

Emotion Regulation

DBT skills

Act Opposite

Emotions and behaviors go hand in hand. If you feel angry, you might raise your voice or argue. If you feel sad, you might withdraw from your friends. Actions and emotions are closely linked.

What many people don't know is that this connection goes both ways. Just as emotions lead to behaviors, *behaviors lead to emotions*.

This means doing the **opposite action** can change how you feel. If you typically raise your voice when you're angry, try talking quietly and politely. If you withdraw when you feel sad, make a point to visit a friend instead. It might feel forced at first, but acting opposite can shift your feelings in a more positive direction.

Emotion	Action	Opposite Action
Anger	Fight, yell, and argue	Talk quietly and behave politely
Sadness	Withdraw from friends	Call or visit a friend
Anxiety	Dwell on the anxiety-producing event	Do something unrelated that occupies your thoughts

Check the Facts

Have you ever had a strong emotional reaction to something, then regretted it the next day? Oftentimes, the things that feel like a big deal in the moment turn out to be unimportant when we look back with a clear mind. Practice **checking the facts** to reduce the intensity of these extreme emotions.

Ask yourself the following questions when you notice a strong emotion brewing:

- 1 What event triggered my emotion?
- 2 What interpretations or assumptions am I making about the event?
- 3 Does the intensity of my emotion match the *facts* of the situation, or just my *assumptions*?

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PLEASE

Your physical health and mind are closely linked. A healthy lifestyle improves mental health and makes it easier to manage difficult emotions. Use the acronym **PLEASE** to remind yourself of five healthy habits.

PL	Treat physical illness
E	Eat healthy
A	Avoid mood-altering drugs
S	Sleep well
E	Exercise

Pay Attention to Positive Events

Most people who hear ten compliments and one criticism will focus on that single negative comment. Learning to recognize the positive aspects of a situation can help improve your mood.

Practice **paying attention to positive events** by doing so purposefully for a short period every day. Choose an activity that's generally enjoyable and make a point to focus on the positives (without getting hung up on negative details). Try these ideas to get started:

Have a good, unrushed meal.	Watch a movie.	Visit with friends or family.
Visit a local attraction like a zoo or museum.	Go for a walk.	Put on headphones and do nothing but listen to music.
Have a picnic.	Give yourself a relaxing night in.	Try a new hobby.

After some practice, try extending the positive outlook to more and more situations in your life. To challenge yourself, try it during situations you usually *don't* enjoy.