

# **LIFESTYLE RENOVATION**

**P. E. W.**  
PRISON EXPERIENCE  
WORKSHOP PROGRAM

## **TOOLS FOR PERSONAL GROWTH**

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## *INTRODUCTION*

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The goals of “Tools for Personal Growth”:

In the Tools for Personal Growth material you will be exploring some crucial “normal” adult development life skills and positive behaviors which are necessary for you to reach your full personal mastery and acceptance of personal responsibility for your own life. These tools are needed for you to develop healthy self-esteem, positive attitude, acceptable communication skills, etc. They will assist you to keep your life in a healthy perspective, and help you recognize what is currently unacceptable and unhealthy in your life and how to change those behaviors.

What is important in using the tools in this section is to recognize that everyone can benefit from life skills enhancement. Everyone can benefit from correcting the irrational thinking blocking personal fulfillment. Everyone can benefit from healthy self-scripts of positive affirmation. Everyone can benefit from developing healthy behavioral traits aimed at personal self sufficiency and responsibility taking.

**NOTE:** This section will not be a useful tool for you unless you do the work prescribed in each of the “Steps to” sections.

This section has been adapted to be more “learner friendly”. It is our belief that learning life skills should not be difficult. Although, they do require you to faithfully work at them on a daily basis.

**NOTE:** For this section you will be required to always bring a tablet and pen/pencil. The tablet will be used for a journal.

### What are fears?

#### Fears are the:

- Irrational beliefs about how an object, event, happening, or feeling will result in negative, disastrous, life threatening, disturbing, or unsettling consequences for you.
- Result of giving power to your objects of irrational beliefs, allowing them to rule over you rather than you ruling them.
- Underlying motive behind many of your actions, and lack of action which block your thinking, problem solving, and decision making abilities.
- Disabling beliefs you carry in yourself that prevents you from living a productive, healthy, and growth-enhancing life.
- Underlying foundation of a weak self-image and self-concept. They keep you from fully asserting yourself, and that hinders your quest for self-actualization.
- Comfortable ways of acting and responding. Because of their habitual and well established nature, fears can become second nature to you therefore, being extremely resistant to change or alteration.

### What forms do fears take?

Fears come in a variety of packages for people who exhibit low self-esteem, such as the fear of:

- Places - School, church, planes, etc.
- Animals - Snakes, rats, bugs, bears, etc.
- Objects - Guns, knives, computers, etc.
- Events - Nuclear holocaust, war, crime, prison, etc.
- Atmosphere - Darkness, being alone, strange or unknown settings, etc.
- Family Members - Getting ill, being lost, running away, etc.
- Disaster - Fire, hurricane, lightning, injury, pain, death, financial ruin, etc.
- Reactions or Responses to Self - Rejection, disapproval, being ignored, not being liked, disappointing others, etc.
- Public Speaking - Taking a leadership role, getting nervous in front of others, embarrassing yourself, etc.

## *OVERCOMING FEARS*

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What are some negative consequences of fear?

Fear can:

- Immobilize decision making.
- Prevent you from overcoming your insecurity, trusting in others, and being willing to become vulnerable in order to grow.
- Prevent you from being willing to let go of old habits or ways of thinking in order to change.
- Make you resistant to all offers of help from others.
- Stifle your motivation to pursue an education or career.
- Keep you locked in self-destructive behavior.

What new behaviors are needed to overcome fear?

To overcome fear you need to:

- Refute irrational beliefs.
- Affirm yourself.
- Let go of fear.
- Identify the fear, label it, visualize it, and deal with it as if it was an object or entity that must be changed.
- Establish a sense of confidence in your ability to overcome and deal with the feared objects or events.
- Be sensitized to the stimuli of the feared object or event.
- Maintain the motivation to change and grow.
- Allow for relapses and set backs without undue discouragement.

Once you identify the behavior traits that you need to develop in your life, it is imperative that you make a commitment to accomplish them. Here are some steps that will assist you to confront and conquer all other fears.

**Step 1** - Review the fears listed. In your journal list the forms those fears take, and if they are currently active. Once you've listed them, rank them in order from greatest intensity, using the number one, to the least of intensities, using the number five.

**Step 2** - Once you have ranked your fears, explore your level of motivation to confront these fears by answering the following questions in your journal.

- How real are these fears to me?
- How much power do these fears have in my life?
- How do these fears explain past or present actions in my life?
- How do these fears determine my self-image, self-concept, and self-esteem?
- How do these fears disable me?
- How do these fears inhibit me?
- What emotions do these fears block?
- How long have I had these fears?
- How convinced am I of the need to confront these fears?

**Step 3** - Once you have explored your motivation for confronting your fears, you must convince yourself of the need to address these fears. To help in this process answer these questions in your journal.

1. How do my fears influence my decision making process?
2. How do my fears encourage and exacerbate my sense of insecurity?
3. How do my fears influence my response to offers of help from others?
4. How have my fears kept me chained down and locked in?
5. How have my fears contributed to my self-destructiveness?
6. How have my fears kept me from growing as a person?
7. How have my fears hurt others, who I love and care about?

## OVERCOMING FEARS

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**Step 4** - Now that you are motivated to confront your fears, address the following issues in your journal.

1. What new behaviors do I need to develop in order to confront my fears?
2. What beliefs block my desires and attempts at confronting my fears?
3. How willing am I to try new behaviors and create new beliefs?
4. What new beliefs do I need to confront my fears?

**Step 5** - Once you are committed to confronting your fears, use the "Tools for Personal Growth" to identify strategies in confronting each fear. These tools should help you overcome your fears, or at least reduce their impact on your life. You will need to be vigilant and optimistic while confronting fears. If you work the steps that you will learn in the following pages you will succeed.

**Fear of rejection is the:**

- Irrational fear that others will not accept you for who you are, what you believe, and how you act.
- Pervasive motivators for caution in your behavior, and interactions with others.
- State of mind that makes you incapable of doing or saying anything for fear of others rejection, lack of acceptance, and/or disapproval.
- State of being of individuals who are over dependent on the approval, recognition, or affirmation of others in order to feel good about themselves. In order to sustain personal feelings of adequacy these individuals are constantly concerned with the reaction of others, towards them.
- Underlying process in the power of "peer pressure" that grabs hold and makes people act in stereotypic counter culture, punk, new wave, pop, preppie, yuppie, and other styles. They crave recognition, and acceptance from the reference group with whom they want to be identified.
- Energy-robbing attitude that leads to self-immobilization, self-defeating, and self-destructive behavior. This attitude encourages ongoing irrational thinking and behavior resulting in personal stagnation, regression, and depression.

Common behavior patterns that exist for people who operate out of the fear of rejection:

- Display little or no assertiveness.
- Do not speak up to let others know how they feel about something, especially if their opinions differ.
- Function as enablers. They have neither the courage nor the ability to assist others in discontinuing self-destructive behavior, such as alcohol, drug abuse, underachievement, workaholicism, etc.
- Lack the courage to function differently from others even when they don't enjoy the behavior in which they are involved.
- Resort to passive/aggressive behavior that's dishonest, sneaky, and allows no open communication.
- Play games with people. They will keep their personal feelings hidden. They are in tune with what is in and make every effort to emulate it in their lives.
- Confused as to their true identity, wearing a "mask" to please others.
- Are dishonest with themselves, so much so that it carries over into their interactions with others and they become habitual liars.

How do others react to people, who operate out of a fear of rejection?

People, who care for the people, who are operating out of the fear of rejection:

- Encourage the person to be more assertive.
- Plead with the person to change their lifestyle and become true to themselves.
- Recognize the lies and find it hard to trust the integrity and honesty of the person.
- Recognize that the person for whom they care is in a self-defeating, dead end cycle.

**Results:** The person who operates out of a fear of rejection ends up pushing away the very friend, family, and helpers who care for them.

## OVERCOMING FEARS

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The people whom the person fears, being rejected by:

- Take the person for granted.
- Don't recognize that he/she is making great sacrifices to be accepted by them.
- Ignore the rights of the person.
- Find it humorous how the person bends over backwards to please them.
- Openly reject the person once they have "used" them and have no further use for them.

**Results:** The person who operates out of a fear of rejection ends up being rejected by the very people from whom he/she fears rejection.

To overcome the fear of rejection, you need to: (In the community once you are released)

1. Identify in your journal the person(s) from whom you fear rejection.
2. Identify in your journal how your fear of rejection is displayed in your behavior toward the person(s) you identified in #1.
3. Identify in your journal healthy, productive, and rational alternative behavior patterns to those identified in #1.
4. Identify in your journal what the consequences would be if you used the alternative behavior patterns listed in #3.
5. Identify in your journal what obstacles, other than your fear of rejection, exist in your adopting the alternative behavior patterns listed in #3.
6. Implement the alternative behavior patterns that are not based on the fear of rejection.

### Fear of success is the:

- Fear that you will accomplish all that you set out to, but that you still won't be happy, content, or satisfied once you reach your goal.
- Belief that you are undeserving of all good things and recognition that comes your way as a result of your accomplishments and successes.
- Lack of belief in your own ability to sustain your progress, and the accomplishments you have achieved in your life.
- Fear that your accomplishments can self-destruct at anytime.
- Belief that no matter how much you are able to achieve or accomplish, it will never be enough to sustain success.
- Belief that there are others out there who are better than you, who will replace or displace you if you don't maintain your performance record.

### What are some negative consequences of the fear of success?

#### Fear of success can result in:

- A lack of effort to achieve goals you have set for yourself in life, relationships, and personal growth.
- Self-destructive behavior, tripping yourself up to make sure you don't sustain a certain level of success or achievement you once had in relationships or in your personal growth.
- Problem making decisions, being unable to solve problems.
- Losing the motivation or the desire to grow, achieve, and succeed.
- Chronic underachievement.
- Denouncing your achievements and accomplishments, seeking ways in which you can denigrate yourself enough to lose what you've gained.

## OVERCOMING FEARS

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Those who fear success believe:

- I've worked so hard to get this far, yet I need to keep on working hard. I'm not sure the effort is worth it.
- I've never been happy before, so how can I be sure I'll be happy once I achieve my goals?
- I am nothing and I deserve nothing.
- I can't sustain the momentum I need to achieve my goals.
- I'm always afraid I'm going to lose it all.
- Everyone has the right to fail in life and I have the right to choose to fail if I want to.

To overcome the fear of success, follow these steps:

**Step 1** - First you need to identify the fear of success in your life. To do this answer the following questions in your journal.

1. What do you think if you achieve success in your emotional life, on the job, with family, with friends, in sports, in you spiritual life, and in you physical health?
2. What would success in these areas of your life look like?
3. In what ways do you feel undeserving of success in these areas?
4. Who are you afraid of hurting, or intimidating if you achieve success in these areas?
5. What do you think is lacking to keep you from sustaining success in these areas?
6. How motivated are you in the struggle for success in these areas?
7. In what ways, after achieving success in these areas, do you feel you will lose focus or direction in other areas of your life?
8. What are your long-range goals for these areas?
9. In what ways do you self-destruct achievement and success in your life?
10. How much of a problem do you have making decisions in these areas?
11. Has your motivation been diminished in these areas?
12. Have you ever feared losing people's attention, sympathy, or concern if you achieved success in these areas in your life?
13. Have you ever put yourself down for achieving success?

**Step 2** - After looking at the negative consequences of the fear of success in each area of life, identify the beliefs that lead to fear of success. Once you have identified these beliefs for each arena of your life, refute them if they are irrational, and replace them with rational beliefs. Write out all thoughts and answers in your journal.

**Step 3** - After you have identified your irrational beliefs and replaced them with rational and self-affirming ones, identify what new behavior you will need to develop in each of these areas. To help you with this answer the following questions.

- How can I improve the ways in which I reinforce myself?
- How can I make more honest appraisals of my accomplishments?
- How can I accept myself being unsuccessful?
- How can I accept myself being successful?
- How can I monitor my level of commitment, and motivation to succeed?
- How can I improve my self-talk to assist me in achieving my goals?
- How can I learn to accept the compliments and recognition of others for my success?

## OVERCOMING FEARS

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### A Personal Approach to Life Quiz

1. Other people control my life.  True  False
2. I'm responsible for the success in my life.  True  False
3. Success in life is a matter of luck.  True  False
4. When things go wrong, it's usually because of things I couldn't control.  True  False
5. The last time I did something successful, it was because of my own efforts.  True  False
6. The last time I failed at something, I knew it was because I just wasn't good enough to get the job done.  True  False
7. Most successful people are born successful?  True  False
8. It seems that most things are beyond my control.  True  False
9. When I fail, it's usually someone else's fault.  True  False
10. When I succeed, it's usually because of someone else's effort.  True  False

### What are irrational beliefs?

#### Irrational Beliefs are:

- Messages about life we send to ourselves that keep us from growing emotionally.
- Scripts we have in our head about how we believe life “should” be for us and for others.
- Unfounded attitudes, opinions, and values we hold, that are out of synch with the way the world really is.
- Negative sets of habitual responses we hold to when faced with stressful events or situations.
- Stereotypic ways of problem solving we fall into in order to deal with life’s pressures.
- Ideas, feelings, beliefs, ways of thinking, attitudes, opinions, biases, prejudices, and/or values with which we were raised. We have become accustomed to using them when faced with problems in our current life, even when they are not productive in helping us reach a positive growth enhancing solution.
- Self-defeating ways of acting. On the surface they may look appropriate for the occasion, but actually they result in a neutral or negative consequence for you.
- Habitual ways of thinking, feeling, or acting that we think are effective. However, in the long run they are ineffectual.
- Counterproductive ways of thinking, which give comfort and security in the short run, but either do not resolve or actually exacerbate the problem in the long run.
- Negative or pessimistic ways of looking at necessary life experiences, such as conflict, risk taking, rejection, or accepting change.
- Overly optimistic or idealistic ways of looking at necessary life experiences, such as loss, conflict, risk taking, rejection, or accepting change.
- Emotional arguments for taking or not taking action in the face of a challenge. When followed they result in no personal gain, but rather in greater personal hardship or loss.
- Patterns of thinking that make you appear to others as stubborn, bullheaded, intemperate, argumentative, or aloof.
- Ways of thinking about you that are out of context with the real facts, resulting in you undervaluing or overvaluing yourself.
- Outmoded, unproductive, unrealistic expectations exacted on you and/or others guaranteed to be unattainable and to result in continuing negative self-concepts.

## ***HANDLING IRRATIONAL BELIEFS***

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What are some examples of irrational beliefs?

### **Irrational Beliefs about Self:**

- I don't deserve positive attention from others.
- I should never burden others with my problems or fears.
- I am uncreative, nonproductive, ineffective, and untalented.
- I am worthless.
- I am the worst example of a person on earth.
- I am powerless to solve my problems.
- I have so many problems I might as well give up right now.
- I am the ugliest, most unattractive, unappealing, fat slob in the world.

### **Irrational Beliefs about Others:**

- No one cares about anyone else.
- All men/women are dishonest and are never to be trusted.
- People are always out to get whatever they can from you.
- People are so opinionated; they never listen to other people's points of views.
- What counts in life are other people's opinions of you?

### **Irrational Beliefs on other topics:**

- There is only one way of doing things.
- There are always two choices, right or wrong, black or white, win or lose, pass or fail, growth or stagnate.
- Admitting to a mistake or failure is a sign of weakness.
- Showing any emotion is wrong, a sign of weakness, and not allowable.
- Asking for help from someone else is a way of admitting your weakness.

**How can you recognize irrational beliefs?**

**Irrational Beliefs can be present if you:**

- Find yourself caught up in a vicious cycle in addressing your problems.
- Find a continuing series of “catch 22’s” where every move you make to resolve a problem results in more or greater problems.
- Have been suffering silently with a problem for a long time, yet have not taken steps to get help to address the problem.
- Find that the only way to deal with problems is to avoid them, deny them, procrastinate about solving them, ignore them, run away from them, and/or turn your back on them.
- Find you are constantly obsessed with a problem, yet take no steps to resolve it.
- Find that you are immobilized in the face of your problem.

**What are the benefits of refuting your irrational beliefs?**

**By refuting your irrational beliefs you are able to:**

- Unblock your emotions and feelings about yourself and your problems.
- Become a productive and realistic problem solver.
- Gain greater credibility with yourself and others.
- Gain clarity, purpose, and intention in addressing your current problems.
- Reduce the fear of guilt or of hurting others in solving problems.
- Come to greater honesty about yourself and your problems.
- Separate your feelings from the content of the problem.
- Live richer, more authentic lives.
- Gain a sense of purpose and order in your life as you solve problems.
- Respect your rights and the rights of others as you solve problems.

## ***HANDLING IRRATIONAL BELIEFS***

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### **Steps to take in refuting irrational beliefs:**

**Step 1** - Is your thinking and problem solving ability being blocked by an irrational belief? Consider a specific problem as you answer the following questions in your journals:

1. Am I going in circles in trying to solve this problem?
2. Is there something inside of me that is preventing or keeping me from taking the necessary actions in this matter?
3. Do I find myself saying how this situation should be, or am I having a hard time facing it the way it really is?
4. Do I use fantasy thinking in looking at this problem? Am I always hoping that by some miracle it will go away?
5. Am I burdened by the fear of what others think of me as I work on this problem?
6. Do I know what the solution is, but become paralyzed in its implementation?
7. Do I find myself using a lot of "yes butt's" in discussing the problem?
8. Do I find it easier to procrastinate, avoid, divert my attention, ignore, or run away from this problem?

**Step 2** - If you have answered yes to any or all of the questions in Step 1, you are probably facing a problem or situation in which irrational beliefs is clouding your thinking. The next thing to do is to try to identify the blocking irrational belief. Answer the following questions in your journal:

1. Is the blocking belief something I have believed in all my life?
2. Is the irrational belief coming from the teachings of my parents, church, family, peers, society, culture, community, race, ethnic reference group, etc?
3. Is the blocking belief something that always recurs when you are trying to solve problems similar to this one?
4. Is the irrational belief something that has helped me solve problems successfully in the past?
5. Is the blocking belief one that tends to make me dishonest with myself and others about this problem?
6. Is the blocking belief something that can be stated in a sentence or two?
7. Is the irrational belief a tangible statement or belief, or is it simply a feeling or intuition?
8. Can I state the blocking belief? If so, write it in your journal; my irrational (blocking) belief is.....

**Step 3** - Once you have identified the blocking belief in Step 2, test its rationality. Answer the following questions about the belief in your journal. "Yes or No"

1. Is there any basis in reality to support this belief as always being true?
2. Does the belief encourage personal growth, emotional maturity, independence of thinking and action, and stable mental health?
3. Is this belief one which, if ascribed to, will help you overcome this or future problems in your life?
4. Is this belief one which, if ascribed to, will result in behavior that is self defeating for you?
5. Does this belief protect you and your rights as a person?
6. Does this belief assist you in connecting honestly and openly with others, so that healthy, growth engendering interpersonal relationships results?
7. Does the belief stifle your thinking and problem solving ability to the point of immobilization?
8. Is this belief an absolute? Is it a black or white, yes or no, win or lose no options in the middle type of belief?

If you are unable to give healthy answers to one or more questions in Step 3, then your blocking belief is most likely irrational.

**Step 4** - Once you have determined that the blocking belief is irrational, you are ready to refute this irrational belief. Respond to the following questions in your journal.

1. How do I consistently feel when I think of this belief?
2. Is there anything in reality to support this belief as true?
3. What in reality supports the lack of absolute truth in this belief?
4. Does the truth of this belief exist only in the way I talk, act, or feel about this problem?
5. What is the worst thing that could happen to me if I do not hold on to this belief?
6. What positive things might happen to me if I don't hold on to this belief?
7. What would be an appropriate, realistic belief I could substitute for this irrational belief?
8. How would I feel if I substituted this new belief for my blocking belief?

Once you have answered these questions, substitute a rational belief and act on it.

## *HANDLING IRRATIONAL BELIEFS*

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**My substitute rational belief is:**

Learn to believe in yourself. There is not a single person living that always feels confident. Anyone can experience a poor self-image day, especially when circumstances change abruptly.

Having a positive self-concept doesn't mean you won't ever question yourself. Questioning allows you to compare your self-image with the world around you. You don't want to put yourself in a negative position, because you have inaccurately evaluated your abilities based upon an irrational belief. This is why self-awareness is so important. It allows you to make better decisions about your life.

To change irrational beliefs, you must work daily to do so; practice, practice, practice.

If you still have trouble solving problems, return to Step 1 and begin again.

### What are negative self-scripts?

Before you can become self-affirming, you must learn about the effects of negativism in your life. Negative self-scripts are the:

- Negative beliefs you have about yourself and, you remind yourself of them daily.
- Negative statements about yourself which sprinkle your everyday conversation.
- Self-demeaning remarks that influence your behavior or beliefs.
- Negative descriptions given to you by members of your family of origin or peer groups when you were younger onto which you hold even to this day.
- Negative feedbacks you receive from colleagues, parents, relatives, peer groups, or others that you take personally and incorporate into your personal belief system.
- Negative self-images you have of your body, looks, face, weight, coloring, hair, feet, or other parts of your body, which as you visualize them, influence your presentation of self to others.
- Negative assessments you or others have made of your competency, skills, ability, knowledge, intelligence, creativity, or common sense. You have agreed with this internally and thus, believe it true of you.
- Negative stories about your past behavior, failures, or performances that you systematically run over in your mind and which influence your current conduct.
- Negative attitudes about the possibility of your achievement of success in your life; these influence your motivation, effort, and drive for attainment of goals.
- Negative visualizations you have of your current status or state in life to your personal detriment.
- Feelings of guilt, for real or imagined debilitating wrongs you have committed that prevent positive self-valuing thoughts.

## *SELF-AFFIRMATIONS*

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- Dread and fear you have when facing your future; the belief that you do not have what it takes to survive or to be successful in whatever circumstances you face.
- Feelings of anger, resentment, hostility or rage you feel towards others for real or imagined mistreatment.
- Feelings of over-responsibility which you burden yourself.
- Feelings of failure you harbor about real or imagined mistakes in the past and your “assured” failures in the future.
- Feelings of inferiority you harbor about yourself and the belief that no matter what you do in life, it will never be “good enough”.
- Ways in which you deny yourself rewards for your goodness, hard work and caring by, not taking time to enjoy the fruits of labor, and being afraid to let down your guard and relax, least you fail to achieve your “Big Pay Off”.
- Feelings of jealousy you harbor towards others whom you perceive to be more successful, luckier, better liked, smarter, more talented, more creative, and generally better off than you.

What is the outcome of believing in negative self-scripts?

The outcome of believing in negative self-scripts can include:

**Over dependence on the approval of others;** you have an inordinate need to receive positive reinforcement or approval for what you are, how you act, and what you do from others with an inability to be self-rewarding.

**Lack of self-esteem and low self-concept;** you have an inability to believe in your own worth. You lack the ability to see any value in your own life. You have a poor self-image, and lack belief in your competency to succeed in life.

**Immobilization;** a rigid belief system immobilizes you from taking risks in life. It prevents you from wanting to make change. It freezes your feelings into a negative pattern, and convinces you that your only role in life is to be victimized by those from whom you cannot escape.

**Negativity;** your negative view of yourself leads you to see your entire world in a negative light. You begin to believe and act as a “loser”. You see nothing in a positive light and can’t be convinced that there are better options in life.

**Pessimism;** you no longer believe that you will succeed and are no longer willing to take an optimistic position as you look to your future. You can only see gloom and doom on the horizon.

**Self-pity;** you begin to feel sorry for yourself and how life has treated you, and you become your best “pity party” guest. You are so lost in your self-sorrow, regrets, remorse, sympathy, and pity that you refuse to be shaken or changed. You begin to believe that no one will notice you if they can’t feel sorry for you too.

**Cynicism;** you take a “yes but” cynical look at every suggestion for change in your life. You begin to doubt in the sincerity, kindness, and love of others who are trying to help you. You create a barrier of cynicism to block them out, thus convincing yourself when they leave you that they really didn’t care in the first place.

**Fulfillment of the prophecy;** because negative self-scripts predict the worst, you at some subconscious level work to achieve the worst and succeed in fulfilling the negative prophecy of failure, rejection, loss, disapproval, and/or any other catastrophe or malady. It’s a pattern of being self-destructive with one’s life.

**Depression;** because of anger, resentment, rage, hurt, disappointment, disillusionment, and suffering you experience from your negative self-script, you are a good candidate for firm and long-lasting depression.

## *SELF-AFFIRMATIONS*

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What are self-affirmations?

Self-affirmations are:

- Healing-positive self-scripts you give yourself to counter your negative self-scripts.
- Vehicles by which you can free yourself from the over dependence on others' opinion, attitudes, or feelings about you and feel good about yourself.
- Visualizations of a new order and sense in your life, which you can work toward achieving.
- You, taking personal responsibility for your behavior, health, and emotional stability.
- You, letting go of negative emotional baggage you have been carrying around. Only then will you be able to deal with your life in a realistic and positive manner.
- The resolutions of feelings from the past, so that you can face the present with a less obstructed view.
- You, giving yourself permission to grow, to change, to take risks to rise up, and create a better life for yourself.
- You, taking a self-oriented route in your life so that you can "let go" of people who drain your resources and keep you from experiencing full personal growth.
- The recognition of your rights and affirming your claim on them; giving you an equitable chance of achieving your fullest potential.
- Success prophesies that when visualized, imagined, or believed in, do come true.

What shapes can positive self-affirmation take?

I statements are one line statements that can be repeated to cover three areas:

I am - a statement of who you are.

This is a positive affirmation of a real state of being that exists in you. You can achieve a full list of "I am" statements by taking a personal positive inventory of your attributes, strengths, talents, and competencies.

Examples include:

- I am competent
- I am strong
- I am intelligent
- I am beautiful
- I am handsome
- I am a good person
- I am caring
- I am loving
- I am smart
- I am creative
- I am talented
- I am energetic
- I am sharing
- I am enthusiastic
- I am relaxed
- I am joyful
- I am trusting
- I am courageous
- I am forgiving

**I can** - a statement of your potential.

This is a positive affirmation of your ability to accomplish goals. It's a statement of your belief in your power to grow, to change, and to help yourself. "I can" statements are developed after you develop a set of short term (3 - 6 months) goals.

Examples are:

- I can lose weight
- I can stop smoking
- I can gain self-confidence
- I can be strong
- I can take risks
- I can be a winner
- I can change
- I can be assertive
- I can control my temper
- I can grow
- I can heal
- I can let go of guilt
- I can be positive
- I can solve problems
- I can handle my problems
- I can be honest
- I can succeed

## ***SELF-AFFIRMATIONS***

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**I will** - a statement of positive change in your life.

This is a positive affirmation of a change you want to achieve. It's a positive statement of what you want to happen. It's a "success prophecy". I will statements are developed after you have set your priorities for the short term goals you have set.

**Examples include:**

- I will like myself better each day.
- I will gain emotional strength each day.
- I will lose weight each day.
- I will smoke less each day.
- I will control my temper each day.
- I will smile more each day.
- I will praise a friend today.
- I will feel good things about me all day.
- I will feel less guilt each day.
- I will face my fears courageously today.
- I will take care of me today.
- I will challenge myself to change today.
- I will take a risk to grow today.

**STATEMENTS OF SELF-BELIEF =**

- **I AM**
- **I CAN**
- **I WILL**

The daily use of these "I" statements is another form of self-affirmation designed to counter negative self-concept. It can result in a positive attitude, optimism, and can motivate you toward emotional growth and progress.

### **Affirmation of the Day Exercise**

Write a single positive affirmation in your journal. Write one for each day of the month, and when you get to the last day of the month. Repeat this step of the exercise for all 12 months of the year. Keep the written affirmations in a separate journal and continually use the collection year after year, adding new affirmations as you need them.

### **Self-Affirmation Statements**

These forms of affirmations are words, phrases, or statements. You should review them daily to be reminded of positive aspects about yourself. Every time you read your positive affirmations remember they are positive qualities or attributes that you have.

#### **Affirmation word examples:**

- Bright
- Creative
- Intelligent
- Smart
- Quick
- Loving
- Caring
- Successful
- Calm
- Relaxed
- Capable
- Strong
- Beautiful / Handsome
- Giving
- Peaceful
- Hopeful
- Responsible
- Problem Solver
- Quit
- Enjoyable

#### **Affirmation Phrase Examples:**

- Think happy
- Be calm
- Take action
- Do it
- Do it now
- Take a risk
- Dare to be different
- Seize the moment
- Let go
- Let them be
- Take it easy
- Think wisely
- Work smart
- Have fun
- Sit back
- Step back
- Take the lead
- Believe in me
- Trust in me

## *SELF-AFFIRMATIONS*

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### Affirmation Statement Examples:

- I can be a winner
- I am a winner
- I am the best friend I have
- I have solved problems like this before
- I have the ability to handle this
- I am a capable human being
- I deserve to love and be loved
- I am a skillful and artistic person
- I can be a good example to others
- I am responsible for my own feelings
- I deserve to have my rights recognized
- I am a deserving human being
- I deserve to be rewarded for what I do
- I love myself for who I am
- I like the way I handle problems
- I experience the excitement of growth daily
- Change is a blessing I am operating in
- Taking risks is the path to my growth
- I grow in love daily
- I face each day as a race I will win
- I am a rich treasure ready to be found
- I am free of guilt today
- Today I say hello to the new me
- My possibilities are endless

These are positive affirmations that you can use, but I urge you to create your own set and use them daily. They are a powerful tool in wiping out negative beliefs you might have. Once the negative self-scripts are fully replaced with positive self-scripts, a positive change can and will take place.

## What is Guilt?

### Guilt is a:

- Feeling of being responsible for negative circumstances; that have befallen yourself or others.
- Feeling of regret; for your real or imagined misdeeds; both past and present.
- Sense of remorse; for thoughts, feelings, or attitudes that were or are negative, uncomplimentary, or non-accepting; concerning yourself or others.
- Feeling of obligation; for not pleasing, helping, or pacifying another.
- Feeling of bewilderment and lack of balance; for not responding to a situation in your typical, stereotype manner.
- Feeling of loss and shame; for not having done or said something to someone who is no longer available to you.
- Motivator; to amend all real or perceived wrongs.
- Strong moral sense of right and wrong; that inhibits you from choosing a “wrong” course of action.
- Driving force or mask; behind which irrational beliefs hide.

How do others play on your feelings of guilt?

People can and sometimes will:

- Make you believe they will suffer greatly if you do not respond positively to their request(s).
- Call on your guilt to respond to their request, even when it means violating your rights.
- Respond to your irrational self by reinforcing your irrational thinking, thus giving you a sense of blame for past, present, and future actions.
- Build up a verbal or imagined scenario that portrays you at fault for inaction, thus guaranteeing your sense of guilt and your willingness to do anything to alleviate it.
- Reinforce your negative self-perceptions, encouraging you to be guilt ridden and self-judgmental for their belief.
- Set up situations for you in which you will believe your alternatives are limited to that which results in the least sense of guilt.
- Accuse you of misdeeds, words, or actions to arouse your sense of guilt and make you believe you are the one with a problem.
- Threaten negative consequences, like loss of a job, going to the hospital, failing school or even dying. This manipulation uses your guilt to benefit them.

### What can guilt do to you?

#### Guilt can:

- Make you become over “**responsible**”, striving to make life “right”. You overwork and you over give yourself. You are willing to do anything in your attempt to make everyone else happy.
- Make you over “**conscientious**”. You fret over every action you take, as to its possible negative consequences to others, even if this means that you must ignore your needs and wants.
- Makes you over “**sensitive**”. You see decisions about right and wrong in every aspect of your life and become obsessed with the tenuous nature of all of your personal actions, words, and decisions. You are sensitive to the cues of others where any implication of your wrong doing is intimidated.
- “**Immobilize**” you. You can become so overcome by the fear of doing, acting, saying, or being “wrong” that you eventually collapse and give in by choosing inactivity, silence, and the status quo.
- “**Interfere**” in your decision making. It’s so important to always be “right” in your decisions that you become unable to make a decision, lest it be a wrong one.
- Be hidden by the mask of “**self denial**”. Because it is less guilt inducing to take care of others first, instead of yourself, you hide behind the mask of self denial. You honestly believe it’s better to serve others first and there is nothing wrong with serving others first, as long as “guilt” is not the motivation behind such actions.
- Be a mask of negative “**self belief**”. You may actually have low self-esteem, but claim the reason for your negativity is the overwhelming sense of guilt you experience.
- “**Mislead**” or “**Misdirect**” you. Because of the irrational beliefs that form behind guilt, you may be unable to correctly sort out your feelings. It’s important to be objective with yourself when you are experiencing guilt. Be sure that your decisions are based on sound, rational thinking.

## *HANDLING GUILT*

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What irrational beliefs or negative self scripts are involved in guilt? Example:

- I do not deserve to be happy.
- I am responsible for others happiness.
- There is only one right way to do things.
- It's bad to feel hurt and pain.
- It's my fault if others in my life are not happy.
- It's wrong to be concerned about myself.
- People are constantly judging me, and their judgment is important to me.
- You must never let your guard down; something you're doing could be evil or wrong.

**Suggested Steps to Overcome Guilt:**

**Step 1** - You can recognize the role guilt is playing in your life by choosing a current problem and answering the following questions in your journal:

1. What problem is currently troubling me?
2. Who is responsible for the problem?
3. Whose problem is it, really?
4. What did I do to make the problem worse for myself?
5. How much guilt do I feel about this problem?
6. If I felt no more guilt what would my problem look like?
7. Can your problem be resolved by reducing or removing guilt?

**Step 2** - Redefine your problem with the absence of guilt as an issue. In answering the questions in step 1 you should have recognized that guilt was preventing resolution of the problem. To re-define your problem, answer the following questions in your journal:

1. How insurmountable is the problem?
2. Is the problem an interpersonal or intrapersonal problem?
3. Does the problem have more than one solution? Can others and I experience satisfaction, comfort, and resolution with a minimum of debilitating guilt?
4. Whose Problem is it?
5. Am I taking on another's responsibility?

**Step 3** - If the problem is really someone else's, give the problem back to the person(s) to solve and deal with. If the problem is yours go to step 4.

**Step 4** -You must confront the real or imagined guilt or fear of guilt preventing you from either handing the problem back to the person(s) whose problem it really is or from handling the problem on your own. Consider the following:

1. What fears are blocking me at this moment from taking the steps I need to resolve this problem?
2. What are the irrational beliefs behind the fears?
3. Refute the irrational beliefs using the steps given in the "Handling Irrational Beliefs" section.
4. Initiate a program of self-affirmation as presented in the Self-Affirmations' section.
5. Affirm for yourself that:
  - A. You deserve to solve this problem
  - B. You can be good to yourself
  - C. You deserve to have others be good to you

### What is trust?

#### Trust is:

- Letting others know your feelings, emotions, and reactions. It's also having the confidence in them to respect you, and not to take advantage of you.
- Sharing your inner feelings and thoughts with others with the belief that they will not spread them indiscriminately.
- Placing confidence in others so that they will be supportive and reinforcing of you, even if you let down your "Strong" mask and show your weaknesses.
- Assuming that others will not intentionally hurt or abuse you if you should make an error or mistake.
- The inner sense of acceptance you have of others with whom you are able to share secrets, knowing they are safe.
- The sense that things are fine and nothing can disrupt the bond between you and the other person.
- The glue or cement of relationships that allows you to need others to fulfill yourself.
- The ability to let others into your life so that you and they can create a relationship built on an understanding of mutual respect, caring and concern to assist one another in growing and maturing independently.
- Opening yourself up to let others in on your background, problems, concerns, and mistakes with the assurance that they will not ostracize you because of these things.

Why do people have trouble developing trust in others?

People have trouble developing trust in others if they have:

- Experienced a great deal of emotional and/or physical abuse and/or neglect.
- Been chronically put down for the way they feel or for what they believe.
- Been emotionally hurt in the past and are not willing to risk getting hurt in the future.
- Had problem relationships in the past where they were belittled, misunderstood, or ignored.
- Experienced a hostile or bitter separation or end of a relationship. They may be unable to believe anyone who opens up to them in a new committed relationship.
- Been reared in or have lived in an environment that is emotionally and/or physically unpredictable and volatile.
- Low self-esteem and cannot believe that they are deserving of the attention, care, and concern of anyone. They have problems even trusting the positive, healthy, and reinforcing behavior of another who is sincere.
- Experienced a great deal of non-provoked victimization in their lives. They are unwilling to trust people, situations, or institutions for fear of being victimized again.

What are some beliefs of people who have problems trusting?

Examples of some of their beliefs:

- I have been hurt too much in the past, and I refuse to be hurt again!
- People are out to get all they can from them, so they avoid them to survive!
- As soon as they let their guard down they will be stepped on again!
- No one is to be trusted!
- You always get hurt by the ones you love!
- I get no respect from anyone!
- All men (women) are dishonest and never to be trusted!
- Everyone is out to get me!
- You can never let your guard down because all hell will break loose!
- There is no such thing as change in behavior. It's only manipulation by others to get their way with you!
- Everyone is out to get as much as they can out of you!
- It's better to live alone for the rest of my life than to risk being hurt as I was!
- I will never let you know my true feelings again since, I'm afraid you will use them against me!

What behavioral traits do people need in order to develop trust?

A person needs to develop the following behavior traits, attitudes, and beliefs in order to develop trust:

- **Hope in the goodness of mankind** - Without such hope people can become emotionally stuck, reclusive, and isolated. Hope in goodness is a change based on the willingness to take a risk that all people are not evil, bad, or ill willed.
- **Faith in the fairness of life** - This faith, in fairness, is similar to the “boomerang belief” - what you throw out to others will come back to you eventually in life. So, if people are fair, honest, and nurturing they will eventually receive similar behavior aimed back at them. Having faith in fairness is an attitude that helps people be open to others and risk being vulnerable. They believe that the person who treats them negatively will eventually “get it in the end” and be punished in some way later in life.
- **Belief in a power greater than self** - This is the acceptance of a spiritual power with greater strength, wisdom, and knowledge than you. One with a divine plan to include your experience - whatever you will encounter in life. Rather than believing that you are 100% in control of your destiny. Your belief in this spiritual power enables you to let go of over responsibility, guilt, and anger. This lets you accept God’s will in your life and enables you to let go of your distrust and isolation from others.
- **A healing environment** - This is the creating of a trust bond with the significant others in your personal life where blaming, accusing, and acrimony do not exist. In the healing mode the participants actively use forgiveness, understanding, and healthy communication to resolve problems and issues. The participants are then willing to forget, let go of, and release themselves to trust one another.
- **Reduction of a sense of competition** - The reducing of competition, jealousy, and defensiveness with significant others in your life, is a way to reduce the barriers between you and them. The lowering of these psychological barriers is essential to the movement towards development of mutual trust.
- **Taking risks to be open to others** - This enables you to become a real person to others. It’s an essential behavior in trust-building between people because it is the establishing of the parameters of strengths and weaknesses on which you have to draw as the relationship develops.
- **Letting go of fear** - Fear restricts your actions with others. The letting go of fear frees you of behavioral constraints that can immobilize your emotional development. Fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of caring, fear of success, fear of being hurt, fear of the unknown, and fear of intimacy are all blockers against the development of trust filled relationships and will impede relational growth if not given appropriate attention and remedial action.

## ***BUILDING TRUST***

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- **Self acceptance** - Accepting who you are and what your potential is an important step in letting down your guard enough to develop trusting relationships with others. If you are so insecure in your identity that you are unable to accept yourself first, how can you achieve the self revelation necessary to develop trust? Self acceptance through an active program of self affirmation and self love is a key to the development of trust.

### **What steps can be taken to build/improve trust?**

**Step 1** - Read and answer the following questions in your journal.

1. Am I lacking trust in person(s), group(s), or institution(s)? If yes
  - A. Which person(s), group(s), or institution(s) do you lack trust in?
  - B. How does this lack of trust manifest itself?
2. Why do you lack trust in the person(s), group(s), or institution(s)?
3. What beliefs do you hold that are behind your lack of trust in these categories?
4. What new behavior trait(s) do you need to acquire or develop in order to develop trust in these three categories?

**Step 2** - After reviewing your answers listed above, you should have a good idea of where your lack of trust lies. In order to change your beliefs and remediate this situation you have to:

1. Let go of the negative beliefs by using the Tools for Personal Growth "Refuting Irrational Beliefs" process, and use replacement beliefs you already listed, or acquire replacement beliefs.
2. Take the new beliefs, and use Tool for Personal Growth "Self-Affirmation" process to make these new beliefs real for you.

**Step 3** - Communicate with the person you have problems trusting. You need to let them know your reason(s) for the lack of trust. You need to let him/her know your true feelings, and the beliefs you have which block you trust. This person needs to understand and assist you in resolving this problem. Tell the person what you are willing to do and commit to in order to change this lack of trust situation. Also, tell this person what you are unwilling to do because of your integrity. Use as many of the communication skills as you need to in an attempt to resolve this situation. The bottom line is that you have cleared your own "Air waves" even if you are unable to resolve this problem.

**NOTE:** Refer to Communication Skills in the first section of your workbook.

**Step 4** - If after a complete study, and completion of Steps 1, 2, and 3, you still have problems developing trust in a person(s), group(s), and/or institution(s), return to Step 1 and begin again.

### What is insecurity?

#### Insecurity is a/an:

- Feeling of not being “good enough” to meet the challenges of situations you face in life.
- Sense of helplessness in the face of problems, conflict, and/or concerns.
- Belief that one is inadequate, ill fitted, or unsuited to meet responsibilities at home, work, etc.
- Sense of not fitting in, being “out of synch” with those in your peer group.
- Sense of always climbing up a mountain, never being able to reach the top.
- Sense of lacking support or reinforcement where you live, work, or play.
- Result from a sense of being unaccepted, disapproved, or rejected.
- Inner turmoil coming from a lack of direction or bewilderment as to where you are going, what your goals are, and what responses are appropriate for events in life.
- Perception that life is unpredictable with most of the expectations you have to meet not clearly understood.

### Why are people insecure?

#### Insecure people may have:

- Been raised in a chaotic, unpredictable, or volatile environment in which they were kept off balance, on guard, and/or on edge.
- A poorly developed self concept with low self esteem, lacking belief in their personal goodness, skills, and/or abilities.
- A poor body image, that make them believe, that others see them in a negative light. This makes them self conscious, tense, and anxious in dealing with others.
- Never received enough positive reinforcement or feedback from others about their talents and abilities; leaving them unclear as to their true skills.
- Been given very little direction, guidance, and/or discipline in their earlier lives leaving them unable to cope with the current pressures of life.
- Had an unrealistic list of rules and expectations prescribed by significant others in their life - values they are striving to meet even in there current life.

## *HANDLING INSECURITY*

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### What do chronically insecure people believe?

- I can never accomplish the task facing me!
- I am a failure!
- I can never win, I'm a loser!
- What is the sense of trying? I never get it right!
- No matter how hard I work to achieve, I never get any recognition!
- I'm incompetent in everything!
- How could anybody say anything good about me?
- I failed them in the past, so I will fail them in the future!
- Once a failure always a failure!
- No one could ever like, respect, or accept me!
- I don't fit in here or anywhere else!
- I am afraid that no one will like me!
- I am an incomplete person and will always be!

### These are some negative effects of insecurity:

- Having difficulties in establishing healthy, long-lasting relationships.
- Being perceived incorrectly by others as being snobbish, or uppity. Therefore, they are avoided by others.
- Becoming victims of fears that impair their freedom of action or choice.
- Becoming paranoid, feeling "others" are out to get them.
- Scare others away from you by defensive attitudes.
- Have problems meeting people and often can become debilitated socially by chronic shyness.
- People become inward and escape into fantasy rather than deal with the reality of their lives.

How can insecurity be overcome?

In order to overcome insecurity people need to:

- Be willing to be put in vulnerable positions in life where they might get hurt.
- Take risks to change their current behavior.
- Trust others enough to expose themselves to them.
- Have a healthy and humorous belief in self in order to overlook their exaggerated need for acceptance and approval.
- Take a rational approach to each problem they face so that they are no longer inhibited by debilitating fears of beliefs
- Practice assertive behavior in their lives, earning respect and the acknowledgment of their rights.
- Open themselves to the possibility of success and accomplishments. Visualize or make a prophecy of winning at life.
- Reward self for who they are and capitalize on their strengths, attributes, skills, and competencies.

What steps can people take to handle insecurity?

Step 1 - Read and answer the following questions in your journal.

1. What behavior traits signal my insecurity?
2. What happened in my past to make me insecure?
3. What are some of the beliefs that account for my insecurity?
4. What are some negative consequences I've experienced due to my insecurity?
5. What behavior traits do I need to develop in order to overcome my insecurity?

## *HANDLING INSECURITY*

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**Step 2** - After identifying your insecurity, how can you handle it? Answer the following questions in your journal.

- What substitute behavior traits could I develop that would indicate security in myself?
- What are some positive consequences of exhibiting such secure behavior traits in my life?
- What are some rational beliefs I must develop in order to exhibit secure behavior in my life?
- How will my life change if I exhibit secure behavior?
- What is my action plan to develop secure behavior?
- What obstacles stand in the way of my implementing this action plan?
- How can I overcome the obstacles to my development of self confidence and security?

**Step 3** - Implement your plan of action listed above. Keep a log in your journal as you go through each stage of "Handling Insecurity".

What is risk taking?

Risk taking is free:

- To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
- To weep is to risk appearing sentimental or weak.
- To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
- To place your ideas or dreams before the crowd is to risk their loss.
- To love is to risk not being loved in return.
- To live is to risk dying.
- To hope is to risk despair.
- To try is to risk failure.

A risk must be taken. Because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing. The person, who risks nothing - does nothing, has nothing, and is nothing. He/she may avoid suffering and sorrow to a degree, but he/she simply cannot learn, feel, change, grow, love, or even live. Chained by certitude, you are a slave, and have forfeited freedom. Only a person who risks - is FREE!!!

- Author Unknown -

### Risk taking is:

- Opening one's self up for change. It's accepting the need for change, and it's taking the behavioral steps that will result in that change.
- An honest appraisal of a situation in life requiring your action.
- Understanding the risk involved in taking such action.
- Weighing the pros and cons of taking the action.
- Making the choice to take the required action.
- Accepting the consequences of such action.
- The ability to ignore your need for other's approval in order to act.
- Deciding to make a personal sacrifice of time, energy, ability, and knowledge as an investment to better your current circumstances.
- Committing to becoming objective in pursuing a rational approach to a problem.
- The willingness to identify irrational beliefs, which hinder resolutions to problems.
- The willingness to accept honest, objective feedback about the need for you to change your behavior.

Roadblocks to becoming a risk taker include:

- Fear of rejection
- Need to avoid guilt
- Lack of certainty
- Unresolved anger
- Lack of belief in self
- Playing it safe
- Absence of desire to change
- Need for approval
- Need to always be right
- Desire to avoid conflict
- Fear of being incompetent
- Fear of failure
- Fear of hurting others
- Fear of pain
- Unwillingness to face problems honestly
- Lack of assertiveness in protection of your rights
- Inability to take the responsibility for your own life
- Unwillingness to accept possible negative consequences
- Relying on others to solve your problems
- Alcohol or drug abuse “clouding” your thinking
- The belief that life should always be fair
- Your self-destructive, self-defeating behavior

## *BECOMING A RISK TAKER*

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If you find that you are not a risk taker or you need to take more risks in life, answer the following questions in your journal:

1. What is keeping me from taking risk?
2. How do I feel about taking a risk with an outcome of which I am uncertain?
3. What am I uncertain of when it comes to this risk?
4. What is the worst possible thing that could happen?
  - A. If I take the risk
  - B. If I don't take the risk
5. What are all the possible consequences of ignoring this risk?
6. What do I need, spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally, right now to take the risks necessary to change my life?
7. What will my life continue to be like if I refuse to take a risk?

After answering these questions in your journal, you should be encouraged to start taking necessary risks in your daily life.

To better help you succeed in becoming a positive risk taker, always visualize a successful solution to a problem in which you took a risk and became a winner because of it, thus, becoming a better person. Also, use these positive self-affirmations daily:

- I am a successful risk taker!
- I can take risk in which everyone wins!
- I will take the risks necessary to solve problems!

As changes begin to occur, remind yourself that these changes are happening because of your risk taking behavior.

## What is patience?

### Patience is the ability to:

- Sit back and wait for an expected outcome without experiencing anxiety, tension, or frustration.
- Let go of your need for immediate gratification.
- Display tolerance, compassion, understanding, and acceptance toward those who are slower than you in developing maturity, emotional freedom, and coping abilities.
- Accept your human frailty in the pursuit of personal, physical, emotional, and spiritual growth. Accept the setbacks and reversals inevitable in your quest for personal growth.
- Feel peace, contentment, and satisfaction that you are on the path to recovery and personal growth.
- Temper enthusiasm, energy, exuberance, and excitement after you have experienced a renewal of spirit, received revelations or insights.
- Accept the non-enthusiastic reception of others to share in your “new found truths” .
- Accept that there is no need to rush yourself or others in facing the challenges of emotional growth.
- See that overnight reformations are rarely long lasting. Gradual change and growth have greater durability.
- Feel satisfied with the use of the Tools for Personal Growth in a gradual reshaping, rebuilding, and remodeling of yourself into a confident, secure, trusting, loving, person dealing in healthy communications, and self-actualization.

## *DEVELOPING PATIENCE*

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What are some negative consequences of impatience?

By being impatient you can:

- Run the risk of always being dissatisfied, upset, and angry at yourself for your slow pace of growth and change.
- Become a member of the “throw away” generation; discarding relationships, people, and jobs whenever things are not working out as quickly as you want them to.
- Be in such a hurry that you neglect to count your blessings and see how far you have come.
- Withdraw prematurely from a helping situation because you are not seeing an immediate pay off for your efforts.
- Ignore all of the positive gains you and others have made on the road to recovery and growth.
- Become pessimistic about life, seeing only the “half empty cup” rather than the “half filled cup”.
- Burn yourself out in the pursuit of your goals.

How do people respond to impatience in others?

When you are impatient with yourself and your rate of personal growth, others may:

- Remind you of your current progress.
- Try to help you refocus on the positive gains you have made.
- Try to help you reset your goals to make them more realistic.
- Try to encourage you to take “one day at a time”.
- Get angry with you for being so hard on yourself.

Here are some emotions people feel when they are impatient:

- Irritated
- Frustrated
- Anxious
- Tense
- Nervous
- Agitated
- Resentful
- Burned Out
- Over Stressed
- Ill tempered
- Ignored
- Forgotten
- Misdirected
- Misunderstood

Here are some beliefs of people who lack patience:

- I should be able to do this faster and better than what I am.
- They should understand me the first time and not need me to repeat myself.
- Why should it take so long and so much effort to change and grow?
- I have so much to accomplish I'll never be able to do it all.
- There is no way that I can ever be helped to change.
- I want this done yesterday.
- I could never accomplish my goal of growth and change, so there is no use in even starting it.
- If I can change and grow, you should be equally doing the same.

What new behavior traits are needed for patience to develop in your life?

To increase your level of patience you need to:

- **Develop a consistent philosophy of life.** Take life one day at a time. Consider each day a gift of life that will allow you to get closer to your goal of growth and change.
- **Accept the reality of your humanity.** You are going to need time and energy to change and grow. You will experience some resistance to altering long standing, habitual ways of acting, reacting, and believing.
- **Reframe your perspective on the past, present, and future.** Do not dwell on your past mistakes and failings. Don't worry about what you will become or how you will act in the future. Begin to live each new day as a fresh start.
- **Break larger goals down into components that are short term goals and objectives,** thus making them more realistically obtainable in the future.
- **Be systematic in planning your path to recovery and growth.**
- **Accept, understand, and forgive yourself for being imperfect.** You need to become your own best friend. Love yourself.
- **Wake up to the realities of life around you.** Everyone with whom you come in contact is busy working through their own struggles, setbacks, relapses, crises, and obstacles to their personal growth. There is no one exempt from this journey. It takes a lifetime to complete.
- **Hand over and/or let go of the worries, concerns, anxieties, and doubts about attaining your goals.**
- **Confront your fears about attaining your goals.** The world was not created in a day. A lifetime is not lived in a day.

### Steps to develop patience in the pursuit of personal growth and change:

**Step 1** - Prior to developing the skills needed to increase patience, identify the current state of your patience. Answer the following questions in your journal:

1. What is your definition of patience?
2. How much patience do you have when a problem presents itself?
3. How patient are you with your rate of personal growth?
4. What negative consequences have you experienced as a result of your lack of patience?
5. How do others react to your lack of patience?
6. What feelings do you experience when you are impatient?
7. What beliefs block your ability to have patience?
8. What replacement beliefs would help you gain more patience?
9. What new behavior trait(s) could you develop to gain more patience?

**Step 2** - Once you have a better picture of the status of your patience, you may need to learn how to take a growth goal and break it down into workable components that are realistic, and can be accomplished in a short time period. Use the following goal setting activity to learn this skill.

1. Record the life goals you visualize for each of the six areas of your life's path in your journal:
  - **Family** - family of origin and/or current family and/or children
  - **Relationships** - friendships, marriages, etc.
  - **School** - G.E.D., college, trade, graduate
  - **Career** - profession, work
  - **Community** - civic group, volunteer activities, church, politics, etc.
  - **Personal Wellness** - physical and mental health, physical and leisure activities

## *DEVELOPING PATIENCE*

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2. Do the goals in "1" represent each of your personal goals? If not then list the ones not mentioned, in your journal.
3. For each goal listed, answer the following questions in your journal:
  - How long will it take to attain the goal?
  - What smaller goals or objectives go into making this larger goal?
  - How much time will the smaller goals take?
  - What new behavior do I need to develop in order to attain these smaller goals?
  - What tasks will I need to do in order to achieve these smaller goals?
  - What rewards can I give myself for attaining each of the smaller goals?
  - What role does patience play in achieving the smaller goals?
4. Fit each of the six life goals into the following "Life Goal" outline.
  - **Life goal** - estimated time needed
  - **Sub goal** - estimated time needed
  - **Objectives** - estimated time needed
  - **Tasks to be done** - estimated time needed
  - **Behavior to be developed** - estimated time needed
  - **Rewards** - for each new behavior, task, objective, sub goal, and goal

**Step 3** - After you have reviewed your life goals and learned to break them down into smaller, workable, achievable units, you are ready to respond to your beliefs system about patience and goal attainment. Answer the following questions in your journal:

- How am I more accepting of the concepts of being patient with myself and others?
- How open am I to patience promoting sayings?
- How can I relax and accomplish personal growth at a comfortable pace?
- What have I learned about patience from this exercise?
- How do I feel about myself and my future as a result of learning to have patience?

Once you have completed Steps 1, 2, and 3, you will be able to accept that personal growth, recovery, and change are lifelong pursuits to be approached in realistic increments.

What is accepting personal responsibility?

Accepting personal responsibility includes:

- Acknowledging that you are solely responsible for the choices you make in your life.
- Accepting that you are responsible for what you choose to feel and think.
- Accepting that you choose the direction for your life.
- Accepting that you cannot blame others for the choices you have made.
- Tearing down the mask of defense or rational for why others are responsible for who you are, what has happened to you, and what you are bound to become.
- Pointing the finger of responsibility back to yourself and away from others when you are discussing the consequences of your actions.
- Realizing that you determine your feelings about any events or actions addressed to you, no matter how negative they seem.
- Recognizing that you are your best cheerleader. It is not reasonable or healthy for you to depend on others to make you feel good about yourself.
- Not feeling sorry for the “raw deal” you have been handed by taking hold of your life.
- Letting go of your sense of over responsibility for others.
- Protecting and nurturing your health and emotional well being.
- Taking an honest inventory of your strengths, abilities, talents, virtues, and positive points.
- Developing positive, self-affirming, self-talk scripts to enhance your personal development and growth.
- Letting go of blame and anger toward those in your past who did the best they could, given the limitations of their knowledge, background, and awareness.
- Working out anger, hostility, pessimism, and depression over past hurts, pains, abuses, mistreatments, and wrongs.

## *ACCEPTING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY*

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How can failing to accept personal responsibility result in negative consequences?

When you haven't accepted personal responsibility, you run the risk of becoming:

- Overly dependent on others for recognition, approval, affirmation, and acceptance.
- Chronically hostile, angry, or depressed over how unfairly you have been or are being treated.
- Fearful about taking a risk, or making a decision.
- Overwhelmed by disabling fears.
- Unsuccessful in personal relationships.
- Addicted to unhealthy substances, or unhealthy behaviors, such as, excessive gambling, sex, smoking, etc.
- Unable to develop trust, or to feel secure with others.

What do the people, who have not accepted personal responsibility, believe?

- It's not my fault that I am the way I am.
- I never asked to be born.
- I want you to fix me.
- Life is unfair! There is no sense on trying to take control of my life.
- Why go on, I see no use in it.
- You can't help me, nobody can help me, I am useless and a failure.
- When do the troubles and problems cease? I'm tired of all of this.
- How can you say I'm responsible for what happens to me in the future? There are so many outside forces that have a greater bearing on my future than I have.
- Racism, bigotry, prejudice, sexism, ageism, and closed mindedness all stand in the way of my becoming what I really want to become.
- No matter how hard I work, I never get ahead.

Here are some terms used to describe those who haven't accepted personal responsibility?

- Self-Pitying
- Depressed
- Losers
- Complainers
- Addictive Personalities
- Blamers
- Quitters
- Chronically Angry
- Stubborn
- Persons in denial
- Troubled
- Stuck
- Fearful
- Pessimists
- Despondent
- Mentally Unstable
- Obstinate
- Hostile
- Aggressive
- Irresponsible
- Weak
- Guilt Ridden
- Resistant to Help
- Passive
- Irrational
- Insecure
- Neurotic
- Obsessed
- Lost

What behavior traits need to be developed in order to accept personal responsibility?

In order to accept personal responsibility you need to develop the abilities to:

- Seek out and accept help for yourself.
- Be open to new concepts about life and the human condition.
- Refute irrational beliefs, and overcome fears.
- Affirm yourself positively.
- Recognize that you are the sole determinant of the choices you make.
- Let go of anger, fear, blame, mistrust, and insecurity.
- Take risks and become open to change and growth in your life.
- Recognize your priorities and goals.
- Realize that you are the party in charge of the direction your life takes.

## *ACCEPTING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY*

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Here are the steps for accepting personal responsibility:

**Step 1** - To decide if you are having problems accepting personal responsibility, answer the following questions in you journal.

1. How frequently do you claim that others have determined what you are today?
2. How easy is it to accept that you are responsible for your choices in life?
3. How easy is it to blame others for where you are today?
4. What masks do you hide behind to avoid accepting personal responsibility?
5. How easy is it to accept blame or admit mistakes?
6. How easy is it to depend solely on one's self for acceptance, affirmation, and approval?
7. How frequently do you feel sorry for yourself?
8. How easy is it to believe that you determine the direction your life takes?

**Step 2** - Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 5 as to the level of personal responsibility you have accepted in each of the following areas. Use the following scale as you write in you journal.

1 = Always Irresponsible

2 = Usually Irresponsible

3 = Irresponsibility balanced out with responsibility (Neutral)

4 = Usually Responsible

5 = Always Responsible

**Rating Area in Life:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Taking preventive and maintenance measures to ensure emotional health.

\_\_\_\_\_ Taking preventive and maintenance measures to ensure physical health.

\_\_\_\_\_ Controlling weight and overeating.

\_\_\_\_\_ Stopping the habits of smoking, drinking, and drugging.

\_\_\_\_\_ Controlling the habits of gambling and sexual behaviors.

\_\_\_\_\_ Taking preventive and maintenance measures to ensure healthy relationships.

\_\_\_\_\_ Taking the necessary steps to overcome any current problem(s) or trouble(s).

**SCORE:** A rating of 3 or less in any one of these areas indicates a need to accept personal responsibility.

**Step 3** - Identify the beliefs that are preventing you from accepting responsibility. Develop new rational replacement beliefs to help you accept responsibility for yourself.

**Step 4** - You are now ready to develop a plan of action. For each area of your life identify the tools you will use to help you accept personal responsibility. The following tools for personal growth are available to help you determine and accomplish the goals listed in your plan:

- Handling Irrational Beliefs
- Self Affirmations
- Handling Guilt
- Building Trust
- Handling Insecurity
- Becoming A Risk Taker
- Developing Patience
- Eliminating Overdependence
- Developing Self Control
- Improving Assertive Behavior

Write your plan of action in you journal. Date and Sign it. This is the beginning of accepting personal responsibility in your life.

**REMEMBER:** The journey is not easy but you have all the tools inside of you to accomplish all you want to accomplish in life. You just have to sharpen them a little.

## *ELIMINATING OVERDEPENDENCE*

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What is over dependency?

Over dependency is:

- Holding on desperately, to other people, places, and things to give your life meaning and direction.
- Allowing others to “do for” you so much so that you haven’t developed a sense of personal autonomy, independence, and/or personal responsibility for your own actions.
- An unwillingness to set out your own goals, aspirations, and dreams for your life for fear that they won’t coincide with those of the people, places, and/or things on which you have become dependent.
- A sense of worthlessness; the “need to be needed” and the “need to be loved” have gone out of control, to the extent where you need the dependency of another in order to believe that your life has meaning and value.
- The inability to take self-initiated steps to get your life into control, order, and direction, because you have overly identified and submitted yourself to the will power and control of another person; even if that person didn’t intentionally set you up to be so dependent.
- A lack of direction; which has resulted in your lack of belief in your own competency skills, or abilities to handle things on your own, and the fear to set out on a course of self-direction and independence.
- Irresponsibility, due to a lack of training in knowing what accepting normal personal responsibility means.
- A fear of losing your identity, making you frantic in pursuit of maintaining a relationship with a person, place, or thing which in reality is unhealthy for you.
- A fear of loneliness. Being alone or isolated making you desperate to hold onto a dying relationship with a person, place, or thing well beyond the time that is reasonable to do so.
- A fear of being independent; which is due to the fear of the negative consequences of becoming independent keeping you weak and frail, thus needing the support and nurturance of those people, places, and things on which you are dependent.

What are the effects of over dependency?

If you continue to be over dependent in your relationships with people, places, or things, then you could:

- Lose a sense of personal identity, uniqueness, or independence.
- Never gain personal mastery or control over your own life.
- Not allow those who are dependent on you to become fully functional human being.
- Begin to become resentful of those upon whom you are dependent on, keeping you back from becoming all that you are capable of being.
- Fear the possibility of separation, abandonment, or individuation from those upon whom you are dependent and thus sabotage all efforts to grow and heal as a fully independent and self-confident person.
- Run the risk of being left by people who change, and no longer are willing to be caretakers or fixers in your life.
- Increase your manipulation to keep those whom you are “hooked” on to remain hooked in the relationship with you.

## *ELIMINATING OVERDEPENDENCE*

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How is over dependency a control issue?

Over dependency is a control issue because:

- It's an act of transferring the "locus of control" out of your hands into the hands of others.
- When you become too dependent on a person, place, or thing, you give it power to control you.
- It is an act of controlling others to take care of you, so you don't have to do it yourself.
- By the use of manipulation, cunning, and other subversive control techniques, you "hook" people into allowing you to be dependent on them so that they can fix, save, rescue, or be a caretaker for you.
- You use your "hooks" to prevent others from detaching from you so that you can continue to be dependent on their resources, energy, knowledge, care, concern, and support.
- You use intimidation, coercion, and threats often times when you become disgruntled because others no longer want to allow you to be dependent on them.
- You have learned to use the mask of "helplessness" to get others to allow you to be dependent on them. They likewise get hooked on being depended on.
- Your style is to seek out people whom you can control to do for you what you need to do for yourself. Thus you succeed in finding "fixers", "caretakers", and "rescuers" ready to take over your responsibilities.
- It hands power and control of your life over to others whom you are willing to rely on in order to avoid taking personal responsibility for your own life.
- When it takes on an addictive quality, you appear to lose power and control over it.

Here are some examples of irrational thinking that leads to over dependency:

- I could never survive without them.
- I need them as much as they need me.
- They would never survive without me.
- I could never envision my life without being dependent on others.
- I am afraid to let go of them since I'd be so lonely.
- I would have no idea what to do if I were on my own.
- As long as they are offering to take care of me, I'll continue to accept their help.
- I'm entitled to what they do for me.
- I'm not dependent on anybody. I am only accepting their gifts, offers to help, and/or support because it makes them feel good.
- I'd rather be dependent on a person, than on myself because I am so afraid of being by myself.

How can you stop being over dependant and become more independent?

In order to become independent, you need to follow these steps:

**Step 1** - You need to identify what the dependency is:

1. Financial Support
2. Physical Support
3. Companionship / Friendship Support
4. Emotional Support
5. Problem Solving / Decision Making
6. Knowledge and Insight
7. Skills and Abilities
8. Sexual Outlet
9. Affirmation, Recognition, and Approval
10. Advice, Direction, and Information on how to live life
11. Something Else - Name It: \_\_\_\_\_

## *ELIMINATING OVERDEPENDENCE*

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**Step 2** - Once you have identified what the dependency is you then need to determine the root cause(s) of this dependent nature.

1. The need to be needed.
2. The need to be the source of financial stability in your life.
3. The need to be recognized for their generosity.
4. The need of approval for their good deeds.
5. The need to fix, correct, and/or make things right.
6. The need to be a compulsive caretaker.
7. The need to hold on to relationships in their life.

**Step 3** - Once you have identified why you have become over dependent on this person, place, or thing, you need to identify a healthier way to think and treat the other person in your life and your relationship with them. Examples:

1. It's ok for you to fail.
2. It's better to become responsible for all aspects of your own life.
3. You need to be independent, if you are to experience a full productive life.
4. You are a good person and it's ok if people don't need to fix your problems.
5. I'm a better person by freeing people I have become over dependent on.
6. Any other rational, reality-based, healthy idea can be added here.

**Step 4** - Once you have identified new ways of thinking and feeling about the people you are over dependent on in your life, you now need to establish a new set of guidelines to help yourself to become more personally responsible for your own life. Some strategies to become independent are:

1. Natural Consequences; accept the natural consequences for your own actions, so you can learn what is good or bad involving your own actions, decisions, and behaviors.
2. Freedom to Fail; have the freedom to fail. Make mistakes or experience personal disaster so you can learn from your mistakes and recognize new strategies to prevent them in the future.
3. Shared Responsibility; letting people share with you the responsibility to do the things which in the past you were totally dependent on others for.
4. Compromise; the way to ensure your independence of others is to reach compromises between your wants and needs and their wants and needs.
5. Mutual Respect; this involves you and the other person respecting one another's competency, skills, and abilities without undermining either's independence of thinking, emotions, or actions. Respecting each other as deserving people creates an atmosphere which encourages individuality.
6. Elimination of Entitlement; entitlement is the belief that you are owed something because of circumstances of birth, position, title, tradition, or status. By de-powering the concept of entitlement, people need to earn, on their own merits, what they are receiving out of life.

This eliminates the dependencies, which makes the entitled person lack ambition and motivation, and start striving to be independent, successful, and accomplished.

7. Individuation; individuation is the encouragement of people dependent on others to become unique individuals with an accent on their own interests, values, attitudes, skills, abilities, knowledge, and competencies. This encourages each person to become free-standing, independent, self-sufficient, self-confident, and self-responsible individual.
8. Disarming the "Hooks"; it's imperative to be on the watch for the hooks that keep you dependent on people or things, such as, manipulation, helplessness, self-destruction, intimidation, and/or con jobs.

**Step 5** - Once you set guidelines for your relationship with people, you then need to put the new non-controlling independence encouraging beliefs and behaviors into practice. Make sure you monitor your progress daily.

What is self-control?

Self-control is a set of behaviors which:

- Accept the reality that the only thing in life which you can successfully change and control is yourself.
- Keeps in check all self-destructive, addictive, obsessive, compulsive, irrational, and unacceptable behaviors.
- Gives you a sense of personal mastery, autonomy, and competency over your own life.
- Is under your control and power to direct and orchestrate with no need for interference or manipulation from others.
- Makes you the master of your own destiny because it keeps in check those barriers and obstacles which are a threat to your overall success in life.
- Is a middle ground between perfectionism and laxity in self-care?
- Results in your life having a balance and focus by helping you to cope with new challenges in life as they come.
- Helps you to keep your over emotional responses in check or moderation.
- Is the foundation for healthy coping and contributes to your accepting personal responsibility for your life.
- Eliminates the need for you to be manipulative, helpless, fixing other, intimidating, over dependent or a caretaker of others.
- Reflects your inner desire to grow up into a mature-responsible adult.

What are the negative effects of not maintaining self-control?

If you can't gain self-control in your life, you could:

- Focus all of your attention on trying to control, fix, or rescue other people, places, and things and divert your attention from your own needs.
- Suffer the negative impact of your out of control behaviors, such as, alcoholism, chemical dependency, addictive relationships, compulsive gambling, smoking, etc.
- Become deeply depressed and despondent over your weakness and inability to get your life into "check/balance".
- Become lost as to where you begin and end.
- Lose control over the emotional boundaries you need to maintain from becoming over-entangled or controlled by others.
- Find yourself in a state of powerlessness to effect change to get your life into moderation or balance.
- End up convinced that there is no way you can get your life into balance. Because the amount of work, effort, energy, and resources needed are too great of an investment.
- Experience even lower self-esteem because of your inability to believe enough in your worth and value to take action, to get your life into control.

How is self-control a control issue?

Self-control is a control issue because it is:

- Giving to one's self the power and control to have an impact on your personal destiny and fortunes.
- Ensuring you're focusing on what you have the ability to change and control, namely yourself.
- Not allowing yourself to fall into the trap of using manipulation or helplessness to get others to come to your rescue to fix or care for you.
- Not allowing survival behaviors to get in your way of reaching out for support, intimacy, and vulnerability from others in your life.
- Accepting responsibility for your own actions, feelings, thoughts, and life giving powers.
- Being aware of people who are trying to control or exert power over you and taking the steps to change this.
- The realistic and rational exercise of power and control in your life.

Here are some examples of irrational thinking that leads you to not exercise self-control:

- There is no sense in trying to gain control over this since I'm going to fail at it anyways.
- There is no way I will ever be able to gain control over my behaviors.
- I'd rather have others do things for me.
- If I become too independent and in control, I'll be unappealing to them.
- I'm never going to grow up, it's too boring.
- They'll just have to accept me the way I am.
- I like myself the way I am.
- I feel overwhelmed by all the responsibilities involved in being an adult.
- There is too much to change, so why even try?
- Why do I always have to do it for myself? Why can't others do it for me?
- I hate trying to take charge of my life. It's always so tough and I never feel good when I do it.
- Loneliness is the major result of self-control, and it keeps me from working harder on self growth.
- I'm so addicted I could never change.
- No one is going to tell me what I have to do with my life.

## *DEVELOPING SELF-CONTROL*

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How can you develop self-control?

In order to develop self-control you need to take the following steps.

**Step 1** - You first need to identify, in what areas of your life; you need to gain more self-control. Review the following life arenas and identify any issues you may need to take control of.

**Life arenas control issue checklist:**

### **Personal Life**

- Unconditional acceptance and love of self.
- Self-esteem recovery.
- Compulsive and/or addictive behaviors.
  - Eating
  - Drugs
  - Exercise
  - Crisis oriented activity
  - Cleaning
  - Gambling
  - Relationships
  - Obsessive Behaviors
  - Alcohol
  - Smoking (Nicotine)
  - Body Image

### **Relationships with fixers, helpers, caretakers, and enablers**

- Over dependency on others
- Manipulation of others
- Helplessness
- Lack of emotional boundaries
- Overuse of survival behaviors

**Relationships with needy people**

- Need to fix
- Use of intimidation
- Powerlessness to control them
- Over Idealism
- Handling anger or resentment

**Work/School Life**

- Time management
- Stress management
- Workaholism
- Fear of success
- Assertiveness
- Self recognition of accomplishments

**Community Life**

- Need for support system
- Involvement with others
- Participation with clubs and activities
- Recreational and leisure participation
- Handling leadership

## *DEVELOPING SELF-CONTROL*

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**Step 2** - Once you have identified the various issues in which you need to develop more self-control, you then must identify which emotions tend to lead you to be more out of control with these issues. Use the list of emotions and feelings clusters to identify which emotions or feelings that tend to exacerbate the loss of control. Emotions which lead to being out of control are:

<u>Emotions</u>	<u>Feeling Cluster</u>
1. Boredom:	Listless, Unoccupied, Restless, Uneasy, A Need For Novelty, Change, Excitement
2. Anger:	Rage, Hate, Cheated, Spiteful, Mean, Mad, Envious
3. Guilt:	Ashamed, Miserable, Remorse, Blamed, Distraught, Pain
4. Depression:	Ugly, Empty, Powerless, Victimized, Suffering, Sad, Helpless, Discouraged, Troubled, Left Out
5. Anxiety:	Overstressed, Out of Control, Nervous, Uneasy, Overwhelmed, Tense, Pressured, Panicked, Troubled, Confused, Shocked
6. Loneliness:	Unwanted, Unappreciated, Left Out, Ignored, Unloved, Alone, Hurt, Neglected, Ugly, Rejected
7. Fear:	Afraid, Tense, Anxious, Nervous, Weak, Worried, Skeptical, Frightened, Threatened
8. Excitability:	Eager, Driven, Energetic, Capable, Turned On, Enthusiastic, Motivated, Clever
9. Comfort:	Proud, Refreshed, Appreciated, Satisfied, Calm, Accomplished, Useful, Respected, Content, Full, Confident, Relaxed
10. Happiness:	Good, Nice, Glad, Loved, Pleased, Wanted, Wonderful, Delighted, Beautiful

**Step 3** - Once you have identified what feelings and emotions tend to exacerbate your loss of control. Next identify what irrational beliefs lead to increase loss of self-control in each of these issues.

**Step 4** - Once Step 1 - 3 are completed you must identify new, rational, reality based, healthy thinking which will lead to your gaining control over these issues. Some self-affirmations to help you in this very important step are:

- I can gain control over this.
- I am capable of controlling myself.
- I will take control of my behaviors.
- I can succeed in containing my compulsive/addictive behaviors.
- I am able to take one behavior at a time and keep it under control.
- I can be rational, realistic, and healthy in my thinking, emotions, and actions.
- I'm the one person in my life whom I can control and change, and I choose to do so.
- I will make time for work to develop my self-control.

## *DEVELOPING SELF-CONTROL*

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**Step 5** - Once you have identified and adopted positive self-talk to help you through this time of gaining self-control, you need to identify and adopt positive actions and behaviors which will assist you to develop self-control in your life. Such behaviors or actions are:

- Stress reduction and relaxation work
- Time management, planning, and scheduling
- An aerobic exercise program five times a week
- Thought stopping
- Spirituality formation and enhancement
- Motivation enhancement exercises
- Development of an emotional support system
- Creative problem solving
- Changing patterns of routines of daily life
- Self-affirmation work
- Use of rational and realistic thinking
- Development of goals and objectives to be met on a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly schedule with self monitoring of their achievement and refinement.
- Avoiding settings which arouse negative emotions.
- Diverting your attention from old patterns of desires, temptations, or urges.
- Talking out feeling with a support person.
- Watching out for “H-A-L-T” situations which could lead to a relapse of out of control behaviors. For example feeling out of sorts and too:
  - H - Hungry
  - A - Angry
  - L - Lonely
  - T - Tired

**Step 6** - Once you have identified the set of healthy actions which assist the development of self-control, develop a plan of action for each issue which is out of control in your journal.

**Step 7** - Once your plans of action are developed, implement them one at a time, by applying them to the most urgent and important issue first and work your way down the list until they are all under control. To find out which issue is the most urgent/important you must prioritize them. The following scale will help you in this task.

1. **Highest Priority** - this issue is so out of control that your life or other people's lives are in danger.
2. **High Priority** - this issue is so out of control that your physical and/or mental health is in peril.
3. **Average Priority** - this issue is out of control and if affects your thinking and/or emotions so that you get compulsive or obsessive with it.
4. **Slight Priority** - this issue is out of control, but it presents no current threat to your life, health, or actions.

**Step 8** - Once you have prioritized the issues to be worked on, begin to implement the plans of action to get them under your control.

**Self-control action planning outline:**

1. Issue out of control
2. Emotions which lead to lack of self-control
3. Old thinking which keeps you out of control
4. New self-talk on the issues out of control
5. New behavioral strategies to use in order to conquer this issue

**Remember:** There aren't any feelings, thoughts, or behaviors that you can't gain control over!!

What is assertive behavior?

Assertive behavior is:

- Standing up for one's rights no matter what the circumstances.
- Correcting the situation when one's rights are being violated.
- Seeking respect and understanding for one's feelings about a particular situation or circumstance.
- Interacting in a mature manner with those found to be offensive, defensive, aggressive, hostile, blaming, attacking, or otherwise unreceptive.
- Direct, up front, not defensive, or manipulative behavior. It's using behavior that confronts problems, disagreements, or personal discomforts head on with intent that is unmistakable to others.
- Using "I" statements, where individuals tell others how they feel about a situation, circumstance, or the behavior of others.
- Taking the risk of being misunderstood as being aggressive, abrasive, or attacking.
- Being able to protect one's rights, while protecting the rights of others.
- Risk-taking behavior that is not ruled by fear of rejection or disapproval, but is directed by the rational belief that "I" deserve to stand up for my rights.
- Rational thinking and the self-affirmation of personal worth, respect, and rights.
- Finding a "win-win" solution in handling problems between two individuals.

Here are ten assertive rights of individuals.

**Assertive Right #1** - I have the right to judge my own behavior, thoughts, and emotions. I take the responsibility for their initiation and consequence. The behavior of others may have an impact upon me, but I determine how I choose to react and/or deal with each situation. I alone have the power to judge and modify my thoughts, feelings, and behavior. Others may influence my decisions, but ultimately the choice is mine.

**Assertive Right #2** - I have the right to offer neither reason nor excuse to justify my behavior. I need not rely upon others to judge whether my actions are proper or correct. Others may state disagreement or disapproval, but I have the option to disregard their preferences or to work out a compromise. I may choose to respect their preferences and consequently modify my behavior. People may try to persuade me that I am wrong about certain things, but what is important is that I am the ultimate judge and it's my choice.

**Assertive Right #3** - I have the right to judge whether I'm responsible for finding solutions to other people's problems. I'm ultimately responsible for my own psychological well being and happiness. I may feel concern and compassion, and good will for others, but I'm neither responsible for nor do I have the ability to create mental stability, and happiness for others. If I fail to recognize this assertive right, others may choose to manipulate my thoughts and feelings by placing the blame for their problems on me.

**Assertive Right #4** - I have the right to change my mind. As a human being, nothing in my life is necessarily constant or rigid. My interests and needs may change with the passage of time. The possibility of changing my mind is normal, healthy, and conducive to self-growth. Nevertheless it's unnecessary for me to justify my decisions in life.

**Assertive Right #5** - I have the right to say, "I don't know."

**Assertive Right #6** - I have the right to make mistakes and be responsible for them. To make a mistake is part of the human condition. Others may try to manipulate me, having me believe that my errors are unforgivable, that I must make amends for my wrongdoing by engaging in proper behavior. If I allow this to happen, my future behavior will be influenced by my past mistakes and my decisions will be controlled by the opinions of others.

**Assertive Right #7** - I have the right to be independent of the good will of others before coping with them. It would be unrealistic for me to expect others to approve of all my actions, regardless of their merit. A relationship does not require 100% agreement. It's inevitable that others will be offended by my behavior at times. I am responsible only to myself, and I can deal with periodic disapproval from others.

**Assertive Right #8** - I have the right to be illogical in making decisions. I sometimes employ logic as a reasoning process to assist me in making judgments. However, logic cannot predict what will happen in every situation. Logic is not much help in dealing with wants, motivations, and feelings. Logic generally deals with "black or white", "all or nothing", and "yes or no" issues. Logic and reasoning doesn't always work well when dealing with the gray areas of the human condition.

**Assertive Right #9** - I have the right to say, "I don't understand."

**Assertive Right #10** - I have the right to say, "I don't care."

## *IMPROVING ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR*

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Answer the following questions in your journal. They are designed to help you assess your level of assertiveness.

1. How can I keep myself and others from being judgmental?
2. Why is it easy to judge another?
3. How does my fear of judgment reduce my assertiveness?
4. How comfortable am I living in a situation in which the outcome is unknown?
5. Why do I have such a great need for certainty in my decision making?
6. How comfortable am I in taking risks?
7. Why does prior approval by others have to be a prerequisite before I take action?
8. Why is it so hard to admit to making mistakes?
9. How do I feel about being blamed for others problems?
10. What is the usual outcome of such blaming?
11. What part does logic play in my life?
12. How freely do I admit I don't understand the other person?

### **Roadblocks to Assertiveness:**

- If I assert myself in any relationship, others will get mad at me.
- If I do assert myself and others do become angry with me, it will be awful.
- Although, I prefer others to be straightforward with me, I am afraid that if I'm open with them about how I feel about things, I will hurt them.
- I must avoid making statements or asking questions that might make me look ignorant or stupid.
- Assertive people are cold and uncaring. If I'm assertive I'll be so unpleasant that others won't like me.

### Assertive Counterparts:

- If I assert myself the results may be positive, negative, or neutral. However, since assertion involves legitimate rights the odds of having positive results are in my favor.
- Even if others become angry, I'm capable of handling it without falling apart. If I assert myself when it's appropriate, I don't have to feel responsible for others feelings.
- If I'm assertive others may or may not feel hurt. Others are not necessarily more fragile than me. I prefer to be dealt with directly, and most likely others will too.
- It is ok to lack information or make a mistake. Mistakes just confirm my humanity.
- Assertive people are direct and honest, and behave appropriately. They show a genuine concern for other people's rights and feelings as well as their own. Their assertiveness enriches

### Here are some myths that encourage nonassertive behavior:

- Anxiety - Some people believe that overt signs of anxious behavior indicate weakness or inadequacy. These individuals assume that if they were to exhibit anxiety, they would be ridiculed, rejected, or taken advantage of by others. This is self-defeating. The harder people try to camouflage anxious feelings, the harder it is to conceal the accompanying symptoms of trembling, sweating, flushing, etc. One method of reducing anxiety is to acknowledge that anxious feelings are present. If people can disclose their feelings of discomfort safely, they will find it unnecessary to expend so much energy disguising their anxiety. Therefore, the anxiety will no longer interfere with the task at hand.
- Modesty - This myth consists of three parts:
  - A. The inability to acknowledge or say positive things about oneself.
  - B. The inability to accept compliments from others.
  - C. The inability to give compliments to others.

Some people fear that positive self-statements seem ego-centric. They fail to discriminate between the accurate representation of accomplishments and over exaggeration. Additionally, they may fear that once asserting themselves they will have to live up to these expectations 100% of the time. Inability to self-disclose positively will hinder their opportunities. If they don't believe in themselves it is unrealistic to expect others to believe in them.

People who are unable to receive compliments are indirectly damaging their self-respect. After several unsuccessful attempts, most people trying to give genuine compliments will hesitate feeling uncomfortable in giving positive feedback. The intended recipient of the praise, no longer hearing positive feedback, may begin to question their self-worth.

Some people are unable to provide others with positive feedback. They may be unaware of the potential positive effects. That is greater rapport or satisfaction in life. Sometimes others have difficulty delivering praise because they fear making themselves vulnerable. They may be unable to elicit feelings easily and openly. Perhaps this is an alien behavior because maybe there is a risk involved in developing more honest, open relationships. For whatever reason, modesty does not enhance mutually satisfying, spontaneous, interpersonal relationships.

- **Good Friend** - This myth assumes that others can read my mind based upon our past relationships. Lack of good facilitative communication is apparent here. One must remember that individuals don't always respond in the same manner to the same situation.

This type of expectation will undoubtedly lead to guilt, resentment, hurtful feelings, and misunderstandings within a relationship, assuming that others have known you long enough to know your mind or how you are thinking.

- **Obligation** - This myth indicates that some people disregard their personal needs and rights due to a belief in personal obligations to others. These people put others ahead of themselves. Obviously other people's needs can't always be met. However, those who routinely neglect to express their needs and rights, and who find themselves imposed upon quite frequently is being restrained by this belief. This myth along with the others facilitates neither self-respect nor the development of open healthy relationships.
- **Gender Role** - Sometimes people behave in a particular manner due to various gender role expectations. Men have been encouraged to act upon their needs and rights aggressively to fill the "macho" or "controlling" role in a relationship. Gender role expectations can color behavior, often to the opposite extreme as well. Some men may be inappropriately passive, while social pressures often call for men to take aggressive stands.

Gender role expectations limit people's options for acting appropriately upon their beliefs, needs, and rights. It can close the door to spontaneous, sincere interactions that will hinder, if not stop, personal growth.

**Steps to improve personal assertiveness:**

**Step 1** - Study the following behavioral strategies involved in self-assertion training. There are three types of individual behaviors listed.

1. **Non assertive Behavior** - The act of withdrawing from a situation. This is a passive approach to a situation in life resulting in:
  - Denial of one's feelings/opinions.
  - Allowing others to choose for you.
  - Guilt, Anger.

**Examples of non assertive language:**

- Oh! It's nothing.
  - Oh, that's alright. I didn't want it anymore.
  - Why don't you go ahead and do it. My Ideas aren't very good anyway.
2. **Aggressive Behavior** - The act of over reacting emotionally to a situation. Aggression can also take the form of a lie or a misrepresentation of the facts. This is a self-enhancing, egotistical approach to a situation (life) resulting in:
    - "Put down" feelings on the receiver's part.
    - Not allowing others to make their own decisions, instead you choose for them.
    - Hostility, defensiveness on the aggressor's part and hurt, humiliation on the receiver's part.

**Examples of aggressive language are:**

- You are crazy!
- Do it my way!
- You make me sick!
- That's about enough out of you!
- Others include sarcasm, name calling, threatening, blaming, and insulting.

## ***IMPROVING ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR***

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3. **Assertive Behavior** - The act of declaring that this is what I am, what I think and feel, and what I want. This is a non-egotistical, active, rather than passive, approach to a situation in life resulting in:
  - Open and direct self-expression of your thoughts and feelings.
  - Allowing others to choose their own paths.
  - Mutual satisfaction at achieving a desired goal.

### **Examples of assertive language:**

- I am
- I think we should
- I feel bad when
- That seems unfair to me.
- Can you help me with this?
- I appreciate you help.

### **Assertion Strategies:**

1. Make known your desires and feelings. Don't be side tracked by others. Make a short, clear, assertive statement of your goal. Take into account what others are saying, but persistently repeat your goal. Ex. Yes, I understand {others response} but I still want {state your goal}.
2. Express Feelings about a situation without threatening others.
  - Identify the situation - When you put me down
  - Identify how you feel about the situation - I feel angry
  - Identify what you want - When you put me down, I feel angry. I want you to know that and stop putting me down.
3. Make a non assertive person open up. The topic should be pursued in a gentle, probing manner. "I don't understand why you are so up tight."

**Body language as related to assertive behavior:**

- Eye Contact and Facial Expression - Maintain direct eye contact. Appear interested and alert, but not angry.
- Posture - Stand or sit erect, possibly leaning forward slightly.
- Distance and Contact - Stand or sit at a normal conversational distance from the other person.
- Gestures - Use relaxed conversational gestures.
- Voice - Use a factual, not emotional tone of voice; sound determined and full of conviction, but not overbearing.
- Timing - Choose a time when both parties are relaxed. A neutral site is best.

**Further tips on assertiveness are:**

- Assertive responses are characterized by the use of "I" statements instead of "you" statements.
- Assertive responses are usually effective in getting others to change, or reinforce behaviors.
- Assertive responses run a low risk of hurting a relationship.
- Assertive responses neither attack the other person's self-esteem nor does it put them on the defensive.
- Assertive behaviors prevent saving up a lot of bad feelings.

## ***IMPROVING ASSERTIVE BEHAVIOR***

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**Step 2** - Read the following "sample situations" and record in your journal whether each of the three responses given is non assertive, aggressive, or assertive.

**Situation #1** - Cousin Jessie, whom you prefer not to spend much time with, is on the phone. She says that she is planning to spend the next three weeks with you.

- I'd love to have you come and stay as long as you like.
- I'd be glad to have you come for the weekend, but I can't invite you for any longer. A short visit will be very nice for us both.
- The weather down here has been terrible (Not true), so you'd better plan on going elsewhere.

**Situation #2** - You have bought a toaster at a local discount store and it doesn't work properly.

- I bought this toaster and it doesn't work. I would like my money back.
- What right, do you have selling me this piece of junk toaster?
- You silently put it in the closet and buy another one.

**Situation #3** - You are at the dinner table and someone start smoking, which offends you.

- Hey, that smoke is terrible!
- You suffer the smoke in silence.
- I would appreciate it if you wouldn't smoke here.

**Situation #4** - You are across the room and someone is talking to you, but not quite loud enough for you to hear.

- You continue straining to hear them, but end up daydreaming instead.
- You yell out, "Speak up! I can't hear you if you talk to yourself."

You stop; get the person's attention and say, "Would you mind speaking a little louder, please. I'm having trouble hearing you."

See page 81 for Step 2 Answer Key

**Step 3** - Role playing situations for assertion training. Each of these situations involves a need for assertive behavior. Write down your assertive strategy for each scenario in your journal and Role-play each of these scenarios also. Remember the goal is to be assertive.

- You just got home from work and your friend wants to go to the movies, but you would rather not.
- Your friend has begun smoking in the house and it bothers you.
- You have made a mistake in balancing the checkbook. Your wife/husband finds the mistake and starts telling you off in front of your children (or neighbor).
- You are at a restaurant and have received a \$15.00 steak that is tough. Your friend is encouraging you to return it, but you don't like being pressured into doing such things.

**Step 4** - After the class has completed the role-playing activity in step 3, answer the following question in your journal.

1. How comfortable am I in being assertive?
2. What new behaviors do I need to develop in order to be more assertive?
3. How awkward is it to confront my true feelings in a situation?
4. What part does my need for approval, and fear of rejection play in my non assertive behavior?
5. Why is it easier to role play being assertive than actually being assertive in real life?
6. What body language cues do I need to develop in order to improve my assertive style?

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### Answer Key for Step 2:

Situation #1: A = Non assertive, B = Assertive, C = Aggressive

Situation #2: A = Assertive, B = Aggressive, C = Non assertive

Situation #3: A = Aggressive, B = Non assertive, C = Assertive

Situation #4: A = Non assertive, B = Aggressive, C = Assertive

### **Congratulations!!!**

You have completed the Lifestyle Renovation Workbook "Tools for Personal Growth". I do hope that you will apply all that you have learned to your daily life. Remember: You are who you strive to be. Make the right choice!!!!

*Change, by Mark Peveto*

When life brings mistakes

Change we should seek,

Transform and be strong

Do not and be weak,

Look deep inside

Find self - control,

A disciplined mind

Should be the goal,

With mirror before you

It should reveal,

A man that is honest

A man that is real,

So take off the mask

Of envy and hate,

These emotions are feeble

But your life they will take,

Stand and be strong

Truth you will find,

You'll follow no longer

The weak and the blind...

## *A Brighter Day, by Mark Peveto*

As I sit in this prison  
Thoughts cross my mind  
I think of the loved ones  
That I've left behind

I think of my life  
And where I went wrong  
Is the state penitentiary  
Where I really belong

To answer this question  
I'll have to reflect  
On choices I've made  
And promises unkept

With much contemplation  
It all becomes clear  
My own bad decisions  
Are why I am here

So now I must stand  
For positive change  
Thinking and actions  
I will rearrange

Mistakes in the past  
That's where they will stay  
Time to look forward  
To a much brighter day...

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