

## Taking Responsibility For Your Moods

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy** teaches you to become aware of & take responsibility for your thoughts, emotions and actions.

- **Emotional Intelligence** reflects your ability to accurately identify your emotions.
- **Emotional Self-Regulation** refers to the ability to manage your emotions.

*The key to managing emotions is learning to cope by aligning your thoughts and your actions with your values.*

**You may not always choose what happens to you** (criticism, hardship, betrayal, injustice, crime, violence, accidents/injury/trauma or loss) And you may not always choose emotions (fear, anger, guilt, grief, loneliness, inferiority, unworthiness) **but you always choose your response to emotions & events.**

**Stimulus: Anything inside or outside of your body that triggers your response.**

Acknowledge what is happening inside of you and around you.

*Internal = your own feelings & thoughts: everything inside of your body*

*External = Everything outside of your body: other people & events*

### Examples of Internal Stimulus:

Health/appetite/fatigue/pain  
Injury/illness/disease/trauma  
Anxiety/worry/fear  
Depression/loss/grief  
Anger/resentment/blame  
Guilt/shame/loneliness  
Inferiority/insecurity/jealousy  
Boredom/stagnation

### Examples of External:

Change/challenges/schedules  
Education/employment/economy  
Family/dating/marriage/parenting  
Conflict/separation/divorce  
Injustice/unfairness/betrayal  
Bullying/intimidation/crime  
Accidents/Natural Disasters  
Violence/War/ Death

**You**

**have**

**A**

**choice**

**“Responsible” means:**

**You are ABLE to**

**CHOOSE**

**Your**

**Response.**

### Response

You have no choice about the stimulus, but you can choose what happens next.  
..You choose *your response*.

- Fight: Stuck in Blame/Anger/Rage**  
Feeling stuck in blame, resentment & anger, “I should not have to feel this way!”  
“They are the problem! It’s their fault!—demanding that “they” change.
- Flight: Avoid/Deny/Escape with bad habits and self-defeating behaviors;**  
Quick fixes/denial & avoidance  
**Excessive** social media, working, eating, cleaning, spending, clutter, gambling, porn, **unhealthy relationships codependence—** (obsessing about changes other people should make) gossip, affairs, tantrums, domestic violence, smoking/drinking/drug abuse.
- Freeze: Wounded/Victim/Martyr**  
Feeling stuck in guilt, worry, helplessness, inferiority. Waiting to be rescued, helped or saved.
- Choose Dignity & Self-Respect:**  
*Aligning thoughts & actions with your values— be the role model.*
  - Breathe (Calm Mind = Wise Mind)
  - Reframe (Challenge Distorted Thoughts)
  - Embrace Self-Compassion
  - Accept Reality That Feelings Are NOT Facts
  - Treat yourself and others with dignity
  - Heal with Problem-Solving, Coping and Seeking Support
  - Every Challenge Offers Opportunities

**“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”** Viktor Emil Frankl, M.D., Ph.D. (26 March 1905 – 2 September 1997) was an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist as well as a Holocaust survivor and author of *Man's Search for Meaning*

## Stimulus → Choice → Response

**What does “stimulus/choice/response” actually mean and how does it apply to you?**

Let’s take a few moments to process the information on the previous page.

*Have you worried about what other people will think?*

*Ever felt too afraid to address conflict—or regret how you “lost control”?*

*What do you do with your thought that you “are not good enough”?*

*How do you cope with feelings of anger, jealousy or betrayal?*

*Do you trust and love again after a broken heart?*

*If you have always thought this way, how do you choose differently now?*

*If you feel it, do you think it must be true?*

**There is a difference between your *stimulus* (automatic physical and emotional responses)— which you have no control over— so they are not your choice and your intentional, or chosen *response* gained through emotional intelligence.**

**Stimulus:** Review the left column depicted on the previous page. **Stimulus refers to everything inside and outside of your body.** The stimulus is what triggers your response. **Internal stimulus** refers to everything happening inside your body **automatically**: thoughts, emotions and physical bodily sensations. Everything listed in the stimulus column is *out of your control*. You don’t get to choose the automatic thoughts, emotions and physical sensations that pop into your awareness—those are controlled by the limbic system. The limbic system functions without your consent. The hair will stand up on the back of your neck whether you want it to or not. Your pulse rate increases without consulting you. You have no control over the irrational, emotional or judgmental thoughts that spontaneously pop into your head. **Just because a thought pops in, doesn’t mean your thought is true.**

**External stimulus** refers to everything outside of your body including other people’s thoughts, emotions and actions, and literally everything else. You have no control over how other people think, act or feel. When an external stimulus such as a rude person, a challenging task or stressful event triggers your uncomfortable thoughts and emotions, it is easy to believe that those thoughts and feelings are facts. If you *feel* like a failure, then in your mind, it must be true. But the truth is that someone’s rudeness represents his or her social skills, it is not about you. Mistakes are human. Everyone faces life-challenging events. Just because you “*feel*” inferior, defeated or alone, does not mean that it is true.

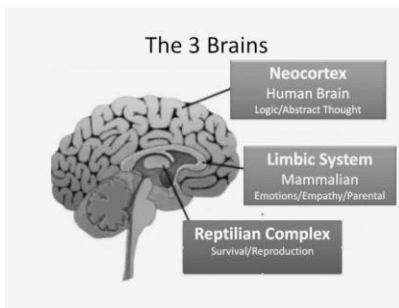
**Thoughts are not truths. Feelings are not facts.**

Now review the “**Response**” depicted in the right column of the previous page. **Becoming aware of your automatic thoughts and emotions creates choices about how to respond next.**

A calm brain’s allows logic and reason to transform emotions into insight with proactive rather than reactive responses. Without calming first, your brain may get stuck in reactive stress responses such as fight (anger, blame, resentment), flight (avoid, escape and denial) and freeze (wounded victim). A healthy coping response to the emotional triggers of stress, also known as *emotional self-regulation*, requires that you pause long enough to think rationally before you react. Once you focus on taking responsibility for how to respond to your own emotions and thoughts, you may choose to align your response with *your values*. Emotional self-regulation is the ability to address the physical and emotional needs of your body wisely. Information is power, care you have more brain power—higher emotional intelligence?

## Understanding Emotions: The 3 Brains

“Why does dumb stuff seem so smart when you are doing it?” Dennis the Menace



**Reptilian Brain**—is the *action, or power brain, focusing on survival instinct*. The reptilian brain controls: heart, lungs, and other vital organs. **It enables aggression, mating, and reaction to immediate danger**, often referred to as, the four Fs: Feeding, Fighting, Fleeing, and Reproduction. Notable behavior patterns include defense of self, family, and personal property, physical communication..

**Limbic System, Mammalian**— The limbic brain emerged in the first mammals and has the **power of feeling, as opposed to simply reacting**. The main structures of the limbic brain are the hippocampus, the amygdala, and the hypothalamus. The limbic system is composed of structures in the brain that deal with emotions (such as anger, happiness and fear) as well as memories, motivation and learning. It can record memories of behaviors that produced agreeable and disagreeable experiences, so it is responsible for what are called emotions in human beings.

**The Neocortex: Human brain**—The *thinking brain, seat of perception—all mental activity that we associate with being human*. It’s called “neo” because it is a relatively recent invention of mammals. Humans—and only humans—have an enormous cerebral cortex. The neocortex enables the most complex thought: planning, language, logic, will, and awareness as well as human emotions: feelings, relationship/nurturing, images and dreams and play. The thinking brain function is slower than the reptile and mammal brains. The logic center can be over ridden or shut down when the fight, flight and flee functions are activated.

**Emotional intelligence: EIQ** awareness of yours and of other’s emotions

**Emotional self-regulation:** The ability to calm yourself down and cheer yourself

**Emotional dysregulation:** (ED) commonly known as mood swings.

### Daniel Goleman’s 13 signs of high EIQ and emotional self-regulation:

1. **You think about feelings.** Emotional intelligence begins with what is called self- and social awareness, the ability to recognize emotions (and their impact) in both yourself and others.
2. **You pause.** Use your human brain, not reptile brain
3. **You strive to control your thoughts,** allowing yourself to live in a way that's in harmony with your goals and values.
4. **You benefit from criticism.** Keep your emotions in check and ask yourself: How can this make me better?
5. **You show authenticity.** Saying what you mean, meaning what you say, and sticking to your values and principles above all else.
6. **You demonstrate empathy.** Striving to understand--which allows you to build deeper, more connected relationships.
7. **You praise others.**
8. **You give helpful feedback.**
9. **You apologize.**
10. **You forgive and forget.**
11. **You keep your commitments,** develop a strong reputation for reliability and trustworthiness.
12. **You help others.**
13. **You protect yourself from emotional sabotage.**