

Rhonda's Daily Mood Log*

Upsetting Event: Listening to myself on the Feeling Good Podcasts on social anxiety.

Emotions	% Now	% Goal	% After	Emotions	% Now	% Goal	% After
Sad, blue, depressed, down, unhappy	100			Embarrassed, foolish, humiliated, self-conscious	100		
Anxious, worried, panicky, nervous, frightened	100			Hopeless, discouraged, pessimistic, despairing	100		
Guilty, remorseful, bad, ashamed	100			Frustrated, stuck, thwarted, defeated	100		
Inferior, worthless, inadequate, defective, incompetent	100			Angry, mad, resentful, annoyed, irritated, upset, furious	100		
Lonely, unloved, unwanted, rejected, alone, abandoned	90			Other	100		

Negative Thoughts	% Now	% After	Distortions	Positive Thoughts	% Belief
1. I sound so stupid, in articulate, and inaccurate.	100				
2. I made a gross overgeneralization when I said that psychiatric diagnoses are meaningless labels.	100				
3. I don't know a lot of the answers.	100				
4. I sound like an idiot.	100				
5. I didn't know what Perceived Perfectionism was!	100				
6. I stumbled and fumbled in many of my comments and responses.	100				
7. Fabrice was never wrong.	100				

* Copyright © 2016 by David D. Burns, M.D.

Rhonda's Daily Mood Log, page 2*

8. I laughed inappropriately at one point, and that will come across as lacking in empathy.	100				
9. The Feeling Good Institute will take away my level 4 Certification.	100				
10. I should be over this by now.	100				
11. David is going to regret having me as podcast host.	100				
12. I won't live up to his expectations.	100				
13. People will think, "she's broken."					

Checklist of Cognitive Distortions*

1. All-or-Nothing Thinking. You view things in absolute, black-and-white categories.	6. Magnification and Minimization. You blow things out of proportion or shrink them.
2. Overgeneralization. You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat: "This <i>always</i> happens!"	7. Emotional Reasoning. You reason from your feelings: "I <i>feel</i> like an idiot, so I must really <i>be</i> one."
3. Mental Filter. You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.	8. Should Statements. You use shoulds, shouldn'ts, musts, oughts, and have tos.
4. Discounting the Positive. You insist that your positive qualities don't count.	9. Labeling. Instead of saying, "I made a mistake," you say, "I'm a jerk" or "I'm a loser."
5. Jumping to Conclusions. You jump to conclusions not warranted by the facts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind-Reading. You assume that people are reacting negatively to you. • Fortune-Telling. You predict that things will turn out badly. 	10. Blame. You find fault instead of solving the problem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Blame. You blame yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for. • Other-Blame. You blame others and overlook ways you contributed to the problem.

* Copyright © 1984 by David D. Burns, M.D. Revised 2003, 2019.

Rhonda's Downward Arrow / What-If Technique

I'll freeze and get it wrong.



Let's assume that happened.. What would you be the most afraid of? What's the worst that could happen?

That will show what a fraud I am.



Let's assume that happened.. What would that mean to you? Why would that be upsetting?

That would mean I don't deserve to be here, or to be a therapist, or a teacher.



And then what would you be the most afraid of? What's the worst that could happen?

Everyone will know what a fraud I am.



Let's assume that happened.. What would you be the most afraid of? What's the worst that could happen?

Then no one will like or respect me.



Let's assume that's true. What would that mean to you? Why would that be upsetting to you?

I'll be rejected, and ostracized.



Let's assume that happened.. What would you be the most afraid of? What's the worst that could happen?

I'll be entirely alone, like a leper.



And then what would happen? What would you be the most afraid of? What's the worst that could happen?

People will judge me.



Let's assume that lots of people, or everyone, judged you. Why would that be upsetting to you? What would that mean to you?

I'll have no community, so I'll be lonely all the time.

Rhonda’s Positive Reframing Table*

Negative Thought or Feeling	Advantages / Values
Depressed, down, unhappy	<p>1. What are some advantages of this negative thought or feeling? How might it help, protect you, or benefit you?</p> <p>2. What does this negative thought or feeling show about you that is beautiful, positive and awesome?</p> <p>These feelings shows that I have high standards. My high standards have motivated me to work hard. These feelings have motivated me to reach out and do some personal work. These feelings show that I’m realistic. It’s appropriate to feel down when you haven’t lived up to your standards.</p>
Anxious, worried, panicky	<p>These feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make me vigilant, so I’ll monitor myself and do a good job. • Show that I’m humble. • Help me learn new things. • Have helped me feel closer to my kids, since they saw how upset I’ve been feeling about the editing I’m trying to learn and the way I’m sounding on the podcasts.
Feeling alone and fearing that people will judge and reject me	<p>These feelings show</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how much I care about my relationship with David and with the people who listen to our show. • I really care about others and want to love and be loved.

After Rhonda completed the Positive Reframing Table, she decided to “dial down” her negative feelings to the levels indicated in the “% Goal” column below.

Emotions	% Now	% Goal	% After	Emotions	% Now	% Goal	% After
Sad, blue, depressed, down, unhappy	100	10		Embarrassed, foolish, humiliated, self-conscious	100	10	
Anxious, worried, panicky, nervous, frightened	100	20		Hopeless, discouraged, pessimistic, despairing	100	0	
Guilty, remorseful, bad, ashamed	100	0		Frustrated, stuck, thwarted, defeated	100	0	
Inferior, worthless, inadequate, defective, incompetent	100	0		Angry mad, resentful, annoyed, irritated, upset furious	100	3	
Lonely, unloved, unwanted, rejected, alone, abandoned	90	0		Other			

Here are the distortions Rhonda and David identified in Rhonda’s 11th Negative Thought.

Negative Thoughts	% Now	% After	Distortions	Positive Thoughts	% Belief
1. David is going to regret having me as host of the Feeling good Podcast.	100		AON; OG; MF; DP; MR; FT; MAG / MIN; ER; SH; BL		

Below, you can see how she challenged the Negative Thought. Remember, to be effective, a Positive Thought must be 100% true, and it must drastically reduce your belief in the Negative Thought. You can see that Rhonda’s first PT reduced her belief in the Negative Thought to 50%, and the next two PTs reduced her belief all the way to 0%.

Negative Thoughts	% Now	% After	Distortions	Positive Thoughts	% Belief
1. David is going to regret having me as host of the Feeling good Podcast.	100	0	AON; OG; MF; DP; MR; FT; MAG / MIN; ER; SH; BL	I made a few mistakes on the podcast, but I also said quite a few good things.	100
	50			David is pretty honest, and would have told me if he regretted having me as host.	100
				He doesn't seem upset with me, and actually seems happy about having me as host. He even said he was afraid of losing me if I got fed up with having to learn how to edit the audios.	100

After Rhonda smashed all of her Negative Thoughts, she re-rated her negative feelings, as you can see here. She felt more than simply “recovered,” but was actually elated.

Emotions	% Now	% Goal	% After	Emotions	% Now	% Goal	% After
Sad, blue, depressed, down, unhappy	100	10	0	Embarrassed, foolish, humiliated, self-conscious	100	10	0
Anxious, worried, panicky, nervous, frightened	100	20	5	Hopeless, discouraged, pessimistic, despairing	100	0	0
Guilty, remorseful, bad, ashamed	100	0	0	Frustrated, stuck, thwarted, defeated	100	0	0
Inferior, worthless, inadequate, defective, incompetent	100	0	0	Angry, mad, resentful, annoyed, irritated, upset, furious	100	3	0
Lonely, unloved, unwanted, rejected, alone, abandoned	90	0	0	Other			

Teaching Points

1. Some of the M = Methods that were helpful in this session included:
 - a. Identifying the Self-Defeating Beliefs
 - b. Smashing them with the Feared Fantasy Technique
 - c. Identify the Distortions
 - d. Paradoxical Double Standard Technique
 - e. Externalization of Voices
 - f. Acceptance Paradox / Self-Defense Paradigm
 - g. Self-Disclosure / Exposure
 - h. The Experimental Technique
 - i. Thinking in Shades of Gray
2. In addition, David and Rhonda both agreed that humor was helpful. Humor is rarely talked about as a therapeutic technique, and is difficult to teach, but does seem to play a role in the kind of therapy that David does.

Humor can

- convey warmth and affection for the patient
- indicate that a negative thought really isn't really valid and does not need to be feared
- communicate the idea that we're all pretty human and perhaps don't need to take ourselves so seriously
- provide relief and even joy. The experience of laughter is pleasant, and can sometimes be a nice antidote to intense depression, shame, and anxiety.

However, humor, like all techniques has a downside. You do not want to use humor when they patient is angry with you, as it may sound defensive or dismissive. In addition, you don't want to use humor if patients feels you are laughing at them, or if your humor is at their expense.

In addition, humor is not necessary to doing good, effective therapy. Not all therapists will feel comfortable with humor in sessions, and that's perfectly okay!

3. Once David and Rhonda smashed her first Negative Thought, all the rest of her Negative Thoughts fell apart quickly. That's because there is usually a "cognitive click," and the patient suddenly feels better when s/he smashes the first thought. Then the brain seems to change, and new circuits are activated that make it much easier to see through most, if not all, of the Negative Thoughts.

You can call this experience recovery, or enlightenment. It really is both. This often happens in recovery from depression and anxiety. Relationship work is usually much more difficult, due to the intense resistance that is almost universal in relationship problems.