

Disputation (D)

The **process** of disputation involves examining my belief (B) to test it for several things:

- **To what extent might it be true?**
- **To what extent might it be logical?**
- **What effect might the belief be having on me - how HELPFUL might it be?**

To what extent might they be actually an Unhelpful Belief - uB?

Scientific, Empirical, Evidence Based, Reality Based Disputations:

- Where is the evidence that this is true, or that says it must be so?
- Where is it written in the universe in stone that _____ is true?
- How “horrible” is this really (compared, say, to being fed feet first through a mincing machine on a cold day)?
- Why **MUST!** this be so?

Logical Disputations (how does it follow from the reasoning I am using to defend it?):

- How does it follow that.....?
- How is this actually true?
- How can I explain why this is true?
- How do I know that this automatically follows on – what else might be possible?
- What makes me a SPECIAL CASE and that MY life **MUST!** always be the way I say?
- Why **MUST!** my relationship be the way I say it **MUST!** be?
- **Because I say I SHOULD! or MUST! do this**, how does it follow that this will be what I do?
- **Because I say a person SHOULD! or MUST! do this**, how does it follow that this will be what they do?
- **Because I say a situation SHOULD! or MUST! be this way**, how does it follow that it will be?

Practical, Pragmatic or Functional Disputation:

- In what ways is this belief consistent with a value of mine and how will it help me reach my goal?
- What benefit to me is this belief? How is it helping me to stay safe, sober and alive?
- What is a reason I would CHOOSE TO believe this thing that causes me so much upset?
- If I continue to tell myself this, how might I feel? How might this help me?
- In what way is holding this belief helping me or hurting me?
- How is this thought producing an emotion I want to have?
- What is a way I might dislike it, yet still live with it?
- In what way might I “stand” this thing?
- In what way might I still take action, despite it?

I look for an **ABSOLUTE** thought - uB - **should, must, never, always, awful, terrible, horrible, and the “Ican'tstandit's!”** (Ways that I am attempting to force my will on the world, or am causing myself to suffer unnecessarily) - and **dispute, dispute, dispute!**

I REMEMBER:

- “Weak” disputing might lead to a “weak” **Effective New Belief (E)**
A disputation work better when **PERSISTENT, POWERFUL AND VIGOROUS!!!**

Helpful versus Unhelpful:

Three key questions I might ask myself about my belief:

1. How does my Belief tend to HELP ME or hinder me over the long run?

- **Helpful thinking can be defined as thinking that is beneficial to me over the longer run.**
- Unhelpful thinking can be defined as thinking that hinders me over the longer run.

Follow-up question: **If my Belief tend to hinder me, what HELPFUL Belief might be more likely to help me reach toward my goal and help me to feel a bit better?**

2. In what way is my Belief consistent with a KNOWN fact and actual reality?

- **Helpful thinking can be defined as thinking that is consistent with a known fact.**
- Unhelpful thinking can be thinking that is inconsistent with, or unsupported by, a known fact.

Follow-up question: **If my Belief appears inconsistent with actual reality, then what HELPFUL Belief might be more consistent with actual reality?**

3. In what way is my Belief logical?

- **Logical means thinking that makes sense – that actually follows on.**
- Unhelpful thinking can be thinking that doesn't follow on from what has occurred.
- For example, if I said I would very much like to succeed at something, or it would be really helpful if I did, does it logically follow that therefore I **MUST!** or **WILL!** succeed? Whilst I can certainly work towards it, the necessity for success does not follow logically from the fact that success would be beneficial.

Follow-up question: **If my Belief is illogical, which Helpful Belief would make more sense logically?**

DISPUTATIONS – Humorous:

- What is wrong with the notion I am Queen or King of the entire World and my Loyal Subjects owe me a good life?
- Why can't it be raining just on the other person?
- Why can't the hole just be on the other person's side of the boat?
- How do they know nobody lives forever? **What if I AM that exception?**
- **Why can't I be the only one who doesn't have to think about using their time wisely?**

A helpful technique might be to add, "**and that means**" after each uB (Gently).

For instance, "I will be bankrupt," and that means? What?

I won't be able to take care of myself? I will be homeless? My lifestyle will suffer - I won't be in control?

Rather than jump to the worst case, I can look to make room for a more hopeful outcome. There is plenty of hope for treatment in a serious illness, for example.

There are some things that happen that really are pretty far up there on the 'horrible' scale - a loved one dying or getting a severe illness are probably an example. It is VERY okay for a time to be upset, off-kilter, assailed by grief and fear, as I try to process a whole lot of emotional things. I might attempt to be a little compassionate and understanding with myself as I grieve. Trying to remember self-care.

While an ABC might help me lessen some self-imposed unnecessary emotional suffering, my DEMAND!, a situation might itself still be pretty tough (((Hugs))).