



## C. Reaching Your Goal

### 6. Changing your thinking

V.1

Most people who have a problem with gambling know at some level that they will never win back all the money they have lost; yet, they continue to “chase their losses”. They gamble more to recover what they have already lost. In other words, they rationally know the truth, but when they get in to the situation their thoughts and ideas become irrational.

People naturally “talk to themselves” constantly. This “self-talk” can be positive and supportive, or it can be negative, irrational and self-defeating. Talking to yourself in a positive way in order to overcome the urge to gamble or to interrupt the habit of gambling can be very effective. Self-talk can be the most immediate way to stop the urge, and it helps make your gambling less automatic.

**Check off which irrational statements you have made either when you are gambling or between gambling sessions:**

- Gambling is an easy way to earn money.
- Gambling is healthy recreation.
- My gambling is under control.
- I can win it back.
- I’m smart; I have a system to beat the odds.
- Someday I’ll score a really big win.
- Gambling will be the solution to my problems.
- Gambling makes me feel better.
- I will pay it back.
- Stealing to gamble isn’t really stealing.
- The more money I have to gamble with the better my chances of winning.
- I’m a lucky person.
- I can’t stop.
- I can stop anytime.
- Sometimes I think I have two personalities.
- I can’t afford to pay for treatment or take time off work to get help.
- I have to make as much money as I can as quick as I can.
- I always win.
- Even if I only have a few bucks, I’m better off taking a chance.
- This is the last time I will gamble.



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Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine you are gambling or about to start gambling. Are there other thoughts that go through your mind?

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Now continue the exercise by listing two things that are irrational about each of the thoughts you identified above. Then enter a rational thought you could use to replace it. Write down anything else you think you could do when faced with these thoughts. With practice, you can challenge these thoughts right away when you are actually in the situation.

**Example:**

- **Irrational thought:** Gambling is an easy way to earn money.
- **What specifically is irrational about it?**
  - a) I lose money much more than I win; therefore, in the long run I am not really earning money. Very rarely can I come away from gambling ahead.
  - b) It's really not that "easy" since it causes me a great deal of time, stress and anxiety.
- **Rational thought to replace it:** Gambling is actually an easy way to lose money. Only very rarely is it a way to "earn" money.

**1) Irrational thought:**

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What specifically is irrational about it?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

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b) \_\_\_\_\_

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Rational thought to replace it:

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## C. Reaching Your Goal

### 2) Irrational thought:

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What specifically is irrational about it?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

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b) \_\_\_\_\_

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Rational thought to replace it:

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### 3) Irrational thought:

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What specifically is irrational about it?

a) \_\_\_\_\_

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b) \_\_\_\_\_

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Rational thought to replace it:

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