

## ***Feel Better by Minding your Language!***

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- 1) Write down 3 statements about **yourself**, each of which contains a '**Should**' '**Ought**' or '**Must**'.  
For example:
  - a) 'I **should** call my parents more'.
  - b) 'I **ought** to exercise more'.
  - c) 'I **must** pass my exam/this audition'.
- 2) Now, read each statement back and pay attention to the feelings that arise in you as you read each statement. (These typically include guilt, feeling a failure, anxiety, etc.)
- 3) Write down 3 statements about **others**, each of which contains a 'Should' 'Ought' or 'Must'.  
For example:
  - a) 'Dog walkers **should** clear up after their dogs'.
  - b) 'Doctors **ought** to be available when I want to see them.'
  - c) 'Other people **must** treat me fairly'.
- 4) Now, read each statement back and pay attention to the feelings that arise in you as you read each statement. (These typically include anger, feeling let down or the victim of injustice, etc.)
- 5) Now re-write each statement from list 1, substituting '**Prefer**', '**Like**' or '**Want**' for '**Should**', '**Ought**' or '**Must**'. For example:
  - a) 'I **want** to call my parents more'.
  - b) 'I would **prefer** to exercise more'.
  - c) I would **like** to pass my exam/this audition'.
- 6) Now, read each statement back and pay attention to the feelings that arise in you as you read each statement. (These have typically softened considerably from the feelings evoked @ point 1 above).
- 7) Now re-write each statement from list 3, changing each of the '**They**' statements to '**I**' statements (because the only person we can control directly is ourselves!) and substituting '**Prefer**', '**Like**' or '**Want**' for '**Should**', '**Ought**' or '**Must**'. For example:
  - a) 'I would **prefer** that dog walkers clear up after their dogs'.
  - b) 'I would **like** doctors to be available when I want to see them.'
  - c) 'I **want** other people to treat me fairly.'
- 8) Now, read each statement back and pay attention to the feelings that arise in you as you read each statement. (These have typically softened considerably from the feelings evoked @ point 3 above).

By turning '**Shoulds**, **Oughts** and **Musts**' into '**Prefers**, **Likes** and **Wants**' and by turning '**They**' statements into '**I**' statements we can significantly reduce feelings of anxiety, guilt, persecution, anger, etc. – and we instantly feel better!

