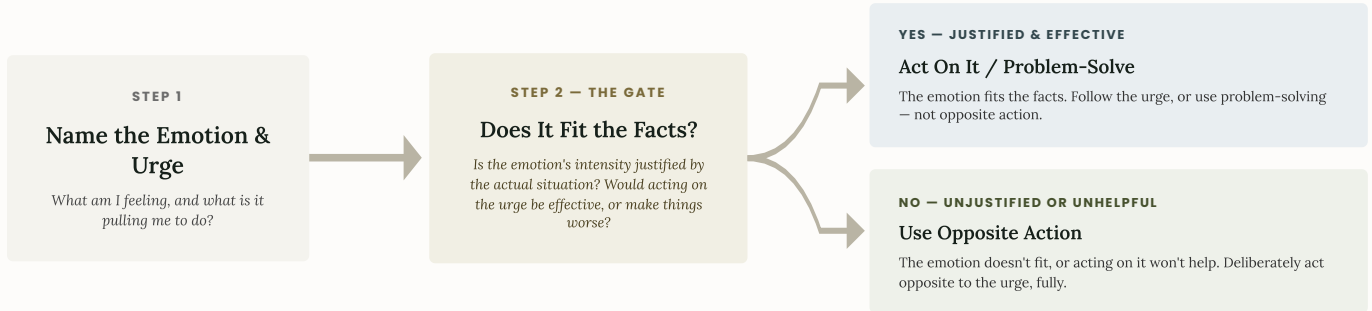


Opposite Action

CHANGING AN EMOTION BY CHANGING WHAT YOU DO

Every emotion comes with a built-in action urge — fear urges avoidance, shame urges hiding, anger urges attack. When that urge no longer fits the situation, or won't help you, deliberately doing the opposite — fully — can shift the emotion itself. This is not suppression: you still name and acknowledge the feeling first.

THE FIRST STEP IS ALWAYS: CHECK THE FACTS



COMMON EMOTIONS & THEIR OPPOSITE ACTIONS

EMOTION	TYPICAL URGE	OPPOSITE ACTION (WHEN UNJUSTIFIED)
Fear / Anxiety	Avoid, escape, or flee the situation	Approach the feared situation, gradually and repeatedly, with an open posture
Sadness / Depression	Withdraw, isolate, stay in bed, avoid activity	Get active, get involved, engage with others rather than withdrawing
Shame	Hide, avoid eye contact, keep secrets	Share what happened with someone trustworthy; hold your head up
Unjustified Anger	Attack, criticise, raise your voice	Gently avoid, or approach with kindness; soften your voice and posture
Guilt (unjustified)	Apologise excessively, over-correct	Continue the behaviour without apologising, if it wasn't wrong

TRY IT: MY OPPOSITE ACTION PLAN

1 · THE EMOTION & URGE What am I feeling, and what does it want me to do? _____ _____	2 · CHECKING THE FACTS Does this emotion fit the facts? Would acting on it help? _____ _____	3 · THE OPPOSITE ACTION If unjustified — what is the opposite behaviour, in full? _____ _____	4 · HOW IT WENT What did you notice, in your emotion, after trying it? _____ _____
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SOURCES

Linehan, M. M. (2014). *DBT Skills Training Manual* (2nd ed.). Guilford Press.