



An Act of Alternate Rebellion

By Angela “Gel” Topetzes, MSAT, ATR

Often, our culture places unrealistic expectations on our performance. We are spread thin among multiple roles and expected to exceed as parent, child, partner, friend, coworker, leader, civilian, and so on. The result may lead intense perfectionism, and could be paired with flashes of shame and guilt.

If this experience resonates, I would like to invite you to consider a Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skill called alternate rebellion (Linehan, 2015). The skill gives you permission to rebel against over-controlled behaviors, while still acting in alignment with your values. Alternate rebellion takes form in supportive actions that do not harm yourself or others, and an example of this could be the following directive:

Seed Bombs:

Materials you will need

- Air Dry Clay
- Packets of wildflower or perennial seeds
- A baking sheet lined with parchment paper

To begin, take a pinch of clay and with your thumbs gently press into the clay to form a concave shape. In the bowl of the shape, place about 6 seeds into the center. Fold the edges of the clay inwards, and roll into a ball. Allow the clay-seed balls to fully air dry (no heat required) for about two days. Once hardened, your seed bombs are ready for rebellion!



Here is where the rebellion comes into action: consider placing a few seed bombs into your car, and while driving on your morning commute, or walking through a grassy median in a parking lot, toss them towards any earthy surface. In this action, you are giving yourself permission to bend social expectations, yet doing-so in a way that is cultivating enrichment and supporting your local ecosystem. Enjoy!



References: Linehan, M. (2015). *DBT skills training manual*. Guilford.

©March2024, Angela Topetzes, ATR offers Art Therapy services at The Ommani Center. She is available for appointments on Wednesdays. Call our office at (262) 695-5311 to schedule an appointment.