

Work in Progress

Published monthly by Michele Crawford

Work in Progress is an electronic newsletter intended to assist individuals seeking optimum well-being.

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Feature Article: Change the way you think; Change your life Part Four  
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1) Note from Michele  
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Dear Reader

Albert Ellis has always been a voracious reader. When he began his research for developing Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) he studied many philosophies at length; including, but not limited to, Buddhism, Taoism, many Indigenous cultures and the Bible.

From these readings flowed a fundamental REBT principal that all human beings are born equally worthy; not less or more worthy than anyone else. This is both a gift and a responsibility.

Simply put, there has never been, nor will there ever be, another human person exactly like you. Since you will leave an imprint of your life long after you leave this world, it is your responsibility to do no harm. Failure to recognize the value of this universal law is an affront to all creation.

To fall short of this truth is diminishing yourself and all existence. According to the principles of REBT, there are two ways to do this.

1. To choose to live less than others leads to feeling unworthy. Unworthiness embraces the language of unassertiveness, self-criticism, people pleasing, insincerity, falsehoods and victim ideation: the metaphor of the doormat that allows people to walk over you.

Ellis describes the inner dialogue of unworthiness as self-downing. He also states that since this personal discourse is so dispiriting, you may as well eat worms. That he calls acting wormily.

2. To choose to live more than others is the conception of entitlement. The perception of superior power is conceit, arrogance, bullying, privilege, self-importance, aggression and lawlessness: the metaphor of the boots that walk over others.

The foundation of both is insecurity, immaturity, self-absorption and being controlling. Both groups morph into a perceived identity; sabotaging your authentic identity for instant gratification.

At the unassertive end of the Esteem continuum, Esteem beliefs do provide a superficial instrument for fitting in, pleasing others, idealism, manipulation, avoidance of conflict and so on.

On the other hand, aggressive beliefs can grant an agency for feeling important or powerful or omnipotent, displaying bravado, conning others, intimidation and the like.

All this is done in order to fit shallow, cultural and often shifting standards. Rewards from Esteem beliefs depend on a variety of factors including audiences, incentives, desired indulgences, subterfuge and even to be able to conceal real, often painful emotions from yourself and others.

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## 2) Feature Article: Change the way you think; Change your life Part Four

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E = Esteem beliefs violate the equality law. It is the irrational belief that external things determine a person's worth. Esteem is propped up by other people's opinions and or your accomplishments, possessions, appearance, money or what you do (versus who you are).

If you play hockey magnificently, your ego ascends ever upwards. But what happens to that ego if you permanently injure yourself and can no longer play? Or what happens to that ego if the audience boo's your performance? Or there are better players than you?

On the other hand, if you have a deep seated unworthiness, your hockey skills will only be a temporary fix. Your sense of not-good-enough endures under the accolades.

A rational alternative is both your acceptance of and attaching importance to your worth as a human being and then separating that worth from what you do and what others think of you. It's being celebratory of your accomplishments and humble, candid and realistic about your foibles. You then extend the same notion to others.

Esteem beliefs are an advertiser's dream. Selling products or services is so much easier when they can rely on your insecurities. Then you can feel more powerful, loveable, important, smarter, attractive and so on with external props. Of course, that only lasts a finite amount of time and the emptiness inside persists.

Similar to all irrational beliefs, esteem beliefs fall on a continuum from mild to extreme.

An unworthiness viewpoint falling on the subtle end would be people pleasers who interpret every facial expression, glance, whisper, gossip as a negative interpretation of either whom you are or what you do.

The problem with these assumptions is that you are also assuming others have nothing better to do than to make you the centre of their universe. Maybe their thoughts are far more introspective, neutral or even self-serving.

And of course, any interpretation that other people's thoughts are disapproving would automatically denote they are mean-spirited,

judgmental, callous and critical individuals. It's more a condemnation of their character than an accurate explanation of your worthiness.

Along the unworthiness continuum is this true story. A sweet young bride is waiting in the foyer of the church with her bridesmaids. Soon she will be walking down the aisle towards her waiting husband-to-be.

Suddenly, the outside door bursts open and her favourite aunt arrives late in a flutter of gregarious best wishes and congratulations. While hugging her, our young bride feels a stabbing sharp pain in her chest and realizes she has been deeply stuck by her aunt's corsage pin.

Not wanting to offend her aunt or create a scene, she sharply inhales, bites down on her lips to keep from screaming out loud and acts like everything is just fine.

The music starts and she moves forward to stand in front of her family and friends, smiling, smiling through excruciating pain. Five minutes into the ceremony she swoons into unconsciousness.

At the hospital, the doctors wasted precious time trying to identify the problem because at first it was assumed she had fainted from stress. They eventually discover her lung has collapsed.

They told her, because of a pre-existing condition, she came close to death. This young woman is then married to her husband while lying in a hospital bed.

Imagine how the aunt feels on hearing the cause of her injury. People pleasers often hurt more than themselves when they assume they can please everyone all the time.

Less excessive examples for aggressors' thinking is the entitlement of disrespect, littering, intrusive language, offensive displays of anger, petty crimes like shop lifting and graffiti and on and on and on.

A case in point of radical aggression is the majority of men serving hard time in prison. Their absolute beliefs of entitlement give them permission to take what they want with no empathy. The rights of others are disregarded because in their opinions, their own demands are more imperative.

Other historical examples of extreme aggression beliefs are corruption, cruelty, slavery, oppression, war, genocide and holocausts.

Both modes of irrational Esteem thinking create harm: to self, others, nature, the environment and the future. This is why the application of rational worthiness beliefs encompassing all humanity is a responsibility.

Among the many benefits of rational worthiness beliefs is the celebration of your authentic identity... your true empowered self.

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3) About Michele

Michele Crawford is a therapist who assists individuals who are struggling with trauma, anxiety or depression. Her passion for her work remains embedded in being able to connect with you in your suffering, helping you find real solutions no matter how complex the issue may be.

4) Counselling Services

Are you prepared to live with more happiness, optimism, confidence, self-worth and hope? If your answer is "yes," then your next step is to contact me for a free 20-minute phone consultation. We can then discuss how I might best help you resolve your problems of Trauma, Depression and Anxiety.

The benefits of counselling with Michele include: significantly reduced stress levels, an optimistic outlook in life, increased confidence and hope.

Privacy Policy

I want to reassure you that your e-mail address will never be shared or sold to anyone else.

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**Pass It Along**  
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