

## Stress Exercise #2: Confronting Unrealistic Expectations

Think back over some events that have upset or angered you, but that also puzzle you. (“Why was I so upset about that?” is a common question). Look for patterns across these events. Were there any similarities in terms of type of people involved, feelings, setting, words spoken, etc.? Ask yourself, “What did I believe **should** have happened in each situation?” Write down any underlying beliefs that emerge from this process. Choose one that seems stress-inducing, and work through the remainder of the exercise.

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Is the belief rational? Is it helpful in the long-term?

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Is there anything that supports the belief as being true?

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What more healthy belief could I substitute for it?

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Note that substituting a healthy belief (just like making more optimistic attributions) takes time and practice. Try not to hold on to the unrealistic expectation, “I should be able to get this the first time I try!”