

Quit Quitting With ABCDE

The key to successful weight loss comes down to hanging in there, even when things are not going well. You must cultivate optimism. It's as simple as ABCDE.

This powerful technique comes from psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman's book *Learned Optimism*. And he got it from Dr. Albert Ellis (also a psychologist). I first started using this technique after reading *Awaken the Giant Within* by Tony Robbins. And truly, these ideas go back to Socrates (critical thinking) and the Stoics as well. No matter who came up with it originally, it works. Here's how you do it.

Instructions: (The blank ABCDE template is available on pages 2-5).

First, you must notice when you have a negative thought. This is Adversity. Write down the thought next to the space for Adversity. Our thoughts quickly morph into beliefs. Write down what beliefs you hold because of that adversity. Next, write down the consequences of that belief. Do you feel sad? Demotivated? Angry? Write it down! Next is the most important step: Disputation. The important thing to remember is that **beliefs are not necessarily true**. False beliefs lead to discouragement, pessimism, and quitting. Argue against the belief you wrote down. Show yourself how you might be wrong. When you've finished disputing, move on to Energization. How do you feel now?

Example from my own weight loss journey:

Adversity: I'm so fat.

Belief: Everyone thinks I'm fat and ugly, and my family is so disappointed in me. I can't control my weight. I can't keep the weight off, even if I do lose it.

Consequence: I feel like a loser. I think there's no point in even trying to lose weight.

Disputation: I have lost weight before. And for a brief period when I was in college, I didn't gain the weight right back. And at that point, I wasn't even dieting or anything.

Energization: I feel encouraged. I'm motivated to figure out a plan and try.

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Now it's your turn! Every time you catch yourself having negative thoughts, take out this worksheet, and do your ABCDE!

Adversity:

Belief:

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Disputation:

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