

Taking Responsibility

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 your emotions is to learn to cope by aligning your thoughts and actions with your goals/values.

You may not always choose what happens to you (criticism, injustice, betrayal, hardship, crime, violence, accidents/injury/trauma or loss) And you may not always choose feelings (fearful, angry, guilty, sad, insecure, inferior, unlovable or lonely) **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:

Internal:

Anxiety/worry/fear
Depression/loss/grief
Anger/resentment/blame
Guilt/shame/loneliness
Inferiority/insecurity/jealousy
Boredom/stagnation

External:

Change/challenges
Responsibility/Schedules
Stress: family/school/work
Dating/marriage/parenting
Conflict/arguments
Injustice/unfairness/betrayal
Bullying/intimidation
Accidents /Injury/Illness
Divorce
Crime/Violence
Death

You

have

A

choice

**“Responsible”
means:**

**You are ABLE
to**

CHOOSE

Your

Response.

Response

You did not get to choose the stimulus, but you can choose what happens next. ..You choose your response.

Now what? What is your intention?

Fight: Stuck in Blame/Anger/Rage

Feeling stuck in blame, anger, and resentment. “They are the problem!— waiting for the “stimulus” to 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**— (obsessing about other people) gossip, affairs, domestic violence, addiction.

Freeze: Wounded/Victim/Martyr

Feeling stuck, helpless, inferior, worried and afraid. Waiting to be rescued, helped or saved.

Choose Dignity & Self-Respect:

*Be the best version of yourself by
Aligning thoughts & actions with your
values— be the role model.*

- **Breathe** (Fear holds your breath)
- **Reframe** (Challenge distorted thoughts)
- **Embrace emotions** (Feelings aren't facts)
- **Accept yourself** with compassion
- **Talk to yourself** as you would a beloved
- **Heal** by problem-solving and coping
- **Every challenge** brings 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 this 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?

What is the best way to stop worrying and to start addressing conflict?

How do you heal the thought that you "are not good enough"?

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

What is the right way to think, feel or act when someone disrespects you?

How do you trust and love again after a broken heart?

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

Stimulus: Notice 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 and emotions 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.

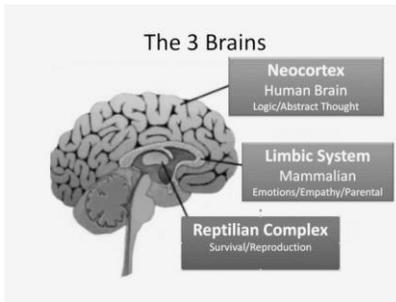
External stimulus refers to everything outside of your body including other people's thoughts, emotions and actions, and literally everything else. You have no control over what other people think, act or do. When an external stimulus such as a rude person, a challenging task or stressful event triggers 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.

Notice the "**Response**" column on the right, depicted on the previous page. **Responsible means response + able, you are able to choose your response.** Becoming aware of your thoughts and emotions creates choices. Your brain's frontal lobe allows logic and reason to transform emotions into insight. You may choose how you wish to respond to the awareness of your thoughts and emotions. Not all choices are healthy. Responses such as fight (anger, blame, resentment), flight (avoid, escape and denial) and freeze (wounded victim) may cause problems. A healthy coping response to emotional triggers, 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 refers to the ability to calm yourself down and cheer yourself up. It is the ability to use your emotions wisely.

Understanding Emotions:

“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.**