

TRANQUIL-IZER

Joy Through Reason

**Everything is just the way it should be (cause and effect)--
even if it's not the way you want it to be!**

This means that whenever you don't like something, it makes no sense (and therefore is foolish) to think that it shouldn't be or that it shouldn't have happened when, in fact, what is causing or has caused the unwanted or crappy happening (effect) is occurring or has already occurred. So to think that just because you don't like something—it shouldn't be, is to deny reality as well as the existence of cause and effect. This, of course, is very problematic because the acceptance of reality is necessary for effective problem-solving—when the problem is under our control.

You may not even know what causes (drowsy, drunk, distracted, depressed or daydreaming) other drivers' unsafe behavior (effect), but because you don't approve of their driving doesn't mean they shouldn't be doing so. Of course they should be driving poorly when they are driving poorly (cause and effect). You can't control them, or life events, and shouldn't like it. But when you escalate your *dislike* to a *demand* for better driving by rigidly commanding that they shouldn't be driving the way they are driving, you needlessly perturb yourself. This *tyranny of the should* is likely the single most powerful disturber of human emotion and behavior.

So stop demanding and start preferring. Don't escalate desires into demands and wants into needs. Musterbation (should, must, need, ought to, have got to) really is self-abuse since it promotes anger and anxiety, depression and self-downing. To achieve greater self, other and life acceptance while making yourself much less disturbable, remember that what you don't like is just the way it should be. Now with your healthier negative feeling (instead of unhealthy negative emotion), how can you respond—not react—in the moment? Is this thing under YOUR control? Is there anything you can *reasonably* do about it? If not, re-direct your thoughts.

If worry and anxiety or depression are more problematic for you than anger and frustration, then take heart in the words of one of the sanest humans our species has ever produced—that being the great Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius:

“Never let the future disturb you. You will meet it, if you have to, with the same weapons of reason which today arm you against the present.”

Richard E Madden, PhD, LCSW

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125 Wolf Road, Suite 210, Albany, New York 12205

Tel: 518.225.7707 ▪ madden@theSTRESSdoc.com ▪ www.theSTRESSdoc.com