

## SOS... HOW TO REGAIN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE

**Raúl Quevedo-Blasco**

*University of Granada*

**S**OS... *How to regain control of your life*, by Dr. Izabela Zych, recently published by Pirámide, is part of the *SOS Psicología Útil* (SOS Useful Psychology) collection, edited by Dr. Javier Urra. As its name suggests, it is a practical manual which guides readers so that, little by little, they can regain control of their lives. It is based on the findings of cognitive-behavioural psychology, a scientifically validated approach for treating the vast majority of mental disorders. Despite having a scientific basis, the book is easy to read and understand, full of examples and practical exercises and therefore suitable for a general readership.

Although in principle it can be considered a self-help book, this manual is also of great utility for psychology professionals, who daily face the challenge of adapting their knowledge and expertise to their clients, which is no easy task. This book can help psychologists to structure therapy sessions and explain to patients the main concepts of cognitive-behavioural psychology in simple fashion, providing practical exercises suitable for use during sessions or as homework assignments.

The life of a human being is replete with difficulties and problems to be solved. Nevertheless, it is not external situations that determine our happiness; on the contrary, it is our thoughts and interpretations that make us feel well or distressed, and which are thus ultimately responsible for such happiness. If our thoughts are in accordance with reality, then we feel positive and negative emotions in the right measure, which also helps us to improve our lives. However, if we think in a way that is out of step with reality, that is when we feel truly bad, pathologically distressed. The good news is that psychology can help us to think in a more logical and rational way and free ourselves from such pathological distress. This practical manual provides exercises and examples that give readers the opportunity to identify, analyze and change those irrational thoughts that are making them feel bad.

Thoughts and interpretations are the principal causes of our feelings. Nevertheless, whether we feel good or bad is not the only factor that affects our losing or regaining control of our life. It has been demonstrated that being depressed or suffering from anxiety disorders are not merely states, but rather actions carried out in mistaken fashion. Therefore, we can also act in exactly the opposite way for regaining control of our life. Whatever happens, however we feel, we can always *do* something to give our life meaning. In this book, readers will learn how they can act, and not only feel or think, in order to control their lives.

As noted by Dr. Gualberto Buela-Casal (Professor of Psychology at the University of Granada) in his foreword to the book, human beings attribute special importance to control. A Google search yields 821,000,000 entries for the word "control" – more than "food" (28,000,000) or "work" (134,000,000). This reflects human beings' tremendous desire for control. It is probably thanks to this desire that we have achieved such enormous levels of control over our environment in such a short time. Just 130 years ago, Thomas Edison invented the light bulb. Since then, we have succeeded in controlling the light and the dark, the cold and the heat; provided access to food and water; increased our control over our bodies thanks to beauty treatments and plastic surgery; and over health by means of vaccines and the general medical progress that permits us to cure innumerable illnesses and lengthen our lives considerably. However, despite this increase in control over our environment, it seems that we have less control over our own lives. As the number of psychologists grows, so does the number of mental disorders. Therefore, this highly practical manual is very important, since it covers the findings in psychology that can help us to regain that control over our lives.