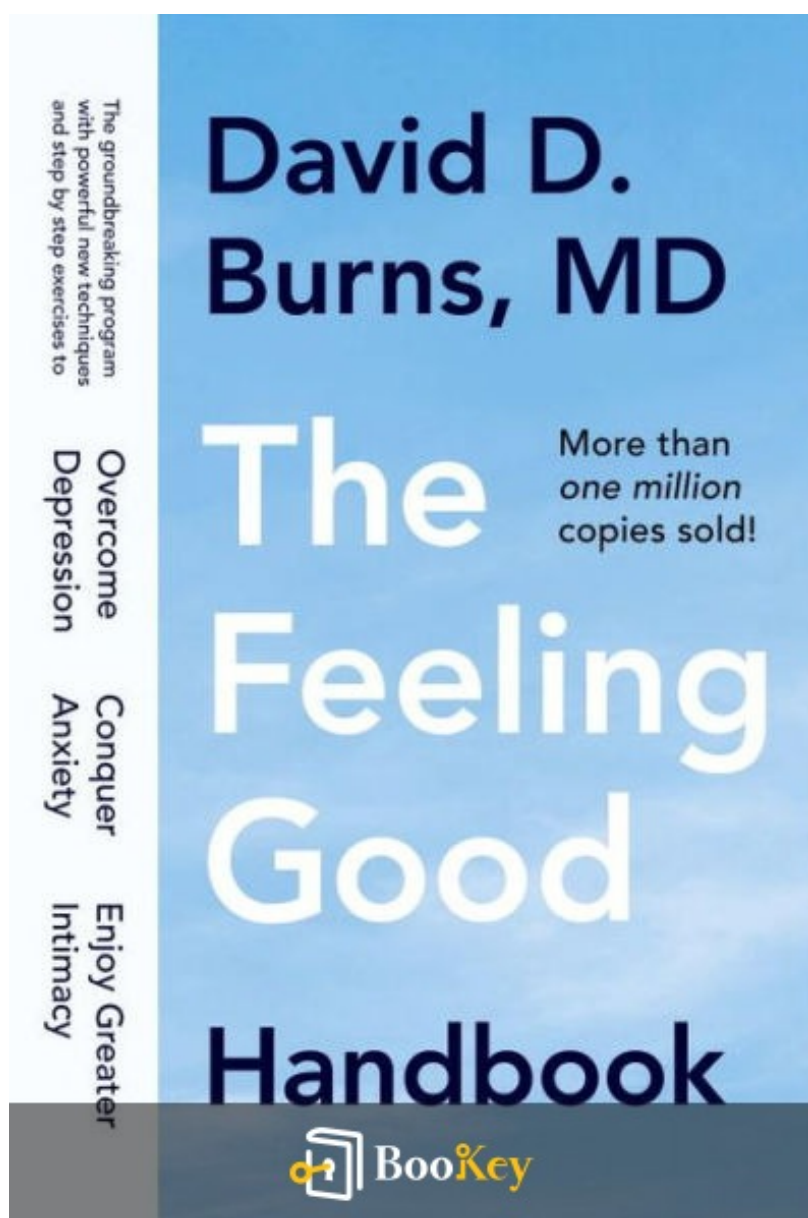


The Feeling Good Handbook PDF

David D. Burns



About the book

Transform Your Mental Wellness: A Guide by Dr. David Burns

Introducing the Companion to the National Bestseller

From the mind behind the renowned book, *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*, Dr. David Burns presents a powerful new resource designed to elevate your mental health and help you transcend depression and anxiety for a more exhilarating life.

What's Inside?

In this compelling follow-up, Dr. Burns shares innovative, drug-free strategies for overcoming emotional hurdles that may hold you back. Along with insightful techniques, the book is filled with practical exercises aimed at addressing a spectrum of everyday challenges.

Key Benefits:

- Break Free from Anxiety: Tackle your fears, phobias, and panic attacks head-on.
- Change Your Mindset: Learn how to overcome self-sabotaging thoughts and behaviors.
- Enhance Communication: Uncover the five secrets of meaningful, intimate conversations.
- Resolve Conflicts: Find effective solutions to end marital disputes.

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- **Boost Productivity:** Defeat procrastination and unlock your full potential for success.

Alongside detailed information regarding common psychiatric medications and anxiety disorders (like agoraphobia and OCD), this remarkable guide equips you with the tools to cultivate a positive self-image and nurture deeper relationships.

Discover a New Way to Experience Life!

Learn how to thrive and find joy in your life and relationships.

Praise for the Book:

- “A wonderful achievement—the best in its class.” — M. Anthony Bates, Clinical Psychologist, Penn Presbyterian Medical Center.

- “Clear, systematic, forceful.” — Albert Ellis, PhD, President of the Albert Ellis Institute.

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The Feeling Good Handbook Summary

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Who should read this book **The Feeling Good Handbook**

"The Feeling Good Handbook" by David D. Burns is an essential read for anyone seeking to improve their mental health and emotional well-being. It is particularly beneficial for individuals struggling with depression, anxiety, or negative thought patterns, as it provides practical cognitive-behavioral techniques to challenge and change those thoughts. Additionally, therapists and mental health professionals can use it as a valuable resource to enhance their understanding of cognitive therapy approaches. Furthermore, anyone interested in personal development, mindfulness, and self-help will find the insights and exercises within the book useful for fostering a more positive mindset and healthier coping strategies.

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Key insights of The Feeling Good Handbook in table format

Chapter	Summary
Introduction	The book introduces cognitive therapy techniques aimed at helping individuals overcome depression and anxiety through the understanding and modification of negative thought patterns.
Chapter 1: The Nature of Depression	Explains what depression is, common symptoms, and how it affects thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.
Chapter 2: The Mood Log	Introduces a tool (the mood log) for tracking negative thoughts and feelings to identify patterns and triggers.
Chapter 3: Cognitive Distortions	Details common cognitive distortions (e.g., all-or-nothing thinking, overgeneralization) that contribute to negative emotions.
Chapter 4: Identifying Distortions	Guides readers on how to recognize and challenge cognitive distortions in their own thought processes.
Chapter 5: The Power of Thought	Emphasizes the importance of understanding that thoughts influence feelings, and how changing thoughts can change feelings.
Chapter 6: Behavioral Techniques	Discusses practical behavioral techniques such as activity scheduling and exposure therapy to improve mood.

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Chapter	Summary
Chapter 7: The Five Secrets of Effective Communication	Covers techniques for improving interpersonal relationships and communication skills.
Chapter 8: Self-Esteem	Explores the concepts of self-worth and self-acceptance and exercises for building self-esteem.
Chapter 9: Dealing with Loneliness	Provides strategies for overcoming loneliness, including building social networks and fostering connections.
Chapter 10: Overcoming Procrastination	Offers tips and techniques for combating procrastination and increasing motivation.
Chapter 11: The Power of Gratitude	Discusses the benefits of practicing gratitude and how it can positively impact mental health.
Chapter 12: Advanced Techniques	Introduces advanced cognitive therapy techniques and looks at case studies for deeper understanding.
Conclusion	Summarizes the key points of the book and reinforces the importance of applying these techniques in daily life.

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The Feeling Good Handbook Summary Chapter List

1. Understanding the Basics of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Its Importance
2. Identifying and Challenging Negative Thoughts and Beliefs
3. Techniques for Overcoming Depression and Enhancing Mood
4. Building Self-Esteem and Gaining Confidence through Positive Thinking
5. Practical Exercises for Emotional and Mental Wellness
6. Strategies for Dealing with Relationships and Social Interactions
7. Integrating Dr. Burns' Techniques into Daily Life for Lasting Change

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1. Understanding the Basics of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Its Importance

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a groundbreaking approach to mental health that focuses on the interconnection between thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Developed through years of psychological research, CBT posits that our thoughts significantly influence our emotions and behaviors. When distorted or negative thoughts infiltrate our minds, they can lead to adverse feelings and actions, thereby perpetuating a cycle of negativity and despair. David D. Burns, in his book "The Feeling Good Handbook," emphasizes the importance of recognizing and addressing these cognitive distortions to improve mental well-being.

One main principle of CBT is its structured and goal-oriented format, which makes it effective for various mental health issues, including depression, anxiety, and phobias. Instead of merely talking about one's problems, CBT involves actively identifying irrational or unhelpful thoughts and beliefs and challenging them with logical reasoning and evidence. By changing the way we think about situations, we can alter how we feel and behave – a transformative principle that has laid the groundwork for many therapeutic practices today.

The significance of CBT extends beyond treatment; it empowers individuals to become their own therapists. Through the methods introduced by Dr.


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Burns, readers are taught to be proactive about their mental health, equipping them with tools to combat negative thought patterns actively. This self-management aspect is crucial because it fosters resilience and independence, enabling individuals to handle life's challenges more effectively.

Another vital component of CBT, as articulated in "The Feeling Good Handbook," is the emphasis on the present moment. While traditional therapies might delve into past experiences and traumas, CBT redirects focus to current thought patterns and behaviors. This shift allows individuals to understand the direct impact of their thoughts on their emotional state, providing an immediate pathway to improvement.

In conclusion, understanding the basics of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is essential for anyone seeking to improve their mental well-being. David D. Burns' framework supports individuals in identifying and combating negative thoughts, illustrates the importance of logical reasoning in emotional regulation, and promotes personal empowerment through cognitive restructuring. As readers delve deeper into the principles of CBT throughout the book, they will uncover the transformative potential of harnessing the mind's power to foster a healthier, more positive life.

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2. Identifying and Challenging Negative Thoughts and Beliefs

In "The Feeling Good Handbook," Dr. David D. Burns emphasizes the crucial role negative thoughts and core beliefs play in influencing our moods and behaviors. Recognizing and challenging these negative thoughts is a foundational step in overcoming depression and improving emotional well-being.

To effectively identify negative thoughts, it is essential to develop an awareness of one's internal dialogue. Many people are unaware of the barrage of negative messages they tell themselves throughout the day. Dr. Burns introduces the concept of cognitive distortions, which are irrational and exaggerated thought patterns that can distort our perception of reality. Common examples include all-or-nothing thinking, where one sees situations in black-and-white terms, and overgeneralization, in which a single negative event is seen as a perpetual pattern of failure. By becoming mindful of these distortions, individuals can start to catch themselves in the act of negative thinking.

Once negative thoughts are identified, the next critical step is to challenge them. Dr. Burns suggests using a technique commonly referred to as the 'Thought Record.' This involves writing down the negative thought, the situation that triggered it, your emotional response, and then evaluating the

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evidence for and against the thought. This structured approach allows individuals to critically assess the validity of their negative beliefs rather than accepting them at face value.

Moreover, Dr. Burns encourages individuals to ask themselves questions that stimulate rational thinking. For instance, one might consider: "What evidence do I have that supports this thought?" and "What evidence contradicts it?" This practice helps individuals see a more balanced perspective. Further, it can be beneficial to ask, "How would I respond if a friend expressed this thought?" By externalizing the thought, it's often easier to spot the irrationality within it.

In challenging negative beliefs, it is also helpful to replace them with more positive, realistic affirmations. For example, shifting from the belief "I always fail" to "I sometimes struggle, but I can learn and improve" not only combats the negative thought but also empowers the individual. The constructive reframing of these thoughts creates opportunities for personal growth and resilience, fostering a more optimistic outlook on life.

Additionally, Dr. Burns highlights the importance of addressing core beliefs—deep-seated ideas about oneself and the world that often originate from past experiences. These beliefs can be even more daunting to challenge because they are ingrained in individual identity. However, recognizing that

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these core beliefs can evolve is vital for healing. Techniques such as guided imagery and visualization can assist individuals in reimagining their past experiences, allowing them to alter the narratives that have shaped their current beliefs.

In conclusion, identifying and challenging negative thoughts and beliefs is essential for anyone seeking to enhance their mental health. Dr. Burns presents practical strategies that equip readers with the tools necessary to combat negative thinking patterns that contribute to depression. By actively engaging in this cognitive process, individuals can pave the way towards emotional resilience and greater life satisfaction.

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3. Techniques for Overcoming Depression and Enhancing Mood

In "The Feeling Good Handbook," Dr. David D. Burns offers a variety of techniques designed to alleviate symptoms of depression and improve overall mood. These practical strategies focus on altering cognitive processes that contribute to negative emotions and promote a more positive outlook on life.

One of the key techniques highlighted is the practice of cognitive restructuring. This involves identifying irrational or negative thoughts and systematically challenging them to replace them with more realistic and positive thoughts. For example, a person may think, "I always fail at everything," which can lead to feelings of hopelessness. Dr. Burns encourages individuals to evaluate the evidence for this belief, consider alternative explanations, and reconstruct the thought to something more balanced, like, "Sometimes I succeed and sometimes I don't, but I can learn from my failures."

Another effective technique is the use of mood logs, which serve as a self-monitoring tool to track feelings and identify patterns linked to specific thoughts or situations. By keeping a record of daily emotions and the triggers behind them, individuals can better understand the relationship between their thoughts and mood changes. This increased self-awareness

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facilitates the identification of negative thought patterns, enabling more effective challenge and modification.

Behavioral activation is also emphasized in Dr. Burns' approach. This technique encourages individuals to engage in activities that promote joy and satisfaction, even when they don't feel like doing anything. By scheduling pleasurable activities, such as walking in nature, meeting friends, or pursuing hobbies, individuals can naturally uplift their mood, counteracting the inertia that often accompanies depression.

Additionally, Dr. Burns introduces the concept of "Pleasure-Predicting Sheets," where individuals can predict how much enjoyment they will derive from various activities. After engaging in these activities, they rate the actual enjoyment experienced. This exercise not only fosters a sense of accomplishment but also helps to recalibrate unrealistic expectations about pleasure, emphasizing that engaging in positive activities can lead to unexpected rewards.

Another essential technique is the implementation of self-affirmation exercises, which involve recognizing and reinforcing one's strengths and successes. This can be particularly beneficial in challenging moments, as it helps to combat the inner critic that often accompanies negative moods. Individuals are encouraged to write down achievements and personal

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strengths, thus shifting focus from perceived failures to personal capabilities.

Mindfulness and relaxation techniques are also integral to improving mood and managing depressive symptoms. Dr. Burns endorses practices like meditation, deep breathing exercises, and progressive muscle relaxation. These methods help reduce stress and increase present-moment awareness, allowing individuals to detach from overwhelming negative sensations that contribute to feelings of despair.

Finally, social engagement is vital in combating feelings of isolation and loneliness that often accompany depression. Dr. Burns encourages individuals to reach out to friends, family, or support groups, reinforcing the idea that connection and shared experiences can provide emotional relief and enhance mood.

In summary, "The Feeling Good Handbook" presents a toolbox of techniques for overcoming depression through cognitive behavioral strategies, behavioral activation, self-affirmation, mindfulness, and social interaction. By incorporating these techniques into daily life, individuals can significantly enhance their emotional well-being and cultivate a more positive perspective.

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4. Building Self-Esteem and Gaining Confidence through Positive Thinking

Building self-esteem and gaining confidence can transform a person's outlook on life, and in "The Feeling Good Handbook," Dr. David D. Burns offers practical strategies rooted in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) that encourage individuals to cultivate a more positive self-image.

At the heart of this approach is the understanding that self-esteem is closely tied to thoughts and beliefs about oneself. Many people struggle with self-doubt and negative perceptions, often rooted in cognitive distortions — faulty ways of thinking that skew one's view of reality. Dr. Burns encourages readers to identify these negative thoughts, labeling them for what they are: irrational and unhelpful.

One technique proposed is the practice of positive affirmations. This involves consciously replacing negative self-talk with empowering statements that reinforce one's worth and capabilities. For instance, instead of thinking, "I'm not good enough," one might affirm, "I am competent and deserving of success." The process of repeatedly affirming positive beliefs can gradually reshape a person's self-perception, fostering a stronger sense of self-worth.

In addition to affirmations, Dr. Burns emphasizes the importance of

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evidence-gathering to combat negative beliefs. He encourages individuals to write down instances that contradict their negative views. By creating a tangible list of achievements, positive feedback, and moments of success, one can build a solid foundation of evidence that supports a more favorable self-image. This data-driven approach helps individuals recognize their strengths and achievements, reinforcing their confidence.

Moreover, Dr. Burns introduces the concept of 'experimentation' to test negative beliefs against reality. For instance, if someone believes they cannot perform well in social situations, they are encouraged to engage in small social activities, observe the outcomes, and gather data about their actual performance. Over time, successful experiences accumulate, gradually dismantling the self-imposed barriers to confidence.

Another powerful strategy shared in the book is the visualization technique, where individuals are encouraged to mentally rehearse success in various scenarios, ranging from job interviews to social gatherings. Visualizing oneself succeeding not only prepares the mind for real-life situations but also builds confidence in one's abilities.

Dr. Burns emphasizes that building self-esteem is an ongoing journey rather than a one-time event. It involves recognizing and challenging negative thoughts, employing techniques such as affirmations, evidence gathering,

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and visualization, and continuously iterating on these practices.

By embracing positive thinking and consistently applying these techniques, individuals can foster a sense of empowerment and resilience. As they begin to view themselves in a more positive light, they can unlock their potential, face challenges with a growth-oriented mindset, and ultimately navigate life with greater confidence and self-assurance.

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5. Practical Exercises for Emotional and Mental Wellness

In "The Feeling Good Handbook," Dr. David D. Burns emphasizes the importance of implementing practical exercises to improve emotional and mental wellness. These exercises are designed to help individuals identify and change their negative thought patterns, ultimately leading to enhanced mood and overall well-being.

One of the foundational exercises outlined in the book is the ****Daily Mood Diary****. This simple yet powerful tool encourages individuals to track their moods daily, along with the thoughts and situations that triggered those feelings. By logging this information, users can identify patterns and specific thoughts that contribute to their emotional distress. Once these thoughts are identified, individuals can begin to challenge and reframe them, fostering a healthier thought process.

Additionally, practitioners are encouraged to engage in ****Cognitive Restructuring****. This involves taking negative or distorted thoughts and systematically questioning their validity. For example, when an individual thinks, **"I'm a failure because I didn't get the promotion,"** they can practice asking themselves critical questions: **"Is this thought 100% true? What evidence do I have that contradicts this thought?"** By engaging in this reflective questioning, individuals can shift their mindset from seeing failure

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as an absolute truth to viewing it as a learning opportunity.

Another practical exercise introduced by Dr. Burns is the ****Pleasure-Predicting Sheet****. This exercise requires individuals to list activities they think will bring them pleasure or joy, rate them according to how much enjoyment they expect to receive, and then compare the anticipated enjoyment with their actual feelings after completing the activity. This not only enhances self-awareness about what truly makes them happy but also encourages proactive engagement in enjoyable activities, which can combat feelings of depression and stagnation.

Beyond cognitive approaches, Dr. Burns emphasizes the importance of ****Behavioral Activation****. This technique encourages individuals to schedule specific pleasurable or meaningful activities into their week to increase engagement and motivation. By consciously planning enjoyable tasks, individuals can counteract the tendency to withdraw when feeling down, making it easier to experience positive emotions.

Moreover, practicing ****Gratitude Journaling**** can have profound effects on mental well-being. By regularly writing down things one is grateful for, individuals can rewire their brains to focus on positive aspects of life, rather than concentrating solely on negatives. This practice can foster a more optimistic outlook and improve overall life satisfaction.

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For those struggling with self-criticism, Dr. Burns provides exercises to cultivate ****Self-Compassion****. One such exercise involves writing a compassionate letter to oneself, particularly during times of hardship. This letter should reflect understanding, kindness, and encouragement, which can help individuals treat themselves with the same compassion they would offer a close friend in a similar situation.

Lastly, it is crucial to incorporate ****Mindfulness Practices**** into daily routines. Engaging in meditation, deep breathing, or progressive muscle relaxation can help ground individuals in the present moment, reduce anxiety, and enhance emotional regulation.

By integrating these diverse practical exercises into one's daily life, individuals can promote significant emotional and mental wellness. The key to success lies in consistency and willingness to challenge oneself, ultimately leading to lasting change and a greater sense of fulfillment.

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6. Strategies for Dealing with Relationships and Social Interactions

Dr. David D. Burns, in "The Feeling Good Handbook," offers practical strategies for managing relationships and improving social interactions, recognizing that these are significant components of mental health. He emphasizes that our thoughts heavily influence our feelings and behaviors in social contexts, making it essential to adopt a cognitive behavioral approach to enhance interpersonal communication and self-presentation.

One of the key strategies is the importance of effective communication. Dr. Burns stresses the value of being both assertive and empathetic in interactions. Being assertive means expressing your needs and feelings confidently without being aggressive or passive. This is accomplished through techniques such as using 'I' statements, which help to articulate your feelings without placing blame on others. For example, saying, "I feel overlooked when my ideas aren't acknowledged" rather than "You never listen to me" can help facilitate a healthier dialogue.

Empathy plays an equally crucial role in interpersonal relationships. Understanding and validating the feelings of others can significantly enhance mutual respect and connection. Dr. Burns encourages readers to practice active listening, which involves fully concentrating on what the other person is saying before formulating a response. This not only helps in

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building rapport but also in resolving conflicts more effectively.

Another vital strategy discussed in the book is addressing interpersonal fears and social anxieties that often hinder effective communication. Dr. Burns provides exercises to help individuals confront their fears systematically. For instance, he suggests creating a hierarchy of feared social situations and gradually working through them, practicing exposure in less threatening environments before escalating to more challenging scenarios.

Additionally, Dr. Burns highlights the development of social skills through role-playing exercises, which can help individuals rehearse conversations and interactions before they occur. This can alleviate anxiety and increase confidence, making social encounters feel less daunting.

Furthermore, he explains the significance of understanding cognitive distortions that can affect relationships, such as all-or-nothing thinking or mind-reading. Recognizing these distortions enables individuals to reframe their thoughts in a more balanced manner, promoting healthier interactions. For instance, the belief that one must be perfect in every social setting can prevent genuine connection and create excessive pressure.

Burns also touches on setting healthy boundaries, which are essential for maintaining respectful and supportive relationships. Establishing clear limits

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can help prevent resentment and promote self-respect. He underscores that it's essential to communicate these boundaries openly, helping others understand your needs while fostering a space of mutual support.

Finally, cultivating positive relationships is about mindset. Dr. Burns introduces techniques for gratitude and appreciation, encouraging readers to express gratitude regularly to those around them. This practice can enhance positive feelings and reinforce the bonds between individuals, making relationships more rewarding and less fraught with tension.

By integrating these strategies into everyday interactions, individuals can significantly improve their relationship dynamics and social experiences, leading to greater overall emotional well-being.

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7. Integrating Dr. Burns' Techniques into Daily Life for Lasting Change

To experience lasting change and improved emotional well-being, it is essential to integrate Dr. Burns' techniques into daily life. This integration requires commitment, practice, and a willingness to adapt these strategies within the context of one's daily routines and relationships. Here are some practical ways to weave these cognitive behavioral techniques into everyday practices:

1. ****Consistent Thought Monitoring****: One of the fundamental aspects of Burns' approach is the practice of identifying and challenging negative thoughts. Individuals can keep a daily journal where they record their thoughts and feelings, particularly during moments of distress. By routinely reflecting on this data, patterns can emerge that highlight negative beliefs that might otherwise go unrecognized. This act of monitoring serves as a first step in building awareness and makes it easier to challenge and re-frame these detrimental thoughts.
2. ****Daily Affirmations and Positive Self-Talk****: Incorporating daily affirmations can significantly boost self-esteem and confidence. Daily recitals of positive statements that counteract negative beliefs can help reshape one's inner dialogue. For instance, replacing thoughts like "I can't handle this" with "I am capable and resilient" can foster a more supportive

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inner voice and diminish self-doubt.

3. **Implementing Behavioral Experiments**: Dr. Burns emphasizes the importance of experimenting with behavior to assess their effects on emotion. Individuals can apply this by setting small, measurable goals. For example, if a person fears social situations, they might plan to attend a gathering for a short duration. By observing that these experiences are often less daunting than anticipated, individuals can gather evidence to counteract their fears over time.

4. **Cognitive Restructuring**: This technique involves actively changing the way one interprets situations. To do this, individuals can consciously practice reframing negative situations into more positive or neutral perspectives. For example, instead of concluding that a setback at work is a failure, viewing it as a learning opportunity creates a more constructive mindset. Such cognitive restructuring should be practiced repeatedly to become a habitual response in challenging situations.

5. **Utilizing the "Pleasure-Predicting Sheet"**: Dr. Burns suggests using a pleasure-predicting sheet to facilitate positive experiences. Individuals can list activities they want to do, predict how enjoyable they'll be, and then engage in these activities while later assessing the actual enjoyment they derived. This approach not only encourages engagement in pleasurable

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activities but also helps in dispelling negative expectations and enhancing real-life enjoyment.

6. **Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques**: Integrating mindfulness practices and relaxation techniques into daily routines can also support emotional health. Engaging in deep-breathing exercises or practicing mindfulness meditation for a few minutes each day can cultivate a state of calm, allowing individuals to gain better control over their thoughts and emotions.


7. **Support Networks**: Building a support system is crucial when implementing these changes. Informing friends or family members about one's goals for emotional and mental wellness can provide accountability and encouragement. Engaging in group activities or therapy can also facilitate sharing experiences, fostering an environment of understanding and healing.

8. **Regular Reflection and Adjustment**: Lastly, individuals should establish a habit of regular reflection on their progress in applying these techniques. Setting aside time each week to consider what worked, what didn't, and how the strategies can be adapted for greater effectiveness reinforces a mindset of growth and self-improvement.

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Incorporating these techniques into daily life not only leads to immediate benefits but also lays the framework for sustained emotional health and resilience. By embracing the principles outlined in Dr. Burns' work, individuals can actively work towards transforming negative thinking patterns, enhancing their mood, and achieving better interpersonal relationships. This commitment to integrating cognitive behavioral strategies is essential for anyone seeking lasting change and fulfillment in their emotional lives.

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5 Key Quotes of The Feeling Good Handbook

1. The feelings you have about yourself are based on your thoughts.
2. You are not your thoughts; you are a human being capable of reflecting on your thoughts.
3. Cognitive therapy can help you alter negative thought patterns and build a healthier self-image.
4. Your emotional state is largely determined by the way you think.
5. By changing your thoughts, you can change the feelings that accompany them.

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