

STRATEGY: Change your vocabulary, change your feelings

Because your feelings are influenced by your thoughts, you can change your feelings and behaviors by changing your thoughts. And you can change your thoughts by changing the words you use in your thinking. The difference that changing just one word makes might surprise you. The more you do this, the more natural it becomes. Figures 5.2 - 5.4 show some examples and includes space to write your own.

Figure 5.2. Word exchange.

Instead of saying or thinking:	Say or think:
Must	Really want / prefer / choose to
Should	Really want / prefer / choose to
Have to	Want to
Can't	Choose not to
Ought to	Really want / prefer / choose to
Awful	Not great / undesirable
Unbearable	Unpleasant
Can't stand	Don't like
Always	Often
All	A lot

Figure 5.3. Statement exchange.

Instead of saying or thinking:	Say or think:
I must be perfect	I really want to do well
You should not do that	I prefer you not do that
You ought to help	I would appreciate your help
I can't stand this feeling	I don't like feeling this way
You are a bad person	I don't like your behavior
This urge is awful	This urge is unpleasant
This situation is unbearable	This is not the best way
Everything is terrible	Things are not the way I want them to be
This happens every time	This frequently happens
I need your love	I want your love
I'm a bad person	I behaved badly
I am a failure	I made a mistake / I failed at

Figure 5.4. Emotion vocabulary exchange.

Instead of saying or thinking:	Say or think:
I am terribly anxious	I feel concerned
I am so depressed	I feel sad
I am really angry	I feel annoyed
I am guilty	I feel remorse / I feel regret
I am so ashamed	I feel disappointment
I'm really hurt	I feel sorry
I'm jealous	I feel concern for my relationship
I'm envious	I feel unhappy