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CLARION REVIEW ★★★☆☆ SELF-HELP

Feel the Way You Want to Feel...No Matter What!

Aldo R. Pucci
iUniverse (January 2009)
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"Anger is like urinating in your pants. Everyone can see it but you are the only one who can feel it" Dr. Aldo Pucci writes. This is one of the "scripts" he provides in the anger management section of this self-help book. Pucci is president of the National Association of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapists and founder of the Rational Living Therapy Institute.

Those familiar with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) will recognize its basic tenets in *Feel the Way You Want to Feel*. Pucci expands CBT basics and the Rational Thinking Therapy program developed by his mentor Dr. Maxie C. Maultsby to provide a self-help program based on the brain's response to thought.

The brain responds to what you think whether it's correct or not Pucci explains. "If your mind hears the words it believes them." For example when a person says "This is terrible" the brain responds with a flood of negative emotion. Pucci provides a process designed to recognize and replace "the old irrational thought with a new rational thought." When his approach is followed diligently he promises positive feelings "no matter what."

Rational Living Therapy begins by requiring the answer to "three rational questions": "Is my thinking based on fact?" "Does my thinking help me achieve my goals?" "Does my thinking help me feel the way I want to feel?" If the answer to all three questions is "yes" Pucci calls the thought rational. If it's not clients are led to see the fallacies in their thinking and replace them with correct thoughts.

In a chapter called "Ideas that Cause Misery" Pucci presents twenty "mistaken beliefs" that affect emotions. Among them: "I must achieve perfection in everything I do"; "If a loved one dies I shouldn't ever feel happy again"; "You cannot trust someone again after they have violated your trust"; and "I should never be denied pleasure." He explains the irrational idea in each belief and provides an alternative rational thought.

Pucci also discusses "common mental mistakes" such as overgeneralization all-or-none thinking and jumping to conclusions.

While Pucci's logic is hard to dispute his approach may be overly simple. In one example he instructs people dealing with depression to schedule something enjoyable everyday so that "you wake up in the morning and say 'Wow I'm glad it's Tuesday because…'" In another a rejected suitor learns he can feel better when he realizes he didn't actually "need" his lover; he only "wanted" her.

Like many books that provide a format for self-counseling this one is replete with checklists and charts to be filled in during the process. Pucci also includes a list of natural products that supplement therapy and a chapter on "rational hypnotherapy."

While there is wisdom in the book it probably won't be the self-help answer that its optimistic title promises but as a resource for those in treatment and for therapists themselves Pucci provides an approach to help keep one's thoughts rational.

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