

## **The Logic of Logical Disputation in REBT**

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### **Abstract**

In Albert Ellis' model of REBT empirical and pragmatic disputation are relatively accessible to a client and easier to practice than logical disputation. The article explores the meaning of logical disputation. In what sense is a belief irrational, other than empirically and pragmatically so? Seeing a belief as an inference shows the connection between an irrational belief and Ellis' four core expressions of irrationality. Inference rules are connected to ideas of validity. Ellis' core irrationality, colorfully named "musturbation," will be interpreted as invalidation, of reality or a person. It is easy to quote Epictetus. For a "must-demander," learning to face exposure in disputation, of his/her invalid inferences and beliefs will seem like the ultimate damnation once he/she fully realizes how reality invalidates the self that demands. For a person suffering from "core illogic," it is easy to imagine that, as it is for an honorable fanatic, death is preferable to defeat.

**Key words:** *Albert Ellis, cognitive therapy, philosophical counseling, REBT*

## **Cultivating Character: Hume's Techniques for Self-Improvement**

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### **Abstract**

David Hume stands in the tradition of *eudaimonistic* ethics. People seek happy, fulfilled lives and moral virtue promotes personal flourishing. But while everyone desires happiness, many people create for themselves dysfunctional lives. Virtue ethics has done a good job of analyzing various traits and of showing how they enhance or detract from personal flourishing, but has said little about how one actually develops virtues and eliminates vices. In this paper I examine the techniques for moral self-improvement that Hume recommends in one of his essays on happiness. I correlate them with insights from contemporary moral psychology, suggesting ways in which philosophical counselors can utilize the steps of moral cultivation that Hume recommends.

**Keywords:** *Action theory, David Hume, meditation, moral cultivation, self-control, spiritual formation, virtue ethics*

## **Philosophical Practise in Medical Rehabilitation II: Feasibility and Practical Implementation**

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### **Abstract**

This paper reports a pilot implementation project of philosophical practise in a medical setting. During one year, seven medical professionals working at a neurological rehabilitation center each conducted 4-6 counselling sessions with patients undergoing rehabilitation for various disabling neurological disorders. A total of 23 patients participated. Six themes of practical philosophical importance to the rehabilitation process were identified. These were: Autonomy (e.g., “how can I maintain personal integrity despite the disability?”); Value/Meaning (e.g., “can my life be meaningful despite my new limitations?”); Loss, Suffering & Death (e.g., “why did this happen to me?”; “is suicide a morally acceptable option?”); Guilt (e.g., “I am now a burden to my family”); Compensation (eg. “do I deserve something in return for my losses?”); and Justice/Solidarity (e.g., “which demands can I put on others now?”). We conclude that adding the tool of philosophical practise in a rehabilitation setting was well accepted, and seem to fill a need in patients for discussing a number of significant existential issues made urgent by injury or disease.

**Keywords:** *Rehabilitation, philosophical practise, existential problems, neurology*

## **Environmental Action: Making the Transition from Sympathy to Agency**

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### **Abstract**

This paper seeks to understand the connection between environmental need and what motivates us to act on an awareness of that need. Throughout, I will focus on the personal and community conditions that encourage an active response to instances of environmental degradation by highlighting the connection between John Dewey's consummatory process of direct interaction between human and non-human nature and the traits that eco-philosophers use to describe phenomenological communities. As I draw a connection between this community concept and Dewey's theory, I will emphasize the kind of behavior that philosophers have begun to recognize as vital for human and other-than-human preservation. I will consider why we act-out in response to certain situations in the hope that if we are able to clarify why we feel compelled to act to correct environmental harm, then we can cultivate these circumstances in order to encourage active participation in environmental advocacy and conservation initiatives.

**Keywords:** *John Dewey, consummation, phenomenological communities, environmental action, motivation*

## Letter Writing as Spiritual Exercise

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### Abstract

My conversation partners and I are trying to lead philosophical lives—self-reflective, meaningful, and full integrated existences. For us, philosophy is best understood as a practice undertaken asymmetrically between a guide and a pupil, between one friend and another: we are fellow inquirers and in this sense we are equals, yet the educator is farther along on the path of wisdom than the pupil. As part of our ongoing practice, conversation partners and I engage in what the ancient scholar Pierre Hadot has called “spiritual exercise” (*askesis*). Spiritual exercises are rigorous ways of thinking, living, and acting, all of which are aimed at transforming the self. Letter writing happens to be a genre that is particularly well-suited to spiritual exercise. The following six letters, which were written approximately six months after Anika and I started working together, are a brief but revealing glimpse into our essays at becoming better acquainted with ourselves and each other.

**Keywords:** *Genre, spiritual exercise, Pierre Hadot, inquiry, practice, progress, reasoning, virtues*