

WHAT'S RATIONAL?

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In Rational Behavior Therapy and Rational Self-Counseling, the word rational refers to behavior that obeys three or more of the five rules for optimal emotional health at the same time.

FIVE RULES FOR OPTIMAL EMOTIONAL HEALTH

1. Rational Behavior is based on obvious fact.

Obvious fact refers to any perception that can be recorded by a video camera or some other mechanical recording device. The human brain works like a camera. That's why RBT therapists teach people to do the camera check of their conflict related perceptions.

To do the camera check, ask yourself:

"Would a video camera have recorded the situation exactly as I said it happened?" If your answer is "yes", then you probably have described the fact of the situation. But if your answer is "no", then you probably have described your opinion about the situation. It's best to avoid calling your opinions facts.

2. Rational behavior best helps you protect yourself from probable harm.

3. Rational behavior best helps you achieve your short-term and long-term goals.

4. Rational behavior best helps you prevent your most undesirable conflicts with other people.

5. Rational behavior best helps you habitually feel the emotions you want to feel without alcohol, other drugs, or brain damage.

Your thinking is the single most important factor in your self-control. Therefore, it's best to check your conflict related thinking to make sure it's rational. The easiest way is to use the five questions for rational in their question forms.

THE FIVE RATIONAL QUESTIONS

- . Is my thinking (or behavior) based on fact?
- . Will my thinking (or behavior) best help me protect my life and health?
- . Will my thinking (or behavior) best help me achieve my short-term and long-term goals?
- . Will my thinking (or behavior) best help me avoid unwanted conflicts with others?
- . Will my thinking (or behavior) best help me feel the way I want to feel without alcohol or other drugs?

Three honest "no's" reveal irrational thinking (or behavior). It's best to immediately replace irrational thinking with thinking that is both rational and acceptable to you as a permanent new way of thinking about your current situation.

REMEMBER: What's rational for one person may not be rational for others. What's rational for one person at a particular time may not be rational for that person at another time. But the Five Rational Questions will be the same for everyone, at anytime.