

Some Contemporary Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Songs

Richard E. Watts

This article presents several new rational emotive behavior therapy (REBT) songs. The songs may be used in both academic and therapeutic settings as a humorous way to address cognitive distortions or irrational beliefs.

In teaching graduate-level courses on the theories of counseling and psychotherapy, it has been a nice change of pace to bring my guitar to class when discussing the cognitive-behavioral therapies. Classes enjoy joining together in singing rousing renditions of selected rational emotive therapy (RET) songs (Ellis, 1977). In addition, students have expressed appreciation for the rational emotive behavior (REBT) inspired songs I have written, and I have also used the songs with clients in individual and group counseling. In both academic and therapeutic settings, the following songs may be a creative way to examine common cognitive distortions or irrational beliefs.

(Lyrics: Richard E. Watts. Tunes: Traditional)

"Fallibility" (Tune: "Dinah Won't You Blow Your Horn")

1. Every time I make a mistake,
Then I think I'm not good enough,
It means I don't have what it takes,
If it's not perfect, it's "fluff!" (Chorus)

Chorus: Fallibility, fallibility, absolutely will not work for me.
Worthless I will be with fallibility, gotta do life perfectly.

2. Upon even further reflection,
Oh, I can see it's my job,
For I can't stand imperfection,
Because it means I'm a slob. (Chorus)

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- *"Low Frustration Tolerance Theme" (Tune: "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean")
1. Oh, I want quick gratification, I can't stand to wait or delay.
And if there's a question in your mind,
You'd better let me have my way! (Chorus)
Chorus: Give me, give me, oh, give me what I want right now. Oh yeah!
Give me, give me, oh, give me what I want right now.
 2. Don't ask me to tolerate frustration, It's not something that I do well.
I want what I want when I want it,
If it's not forthcoming, there's hell! (Chorus)
 3. I cannot control my behavior, My childhood has made me this way.
For I'm just a poor little victim,
That's why I continually say: (Chorus)

- "Obsessive Lover's Concerto" (Tune: "Jimmy Cracked Corn and I Don't Care")
1. Oh, you must love me, yes its true. For if you don't I'll be so blue.
I'll pout and wail and boo, hoo, hoo, if you don't love me true.
 2. I cannot live without you dear. I can't go on without you here.
I cannot live without you near. Oh, you must love me dear.
 3. If you decide that you won't stay, I'll never make another day.
Just like a worm I'll crawl away, that's all I have to say.

- *"Oh, Why Do I Choose Misery?" (Tune: "Billy Boy")
1. Oh, why do I choose misery, misery?
Oh, why do I choose to be nauseous?
'Cause I just refuse to say, "I will learn a better way."
And I blame it instead on being cautious.
 2. Oh, why do I keep silly thoughts, silly thoughts?
Oh, why do I keep stinking thinking?
'Cause I just refuse to say, "I will learn a better way."
I'm too lazy to keep myself from sinking.
 3. Oh, when will I be sound of mind, sound of mind?
Oh, when will I be fin'ly stable?
When I do the work to say, "I have learned a better way."
But I won't hold my breath until I'm able.

- *"Perfectionist's Refrain" (Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")
- Perfect, perfect, I must be or I'm worthless don't you see.
I must never slip and fall, I must never fail at all.
Perfect, perfect, I must be or I'm worthless don't you see.

- "Whiner's Lullaby" (Tune: "Brahms' Lullaby")
- Oh, I hate when my fate is to not get my way.
It's not fair when I'm where others don't do what I say.
Don't they see that it's me, that knows better than they,
I know best—others less—what is just the right way.

*"Rejected Lover's Refrain" (Tune: "On Top of Old Smokey")

1. Oh, sweetie, you've left me, Oh, lover, you're gone.
Since I've been rejected, I cannot go on.
2. Oh, why did you leave me? What's that all about?
I guess that I'm worthless and you figured it out.
3. I really deserve this, I know that it's true.
If I only could dear, why, I'd leave me too!

"The Culture of My Victimhood" (Tune: "O Suzannah")

1. Others just don't understand how hard it's been for me,
And that is why I don't take on responsibility.
2. I work so hard to blame my past for everything I do,
And if you dare to say I'm wrong, I'll blame it all on you! (Chorus)
Chorus: That's my story, don't try to change my mind,
For the culture of my victimhood it suits me very fine.
3. I like to whine, I like to moan and just be in the pit,
But if I do not get my way, I'll throw a hissy-fit! (Chorus)

*"This Old World" (Tune: "This Old Man")

1. This old world, it's not fair,
I can't stand it anywhere.
Yes, it's just awful living ev'ry day,
When I do not get my way.
2. Others should be condemned,
When they don't obey my whims.
So I will pout and swell up like a toad,
'Til they treat me like they should.

*"Why Must This Life Be So Hard?" (Tune: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

1. Why must this life be so hard, be so hard, be so hard?
Why must this life be so hard? It ought not be this way.
2. They should let me be in charge, be in charge, be in charge.
They should let me be in charge of ev'ry single day.
3. But they won't so damn them all, damn them all, damn them all.
But they won't so damn them all, their worthless anyway.
4. No one seems to like me much, like me much, like me much,
No one seems to like me much, (spoken) WHAT IS THEIR PROBLEM?

Note. The song titles with an asterisk (*) are from Watts (1994) and are used with permission.

REFERENCES

- Ellis, A. (1977). *A garland of rational songs*. New York: Institute for Rational-Emotive Therapy.
Watts, R. E. (1994). A few new rational emotive behavior songs. *TCA Journal*, 23, 42-44.