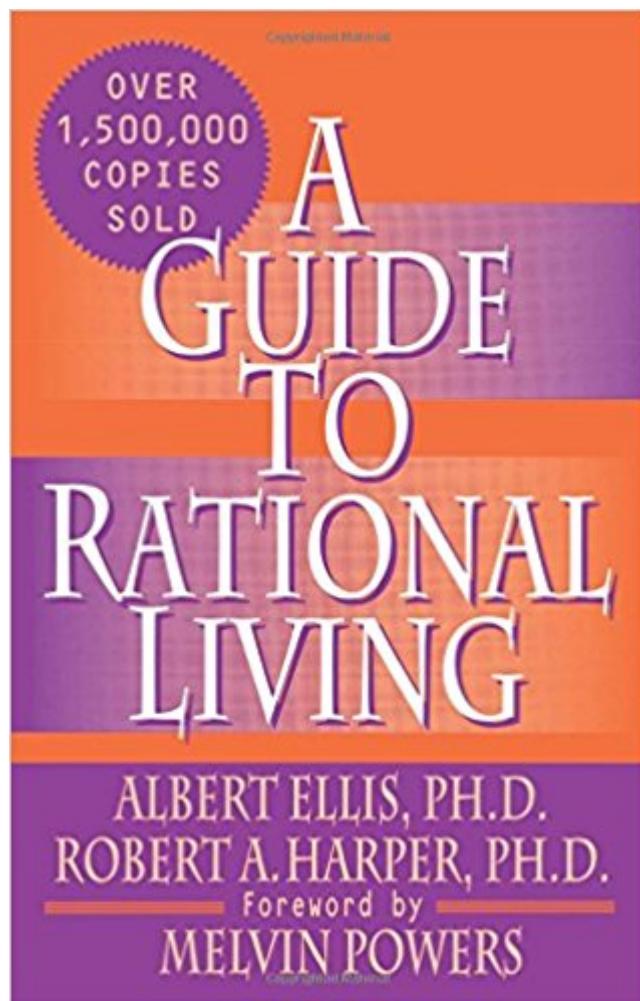


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# A Guide To Rational Living



## Synopsis

Direct, get-to-the-heart-of-the-problem methods to teach you what you do to needless upset yourself and make yourself emotionally stronger by the creators of the most popular forms of therapy in the world. From the foreword by publisher Melvin Powers: Years ago, after two decades of burning the midnight oil, reading manuscripts which professed to have all the virtues this one actually possesses, I found the original New Guide to Rational Living— a gem that has become a classic in the field of psychology. Since then, I am delighted to say, I have sold 1.5 million copies of this book in previous editions. Numerous readers have thanked me for making the book available and have related how positively it has affected their life. Undoubtedly this new, updated third edition will prove particularly valuable to present-day readers, who face unprecedented challenges in daily living. Those who have read a large number of euphoric and inspirational books without achieving lasting success will particularly appreciate this book. For although A Guide to Rational Living makes no promises, it can help readers more than all the other books put together. In the first chapter of this extraordinary new edition of A Guide to Rational Living, Drs. Albert Ellis and Robert A. Harper express the hope that readers will not “jump to the conclusion that we hand out the same old hackneyed, Pollyannaish message that you may have long ago considered and rejected as having no practical value.” This book, unlike others you have probably read, employs none of the jargon usually associated with psychology or psychiatry, and it may well prove to be the best book on psychotherapy for laymen ever written. It can provide emotionally disturbed individuals with many answers they seek, and it can help everyone to feel better about themselves and to deal with their lives more effectively. The authors use a unique method of projecting their solutions to common problems. Thus, they point out that the individual who feels inadequate and insecure suffers from, for example, “Irrational Belief No. 2: The idea that you must be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving.” Drs. Ellis and Harper use ten such ideas to bring out the scope of their psychotherapy, with subtle, helpful solutions that reflect their vast experience as therapists. They have training and a host of case histories, to buttress their advice. This not only makes for a more interesting book but creates confidence in the reader concerning the techniques suggested, all of which have proven effective in a clinical setting. Their direct, get-to-the-heart-of-the-problem methods show wide variance with most orthodox treatments that drag on interminably with clients never quite knowing where they stand. As far as I can see, here certainly lies, along with group therapy, the direction psychotherapy will take if it intends to make a real contribution to comprehensive health. If you feel you have the rigorous honesty necessary to conduct self-analysis, this book will be the most important one you have ever read. And it will seem

a boon to those who cannot pay the high fees charged for individual treatment. You have my best wishes as you join the 1.5 million people who have read and greatly benefited from A Guide to Rational Living since my publication of the first edition. You have chosen to read a book that has set the standard and that likely will remain the standard for years to come. Melvin Powers, Publisher Wilshire Book Company

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Excellent resource for those individuals who have autism or related disabilities where it is hard to take the perspective of other people. People with autism and related disabilities often have trouble understanding why others do not see the world from their own perspective. This book will help the socially confused person (said with the utmost of respect, as "socially confused" coined by Dr. Steven Gutstein of Relationship Development Intervention, is a very accurate way to describe individuals with autism and related social-emotional disabilities) I am an adult who is probably on the autism spectrum but was never diagnosed as a child. This book has helped me with my irrational beliefs as it relates to how other people conduct they are behavior. It has help me to change my belief system so I react differently when other people frustrate or disappoint me. And excellent resource. I only gave it four stars because I felt that it went into greater detail them was necessary to explain each theory presented.

While I don't agree with everything Ellis has to say here (particularly about philosophy), this is

among the best self-help books I've read (and I've read a fair number). In this book, Ellis argues that we've set up a lot of arbitrary rules for ourselves and that these cause a lot of our psychological distress. For example, we might take a preference like "I don't like it when it rains on weekends in summer because it messes up my golf game" and change that to something more along the lines of "it **MUST NOT** rain on weekends [inflexible rule]; it would be awful if it did [catastrophizing] and I couldn't stand it [low frustration tolerance]." ("Awful" being a code word for "much worse than it actually is," "total end of the world," "100% bad" or something along those lines). OK, maybe a bit of a contrived example, but you get the picture... If we held the preference that it didn't rain on weekends, we'd naturally be disappointed if it rained (perfectly normal reaction to something we dislike); if we held the rule that it **MUST NOT** happen (especially if we held it strongly), we'd be horrified and filled with anger at the injustice of the situation. This illustrates another thing I like about his mode of therapy - his basic realism. Stress happens, we just need to learn to respond to it without shooting ourselves in the foot. Similarly, it's not that we feel nothing in response to negative events (in the example above, we'd be genuinely disappointed that the weather prevented us from playing golf), it's just that we try to avoid overreacting. He makes the point (quite effectively, actually) that we actually make quite a lot of these rules without even realizing it; some of them may be pretty harmless but a lot of them can actually cause significant distress, psychological inflexibility, and behavioral issues, and may contribute in a significant way to various mental illnesses like depression, eating disorders, addiction, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (to name a few). For those who do struggle with compulsive behaviors, by the way, Jack Trimpey (of Rational Recovery) has several books applying the ideas in this book to addictive & compulsive behaviors and Tom Horvath (of SMART Recovery) has an excellent workbook on this - I'd encourage you to read this book as well as theirs and see if you'd be helped by them (both provide excellent alternatives to AA and other 12-step programs in my opinion). He does a great job of helping identify the thought patterns underlying distress in general as well as covering specific problems and problem behaviors (e.g. low frustration tolerance, indiscipline, etc.). People are often surprised by the lack of emphasis on "depth psychology" or examining the past. The authors' argument is that psychoanalysis failed because, regardless of how you got to your present situation, you still need to deal with your philosophy as it actually is today. My one criticism of this book is his implicit endorsement of existentialism. For example, I agree with the concept of Unconditional Self-Acceptance (see the book for details on this); however, I don't think he has a particularly good philosophical basis for this. His basic approach to self-worth is "well, you can always make it up and pretend it's true, even if you can't actually prove it." (I kid you not; in this case, this is evidently a guide to not-so-rational

living). Because of his endorsement of existentialism, he's completely unable to provide an objective basis for people's intrinsic value as humans. He also seems to support moral relativism in places (which, in spite of its widespread cultural acceptance, is philosophically incoherent in my opinion). Overall, these don't detract too much from the book (except for his discussion of anger, which I think is flawed); there are definitely rational ways you can come up with an objective basis for intrinsic human worth. (In my case, I just substituted my Christian beliefs in my worth before God for his command to "make it up"). Whether you're recovering from a psychological issue or not, this is a wonderful book to read. Everyone has some issues to work on whether they think so or not. We all have times where we disturb ourselves unnecessarily, as the authors would say, and this book can help you change. Maybe not be perfect but certainly much better. I for one wish I had read this when I was much younger; it could have saved me quite a bit of unnecessary pain.

I personally prefer Dr. Burn's Feeling Good Guidebook for my bibliotherapy but it's nice to have a copy of this great book by one of the inventors of CBT.

Very helpful book to help you understand the sometimes absurd assumptions we make when making decisions and judgments. Highly recommend to anyone, particularly those with self-esteem issues, highly stressful lives, or have suffered loss.

Ellis and Harper give several alternatives to self-damning thought patterns throughout the book. Instead of a person telling themselves that they are unsuccessful at something, one should tell themselves that humans make mistakes, and come up with a resolution or prevention for the same occurrence to happen in the future. Ellis and Harper write that this positive mind-set to oneself and others can be achieved with lots of work and practice. Even if you do not normally read self-help books, this book is a classic book that should not be missed. I read it for a counseling class, and ended up loving it. The concepts are universal and relevant to most people. If you are buying it for self-help, get ready to change your thought patterns! As a practitioner, it is just as important and historical of a read.

Albert Ellis was an amazing psychologist with an interesting view of the humankind. I really enjoyed the book. However, I believe that anyone that really would like to benefit from it, needs to get well prepared & be open minded (psychological speaking) prior to absorb the good that this book has to offer. Indeed, I wasn't 100% ready and I've been in therapy on & off for the past 9 years. Once, you

get his point this book is AMAZING to get you to the next level and of course, keep working on yourself.

This book is an updated version of the first edition of 1961. It tells readers, with plenty of examples, how they might deal with their personality problems. Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is intended to help people who can't afford, or don't want, a professional therapist, but who need to think 'straight' about their problems, or the problems of others they deal with. I find this a very valuable book, and my only criticism is that my copy has been bound incorrectly, with one section of pages being right out of order. However, this is easily solved by the reader. There's a long list of Selected References, an Index, information about the authors, and a list of other books. Thoroughly recommend.

This was recommended to me in the 60's. It is still relevant today. I would recommend it to anyone that has difficult people to deal with. Life is too short not to be happy. Unfortunately it can only be purchased used.

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