

Opposite Action

Use opposite action when the emotion (or its intensity) does not fit the facts
OR when acting on its urges will not be helpful in long term

**Every emotion has an action urge. You can change the emotion
by acting OPPOSITE to its action urge.**

<u>EMOTION</u>	<u>ACTION URGE</u>	<u>OPPOSITE ACTION</u>
Fear/Anxiety	Run away/avoid	Approach/don't avoid
Anger	Attack	Gently avoid/be a little nice
Sadness	Withdraw/isolate	Get active

HOW TO DO OPPOSITE ACTION, STEP BY STEP

1. Identify and name the **emotion** [ex: *fear/anxiety*] and **the situation** that's triggering it [*seeing a dog*]. For more info on how to do this, come to the Emotional Awareness workshop.
2. Identify your **automatic thoughts about/initial appraisals of** the situation [*it's going to bite me*], then **re-evaluate**. For more info on how to do this, come to the Cognitive Appraisal workshop. Be sure to
 - a. Identify and "pull out" any thinking traps (jumping to conclusions, mind-reading, etc)
 - b. Examine the evidence that's left and ask yourself: does this emotion (and its intensity) fit the facts—or is it a false alarm?
 - c. If you decide the emotion (and its intensity) DOES fit the facts [*dog is close by, not on leash, known to be aggressive with people*], forget Opposite Action and act on your urge to run away.
 - d. If you decide the emotion (or its intensity) DOES NOT fit the facts [*dog is a block away, walking on leash with owner, known to be gentle and friendly*], go on to Step 3.
3. Identify the **action urges** the emotion is producing [*run away/avoid*], then **evaluate** the helpfulness of acting on them, as we've been doing in this workshop:
 - a. Identify the likely **consequences (both ST and LT)** of acting on those urges.
 - b. Ask yourself whether acting on the urges will be helpful in the long run, when you consider both ST and LT consequences. **Watch out for "short term gain/long term pain" scenarios where ST consequence is immediate relief from unpleasant sensations of the emotion but LT consequences are very negative.**
 - c. If decide acting on the urges WILL NOT be helpful, go to Step 4 (Opposite Action)

4. Identify actions that are OPPOSITE to your action urges [*ways to approach dogs*]
5. The next time you're in that situation, try one of those opposite actions and see what happens
6. Continue doing the opposite of what the emotion is telling you to do when you're in this situation, until your emotional reaction to it (including action urges) changes [*no longer experience fear and have urge to run/avoid when see most dogs*]