Opposite action

When a feeling does not fit the facts, do the opposite of what it tells you.

Name _____ Date _____

Every emotion comes with an urge. Acting on the urge keeps the emotion going. When the feeling does not fit the situation, or acting on it would not help, doing the opposite, fully, changes the feeling.

Emotion	The urge	Opposite action
Fear	Avoid, escape	Approach. Stay. Do the thing, again and again.
Anger	Attack, criticise	Step back gently. Be a little kind. Try to see their side.
Sadness	Withdraw, stay in bed	Get active. Do things that give a sense of achievement. Be with people.
Shame	Hide	Share it with someone who will be kind. Head up, eye contact.
Guilt (not deserved)	Over-apologise, punish myself	Stop apologising. Carry on doing the thing.

How to do it

1. Name the emotion and the urge.
2. Check the facts. Does the feeling fit? Would acting on it help?
3. If not, pick the opposite action.
4. Do it all the way: actions, posture, face, words and thoughts.
5. Keep going until the feeling shifts.

Situation	Emotion and urge	Did it fit the facts?	Opposite action I took	What happened

Opposite action is a skill from Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), developed by Marsha Linehan.

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