EDITORIAL

# The THINK-FEEL-DO thermostat model: A simple but helpful visual to use with patients and clients to help them generate a more functional amount of emotion and be more responseable

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**EDITORIAL:** They say a picture is worth a thousand words. That???s what makes the THINK-FEEL-DO thermostat model so helpful. It???s based on the work of Dr Albert Ellis. He identified four basic types of irrational thinking: demandingness, awfulizing, can???t stand it is and labeling and damning. the mistake people make is to start thinking they need things they simply want, treating simple preferences as necessities and demand what they simply desire. This creates a much bigger gap between their expectations and reality if they don't??? get what they want, lose it, or imagine doing either. This makes the perceived threat bigger than it is or needs to be and triggers more emotion than is helpful or necessary. That causes people to become reactive and less response-able, or less able to respond to life in the best ways. Many things in life are unpleasant, inconvenient and uncomfortable. By thinking we need things we simply want and demanding what we simply desire, we???re more likely to see not getting it or losing it as awful and think we can???t stand it, rather than simply not liking it. This contributes to generating more emotion than is helpful or necessary. We???re also more likely to label and damn a person rather than simply dislike their behavior. The THINK-FEEL-DO thermostat visual allows people to assess quickly where they are emotionally and behaviorally, why they are there in terms of their cognition, where they might want to be instead emotionally and behaviorally and what it will take cognitively to get there. People can be taught simple ways to turn their thermostat down and ultimately keep it down more often, or turn it down quickly should it go up. We can create multiple variations of this simple visual, depending on what emotional issue someone is struggling with.

Emotions are coded into our DNA and are thought to have developed as a way to help us respond quickly to different environmental threats, much like our 'fight or flight' response. The amygdala has also been shown to play a role in the release of neurotransmitters that are essential for memory, which is why emotional memories are often stronger and easier to recall. Emotions have a stronger physical grounding than feelings meaning researchers find them easier to measure objectively through physical cues such as blood flow, heart rate, brain activity, facial expressions, and body language.

Emotions are seen as preceding feelings, which tend to be our reactions to the different emotions we experience. Where emotions can have a more generalized experience across all humans, feelings are more subjective and are influenced by our personal experiences and interpretations of our world based on those experiences. Feelings occur in the neocortical regions of the brain and are the next step in how we respond to our emotions as an individual. Because they are so subjective, they can't be measured the way emotions can.

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