

▶ I NEED EVERYONE TO APPROVE OF ME

People pleasers are everywhere: you either know a few people pleasers or you are a people pleaser yourself. People pleasers say yes to everyone and everything, regardless as to whether or not they want to.

EXAMPLE:

- ◆ Perpetually lying to fit into other people's narratives and demands.
- ◆ Agreeing with opinions you really don't agree with.
- ◆ Complimenting people's outfits which you don't like.
- ◆ Saying things you believe other people want to hear.
- ◆ Dating people you don't even want to for fear of 'hurting their feelings'.

Why do people compromise their own sincerity, integrity and authenticity to please other people?

It's usually because they believe their opinions, needs, thoughts and whole persona **isn't good enough**. They usually came from backgrounds where parents, guardians or authority figures emotionally or physically abused them and rejected them, resulting in a desire in adulthood to seek any form of approval, regardless of its legitimacy.

▶ I MUST AVOID BEING DISLIKED BY ANYONE

Similarly to the first point, people who don't like to be disliked by people are people pleasers. They are inauthentic with their true selves to avoid being disliked.

EXAMPLE: To avoid being disliked you maintain friendships with people you don't personally like (or are afraid of being on the wrong side of) or you are overly friendly with people who clearly dislike you, go out of your way to buy them nice things, compliment them, and strike up a conversation with them.

Purpose:

To bring awareness to the trend that all dysfunctional behavior and attitudes derive from one (or more) of these self-defeating core beliefs.

Core beliefs - underlying rules or code which guides how we react to the events and circumstances in our lives.

A small number of core beliefs underlie most emotions and unhealthy behaviors.

The Goal:

1. Become aware of these common self-defeating core beliefs.
2. Learn how to challenge them.
3. Ultimately replace them with more healthy beliefs.

*14 Self-Defeating Rules as identified by Ellis

▶ I MUST SUCCEED IN EVERYTHING I DO TO BE VALUABLE

Many people are addicted to success, usually because they have a **deep-seated core belief that they are a failure**. Their parents or teachers may have made them feel like nothing they ever did was **good enough** or that they were a **mistake** which ruined their lives, so they spend the rest of their adult lives trying to out-work this core belief that they're a failure who will never amount to anything. As a result, they end up burned out, overworked, and stressed. Rather than defining success as being true to one's values, being authentic, and living with integrity, they define success as money, career status, materialism, and grades.

▶ IT'S NOT OK TO MAKE MISTAKES. IF I DO, I'M A BAD PERSON

Progression in life relies heavily on our ability to learn lessons from the risks we take and the mistakes we make. Unfortunately, there are millions of people who will never step outside of their comfort zone and take risks because they **believe that every mistake they make defines who they are and their capabilities in life**. They see mistakes, not as learning opportunities, but as markers of their own incapacities and insufficiency.

▶ OTHER PEOPLE SHOULD STRIVE TO ENSURE I AM ALWAYS HAPPY

There's no denying that there are people in this world who feel entitled to be taken care of and appeased by everyone from strangers to immediate friends and family. There are more people out there who carry this belief more subtly.

Whenever someone doesn't go out of their way to please us, like a waiter in a restaurant or a friend, we feel affronted and offended because we expected more from them. We complain when people said something which offended us and bottle hatred towards them because they should have been more considerate, subsequently allowing their inconsideration to negatively impact our day, week or even lifetime. We can easily fall into the trap of self-consumption and forget that our needs, values and life objectives are not any more significant than those around us, so **we prioritize our feelings, needs and emotional satisfaction without considering the complexity of those of the people we interact with**.

▶ PEOPLE WHO DO NOT MAKE ME HAPPY SHOULD BE PUNISHED

Many people feel an urge for vengeance when they've been wronged: they hope someone who hurt them feels hurt sometime soon or they hope the person who stole from them gets robbed to see how they like it. It may be a natural inclination to feel this way in extreme circumstances, but it's never a healthy way to respond and it's even healthier when this desire for vindictiveness enters our everyday realm onto those who haven't even wronged us, but merely didn't appease us. There's an extreme level of self-importance which comes with the idea that our displeasure is worthy of trial and punishment to the source which caused it (in fact, it's somewhat reminiscent of evil kings and queens from fairytales). **Your happiness and pleasure isn't the responsibility of anyone else, and it's not any more important than other people's happiness**.

▶ THINGS MUST WORK OUT THE WAY I WANT THEM TO

It's healthy to have grounded and positive expectations for yourself, but having expectations can be deadly when too much weight is put on them. People with this mindset believe things should be the way they want things to be.

EXAMPLE: Believing a career should be X, a partner should look like X, people should give the responses expected, the food should taste exactly how imagined it, etc.

Because they put so much weight on how they want things to be, they fail to appreciate how things are. **We would be much happier if we cut out all expectations we have of processes, people, life paths, careers, experiences, and things.**

▶ MY EMOTIONS ARE ILLNESSES WHICH I CANNOT CONTROL

People can easily get drawn into the idea that their mental health defines them, and that the only power they have in controlling the state of their mind is through drugs or therapy. In many cases drugs and therapy are essential, but **your mental health label is not your life sentence.** It doesn't define you and it doesn't limit you to be this way forever. Out of all the illnesses we can have in our lifetime, it's the one we have the most power over. You are the definitive power between yourself and mental wellbeing. Therapy and drugs won't do the work for you, only you can do that work. Until we take responsibility for the part that we're playing and the power we have over our minds, we cannot change and will remain disempowered and dependent upon external sources.

▶ I CAN FEEL HAPPY IN LIFE WITHOUT CONTRIBUTING BACK IN SOME WAY

We're all creative people in some form. Whether our creativity is artistic, linguistic, scientific, or mechanical, we are all capable of producing new things. However, our beliefs are what limit our creative power. Sometimes, people live life trying to get more stuff in order to feel more fulfilled rather than produce more stuff. Unless you focus on giving back in life and giving yourself out into the world, you'll only ever seek to feed an ever-hungry consumption which will never leave you feeling happy or satisfied in the long term. Consumers are generally complainers, but contributors don't expect anything: they live by a standard that they want to leave something in this world which wasn't there when they entered.

▶ EVERYONE NEEDS TO RELY ON SOMEONE STRONGER THAN THEM

Most of us can pinpoint someone as the 'cause' of our emotional and mental anguish and issues: father abandoned me, therefore I am this way; mother criticized me too much, therefore I am this way; my teacher humiliated me when I was five, therefore I am this way, etc. It is right to acknowledge when something was done that affected you, but you should not take the blame for something you had no control over. Your point of control however, is what you do after the event, it's how you react. You are strong enough and have full control of your personal healing.

Pointing blame helps you avoid taking responsibility for ourselves and the role you play in perpetuating your unhelpful behaviors and attitudes.

▶ **EVENTS IN MY PAST ARE TO BLAME FOR MY ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS TODAY**

Our past does help create our beliefs, but it is not in control of our beliefs.

We can't blame the past for our present: **we are responsible for managing our present and what we choose to take away from our past.** Beliefs aren't automatic, they're built up over time and they're usually supported by past 'evidence'. What people need to do is focus on understanding the smaller components which make up the belief and choose to reassemble the messages they take away from the past in order to reconstruct new, helpful beliefs.

▶ **MY FUTURE OUTCOMES WILL BE THE SAME AS MY PAST OUTCOMES**

The past can never reflect the future, no matter how convincing the evidence is or how frequent the cycles of misfortune which seemingly repeat themselves. We need to appreciate the present and commit to a life of living our best without allowing the shadows of the past to taint our present day and potentially spoil our future.

▶ **I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO FEEL SADNESS, DISCOMFORT OR PAIN**

No matter how positive our outlook on life is, we cannot expect to live a life free from sadness, pain, grief, stress, and struggle, even if we've already gone through a lot. Negative emotions are part of life, but being able to more accurately relate to yourself helps you manage and cope with these upsetting and disturbing life events.

We aren't entitled to anything in life.

Entitlement is a self consumed, irresponsible fantasy which doesn't have any basis in reality.

▶ **SOMEONE SOMEWHERE SHOULD TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ME**

We can go to therapists, life coaches, doctors, politicians, partners, parents, and even children looking for external support and help during difficult times. However, we have to accept that we don't live in a Hollywood movie or a fairy tale. People can help you, comfort you and be there for you, but **nobody else can save you: only you can save yourself.**