**Six Steps to Challenge Your Unenforceable Rules**

Yes, we all have “unenforceable rules”. One of mine is, “I should be treated fairly”

another one is, “you should like me”. Yet another, “you should be courteous”.

Let’s look at some of the most common Unenforceable Rules:

1. my partner has to be faithful
2. people must not lie to me
3. life should be fair
4. people have to treat me with kindness or care in the way I want
5. my life has to be easy
6. my past should have been different than it was
7. my parents should have treated me better

Here are six steps you can use to challenge your unenforceable rules:

1. recognize that you feel hurt, angry, alienated, depressed, or hopeless. Acknowledge that your feelings may be from memories of the past but that you experience the feelings in the present.
2. Remind yourself that you feel bad because you are trying to enforce and unenforceable rule.
3. Assert your willingness to challenge your unenforceable rule.
4. Find your unenforceable rule by asking yourself the following question: “what experiences in my life and my thinking of right now that I am demanding to be different?”
5. In your mind, change from “*demanding*” that you get what you want to “*hoping*” that you get what you want.
6. Notice that when you wish or hope things be the way you want, then you think more clearly and feel more peaceful.

The advantage of changing from demanding to desiring or hoping for an outcome is that you remain open to the possibility that you may not get what you want. If you hope for a good outcome, you try hard to make it happen.

Our happiness is inversely proportionate to our expectations![[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Adapated from, “Forgive for Good”, by Dr. Fred Luskin [↑](#footnote-ref-1)