



The Coping Series

Resolving Old Bad Feelings plus: Resolving Bad Feelings Instantly

The Workbook

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Introduction to the Coping Course

Welcome to the Coping Course. The first portion is a series of six small audio-visual modules that can be taken one after the other, or spaced over a week or two. Most people go through them one after the other, but that could take a couple of hours and we did talk a lot about doing things in 5 minutes a day. So, it's your choice.

These programs can be used for resolving any bunch of bad feelings, or bad memories that you may have accumulated. So, it will be a valuable tool for you in all areas of your life.

People have told us they've used the course on lots of bad feelings they've built up on a variety of subjects. One fellow used it to get rid of bad feelings he had built up about his job, his company and his boss. Another person used it to resolve a bunch of bad feelings and memories she had accumulated about her parents and her sister.

However, we ask you just to focus on any bad feelings or hurtful memories, or unpleasant thoughts you've had about your partner and your relationship. Save the other stuff for later. So, when you're instructed to write down your thoughts, just write down your thoughts about your partner and your relationship.

One more thing you should know. The course is very powerful as a tool for psychologists to counsel their clients. So, it has more complexity than is required for what you're going to use it for.

The steps are all the same, and the exercises all work for the way you're going to use it, so don't get worried if it looks a little complex. Do the exercises and everything will work out fine. If the sage model makes you curious, ask on the forum and we can direct you to books that will explain everything.

Most of the people who have tested this course loved it. Some said, "It changed my life." Well, if that happens, great, but that's not what we're going for here. We don't aim to change your life. We just want you to clean up any and all the bad thoughts, feelings and memories you may have accumulated about your partner and your marriage. It will do that much, for sure.

Now, enough introductions, let's get on with the Coping Course.

Read Me First

The e-books

This e-book — the Workbook — contains the set of steps for what you'll be doing. It has links to videos. If you keep it on your screen, you can click on any link to take you to what you want. However, if you prefer to print it rather than read it on-screen, you'll have to type the links into your browser as you need them. In any case you'll probably want to print pages 8-25 so you can answer the questions and do the practice.

The second book you have downloaded is the **Reference Book**, which contains supplemental readings.

Troubleshooting

Any browser (Internet Explorer, Safari, Firefox, whatever) will work. However, it's always a good idea to have the latest version. You can upgrade to the newest version by going to the website of the same name as the browser. At this printing: if you use Firefox, it may tell you that you don't have the plug-in to be able to watch the videos. Just follow the instructions, and it will install it for you.

If you find any difficulty seeing the A/Vs, you may instead read the transcript, which is provided in the **Reference Book**.

Flash Program

We use Flash for the A/V programs, so you will need the free Flash software program. You probably already have that in your computer, so don't worry about it now. If you have any trouble, though, you can download the latest version of the free Flash program at:

http://www.macromedia.com/shockwave/download/download.cgi?P1_Prod_Version=ShockwaveFlash

It's an Investment

We know that you have made a time investment in this program, which is also an investment in your life. Sometimes people make investments — then ignore them — forgetting that in order to get the benefits, there has to be some actions taken from time to time.

You could just read the material and skip the videos and practices. But that would be wasting your time investment.

We encourage you to treat this seriously. Follow the instructions and do what is asked of you. When you complete a step, check it off and write the date completed. Use this book like a workbook. Make notes. Write down your thoughts.

Yours, for a happier and happier life,



Ken Johnston

Overview

Managing Our Thoughts

Welcome to the Coping Series, modules that teach you how to resolve old bad feelings. These modules are built on the principle that it isn't the people or events in our lives that make us troubled; it's our *thoughts* about those people or events that trouble us.

In other words, we can't avoid negative people or events in our lives; they are normal and to be expected. What we can do is *manage the way we think and feel* about those adversities so we can cope with them effectively.

If you suffer a loss, it is normal and right to suffer the pain of that loss. Sometimes those feelings overwhelm us, or keep us from coping or carrying on with our lives. If that happens it's important to regain control over our thoughts, feelings, and actions so we can bounce back from life's adversities and return some normalcy to our lives.

Learn a Calming Technique

The first module in the six-module series gives you a technique you can use anytime the feelings overwhelm you, or the thoughts race through your head. If you already have a calming skill or technique, you're free to use it. If you don't, we'll give you three you can use. One of them will be easier for you than the others, so you'll decide which one to use.

Listen to Your "Self-talk"

All of us have thoughts and judgments going through our minds. It is so normal and natural that you may be scarcely aware of it.

When you use one of the calming techniques, it's easier to notice the stream of thoughts that are flitting in and out of your mind (we call this "self-talk"). We help you become aware of those thoughts and notice what they are saying.

Some people find it difficult to listen to their thoughts without reacting and engaging with them ("looping"). We help you learn to listen to them and just notice them and then let them go.

When you can do this, we will ask you to write down your thoughts. We help you become like an observer of your own stream of self-talk. We ask you to write them down so you can examine them for certain helpful or hurtful patterns.

Identify Unanswerable Questions

We each have a wonderful capacity to think, recognize patterns, and figure things out. This thinking capacity is bound together with our question-answering ability. That means that we typically can answer only one question at a time.

For example, if I asked you to figure out how many miles you would drive if you went 35 miles an hour for 45 minutes, you would engage your thinking capacity and figure out the answer. But, until you had the answer, or gave up, you couldn't handle another question.

When we run into one of life's difficulties, we need our thinking capacity so we can cope. It's

pretty easy to clog up our thinking capacity with questions that have no answers, but cause us to search for one.

So, if my company laid me off, but kept Murphy, I could clog up my thinking capacity by asking myself an unanswerable question like, “Why did they like Murphy better than they liked me?” This causes my mind to have to search for every possible thing I did wrong, or who I might have offended, or any possible weakness I have.

Or, if my partner wanted to split up, I could clog up my thinking by asking, “What’s wrong with me?” or “Where did I go wrong?” Either question will send my mind on an endless chase for an answer that I’ll never find, and each possibility that my mind brings up will be something that hurts.

So, we will help you identify unanswerable questions, and teach you how to keep questions out of your mind for which you have no answers. We’ll also teach you to replace the useless and hurtful questions with productive questions that will help you get on with your life.

Replace thoughts or pictures created from hurtful imaginings

We all have wonderful and creative imaginations. We use our imaginations *well* when we use it to rehearse the future so we're confident that we will be prepared. We use our imaginations *well* when we imagine how great the movie will be, or the concert, or the ball game. We get the benefit of good feelings of anticipation.

We can also use our imaginations to hurt ourselves. We can imagine things that bring pain, stress, and anxiety.

For example, if my wife isn’t home when I expected her, I can use my imagination to picture things that could explain her lateness. I could create a picture of her in a terrible automobile accident. I could imagine she’s sick and dying in a hospital from a stroke or heart attack. I could imagine that she’s in the arms of a lover.

Using my imagination in these hurtful ways can only make me anxious, worried, and hurt. If you discover some of these kinds of imaginings on your list of thoughts, we’ll help you replace those with productive imaginings. For example, if my wife is late, I could imagine how happy she’ll be when she comes home and discovers that I’ve fed the dog and started preparing dinner.

People with active imaginations have a wonderful capacity, and they should use it. We help them to use their imagination more positively and less hurtfully.

Let go of memories of past hurts

Some of us are haunted by memories of past events or people that have hurt us. It seems so easy to fix, if it isn’t happening to you. If Sally still feels bitter about something her husband said to her a week ago, it’s going to take a lot more than simply saying to her, “Get over it. It’s history,” or “Don’t let yourself hurt today from the pains of yesterday.”

I can say those things to Sally until I’m blue in the face, and Sally will still feel her pain.

We help Sally recognize the painful feeling immediately when she feels it, and teach her to ask four questions. Two things are happening when she does that. First, she is using her thinking capacities instead of reviewing her memories, so it stops the hurt. Second, one of the questions

we teach her to ask is: “Is this (feeling) what I want for my life?” This question engages her thinking capacity to examine her goals for her life, to see if creating pain by nursing hurtful memories is what she wants for her life.

If Sally practices responding to the painful memories by asking the four questions, when she is ready Sally will say to herself, “Get over it. It’s history. I don’t want to hurt today by remembering the pains of yesterday.”

When Sally says this to herself, she will truly be over it, and can get on with her life.

The benefit of having our hurtful thoughts down on paper is we can examine them for accuracy.

Check each thought for accuracy. Test each thought. Counter each catastrophic conclusion.

Some of us have a tendency to make “catastrophic” assessments. Catastrophic thoughts are hurtful and can be debilitating.

For example, Joe thinks, “I’ve been laid off. I’ll never work again.” When Joe checks his list for accuracy, the first thought passes the test. He has been laid off. The second thought — his catastrophic assessment, “I’ll never work again,” — is probably not accurate. Joe needs to use his thinking capacities and test his thought about never working again.

If Joe is 97 years old, his thought might be accurate. Maybe nobody would hire a 97-year old person. If Joe is educated, has a skill, and only 30 years old, then his thought about never working again may not be accurate.

We invite Joe to marshal evidence to counter his hurtful thought. We help Joe see that he is educated, skilled, and young. Each of these pieces of evidence suggests that Joe is very employable and will work again.

You’ll learn to scan for words like “always,” or “never,” or “everybody,” or “everything,” as clues to thoughts that need to be made more accurate.

By the time you’ve reached this point, you’ve pruned your list of swirling thoughts. You’ve eliminated the unanswerable questions that clog your thinking. You’ve learned to use your imagination in positive ways, and not use it to hurt yourself. You’ve learned how to keep memories of past hurts from hurting you in the present. You’ve learned to test your hurtful thoughts for accuracy, and marshal evidence to dispute catastrophic thinking.

So, we only have one thing more to teach. Whenever you experience a bad feeling, you’ll learn to ask four questions, and make one of four choices.

Replace swirling, hurtful thoughts with productive questions

Any hurtful thoughts still on the list are to be taken one at a time through four questions.

1. What’s happening?

This question asks you to consider your thinking. The usual answer is some variation of “I’m feeling a bad feeling.”

2. How am I creating this feeling?

This question reminds you that it's your thoughts that create your feelings, and asks about the specific thought that brought on the bad feeling. Typical answers might be:

"I'm asking myself an unanswerable question." Or

"I'm imagining something terrible that scares me or makes me anxious." Or,

"I'm recalling something that happened in the past that produces bad feelings for me now." Or,

"I'm using catastrophic thinking and concluding that something is much worse than it really is."

3. Is this what I want for my life?

This question brings out your goals and choices for the future. It asks you if you want to produce bad feelings the way it's happening now.

Sometimes, the answer is yes.

"Yes, my dog died. I ache with the loss. That is an authentic feeling and while it is painful, I choose to always grieve with the loss of a loved one."

Usually, the answer is no.

"I don't want to create bad feelings for myself, if I can avoid it. What can I do to move closer to what I want for my life?"

The fourth question asks for a wise choice for handling the thought that brought up painful feelings.

4. How can I move toward what I want?

The wise choices for this question are Act, Ask, Accept, or Forgive.

Act when action is called for, or schedule an action.

If the adversity is something happening in the present, then action may be the best choice.

For example: Sara is thinking about her retirement savings, and worries, "Will I have enough money saved for my retirement?" This may be a stimulus to action. Sara might decide that she doesn't have a good answer to the question, so she chooses to create a retirement budget to check her planning. If this isn't a good moment to start, Sara can act by scheduling the time when she will create her budget. The worry will be resolved.

Ask, when asking is appropriate, or schedule negotiation.

When the wisest choice for a thought is to talk to someone else, then negotiation may be called for. Mary is undergoing divorce and has the thought that the children may be torn away from their grandparents. She can't know the answer to that unless she talks to the grandparents. So, she can resolve the bad feeling by asking them.

Accept what can't be changed.

Oftentimes, especially when thinking about something from the past, acting or asking won't help. Sometimes the only wise option is to accept that "what is" is just the way it is, and nothing you

can do or say will change it. When that is the case, it is usually the wisest choice to simply accept what can't be changed, and get on with your life. It's hardly ever useful to keep hurting yourself about something that is in the past. The expression, "It's no use crying over spilled milk," comes to mind.

Forgive anyone who has hurt you ... including yourself.

If there is no action that can be taken, no talking to be done, and you still can't accept something that has been done and can't be changed, then perhaps the only wise choice available is to forgive someone. Maybe, even yourself.

The End ... or The Beginning

We know that this is a powerful lot to learn. After the first pass through the course, many people just get the whole picture, without building the skills. So, we invite them back to the first module. Each time they come to a module for the second time, they are different from the person they were when they saw it for the first time. Everybody tells us that.

When the person reaches the end the second time, generally they've learned the skills but may not feel confident that they can continue to practice them forever more, in the future.

Obviously, it's up to each person to decide, but many elect to go through the course a third time, this time practicing the skills so well they'll be able to continue using them by themselves for the rest of their lives. Those who have gone through the third time tell us that each time through is different, because they are different.

Please begin the Coping Series with the Module: "Calm Your Mind"

Calm Your Mind

1. Watch an A/V program

✓ Date Completed

Action

Please begin by watching the audio-visual program called “Calm Your Mind.” Or, read the transcript on page 32 of the **Reference Book**.

Note: You may need to close all other open applications before you watch A/V.

<http://www.howtobehappier.com/a-v/calm-n/player.html>

2. Practice Technique #1: Deep Breathing

✓ Date Completed

Action

Start out with one or two minutes. Over a period of time, you may choose to work up to 20 minutes, as a daily practices in calming.

1. Sit or lie quietly.
2. Breathe deeply and slowly.
3. Focus on feeling the air fill up your lungs.
4. Watch your chest rise and fall.
5. If thoughts come, let them go and refocus on your breathing.

3. Practice Technique #2: Feel Your Pulse

✓ Date Completed

Action

Practice using various fingers until you find one or two that work for you. Use this anytime your mind is racing.

1. Gently use one hand to hold any finger on the other hand.
2. Concentrate on feeling a pulse.
3. Count ten pulses.
4. Be aware of being in the moment.
5. Move to another finger and do it again.

4. Practice Technique #3: Feel Some Part of Your Body

✓ Date Completed

Action

If you are in a chair with arms, you can add the focus of experiencing how your arms feel on the chair.

1. Feel how your foot contacts the floor.
2. Feel how your seat touches the chair.
3. Focus on the feeling in your body.

4. Let thoughts go and refocus on how your body feels.

5. Practice: Select Your Favorite

✓ Date Completed

Action

Decide which of the three techniques seems to work the best for you. Use that technique any time your thoughts race. Don't expect too much at the beginning. Simply keep on practicing.

What's next?

If you have the time, you may continue right on with the next module. If you don't have the time, return at a better time. Continue your practice of using your favorite calming technique.

Continue with "Write Down Your Thoughts."

Write Down Your Thoughts

1. Watch an A/V program

✓ Date Completed

Action

Now watch an audio-visual program called “Write Down Your Thoughts.” As before, if you decide to read the transcription instead, you will find it on page 39 of the **Reference Book**.

Note: You may need to close all other open applications before you watch A/V.

<http://www.howtobehappier.com/a-v/write-n/player.html>

4. Practice

Note: Before starting, locate the two copies of the blank form at the end of this practice on pages 12 and 13.

✓ Date Completed

Action

Use the forms to write down whatever comes into your mind about your relationship, especially things that repeat. Your thoughts may be observations, questions, feelings, strategies, whatever.

Capture as many as you can. More is better. Keep going until you start to feel like you’re repeating. Just write them down; pay no attention to the columns on the right. Don’t make any evaluations of the thoughts (good, bad, hurtful, etc.).

Before you start your list: If you want to see an example of Molly’s list of thoughts after her minor accident, page 14: Molly’s Thoughts.

5. Practice

✓ Date Completed

Action

Now go back to your list and

1. write down the response you have to each thought. This could be a judgment, or assessment (if any) about the thought. Then
2. write down whatever *feeling* it produced.

You will use this list for the rest of the module, so do your best to make it complete. If you miss something — and you will — you can always add it later. (If you want to see what Molly did, see page 15: Molly's Assessments and Feelings.)

When you are satisfied that you have written down most of the thoughts that repeat in your mind, go on to the next module. As more thoughts occur to you, keep adding them to your list.

Once you have captured your collection of bad feelings — and the thoughts and feelings you have about them — you'll learn the key skill of avoiding unanswerable questions. You're going to feel immense relief when you learn how to unclog your thinking by avoiding questions to which you have no answers.

What's Next?

If you have the time, you may continue right on with the next module in the series (page 16). If you don't have the time, continue at a later time.

Continue with "Cross off Unanswerable Questions."

Thought	Assessment	Feeling	Choice

Thought	Assessment	Feeling	Choice

Molly's Thoughts

Thought	Assessment	Feeling	Choice
<i>I can't believe I didn't see that car.</i>			
<i>Charles will be furious.</i>			
<i>The baby could have been hurt.</i>			
<i>Why did this have to happen, now?</i>			
<i>What if our insurance goes way up?</i>			
<i>What if we get sued?</i>			
<i>Maybe I should stop driving.</i>			
<i>I'm so glad the baby wasn't hurt.</i>			
<i>I'm glad no one was hurt.</i>			
<i>I hope Charles understands.</i>			
<i>He's not the world's best driver.</i>			
<i>His mother will think I was careless.</i>			
<i>I'd better call her and tell her.</i>			
<i>I should have avoided the accident.</i>			
<i>Is the car ruined?</i>			

Molly's Assessments

Thought	Assessment	Feeling	Choice
<i>I can't believe I didn't see that car.</i>	<i>I was careless</i>	<i>guilty</i>	
<i>Charles will be furious.</i>	<i>It was my first accident.</i>	<i>defensive</i>	
<i>The baby could have been hurt.</i>	<i>It would have been my fault</i>	<i>guilty</i>	
<i>Why did this have to happen, now?</i>	<i>We have so much going on.</i>	<i>harried</i>	
<i>What if our insurance goes way up?</i>	<i>We'll have to give up our vacation</i>	<i>sad</i>	
<i>What if we get sued?</i>	<i>We'll lose everything</i>	<i>fear</i>	
<i>Maybe I should stop driving.</i>	<i>That would ruin my life.</i>	<i>panicky</i>	
<i>I'm so glad the baby wasn't hurt.</i>	<i>I always use the baby seat.</i>	<i>proud</i>	
<i>I'm glad no one was hurt.</i>	<i>It could have been worse.</i>	<i>grateful</i>	
<i>I hope Charles understands.</i>	<i>He can get really angry.</i>	<i>worried</i>	
<i>He's not the world's best driver.</i>	<i>He takes more risks than I.</i>	<i>defensive</i>	
<i>His mother will think I was careless.</i>	<i>She'll be right.</i>	<i>defensive</i>	
<i>I'd better call her and tell her.</i>	<i>Let Charles tell her.</i>	<i>insecure</i>	
<i>I should have avoided the accident.</i>	<i>I must not have paid attention.</i>	<i>guilty</i>	
<i>Is the car ruined?</i>	<i>It doesn't look that bad.</i>	<i>worried</i>	

Cross Off Unanswerable Questions

1. Watch an A/V program

✓ Date Completed

Action

Please watch the audio-visual program called “Cross Off Unanswerable Questions.” If you prefer to read the transcript, it is on page 41 of the **Reference Book**.

Note: You may need to close all other open applications before you watch A/V.

<http://www.howtohealthier.com/a-v/cross-n/player.html>

2. Practice

✓ Date Completed

Action

Locate the thoughts you wrote down that were questions. Look at each question and determine if it has a real answer, or really has no answer. If it is an unanswerable question, cross it off and make a mental note not to let it come back into your mind. If it does, let your Sage-part take over with thoughts like:

“I’m not going to waste time on questions that are unanswerable.” Or,

“I have no way to know that, and it would hurt me to try to answer it.” Or ask,

“What can I do next to get on with my life?” Or,

“What can I do to stop looping on this thought?”

Once you have removed unanswerable questions, you'll learn to evaluate your thoughts for accuracy and reasonableness. We all have distortions of one kind or another in our thoughts. By taking a critical look at our thoughts the distortions become clear and we can modify the thoughts to make them more reasonable.

What’s Next?

If you have the time, continue with the next module.

Continue with: “Re-evaluate Your Assessments.”

Re-evaluate Your Assessments

1. Watch an A/V program

✓ Date Completed

Action

Please watch the audio-visual program called “Re-evaluate Your Assessments.” If you prefer to read the transcript, it is on page 44 of the **Reference Book**.

Note: You may need to close all other open applications before you watch A/V.

<http://www.howtobehappier.com/a-v/reval-n/player.html>

2. Practice 1:

Note: Before you perform the practices, please read “The Ways you Make Assessments,” starting on page 9 of the **Reference Book**.

✓ Date Completed

Action

Take your list of thoughts and reprocess them one at a time. Ask two questions:

- Is the thought itself accurate? (Does it reflect probable reality?) If not, rephrase it and check it again, then make a new assessment.
- If (or when) the thought is accurate, check to be sure the assessment is reasonable. If not, rewrite it to make it reasonable.
- If you cannot rewrite the thought to make it accurate, nor the assessment to make it reasonable, cross it off.
- If you find an unanswerable question, tell yourself you don’t want to clog up your mind with those kinds of hurtful and time-wasting questions and cross it off.

3. Practice 2:

✓ Date Completed

Action

Read through the rest of the thoughts to be sure you didn’t miss any thoughts that could be categorized as assessments, or judgments.

4. Practice 3:

✓ Date Completed

Action

Read each one and check it for reasonableness. If a thought is an assessment and it is accurate, leave it on. If it produces fear and anxiety, it is probably distorted, and should be crossed off.

What's Next?

Now you have a list of accurate and reasonable thoughts. If you have time, move on to the heart of the coping skills, where you'll hear about the important "Four Questions."

Continue with "Ask the Four Questions"

Ask the Four Questions

1. Watch an A/V program

✓ Date Completed

Action

Please watch the audio-visual program called “Ask the Four Questions.”
Or, read the transcript on page 47 of the **Reference Book**.

Note: You may need to close all other open applications before you watch A/V.

<http://www.howtobehappier.com/a-v/ask-n/player.html>

2. Practice 1:

Note: Before the practices, read the article "Ask the Four Questions," page 14 of the **Reference Book**.

✓ Date Completed

Action

Review any of the remaining painful thoughts that are not crossed off. Be sure all questions with no answers have been crossed off and that you have challenged any distorted thoughts and catastrophic assessments.

3. Practice 2:

✓ Date Completed

Action

If you have a thought or assessment that hasn't been crossed off, address it by asking the four questions

- What's happening?
- How am I creating this feeling?
- Is this what I want for my life?
- How can I best move toward my goal?

Then make one of four choices. Make notes about your choice next to the thought. If your choice is to forgive, write down whom you are going to forgive.

Choices:

- Act
- Ask
- Accept
- Forgive (write down person's name)

4. Practice 3: Clearing Your List

✓ Date Completed

Action

Here is an enlightening practice for you. Fill the space below with whatever comes to your mind. (If you are going to do this practice, do it now, before you read further.)

I am ...

5. Reviewing The “I Am” Practice

✓ Date Completed

Action

Notice any negative statements on your list. Ask yourself, “Am I really that?” You will probably answer, “Maybe sometimes, but not always.”

The “I am” distortion is one major distortion to notice. It is almost always an exaggeration or distortion to characterize your entire self with a single “I am” statement. Perhaps it is true to say, “I sometimes am,” or “I have the capacity to be (something negative).” But, it is a distortion to say, “I am (something negative).”

Your Sage can help you take notice in the future of any “I am” distortions.

The “Never,” “Always,” “Can’t,” and “Every” Distortions

It is useful to be suspicious of the words “never,” “always,” “can’t,” “every,” and “any.” These are words that often are gross distortions. If you ask your Sage to be alert for them, you will gradually find that your parts begin communicating more honestly.

Notice any other distortions that you find that you use. The idea is to refine the communication between your parts so that they can express their needs without harmful attacks on other parts or on your entire person.

6. Read

✓ Date Completed

Action

Read the optional article “Forgiveness” on page 21 of the **Reference Book**.

What's next?

You're almost done. You've learned how to analyze your stress-producing thoughts and keep only the ones that are reasonable. Using the four questions and four answers, you can make logical and useful choices about your actions. Don't miss the next step where you create your plan.

If you have the time, you may continue right on with the next module in the "Coping" series.

Continue with "Keep Your Productive Thoughts."

Keep Your Productive Questions

1. Watch an A/V program

✓ Date Completed

Action

Please watch “Keep Your Productive Questions.” Or, read the transcript on page 48 of the **Reference Book**.

Note: You may need to close all other open applications before you watch A/V.

<http://www.howtobehappier.com/a-v/keep-n/player.html>

2. Practice 1:

✓ Date Completed

Action

Review any of the remaining painful thoughts that are not crossed off.

- a) Look for the words to avoid: always, never, forever, nobody, and everybody, must, have to, can't.
- b) Dispute inaccurate or exaggerated thoughts, and collect evidence against judgments that are harsh or too broad, or are “forever.” Sort through your mind and your memories to collect evidence to either prove or disprove the thought or the assessment.
- c) Cross off inaccurate thoughts, or rewrite them.

3. Practice 2:

✓ Date Completed

Action

Using the remaining thoughts, consider what you might do in each instance. Choose one or more: Act, Ask, Accept, or Forgive, then make notes about a plan to carry out those choices. Notice that Accept and Forgive are totally internal processes. However Act and Ask can be either internal or external. Examples:

(internal) You know that you are ACTing when you consider the four questions and four options.

(internal) You learned that you could ASK your Constructor to provide positive images for you instead of negative.

(external) You can Act by doing something like creating a new budget, or taking steps to meet new people.

(external) You could ASK a friend to help you with something.

4. Practice 3:

✓ Date Completed

Action

Examine your list to see if your feelings have changed. Be aware of your thoughts. If you don't think you have resolution, consider repeating the process (or even the whole coping course). If you do that, the next time through the list is likely to be different.

If for any reason you wish to repeat the six steps, choose A or B below. Use the fresh "thoughts" sheets at the end of this practice (page 30), for the next go-around.

Return to the beginning and do it again?

If you would like to start the process again, you have two choices.

A. Start again by re-watching the first module ("Calm Your Mind"), or

B. Use the steps in the Appendix of this book on page 29, to review the process.

What's next?

If you have the time, you may continue right on with the next module in the "Coping" series.

Continue with "Resolve Bad Feelings Instantly."

Resolve Bad Feelings Instantly

There is no A/V for this module.

1. Register

✓ Date Completed

Action

Please register so that you may receive the email reminder series. Copy the link below into one of your browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari — whatever is your favorite). Or, if you're reading this PDF on your screen, just click on that link.

<http://www.howtobehappier.com/signup1.html>

2. Read Text

✓ Date Completed

Action

Please begin by reading the text, starting on page 23 of the **Reference Book**.

3. Read an article

✓ Date Completed

Action

Please read the article "Assigning Motives" on page 29 of the **Reference Book**.

4. Practice: make your list

Until you've practiced enough to memorize the questions and choices, you might find it useful to make a tiny 'crib' sheet to use. So, when you feel a bad feeling, you whip out your little 3 by 5 card or post-it, and whiz through the questions and choices. It won't take long until you can do this instantly, from memory.

In your practices it is useful to use issues that seem to come up often in your daily life, with a relative or close friend.

✓ Date Completed

Action

Something I sometimes get angry or upset about:

Issue #1 _____

Issue #2 _____

Issue #3 _____

Issue #4 _____

Etc. _____

5. Practice: Rehearse

✓ Date Completed

Action

Go through your list. Take one item at a time.

Imagine that issue coming up again in the future.

Ask the three questions.

Choose what you'll do — Act, Ask, Accept, or Forgive — when the issue arises again.

Practice going through the process in your imagination.

Appreciate yourself for making the choice that will be best for your goal of having a happy relationship that lasts.

Each additional practice:

Look back on the days since your last practice and recall any times that one or another issue on your list arose. Review what you did, and how you felt.

If you allowed yourself to get upset — and didn't go through the questions and resolve the issue — forgive yourself, and do your practice again. Defeating old habits of thought is not easy. The purpose of the practice is to build new, more productive habits of thought. You might have to do the practices over and over again for weeks or even months before the new habit is stronger than the old, less productive habit.

When you succeed in resolving a bad feeling — at the speed of thought — your new habit has become stronger than your old habit. Congratulate yourself. Take pride in your accomplishment. You've taken another step toward a happier and happier life.

Please continue with the next page.

What's Next?

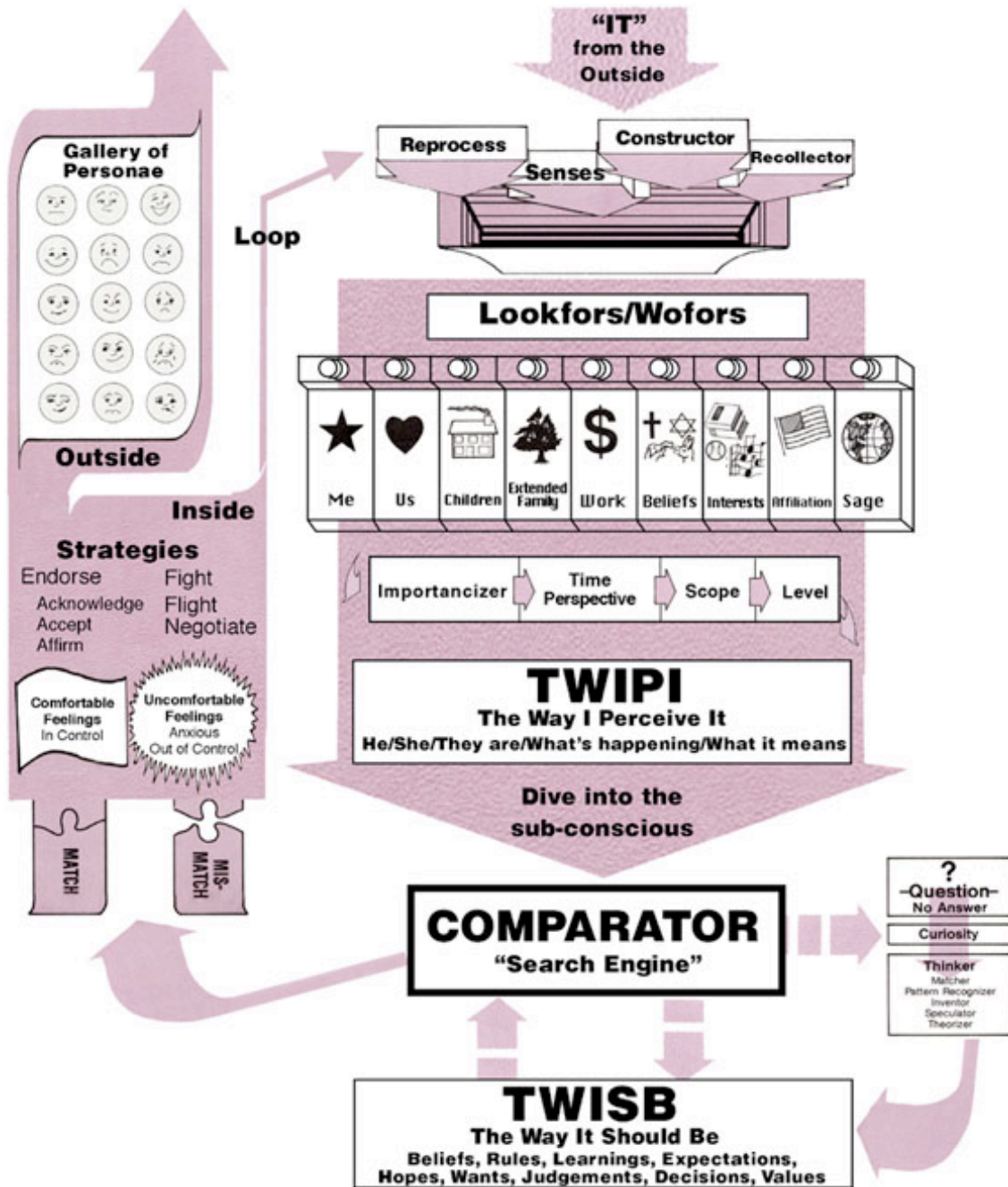
What you learned

You learned how to:

- get rid of old bad feelings
- stop fighting over irresolvable issues
- avoid looping on bad feelings
- moderate distorted thoughts
- moderate extreme assessments and
- make wiser assessments.
- resolve bad feelings instantly

Are you ready for more?

If you've got a handle on many or most of the old bad feelings, and you're interested in more personal development content, consider the Relationship-Insurance series of programs. Go back to <http://www.visionarypublications.com> to see other texts and programs that are available.



Appendix

If you would like to start the process again, you have two choices.

- Start again by re-watching the first module (“Calm Your Mind”). Or
- Use the steps below ("Repeat the Steps") as reminders of what to do.

Repeat the Steps

1. Calm Your Mind

If you find yourself still agitated, select one of the calming techniques and practice with it (deep breathing; feel your finger pulse; feel your body).

2. Write Down Your Thoughts

- a. Use fresh forms to write down whatever comes into your mind. (Notice that the thoughts may be different from your previous effort.)
- b. Record your assessment and feeling(s): Read over each thought one at a time, and write whatever comes to your mind as a response to that thought (your assessment). At that same time, write down whatever feeling it produced. If the thought is an unanswerable question, tell yourself not to clog up your mind with those hurtful and time-wasting questions.
- c. When you are done, relax for a moment and see if there are any new thoughts to add. If so, repeat steps ‘a’ and ‘b’ again.

3. Cross Off Unanswerable Questions

Cross off any unanswerable questions.

4. Re-evaluate Your Assessments

Read each thought and check for accuracy. If your assessment of the thought was reasonable, leave it as is. If the thought and assessment produces fear and anxiety, it’s probably distorted and should be crossed off.

Thoughts and assessments that produce fear or anxiety come from the Constructor. They are about the future. You don't and can't know the future. Stay in the "here and now." You'll find the here and now is safer and vastly more comfortable than imaginings about the future that you can't know will come true.

5. Ask the Four Questions

With each remaining thought, ask the four Sage questions and select one of the four Sage choices:

Questions:

What’s happening?

How am I creating this feeling?

Is this what I want for the rest of my life?

How can I move toward what I want?

Choices:

Act

Ask

Accept

Forgive

6. Keep Your Productive Questions:

Review the remaining thoughts and look for the words to avoid: always, never, forever, nobody, and everybody, must, have to, and can't. Collect evidence to either prove or disprove the thought. Cross off inaccurate thoughts, or rewrite them.

Choose a process for any remaining thoughts (Act, Ask, Accept, Forgive) and create a plan.

If you feel some of the issues are still unresolved, start the process again.

Thought	Assessment	Feeling	Choice