



Skill Builder

Translate “have to” into “chose to”

10-minute exercise to become more conscious of what’s really responsible for our emotions.

Let’s develop the skill of replacing language that implies a lack of choice with language that acknowledges our power. Along the way, we will analyze the needs that drive our emotions.

Step 1 - List your “have to’s”

On the next page of this worksheet are two columns. In the first column, make a list of all the things in your life you tell yourself you “*have*” to do, all activities you dread because you perceive that you have no choice.

I wrote:

- I have to put up with my micromanaging boss.
- I have to take my daughter to school every morning.

Step 2 - Restate them as “chose to”

After completing your list, fill out the second column, truthfully acknowledge to yourself that you are doing these things because you chose to fulfill a need. Pull out the list of feelings and needs attached to this exercise, if needed.

I re-wrote these statements as:

- I chose to put up with my micromanaging boss because I have a need for income and emotional safety. I believe that confronting her would put both of these at risk.
- I chose to take my daughter to school because I need to contribute to her well-being.

Step 3 - Self-reflection

When I realized these things, my entire energy about both of these issues changed. I was more conscious of my needs driving my emotions.

If we take action out of a desire to contribute to life, rather than out of fear, guilt, obligation, or shame, we can widen the possibility to find fulfillment, while shrinking the opportunity for depression.

What, if anything, has changed about the way you view your “have to’s”?



I “have” to...	I chose to...because I need...