How to “10-90” Life: Using R.E.B.T. Skills In a Recovery Lifestyle

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Proud Grandpa of Seven

Learning to “Reprogram our brain” so that it works FOR US
“ATTITUDE is more important than facts. . . than the past . . than what other people think, say, or do. LIFE is 10% of what happens to you, and 90% of how you react to it.

ATTITUDE!”
A client of mine, a recovering alcoholic who had gone through this teaching in my IOP, lost his 25 year-old son to a heroin overdose on July 4.

In his deep grief, he was blaming all the people who had been using with his son, whom he was sure could have prevented this tragedy.

The day after his son’s funeral, he texted me with this message:

“10-90 and your talk about disease kept me from jail . . . thank you.”
Let's talk

We're all in this together
Let’s refresh our memory
Addiction: 1595-1605; < Latin addiction- (stem of addictiō) a giving over, surrender; enslaved

A pathological relationship with any mood-altering experiences which results in life-damaging consequences.

John Bradshaw

Addiction is defined as a chronic, relapsing brain disease that is characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use, despite harmful consequences. It is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain; they change its structure and how it works. These brain changes can be long lasting and can lead to many harmful, often self-destructive, behaviors.

National institute of Drug Abuse
Substance Use Disorders: mild, moderate, severe

“The essential feature of a substance use disorder is a cluster of cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms indicating that the individual continues using the substance despite significant substance-related problems.”

“Note . . . . Some clinicians will choose to use the word *addiction* to describe more extreme presentations, but the word is omitted from the official DSM-5 substance use disorder diagnostic terminology because of its uncertain definition and its potentially negative connotation.”
Potential Symptoms of this Neurological Disorder

A **mild disorder** is suggested by the presence of **two to three symptoms**

- Tolerance
- Withdrawal
- Loss of Control
- Preoccupation
- Cravings
- Neglect of responsibilities
- Continued use “in spite of” adverse consequences

A **moderate disorder** is suggested by the presence of **four to five symptoms**

A **severe disorder** is suggested by the presence of **six or more symptoms**

(addiction)
“Wow - that was pretty awesome! I can’t wait until I really get hooked on that stuff!”
Non-Substance Related Disorders: mild, moderate, severe
Tolerance? Withdrawal? Preoccupation? Cravings? The “have to” syndrome?

“Where would we be without our I-phones?”
Thank you, my children, my minions, my fellow technophiles.
Sherry Turkle is Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Professor of the Social Studies of Science and Technology in the Program in Science, Technology, and Society at MIT.

Reclaiming Conversation
The Power of Talk in a Digital Age
Sherry Turkle
Author of Alone Together
A small but important glimpse into Neurology
85 + BILLION brain cells (neurons)

This number is reduced to around 3 or 4 thousand in teenagers.

Simplest way to explain how our brains work:

Electrical impulses which trigger chemical messengers called neurotransmitters

All human activity

TRILLIONS of neural pathways.
A Substance Abuse Neural Pathway

An addicted person has literally “programmed their brain to work against them.”
Dopamine is a brain chemical involved in many different functions including movement, motivation, reward — and addiction. Nearly all drugs of abuse directly or indirectly increase dopamine in the pleasure and motivation pathways and in so doing, alter the normal communication between neurons.

Also, the firing of dopamine neurons occur when a pleasurable activity is expected, regardless of whether it actually happens or not. This suggests that dopamine may be involved in desire rather than pleasure.
Triggers: Beginning the “Reaction of Relapse”

- My first high
- People I use with
- Places I drink or drug
- Payday!
- Music I listen to while using
- Celebrations
- Unexpected bad news
- Relationship tensions
- Legal hassles
- Boredom
- Stress
- Grief
RECOVERY: “Sober Neural Pathway”
Learning to reprogram our brain
“I’m dying of thirst!”

“I’m starving to death – I haven’t eaten all day!”

“Can I bum a cigarette? I’m about to go crazy.”

It’s been said that no one is more motivated and energized than a Crack Cocaine addict at 3 a.m. in the morning looking for his next fix.
Damage to our brain’s “Reward center”

“Under normal conditions, this neurological system controls an individual’s natural rewards such as hunger, food, and social interactions. It is therefore an important determinant of motivation and incentive drive.”

Icahn School of Medicine at Mt. Sinai
“Brain Reward Pathways”

“(Addiction) is considered a brain disease because drugs change the brain; they change its structure and how it works.”

NIDA definition
The **tyranny** of cravings: a “Hi-jacked brain”

Here’s the message to your pre-frontal cortex:

“Cocaine/alcohol/heroin is **essential** for your continued existence.”

**GO GET SOME NOW !!!**

...cravings can be so penetrating that he will do things that he never would have thought he was capable of doing.
“When alcohol or drugs activate the dopamine system, the hippocampus – which creates new memories - ‘switches on,’ ensuring that you will remember everything about the experience very clearly—not only the high, but also the people, places, objects, smells, and tastes associated with it.”

“Once the brain has been damaged by alcohol or drugs, these signals will continue racing through your head, urging you to drink or use even when there is no substance in sight.”
“One of the major goals of drug addiction treatment is to teach addicts how to deal with the cravings caused by inevitable exposure to these conditioned cues.”

ALAN I. LESHNER, MD
“Addiction is a Brain Disease”
The Addiction Recovery Guide
What is REBT
Rational  Our THINKING
Emotive   Our EMOTIONS
Behavior  Our ACTIONS
Therapy   Our HEALING/GROWTH
“In REBT, to be **rational** it is necessary to be (a) Flexible and non-extreme (b) Pragmatic (c) Logical, and (d) Reality based.

Thus rationality is defined as that which is adaptable and moderate, helps people to achieve their basic goals and purposes, is logical, and is empirically consistent with reality.

Conversely **irrational** refers to that which is rigid and extreme, prevents people from achieving their basic goals and purposes, is illogical, and is empirically inconsistent with reality.”

Part I, Theory
“Rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) is a comprehensive approach to psychological treatment that deals not only with the emotional and behavioral aspects of human disturbance, but places a great deal of stress on its thinking component.

REBT is based on the assumption that what we label our "emotional" reactions are largely caused by our conscious and unconscious evaluations, interpretations, and philosophies.”

From: The Essence of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy: A Comprehensive Approach to Treatment by Albert Ellis
The Three Basic Musts (or “Have to’s”)

1. I **must** do well and win the approval of others for my performances or else I am no good.

   Often leads to **anxiety, depression, shame, and guilt**.

2. Other people **must** treat me considerately, fairly and kindly, and in exactly the way I want them to treat me. If they don't, they are no good and they deserve to be condemned and punished.

   Leads to **rage, passive-aggression and acts of violence**.

3. I **must** get what I want, when I want it; and I must not get what I don't want. It's terrible if I don't get what I want, and I can't stand it.

   Leads to **self-pity and procrastination**.

   **It is the demanding nature of the beliefs that causes the problem.**

Less demanding, more flexible beliefs lead to healthy emotions and helpful behaviors.
Online resource: for information, worksheets, etc. on REBT:

http://rebtnetwork.org
Will Ross, Webmaster
An comprehensive overview of CBT therapy and practice
Hardly any of my clients through the years can remember the initials REBT, or what it stands for . . .
Life is 10% of what happens to you, and 90% of how you react to it.
“Attitude” Learning to “10/90 Life”

by Charles Swindoll

“Attitude is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than success, than what other people think or say or do.

It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a business, a church, or a home.

The remarkable thing is, we have a choice every day of just what our attitude will be. We cannot change the past, we cannot change the actions of others, we cannot change the inevitable.

The only thing we can change is our attitude.

Life is 10% of what happens to us, and 90% of how we react to it.”
All the life “stuff” that happens to me - bummer!

90%

10%

How I REACT to it

Learning to think about how I can “Best Respond to it”

90%

10%

All the stuff I DEAL with

Or
Or choose to respond . . .
“A lot more choices than I assumed I had – sweet.”
Four Most IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT Words
Pay attention to yourself!

Metacognition: Thinking about your thinking
A challenge to recognize that we **DO LIFE** from “the inside out.”
The **AMAZING, MYSTERIOUS, WONDERFUL** gift of **OUR MIND**
Our minds are more complex and amazing than the most sophisticated and astounding computers in the world. Let’s
Our thoughts, feelings, words, intentions, etc. whenever we’re awake.

Just a very tiny percentage of ourselves at any given time.

All our experiences, memories, lessons we’ve learned, choices, etc. formed in us by our parents, peers, or culture, are somehow stored here.

“Who we really are.”
Our invisible “inside self”

Our Philosophies & Unspoken Rules

"Who we really are."

Philosophies

This is our worldview.

“Everything happens for a reason!”

“If something bad happens to me, it’s because I did something to deserve it.”

“You can’t trust the police – they’re really only out there to catch you doing something wrong. . . And if they get the chance, they’ll shoot you for no reason.”

“Sooner or later, everyone you love will cheat on you.”

“Yeah, I know smoking causes cancer, but hey, you gotta go some way . . .”

“Nothing good ever comes from pain and suffering . . . NOTHING!”
You only go around once in life. So grab for all the gusto you can. Even in the beer you drink. Why settle for less? When you're out of Schlitz, you're out of beer.
“How’s all that GUSTO workin’ out for you tonight?”
Our invisible “inside self”

Our Interpretations

These are based on our philosophies.

We human-types are “meaning-makers.” It’s what we do. When starting to talk, the first question we learn to ask our primary caregivers is: ______

“He just did that to hurt me !!!”

“Oh that? That proves there’s a conspiracy in Washington . . .”

“There’s NO OTHER POSSIBLE REASON she said that – she’s up to something, I just know it.”

“See – that promotion I got? I’m just being set up to fail.”

“Why did they smile that way when I came into the room? Have they been talking about me behind my back?”
“Wow, that was a great movie!!! Didn’t you think so?” “Well no, I think I just wasted $35. What a joke!”

“This class is SO BORING – I’m dying inside.”

“You’re an idiot – I’ve never heard anything so stupid as that.”

“I know Charlie’s probably not good for me, but he’s such an interesting guy . . . and I feel important to someone when he’s around.”
This, in many ways, is similar to a computer.

We have two main parts to our subconscious:

1. Our invisible "inside self"
   - Our Philosophies & Unspoken Rules
   - Our Interpretations
   - Our Evaluations

2. Our subconscious part of us

Things in life that happen, like:

- NOT GETTING CALLED FOR A 2ND INTERVIEW AT A JOB I REALLY WANTED!

We are like computers where things get 'filtered' through our conscious and subconscious minds.
I’ll NEVER get a decent job I like!

REBT teaches us that whatever we **think** about something determines how we **feel** about it.

And how we **feel**, often determines **what we say or do** (our actions). In other words, how we choose to “do life” at any given moment.

If our choices **work against us** in some manner, i.e. if they **ARE IRRATIONAL**, the way to prevent that in the future is to **“10-90 it”**.

**EXAMINE – CONSIDER –** and be **WILLING TO CHANGE**, our **THINKING**.

Changing our thoughts and beliefs about a situation gives us a different experience, a different set of emotions. Choosing new thoughts can help us greatly reduce, or even eliminate, high-risk feelings which may easily lead us to want to drink or drug.

If someone understands and **practices** this skill, it will go a long way towards preventing relapse.

**Attitude** (what’s stored in our ‘hard drive’) is more important than anything that may happen to us.
What you see is a bunch of black lines and white spaces. It’s your paradigm that makes you say, either “That’s an old woman” or “That’s a pretty young girl.”
Down the Road?

(chin)

her

nose

her

Hint: She doesn't want to look at you.
For example, here’s a young woman whose paradigms about important life issues shape her conscious thoughts, which then initiate her at-risk feelings, which then cause her to go use.
Scenario:

This woman has been struggling with heroin addiction for 9 months. But she has an NA sponsor, and she’s been clean for 8 days now. She’s gaining some hope she can stay sober.

She’s on her lunch break at an outdoor food court.

She spots her boyfriend across the way, talking to an attractive young woman.

They’re eating their lunch, laughing, and obviously having a really fun time with each other.

(uh-oh)
All of her past experiences and memories shape her P’s, I’s, and E’s in this scenario.

They shape her paradigms...

“My boyfriend’s flirting with his secretary!”
Interpretation

“He’s a real jerk!”
Evaluation

“Why do these things always happen to me?”
Philosophy

Her filters, assumptions, perspectives
Her inside self triggers “high risk emotions” in her Addictive Neural Pathway.

Smoking heroin is THE WAY not to have to feel what I am feeling.
“Hey girlfriend, I’m glad you told me you relapsed last night. But we need to talk about what happened -- what was going on with you?

“GIRL, you wouldn’t believe what I found out yesterday - MY MAN’S CHEATIN’ ON ME. Of course I got high.”

Her NA Sponsor
She needs to “10-90” this situation

Paradigm Shift

a new filter or lens through which to

THINK DIFFERENTLY about what she has just witnessed her boyfriend doing.

“Wait . . . I need to step back a minute and think differently about this situation. I am really feeling angry and jealous, and I’m wanting to go get high right now!”

“So … (deep breath)... let me find a better and healthier way to evaluate and interpret this situation so I can de-energize my urge to smoke heroin again.”

“Pepsi please.”
“. . . OK – I really don’t know who that woman is . . . It’s quite possible it’s his new supervisor, and assuming I know what’s going on is really upsetting me. I DON’T NEED THAT!”

“Clearly, it would be better if I did know who she is, but I don’t have to know right this minute; plus so far he hasn’t given me any reason to doubt his commitment to me. I CAN WAIT until tonight to talk about it.”

“. . . Whatever he’s doing, it’s just NOT TRUE that things like this ALWAYS happen to me. I think I’m just trying to find a reason to get high . . . I’m calling my sponsor right now.”
REBT or “10-90-ing” a situation isn’t magic! Her boyfriend may very well be cheating on her.

But ATTITUDE – how she chooses to process the “stuff” in her life – is more important than the tensions or disappointments with her boyfriend. Or of what anyone thinks, says, or does.
Learn Your ABC’s
Our
“Train of thought, feelings & actions”
Thoughts create feelings

Behavior reinforces thoughts

Feelings create behavior
And then we “10-90” the situation

Disputations to challenge irrational beliefs

Effective new beliefs replace the irrational ones

Effective new beliefs replace the irrational ones

Leading us to

Healthier, less disruptive emotions

Healthier, less disruptive emotions

Disruptive emotions

Healthier, less disruptive emotions

Disruptive emotions
Something happens (LIFE) and we react to it. The Train starts rolling!

Beliefs/Thoughts:
Cognition

Emotions: How we feel about what just happened.

Behaviors: What we say or do about what just happened.

I see my boyfriend flirting with a cute girl at a party!!!

Anger! Jealousy! Sad! Craving! Revenge!

OMG!! This guy’s a real jerk!

He’s flirting with my best friend!

Why does this always happen to me?

I freaking can’t believe this #^@*%^!

THAT’S IT – I’m gonna show his sorry butt!

I can’t believe it – I must be such a loser – guys ALWAYS end up cheating on me!”

I can’t stand it – I’ve gotta get something to drink!

Where’s the nearest bar?”
I've lost control again.
The THERAPY of REBT: “10-90” the situation

Add the D car to your train of thought.

Pay Attention To Yourself!
The Power of the Car

- Rational
- Balanced
- Non-extreme
- Flexible
- Reality-based
Recognizing and debating irrational thoughts
1. Are my thoughts based on all the facts relevant to the situation?
2. Are my thoughts helping me protect my life and my health?
3. Are my thoughts helping me achieve my short and long term goals?
4. Are my thoughts helping keep me out of conflict with others?
5. Are my thoughts leading me to feel the way I want to feel without having to resort to alcohol or drug abuse?
And a 6\textsuperscript{th} Rule for Rational Thinking:

“Your crystal ball is broken!”
Anyone! can help a friend who struggles with addiction to learn how to “10-90” life’s many “trigger” issues.
Let's talk

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
**Acknowledge** what they’re feeling:

“Looks like you’re really freaked out about what just happened.”

“Ok, take a deep breath, let’s relax a bit.”

“Are you wanting to go get high right now?”

“Let’s figure this thing out together – how’s that sound?”

“What are some of the things you’re thinking right now?”

“Can you imagine another way to think about the situation you’re in?”

- Relationship tensions
- Places I drink or drug
- Unexpected bad news
- Legal Hassles
- People I use with
- Celebrations
- Boredom Stress Grief
Activating Event/Adversity - Trigger

Beliefs
Thoughts

Consequences
Feelings

Consequences
Behaviors

Dispute
BE KIND for EVERYONE YOU MEET is FIGHTING a HARD BATTLE

Philo, Egyptian Philosopher, 50 BCE
Learning to practice and use REBT will help us escape some of the cages our THINKING has put us in!

“Just 10-90 it, Bro.”
MY JOB HERE IS DONE
1. **All-or-Nothing Thinking**

This refers to your tendency to evaluate your personal qualities in extreme, black-or-white categories. All-or-nothing thinking forms the basis for perfectionism. It causes you to fear any mistake or imperfection because you will then see yourself as a complete loser, and you will feel inadequate and worthless.

*She hates me ... (I'm just a loser)*

*She loves me ... (I can do no wrong)*

*No GREY areas allowed!*
2. **Overgeneralization**

When you overgeneralize, you arbitrarily conclude that one thing that happened to you once will occur over and over again, *will multiply like rabbits*. Since what happened is invariably unpleasant, you feel upset. You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. Mental Filter

You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that colors the beaker of water. When a person is depressed, they wear a pair of eyeglasses with special lenses that filter out anything positive. Because you are not aware of this “filtering process,” you conclude that everything is negative.
4. Disqualifying the Positive

You reject positive experiences by insisting they “don’t count” for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences. You don’t just ignore positive experiences, you cleverly and swiftly turn them into their nightmarish opposite. This thinking error is one of the most destructive forms of cognitive distortion.

“No no no no - you don’t get it. It’s all bad - useless, no hope...”
5. Jumping to Conclusions

You arbitrarily jump to a negative conclusion that is not justified by the facts of the situation. Two examples are: “mind reading” and “the fortune teller error.”

**Mind reading** – you make the assumption that other people are looking down on you, and you’re so convinced about this that you don’t even bother to check it out.

**Fortune Telling** – it’s as if you had a crystal ball that foretold only misery for you. You imagine that something bad is about to happen, and you take this prediction as a fact even though it is unrealistic.
6. Magnification and Minimization

You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else’s achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow’s imperfections). This is also called the “binocular trick.” Magnification commonly occurs when you look at your own errors, fears, or imperfections, and exaggerate their importance. This has also been called “catastrophizing” because you turn commonplace negative events into nightmarish monsters. When you think about your strengths,
7. Emotional Reasoning

You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: “I feel it, therefore it must be true. I feel like a jerk, so I must really be a jerk.” Or “I feel overwhelmed and hopeless, therefore my problems must be impossible to solve.”

“See -- I knew it! I just knew it was gonna rain! Geez... I can’t believe this!”
8. Should Statements

You try to motivate yourself with shoulds and shouldn’ts, as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. Other offenders are “musts” and “oughts.” The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct should statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.
9. Labeling and Mislabling

This is an extreme form of over-generalization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself: “I’m a loser.” When someone else’s behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label to him: “He’s a no-good s.o.b.” Mislabling involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.
10. Personalization

You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event, even though you were not primarily responsible for it. Personalization causes you to feel crippling guilt. You suffer from a paralyzing and burdensome sense of responsibility that forces you to carry the whole world on your shoulders. You have confused influence with control over others.