou for waiting for me. Is this still a convenient time to get together?
I'm sorry I've been so needy lately.	Thankyou for being here for me.
I'm sorry to ask you for another favour.	Thankyou for helping me out.
I'm sorry I made a mistake.	Thankyou for pointing out the error.
I'm sorry I can't make it tonight.	Thankyou for inviting me! I would have loved to come, however I'm not able to.
I'm sorry I'm emotional.	Thankyou for loving me.
I'm sorry I've been distant.	Thankyou for being understanding.

How important is it to precede my feeling with 'I FEEL' and to state my feeling?

When I say 'I AM upset' - 'I AM hurt' - 'I AM angry' - I am tending to state that the 'feeling' is who I am - it defines me.

Probably more helpful for me to say 'I FEEL upset' - 'I FEEL hurt.' That way, I am likely moving a little away from having the emotion 'define me' - 'seeing it' a bit more as an experience I might be able to interact with, or modify, at some point.