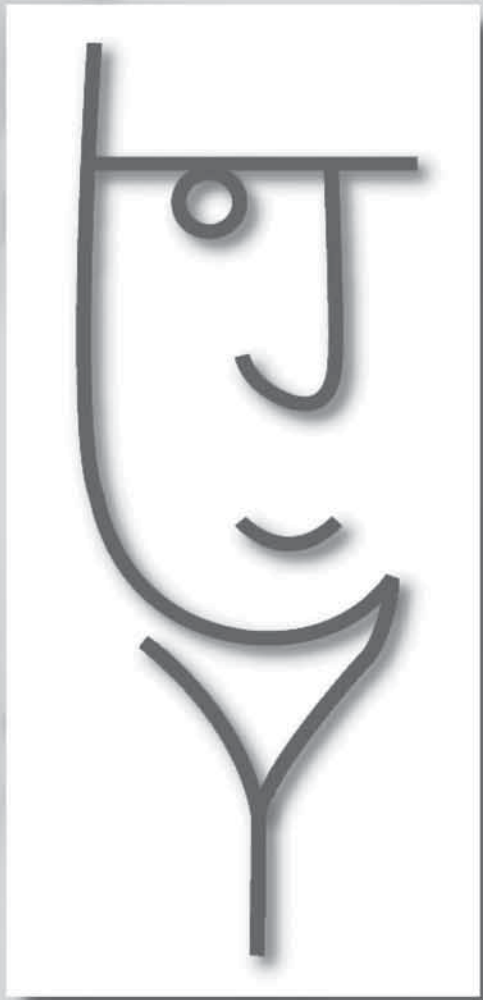


REJOINING

JOY



Volume VI

*The Best of
Rejoining Joy*

Gerald Young, PhD

REJOINING JOY

Volume VI

**The Best of Rejoining Joy
and Destressing Excerpts**

ALSO BY DR. GERALD YOUNG

Books

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Young, G. (2016). *Unifying Causality and Psychology: Being, Brain and Behavior*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

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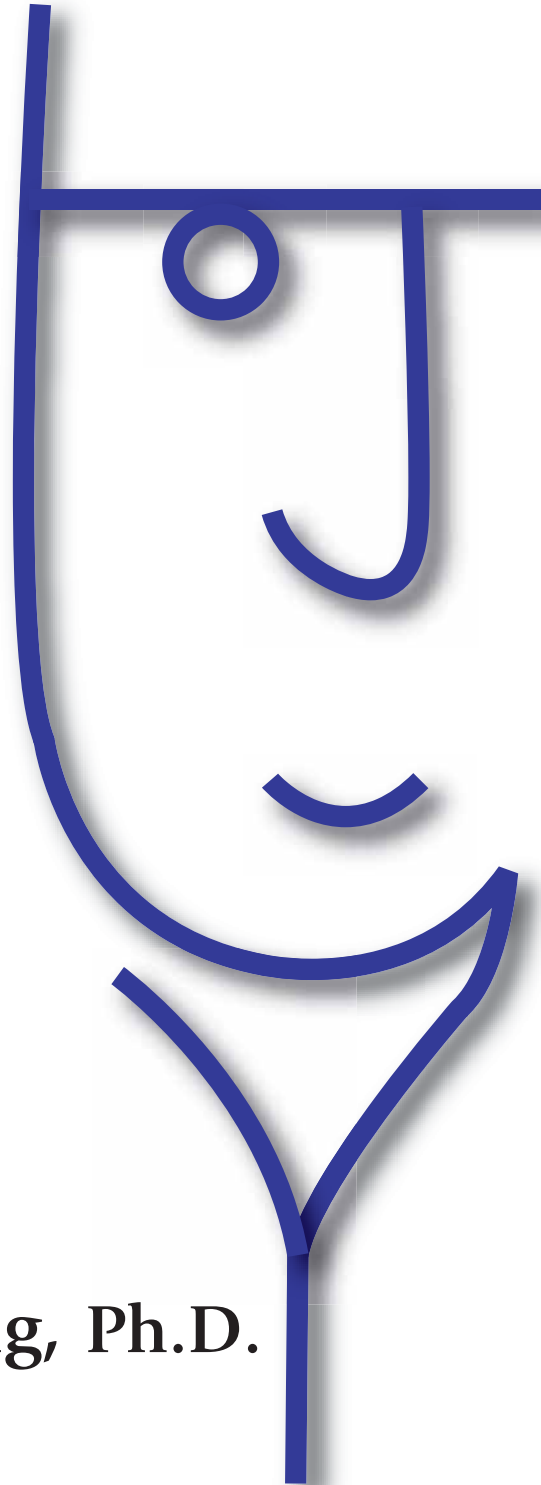
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Journals

Young, G. (Founding Editor and Editor-in-Chief) (2008–) *Psychological Injury and Law*. New York: Springer.

The 2013, 2012, 2010, 2007, and 2006 books are books on psychological effects of traumatic events, and the like, in relation to personal injury law. The 2011 and 1997 books are on life span development. You may also consult the journal for which I am editor-in-chief, entitled, *Psychological Injury and Law*. To see my work in the area of psychological injury and law, consult the websites www.asapil.org and springer.com. To see my work in the area of self-help consult www.rejoiningjoy.com.

Rejoining Joy



Gerald Young, Ph.D.

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To my Family and my Clients



REJOINING JOY

The Best of Rejoining Joy and Destressing

Volume VI

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DR. GERALD YOUNG is a Full Associate Professor Psychology at Glendon College, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He is also a practicing psychologist dealing with rehabilitation and with counseling. He undertakes research on two major topics. The first is on psychological injury and law [five books]. The second is on child development. His most recent books are entitled: *Causality and Development: Neo-Eriksonian Perspectives*, and *Revising the APA Ethics Code: New Principles and Sub-principles* (both published by Springer International Publishing, Cham, Switzerland). In 2016, he received an outstanding trauma research award (lifetime) from the Canadian Psychological Association. He has received a research leader award from his university. He also received an award from the American Psychological Association for media contributions, which attest to the value of the self-help book series. He is the editor of the leading journal in the area of psychological injury and law (*Psychological Injury and Law, PIL*, springer.com), and was the president of its housing association (ASAPIL, see www.asapil.net).

Dr. Gerald Young has gained the trust of his clients and of his professional colleagues in his professional practice in clinical psychology. He has helped numerous clients over the years; and his reports have been presented to court, including for the Supreme Court of Canada. As a Full Associate professor



at York University, he teaches students the courses of Rehabilitation Psychology, and Abnormal Child, Adolescent, Adult, and Advanced Development. For further description of Dr. Young's research leadership, see (<https://www.glendon.yorku.ca/research/two-glendon-researchers-recognised-for-the-2017-york-university-research-leaders/>)

"There is unity in my university teaching, my research, my practice, and the self-help book series. With much passion, I have dedicated my professional life to the area, and the self-help books reflect that passion and the skills that I have learned and developed and want to communicate to the reader."

FOREWORD

R*ejoining Joy* is a self-help book series on stress, emotions, pain, managing stress and resilience, trauma and recovery, and dealing with a range of daily issues, such as raising a range of daily issues, such as raising children and functioning well at work (see rejoiningjoy.com). The series is not a self-help one in the traditional sense, for it is more about improving our ways of living. It does not simply ask us to be more positive, happy, or better. Rather, it shows the reader how to accomplish these and related goals in a realistic manner. It does not simply give the reader positive statements about the self to learn. Rather, it helps facilitate the reader in *learning new ways of living* by dealing better with the negatives and increasing the positives.

The series is based on figures and accompanying text created by psychologist Dr. Gerald Young in sessions with his clients. The text for each figure is described in one to several paragraphs and, usually, includes a positive message. In his clinical work, Dr. Young encourages people to tell better stories about themselves, to find inner qualities and strengths, to learn destressing skills in order to add to them, and to use appropriately these qualities and strengths in solving problems.

There are eight volumes in the book series.

The first volume presents essays, without accompanying figures for the

most part, including an essay on an introduction to psychology, and another on therapy. The next volume, the first with figures and accompanying text, is on stress and destressing. The next two volumes are also in this figure-text format. Specifically, the third volume in the series is on emotions, such as worrying but, also, it includes positive feelings, such as love. The fourth volume deals with diverse topics relating to children, work, change, and so on. The fifth volume has neither essays nor figures and accompanying text, but presents artwork meant to be relaxing. In a sixth book, the reader is provided a self-contained workbook of psychological exercises. In addition, the series includes a seventh book based on excerpts from the best material from books in the series. The eighth book is on sayings for living, loving, and learning. The reader should find them inspirational. They emphasize the major theme of the book series—that when life is difficult, we can still do our best and do it well, and that we choose to find techniques, strategies, and ways of living to help us in this great and empowering task. Another way of describing the major themes of the book is that they involve: Reducing Negatives, Increasing Positives, and Improving Relations and Love. I created over 20 sayings for over 20 themes.

Together, the books are aimed at having the reader not only rejoin joy but, also, keep it.

Introduction to the Book Series

Dr. Young has written a series of eight self-help books. In these self-help books, he shares with you the clinical advice he gives to his clients, most of whom have been in traumatic accidents. A large part of the material in the books consists of graphics and accompanying text. They cover the multiple areas of stress, negative emotions, and life disruptions that follow trauma. There is also an introductory book of essays, a book on art and nature, and a workbook. The series concludes with an excerpted book of the best of the other books. It ends with a book of the sayings, some excerpted from the other books and some newly written for it. The workbook is about *Empowering the Core* and the collection of sayings is about *Living, Learning, and Loving Together*. Together, the books constitute a series called, *Rejoining Joy*. The title reflects the belief that we can learn to be in charge of our lives and maintain joy even when we might experience traumatic events such as accidents. We can learn to live our life to the fullest, and have a sense that we are in charge no matter what may happen to us, and no matter what our situation or age.

The contents of the books are scientifically-based, yet tailored to each client. The goal in these books is to help people who want to grow, learn from their experiences, and have a more positive and peaceful psychology. The work is based especially on car accident survivors, who come into the office with a whole host of life issues. Therefore, the books covers how to handle stress, how to deal with negative emotions, how to handle

injuries and pain, how to cope with death of a loved one, how to handle the many difficulties that emerge in daily life, how to promote positive emotions, and how to improve communication and relationships, deal with children, families, and work, and how to change for the better.

The approach taken is cognitive-behavioral, narrative, interpersonal, and developmental. The books emphasize that ultimately we are responsible for ourselves, but we create that sense of responsibility by active participation in our social relations and daily life, and by actively finding solutions to the problems that may arise in our roles. Even when the worst tragedies happen to us, we can still be in control, learn from the experience and grow, stay ourselves, and be helpful to others. No matter how bad things seem, there is always something that we can direct, adapt to, and live through with inner positivity and peace. Even in the most extreme stress and negative emotions, we can turn to those parts of us that are more positive and peaceful, make them expand, and regain joy. We can learn to emphasize our positives and work with our negatives, to make us better people and to make our future better.

AUDIENCE

The Book Series Has Taken a Unique Approach

1. The most important point about the book series is that it will be helpful to readers because it presents a wide range of useful strategies, techniques, and ideas for use in daily life. The book series is not just for people who are undergoing stress, whether through great tragedies such as serious accidents or in the hassles of daily life. The counseling given in the book series also is useful to prevent stresses from growing out of hand, to head off bad habits, and to promote good habits. We all can develop control in our lives and prosper psychologically in our daily activities. There are eight books in the series and it is comprehensive in the topics discussed and the education and instructions given.
2. In addition, the book series reflects an integration of my practice, teaching, and research, yet stays at the level of my clients and the general reader. In an article written in 2008 for the journal *Psychological Injury and Law*, I describe the psychotherapeutic encounter, and argue that it should deal with the whole person, through 10 critical areas, as well as through family counseling and related interventions, if necessary. This model is an integrative one that has guided the present book series, leading me to organize many common psychotherapeutic techniques into a holistic model. It allows me to keep the client in focus in therapy, and facilitate their self-growth, inner peace, and relations with others in their daily lives.
3. The majority of the books use visual graphics with accompanying text. In the heart of the book series, there are 30 such chapters spread over three books. The books are unique in the amount of graphics and in their use as central organizers, with text written solely to explain them. That is, for each visual, usually there is a paragraph or page-long description. For any one chapter, together the graphics cover the major themes important for it. For the excerpted book, the author took material from each of these 30 chapters, in particular, as well as some introductory essays and some art on nature, as described below. In addition, he put in select sayings written for the margins, as described below.
4. The book of introductory essays includes essays that explain psychology and explain psychotherapy. The author wrote these essays instead of using cumbersome footnotes or endnotes. Almost all key words in the visual graphics and their accompanying text are explained in the essays. Other essays are more motivational and inspirational. Finally, there are those that explain development very well, and they are based on my professional publications. This book concludes with a few poems.

5. The art and nature book is a “green” one, for it encourages readers to respect and love the planet and its animals. The art consists of simple line drawings, illustrating that any one can undertake art, and at any age. Also, the themes are peaceful, motivational, and inspirational, such as ones on families, flowers, dancing figures, and art based on a visit to the holy land.
6. The workbook consists solely of workbook exercises, each having a brief introductory text. Most exercises and their introductions fit on one page. Each exercise consists of two questions, asking for up to five possible answers, or at least things to think about. Other workbooks use more text for each exercise, so there are fewer exercises in other books than in the present workbook. Each of the exercises is aimed at creating a sense that one can succeed in taking charge of life’s difficulties. The workbook was written so that it can stand alone, and be read without reading any other book in the series.
7. The book of sayings is a collection of sayings used as margin material, but it turned out important in its own right. For the most part, other collections of sayings involve those not written by the authors, but by famous writers and public figures. Because the sayings are tied to the book series, all of them are psychological in nature, which is unlike the case for other books of sayings. The reader

will find the sayings are consistent with the major themes of the book, and therefore reasoned, motivating, inspiring, and promoting positives while helping to control negatives.

Market

The book series was written starting with *clients* right in their sessions. I would make for them the therapeutic visualizations that I have described in order to illustrate what I wanted them to learn and to apply in their distressing and rejoining joy. However, the book series is not just aimed at clients in need of mental health services. It aims, as well, for the self-help and self-healing *market, in general*. Many people need and seek simple techniques to use in their attempts to distress and rejoin joy, and they also seek books that further their sense of meaning and fulfillment, inspire them to change, and facilitate their growth. Therefore, the book series can be of great help to the general reader, given its motivational, inspirational, and reflective contents.

Because of its contents and the way it is written, *psychologists* and other mental health professionals will also find that the book series can be helpful in their practice. The contents of the books can be used effectively with their clients, just like I have used them with mine. For example, psychologists can use the therapeutic visual figures and their associated text to make crucial points in session. The sayings and art can be used to motivate and inspire. The essays can help flesh out therapeutic work, both in terms of facilitating reflection and for giving clients

at-home reading assignments.

The advantage of my approach lies in its inclusive nature. I cover so many themes, with one chapter usually per theme. Within each chapter from the three books in the book series that have figures and matching text, there are at least 10 figures. Some are meant to present the same or similar information in different ways. However, most are quite distinct from the others. Because there are about 500 figures in the book series, and they cover a full range of topics, the mental health professional can select from much choice in the material covered by the books for the particular needs presented by clients in sessions. The therapist using my book series can design individually tailored groups of readings and figures for clients to consult.

Who Needs to Read the Book Series?

1. Anyone who has confronted any kind of stress, not just those coming from accidents, should read the book series.
2. Anyone who wants to learn how to handle effectively stress, negative emotions, and bad habits will profit from the book series.
3. Anyone who needs advice on communication, relationships, love, children, teenagers, families, work, and taking responsibility of any kind will keep coming back to the series.

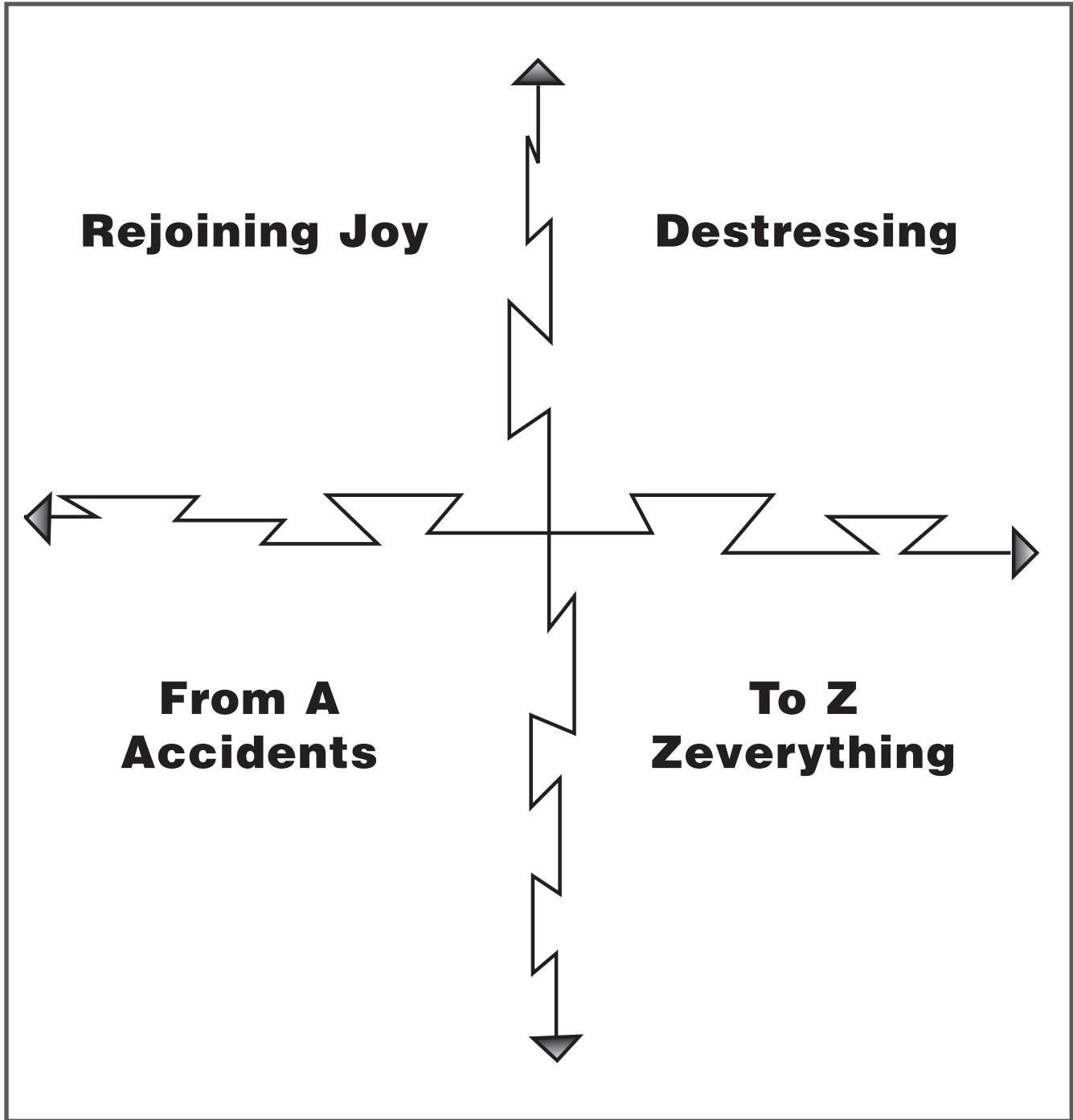
In short, the book series will be useful for almost anyone. Moreover, its attractive visual and workbook format makes for easy reading and good learning.

People of all ages will find the book series interesting and informative, from teenagers to the elderly. Some of the graphics and workbook exercises might seem more appropriate for young people and others for adults. However, readers of all ages, whether they are young or young at heart, will find the book to their liking.

In addition, because the graphics have been made in session and because the workbook is oriented to clients, both treating mental health professionals and their patients should find the book series valuable.

REJOINING JOY: DESTRESSING

Stress infiltrates every aspect of our life. So can destressing and joy.



BOOK SERIES CONTENTS

Volume Descriptions

The first volume in the book series presents in a straightforward manner essays introducing psychology and how to live life more happily and effectively. The essays are meant to cover the basic topics presented in the remaining books, and they include pertinent definitions and explanations of concepts, although the reader does not have to read these essays before reading the other books. The topics in the first set of essays range from what are the fundamentals in psychology, to how to deal with stress, to how cognitive behavioral therapy works. The second set of essays is more literary in the first part and more scholarly in the second. The essays range from short ones that are more inspirational and motivational, to ones on change and on stages in development and their implications. Key themes relate to growth and responsibility.

The second volume is on destressing. This volume marks the beginning of the major use of therapeutic figures. In this volume, I explain basic concepts about stress and I explain behavioral techniques on how to distress. I emphasize various cognitive techniques, such as keeping our hope, optimism, and positive attitude. We learn that when confronted with stress, we have options in our behavior and we can be in control. I go on to explain that having some stress can be growth promoting and that we can learn to live effectively

with it. This first book in the series concludes with a chapter on recovering—stress is a start and dealing with it is our goal.

The third volume of the book series deals with negative emotions, such as worry and sadness, and specific emotional problems, such as drinking or dealing with pain. The volume moves from these negative and most basic emotions to positive ones, for it concludes with chapters on love and motivation, in particular. The main theme of this volume is that we can use emotions to our advantage, that emotions color all our activities, and that we can control them when they are negative. This third book in the book series concludes with a chapter on rewriting the stories that we tell about ourselves so that they are more positive.

The fourth volume in the book series is about improving the quality of our daily living. It deals with more complex topics, such as the self, communication, handling children and adolescents, coping with change, and managing work and family life. It includes a chapter on inspiration. It terminates with a description of major points of view in psychology, including the biopsychosocial perspective. This reflects the integrative effort that I have taken in writing the book series. To better understand our psychology, we need to look both inside and around us, both at our bodies and our mind, both at our thoughts and our emotions,

and both our bad habits and good ones. We all have core positives waiting to grow.

The fifth volume presents two-dimensional artistic line drawings intended to relax and inspire. Many of the drawings are about nature and animals. Many are about people and family. I do these drawings quickly, illustrating that, with a single line or a series of lines, we can both express ourselves and relax in doing so. The accompanying text for this book emphasizes the role that we all have to play in helping nature survive. I added text related to nature and our need to protect and preserve it. By acting to save the planet, its habitats, its animals, and its plants, we engage in the best forms of destressing.

Book six of the book series represents its crowning achievement. It consists of excerpts of the best material, especially from books III, IV, and V of the first five books in the series. I selected those figures and accompanying text that provide the clearest description of the book series' major messages and its best therapeutic self-help skills. The excerpted book offers a concise presentation of the book series contents, allowing the reader to consult the complete series for more in-depth reading.

Book seven presents workbook exercises that have the reader review and reflect on the contents of Books III, IV, and V of the book series. The exercises emphasize empowering our inner positive psychological core and good habits, or strengths and advantages, while helping readers toward altering negatives, bad habits, and so forth. Each of the exercises begins with an introduc-

tory paragraph, so that the reader can read the book by itself, without reference to other books.

The last volume of the book series presents inspirational sayings for living, loving, and learning. The sayings were written based on Dr. Young's work with his clients. They offer a basis for rejoining joy and gaining in life. The third through fifth book of the series concern stress, emotions, and daily living, and there are 10 chapters in each book. For each chapter, there are about 50–100 sayings and bolded sentences that are like sayings. They cover topics such as increasing positives, ensuring success, and improving relationships. There are over 20 topics related to destressing, emotions, and daily living, including at work and with family. There are over 20 sayings per topic. They will motivate, inspire, and help to promote good habits while helping to inhibit negative ones.

What the Book Series is NOT.

To better differentiate how this book series is different from other books similar to them the market, we need to know what the book series is not.

1. The book series is not on one particular topic, such as how to handle stress, depression, or pain, because it covers all these matters. Dr. Young, in his sessions with clients, deals with the full range of issues that come up after accidents and in life.
2. The book series does not give simplistic answers on how to cure or how to deal with all critical problems

that people face because there aren't any such simplistic answers, despite what some people or authors might preach. Books that simplify by giving catchy titles and cute phrases may inspire for the moment, but they do not create long-lasting helpful effects. The approach in the present book series is to not only inspire and teach, but also to have readers learn and apply the strategies in the series, and therefore improve their ways of living.

3. The book series is not a complex scientific explanation of psychology and its therapies. There are not a lot of theoretical explanation, references to the literature, and footnotes. Dr. Young has written scientific books and articles on therapy, but the goal of the present book series is practical and it is aimed at the mass market. The book series speaks to the reader at the level of the reader and gives a bibliography that the reader can consult for further information. Therefore, the book is balanced by being not too simple yet not too complex.
4. The book series is not simply text, because it includes many visuals. For each visual, there is usually an associated paragraph or page, and the visual and the text should be examined together.
5. The book series is not dry and humorless. To the contrary, it includes humor when necessary, it includes some catchy sayings, and there is much to excite the imagination.
6. The book series is not another self-help book project that will not help people. We are coming to understand that self-help books have temporary effects and even some harmful ones. For example, by painting everything rosy or minimizing the difficulties in dealing with problems, other self-help books may overlook the serious problems people have in dealing with stress. Or, they may give very simple solutions that can only work in some situations, but lead to difficulties in others; so in the end, they limit the person and have opposite effects to those intended. The present book series is more realistic, never promising too much. However, it always offers good ideas and strategies, it motivates, and it always gives hope. **Life is a Lesson and we are both its teacher and student.**
7. The book series is not just for accident survivors. Indeed, it will be helpful for most people who want to learn how to handle stress of any kind, and rejoin joy. Also, it will be helpful to any one wishing to grow and transform for the better. Often, psychology is considered as a discipline that deals with helping people with their problems. The approach of the present book series goes beyond this, because psychology can help all of us all, no matter what our age, to learn to improve our psychological wellness, positivity, quality of life, ways of living, and joy in living.

PREFACE

The title of this book series includes the phrase, “Rejoining Joy.” When we experience stress, we do the best that we can to get through it. We try to regain joy, and we use various destressing techniques, perhaps some like the techniques in this series. Rejoining joy is the goal so that we can get on with our lives and live it in enriching, productive ways. “A healthy way of living” is an important means to attain joy.

However, destressing is not a list of techniques mechanically applied. It is essential to want to destress and go beyond our repertoire of learned destressing techniques. People can learn to minimize or take away their present stress. It is just as important to learn that destressing is an ongoing process. When we go beyond the techniques used and see the whole picture, it becomes easier to deal with future stress.

The book series *Rejoining Joy* is divided into eight volumes. They cover a diversity of topics related to destressing, *a)* the nature of stress and how to best deal with it, *b)* the topic of emotions, such as worry, anger, motivation, and love, and *c)* topics relevant to daily life, such as communication, children, and work. The series does not try to cover every area relevant to destressing, nor does it attempt to be exhaustive. In order for readers to complete their knowledge and appreciation of the available destressing techniques in the field, they should consult other relevant self-help

books, their family physicians, and, if necessary, mental health professionals, such as psychologists.

The *Rejoining Joy* book series is unique because it makes extensive use of visualizations, illustrations, drawings, figures, diagrams, graphs, charts, tables, and so on. In the book series, for the most part, I refer to them as “figures.” The advantage of using the visual modality is that it captures simply the message that is being communicated. Moreover, visualizations are like verbal metaphors. They suggest, inspire, make people think, and so on, and often avoid direct instruction. Thus, they can function as powerful therapeutic tools. Within each chapter, the figures are loosely organized. It is not necessary that they be read in sequence from first to last. Each figure is meant to be a self-contained unit. Although there is accompanying text, each figure can be understood without reference to it. Similarly, the text can be read and understood without reference to any associated figure. Therefore, the reader can read the text on its own without reference to the figures, or can flip through the figures without reference to the text, or go back and forth between them.

One result of this format is that, at times, there are repetitions. For example, the idea of having a positive attitude is a common theme in the book series; instead of seeing this repetition as a drawback, we can see it as positive because it allows for the accentuation of important themes. The reader should note

that, although the focus of the book series is on figures, graphs, and so on , such visualizations have their time and place. For example, if using the book series, the therapist should not simply rely on visualizations. It is important to see each client as an individual with particular problems in particular stressful situations and, only when it is appropriate, should visualizations be used.

In our streams of consciousness, we find not only words and ideas but, also,

visual images, both of what happened in the past and what can happen in the future. Therapists can use more effectively the human penchant to visualize. Often, the visual modality is neglected in our thinking process regarding more positive stories that we can tell to ourselves and to others. The current book series aims to rectify this oversight through its many therapeutic visualizations. Narratives need not be verbal alone.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The book series on Rejoining Joy owes much to my teachers, some of the best of whom have been my clients. It is their stories that have inspired me. Often, it is their ideas and solutions that I put into written and visual form. Often, they are like psychologists, and I simply facilitate the dialogue that they are having in their own minds about which course of action to follow, which advice to accept, and so on.

Another special set of teachers has involved my family, including my mother (Rosalind) and my late father (Samuel), my wife (Lelia) and our children (Carina, Joy, Victoria). They have been great teachers about children and parenting, as has been our first grandchildren, David and Osher. In turning to rehabilitation psychology, I owe much to Stephen Swallow, who was an excellent supervisor and mentor. Other important teachers whom I have had in my student and professional life have included: Jim Alcock, John Crozier, Thérèse Gouin Décarie, Neville Doxey, Michael Lewis, Edward Meade, Ronald Melzack, Gert Morgenstern, Marvin Simner, and Peter H. Wolff. To all these people, I say a hardy THANK YOU.

I would like to thank the following people who have helped put together the book series. Orden Braham of e-promotions completed the computer graphics following the hand written figures that I gave him, and he turned them into

the professional quality so clearly evident. Beth Crane of WeMakeBooks.ca worked diligently setting up the pages in their attractive format and provided timely advice, as well. Moreover, she greatly improved on the organization of the contents of the figures. Kim Monteforte set up the pages for the sayings book. Also Cindy Cake expertly put together the child alphabet book, which has been placed on the website for the book series (rejoiningjoy.com). Finally, Heidy Lawrance contributed to the last phases of preparing the book series for the website. The website itself is an excellent one, thanks to her work and that of Nathan Lawrance and Donna Lam, who worked so creatively on it.

Carina Young Rock had worked arduously on the first draft of some of the graphics, and Arthur Demerjian has helped her in this regard. More important, Carina Young Rock has provided photographs for the book series, the excellent quality of which is noticeable. These are, first, from the holy land and its nature preserves. Also, she took pictures in New York State. Brian Rock has added wonderful pictures of Switzerland. Joy Young provided the pictures of Toronto. Not to be left out, I added pictures from my visits to the San Francisco area and the Phoenix area (where conferences took place). Carina Young Rock and Joy Young have contributed some artwork to the series (Carina: the introductory art to Volume IV; Joy:

Figures 29.11 and the loon in Northern Bird in Volume V). They collaborated in writing the essay entitled, "Harmony."

Polly's parents have given kind permission for me to reproduce her epitaph (text for Figure 29.11) and the Foreword to the sayings book.

Editors and proofreaders must have patience, and, and I give Joy Young, Carina Young, Victoria Young, Catherine Leek, and Shayna Buhler many thanks. Jessica Chan and Darcy Winkler provided pertinent advice. Don Bastian provided incisive feedback from an editor's perspective that led to improvements in the final draft. Finally, a colleague, Andrew Kane, provided feedback on the essay, "On Psychology," demonstrating his effective writing skills.

Joy Young and Candice Rubinstein undertook the noble effort of struggling through my handwriting to type the manuscript. They had help from Regina Altarkovsky, Jessie Amaral, Melissa Canastraro, Kaitlyn Chambers, Jessica Chan, Joyce Chan, Aline Demerjian, Bonnie Donaldson, Hilary Downes, Paula Druzga, Ilana Gorodezky, Michelle Greisman, Urszula Jasiowka, Natalie Kardasopoulos, Ko Khaira, Vanessa Kissoon-Singh, Simone McMillan, Kathy Raufi, and Darcy Winkler.

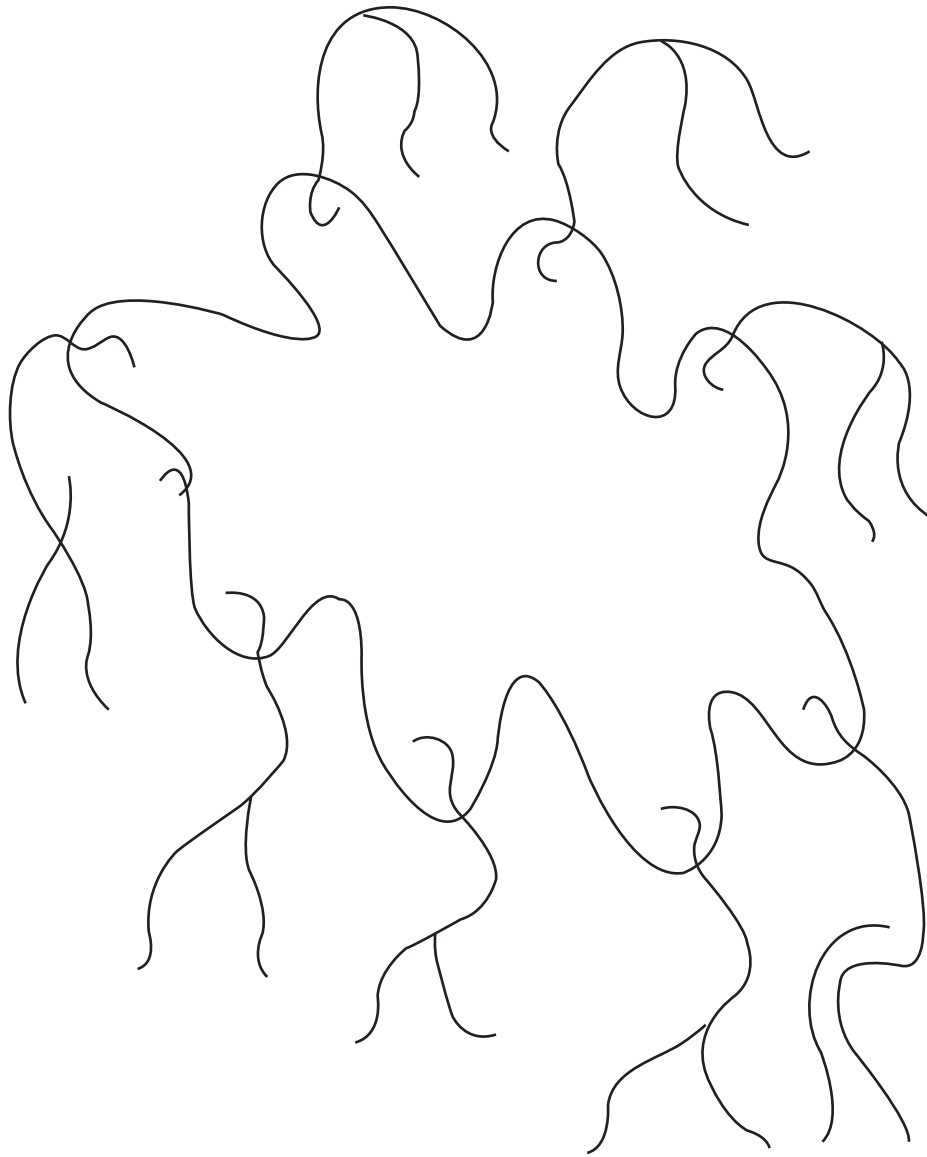
I wish to thank Plenum Publishing Company (now called Springer Science & Business Media) for their kind permission to use full or adapted versions of material from my 1997 book, entitled *Adult Development, Therapy, and Culture: A Postmodern Synthesis*. The material forms the basis of the following figures in this series: E2-2, E2-3, E2-4, 7.5, 18.4, 26.5, 28.10, and 29.9. The poem entitled "A Healing Poem" is repro-

duced from that book, as is the essay "Reflections for Adults in Transition or Crisis." The art piece introducing Volume IV is taken from the cover of the Plenum book. Springer gave kind permission to take excerpts from chapters in my 2006 and 2007 books for the appendix in the book of essays. The first appendix is constituted by an excerpted, condensed version of a chapter by Young and Yehuda (2006). The second appendix is mostly constituted by excerpts from a chapter by Young, Kane, and Nicholson (2007), and by excerpts from an undergraduate BA research thesis by Janice Dias, written under my supervision, and published with permission by the authors. Parts of the essay entitled "Rehabilitation Psychology" are based on an article that I published in 2008 in the Springer journal that I edit, *Psychological Injury and Law*. Springer also gave permission to use material from my book in press for a section of the introductory essay on psychology and for two figures.

Many thanks to Mark Biernacki, LLB, of the law firm Smart and Biggar, for securing copyright and intellectual property rights for the book series and the website.

If you would like to order material related to *Rejoining Joy*, such as the artwork or the photographs, kindly visit www.rejoiningjoy.com.

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October, 2018



Dream Dance

The joy of music, rhythm, and dance invigorates life and provides the best source of destressing. We are connected in the smooth flow of coordinated, undulating bodies and the powerful chant of multitudes singing. Music and dance empower both individual and group. We sing in unison in choirs, or dance together to the trance of drumbeats. Or, we simply absorb the enchanting melodies that we hear at symphonies, at concerts, on the radio, or from our electronic devises. We listen to music as we fall asleep and it carries into the reverie of our dreams. **Music is to life, as life is to life.**

SUGGESTED PROFESSIONAL READINGS

There are many books available for the interested reader. Robert Sapolsky (2004) has written an excellent trade book on the topic of stress. Boenisch and Haney (2004) present a fine book with ways of dealing with stress. In terms of dealing with the psychological trauma after an accident, the reader should consult Hickling and Blanchard (2006). A more academic description of stress can be found in Lehrer, Woolfolk, and Sime (2007). Pain management techniques are described very well in Turk and Winter (2006) and in Thorn (2004). The psychology textbooks that I use to teach my courses at the university have provided me with an excellent fund of knowledge (Arnett; DeHart and colleagues; Wicks-Nelson and Israel). For my own work, the reader is referred to Young (1997), Young (2007), and Young and colleagues (2006, 2007). For those interested in original academic journal articles on stress and distressing, you may consult: *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping; International Journal of Stress Management; Journal of Psychological Trauma; Journal of Traumatic Stress; Work and Stress, Traumatology, Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma, and Psychological Traumas: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy.*

Arnett, J. J. (2007). *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood: A Cultural Approach* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Boenisch, E., & Haney, C. M. (2004). *The Stress Owner's Manual: Meaning, Balance, & Health in Your Life* (2nd Ed.). Atascadero, CA: Impact.

DeHart, G. B., Sroufe, L. A., & Cooper, R. G. (2004). *Child Development: Its Nature and Course* (6th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

Lehrer, P. M., Woolfolk, R. L., & Sime, W. E. (2007). *Principles and Practice of Stress Management* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Hickling, E. J., & Blanchard, E. B. (2006). *Overcoming the Trauma of Your Motor Vehicle Accident: A Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment Program Workbook*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sapolsky, R. M. (2004). *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: Guide to Stress, Stress-Related Disease, and Coping* (3rd ed.). New York: Freeman.

Thorn, B. E. (2004). *Cognitive Therapy for Chronic Pain: A Step-by-Step Guide*. New York: Guilford.

Turk, D. C., & Winter, F. (2006). *The Pain Survival Guide: How to Reclaim Your Life*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Wicks-Nelson, R., & Israel, A. C. (2009). *Behavior Disorders of Childhood*. (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

SUGGESTED SELF-HELP READINGS

In a certain sense, there is no competition for this book series because it is unique in the ways described. In another sense, the other self-help books that are presented below do very well and promise to continue to do well. Given that the present book series is unique compared to them, it is complementary to the others, and reader will find it an excellent addition to their self-help book library. Or, for young people, it could be a great way to start in self-help, learn psychology, or otherwise be inspired, learn, and grow. In the following, we review some recent books on the topic that are somewhat related to the present book series. By comparing them to the present book series, we illustrate not that the present book series is better, but that the field is ripe for another self-help book in psychology having the series positive characteristics, as described in the above.

A. The first group of competitors in the field that I examine consists of workbooks.

1. The first one is by Martha Davis, Elizabeth R. Eshelman, and Matthew Mckay called, *The relaxation & stress reduction workbook*. It follows the traditional model of workbooks, with a lot of text and exercises given throughout the chapters. The workbook in the present book series differs from it by having most of the exercises being one page in length, so that there are hundreds of them in the book. Each of mine has a brief introductory text that can stand alone, is interesting to read, and relates to a major theme in the other book in the series. Then, each introductory text is followed by two questions. Both questions are aimed at having the reader learn how to handle the issue presented in the exercise and feel confident in doing so.
2. The book by Glenn R. Schiraldi, *The post traumatic stress disorder sourcebook*, follows the same model. It covers many common therapeutic techniques to help clients deal with their traumas. It also covers the effects of trauma on many aspects of daily life. The present book series covers the material in Schiraldi, but in a more concise way, allowing coverage of many other topics.
3. The next book is *Mind over mood*, by Dennis Greenberger and Christine A. Padesky. It is a workbook that deals with cognitive-behavioral therapy, for example, for depression. Many of the workbook exercises deal with standard cognitive-behavioral techniques. In comparison, in my book series, although it is based on a cognitive-behavioral approach, it is not strictly on that approach. It is more expansive in how it deals with problems, yet nevertheless it is grounded in the cognitive-behavioral approach.

4. The next book is by Margaret A. Caudill and it is called, *Managing pain before it manages you*. The title shows a similarity with the present approach because a lot of what is done in the present book series is aimed at helping people manage their problems. The Caudill workbook is written in the standard workbook format, with a lot of text and exercises. It includes chapters on communication and problem solving. The comments for this book are similar to those of the others—it is well done but it deals with a limited range of difficulties that people confront after trauma and in their daily lives.
5. The same can be said for the workbook by Martin M. Anthony and Richard P. Swinson, called, *The shyness and social anxiety workbook*. Comparative analysis reveals that most likely at the scientific level, this workbook is the best one. It emphasizes that we are the experts and it intends that we generalize from what we learn so that we can deal with future difficult social situations. Once more, it is noted that the present book series covers a broader range of material, and is complementary to this one.
6. *Mindstorms* is a book written by John W. Cassidy, and it is a guide for families living with traumatic brain injury. It gives suggestions to families and patients, but it is not a workbook, *per se*. The present book series does not focus on traumatic brain injury, but it can

help patients and families dealing with the stress, emotional upset, and effects on daily living that accompany traumatic brain injury.

To conclude, all these workbooks that I have reviewed are complementary to my own, but, given its advantages, mine will gain a fair share of the market and prosper in sales.

B. The second set of competitor books that are examined are not workbooks, but are more general ones, mostly with text, rather than exercises.

1. The first one is by Barbara L. Fredrickson, called, *Positivity*. Positive psychology is a recent, fast-developing field, and Dr. Fredrickson builds on her concept of “broaden and build” to construct a helpful book. In her book, she ends up with suggestions for increasing positivity and flourishing, and offers a helpful toolkit of ideas. She does not have workbook exercises and does not use visuals. Given this contrast, the present book series is different and unique. At the same time, although it is not called a book directly on positive psychology, it is steeped in this approach.
2. The second book is by Stephanie McClellan and Beth Hamilton, who have written a book called, *So stressed*. It explains very well from a scientific basis the negative effects of stress on our body and on our psychology. It develops a stress detox program and indi-

cates how we can build resilience and regain peace of mind. There are a lot of similarities in the present approach in dealing with these matters, although the present book series is medical than them and deal with many more issues than just handling stress. There are also the other differences described in the above that make the present book series special.

3. James Hollis wrote a book on, *What matters most*. In a certain sense, my own book deals with similar issues. He considers love and living fully, wisdom and spirituality, adopting new ways of living, finding meaning, and creating our own paths and journeys. The present book series deals with these topics, as well, as it is not simply just about handling stress and emotions on a momentary level. It is also about living a full life, and it reflects my basic philosophy that life is about responsibility or taking on responsibilities that make sense to us and about continually re-dedicating ourselves to these responsibilities. Our responsibilities might include raising children with love, living with our partners in love, and studying and working with dedication and application.
4. Another book about daily living and change has been written by David Posen, called, *Always change a losing game*. It deals with making the right choices, avoiding traps, strengthening beliefs, and so on. As with these other books reviewed in this section, it consists mostly

text. Not only does the present book series deal with the themes in this book, it also deals with them in the unique ways indicated.

5. Ronald D. Siegel has written a book on the very influential approach of mindfulness, called, *The mindfulness solution*. Mindfulness is a kind of meditation that is simple to use and apply. As explained by Siegel, mindfulness can help deal with anxiety, depression, pain, and stress. Also, the book discusses areas of daily living, such as romance and parenting. Mindfulness can help us break bad habits, change, and grow.

The reader will notice that the present book series deals with all of these, although it does not refer to techniques as mindfulness, *per se*. Rather than teach one technique, the book series offers an array of choices to the reader and they can combine them in ways that are effective for them, while adding to them other coping resources. The approach of the author to psychotherapy and counseling is not about technique. Nor is it about theory. Rather, the present book series is about learning about oneself and growing, on the one hand, and about genuinely meeting the person in context at the individual level, on the other hand.

6. Finally, there are self-help books with catchy titles and contents, such as written by Leil Lowndes, on *How to instantly connect with anyone*. The reader will appreciate that the book series includes

hundreds of sayings in the margins of the text pages, and has gathered them into a book fully dedicated to presenting them. In addition, the present book series has put in bold font hundreds of sentences in the text that are catchy and that are worthy of emphasis. However, the approach of the author in writing these sayings and sentences has been to be educational and instructional,

and not only wise, humorous, inspiring, and realistic. Dr. Young wants the reader to remember and act on the sayings. However, more important, he would especially like the reader to remember specific behavioral and cognitive techniques and other strategies that have proven through psychological and scientific bases to lead to constructive change in the ways of living.

CONCLUSION

Readers should note that the book series may not apply fully to them. Some parts might strike home, while others may be too advanced or may not address personal situations. On the other hand, readers may find that some parts have raised points that they have avoided. A good response would be to say to oneself, "I didn't realize that this book series could help me with this situation. I will keep going in my reading to help me with it."

Throughout the book series, I use some humour, irony, and other means of inducing smiles or laughter. When clients first enter my office, the use of humour is not appropriate. However, humour can help as sessions proceed, as long as it is used sensitively for helping clients move forward.

Note that in this series, I have protected the confidentiality of my clients. In this regard, at the few points when I do refer to particular clients or case studies, their background characteristics, situations, and issues have been altered in order to protect their anonymity.

In summary, I have written a self-help book series with unique features. There are eight books in the series, and the total pages across the books that are available to the reader number almost 2,000 pages. The book series should be appealing to the general reader, as well as mental health professionals and their patients. It will have a long shelf life, so readers should keep it on their reading list for years to come, and consult the full series, available at

www.rejoiningjoy.com. We look forward to your feedback.

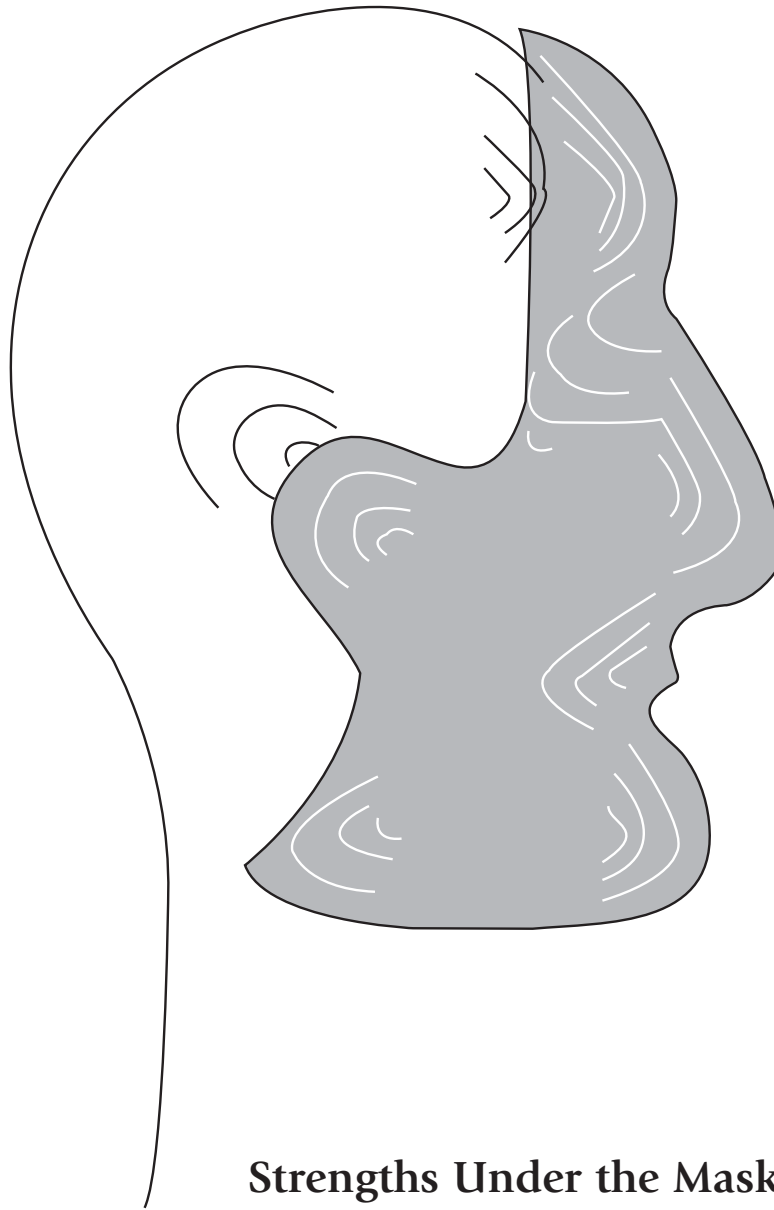
From Science to Practice and from Practice to Science

[Summary of an article published in the *Trauma Division Newsletter* of the American Psychological Association, 2009]

Evidence-based practice concerns application of sound scientific empirical investigation of psychological interventions to the treatment of patients. Moreover, it includes the capacity to engage in critical thinking, using scientific principles, in analyzing the quality of the research and in applying it to the patient being treated. Evidence-based practice adjusts to the wide individual variations in the population and the limits of the research.

Ideally, psychotherapy is a dynamic encounter of the therapist and patient, as they strive together to establish pathways to empowerment and improvement in the patient. Psychologists are trained in according to schools of thought, but often prefer eclectic and individualized approaches. We treat people for their symptoms rather than treating them for how they fit into schools of thought and learned techniques.

For a scientifically informed approach to psychotherapy published in the journal, see: Young, G. (2008). Psychotherapy for psychological injury: A biopsychosocial and forensic perspective. *Psychological Injury and Law*, 1 (4), 287-310. (www.asapil.org)



Strengths Under the Mask

Each of us has a unique set of core strengths that make us special. Each of us has weaknesses that can be improved by self-exploration, social support, and good advice. What others see in us is not a measure of what we know to be true of ourselves. At the same time, we may be confused about who we are, what are our strengths and virtues, and where we want to go and grow. **When times are difficult, we need to know that we have positive psychological anchors that can help us stabilize, preparing constructive change.** These can be found by being vigilant to our depths. By seeking inside, we will find constructive paths to the outside. By taking constructive paths on the outside, our inside anchors will grow.

VOLUME VI — INTRODUCTION TO THE BEST OF REJOINING JOY

The goals of “Rejoining Joy” and of “Destressing” tap fundamental properties that are part of our human heritage, but often the means of arriving at these goals are difficult to find and, therefore, the goals remain difficult to achieve. In this book, on the topic of rejoining joy and destressing, I present the best of the material in the book series.

Why this book series is unique and compelling

FIRST. This book series is about our capacity to destress, help ourselves heal, rejoin joy, grow, and live our daily life in harmony. It has a unique format. The three middle books in the book series are built around about 500 therapeutic visual figures that I have constructed in session with clients. There is an associated brief text that was written for each figure. Therefore, each figure-text combination can stand alone. I have put them in a certain order, according to chapter themes, but they do not have to be read in order. The book of essays are in standard format; some are meant to educate/teach and others to inspire/motivate. The art consists of my line drawings, done simply and on relaxing themes. There are relaxing nature photos, as well. I made recordings of my relaxation discourses with clients right in session, and a CD is being made. In these regards, the book series is multi-

media in the service of helping the reader deal with stress and regain joy. Finally, I have written a workbook of exercises to accompany the three books of therapeutic visualizations. These exercises have their own introductions, so the workbook can be read by itself, without reference to the other books.

To summarize, this book series is built on format innovations, especially in its use of therapeutic visualizations. These innovations help highlight the book series’ message that we can learn destressing techniques that help us deal effectively with stress, rejoin joy, and grow psychologically.

SECOND. This book series includes many motivational, educational, relaxation, or healing sayings. Generally, these sayings are short sentences having meaning, humor, or reflection-inducing qualities. I have written about 2,000 of these sayings and have placed them in the margins. Also, in the books, I have bolded one sentence for the text of each figure that has these properties (motivation, education, destressing, healing, etc.). Therefore, every page of the books has material that can stand alone as items for reflection, either placed in the margins or embedded in the text paragraphs. The essay book and art book also have some text and sayings. Overall, my approach is to have multiple pathways to help in healing and in Rejoining Joy. The reader will

find different modalities and a continuous stream of short written clips, visual images, and so on, meant to inspire and motivate.

To summarize, this book series includes an easy-to-grasp writing style, with short text written for each of the many therapeutic figures and with sayings placed in the margins. The sayings helping to motivate, educate, relax, and heal, thereby facilitating destressing and Rejoining Joy. The essay portion of the book series consists of many smaller ones, which helps in the reading.

THIRD. The book series is aimed at helping people deal with and overcome stress, whether in terms of major trauma or the daily hassles of life. In this sense, it is attractive to many readers, and can help improve quality of destressing, of mood, and of daily functioning across a range of domains. It teaches techniques in simple ways, from the cognitive-behavioral perspective. At the same time, it reflects wider narrative and systems perspectives aimed at increasing the quality of the stories that we tell ourselves as we confront stress and the problems of daily living. The book series consists of many pages, but its message of having hope, and of learning how to improve one's quality of life, stands out on most every page.

To summarize, a lot of what we do in our daily lives reflect bad habits that we have learned or the lack of knowledge of how to create good habits. This book educates and inspires along these lines, so readers can take charge of their lives. They can learn how to be who

they want to become and learn how to integrate in where they want to belong.

FOURTH. For the most part, I have tried to keep the writing in the books simple and the techniques that I use in my therapy simple. The book series took 15 years to write because it involves about 500 diagrams made with clients in session, aside from the text for the diagrams and other essays that were written. It is a product of my meeting with people in distress so that they can emerge with renewed hope and happiness, confident that they have new tools, new habits, and a new future. Good psychotherapy is not mysterious, because often it uses many of the common psychological procedures that we all use. However, psychologists know how to package them systematically according to contemporary theory, and we know how to teach them well.

To summarize, I have worked to come up with usable and practical techniques and ways of improving oneself and one's relationship with others. I have written motivational and inspirational material that facilitates change from within, self-growth, tranquility, presence of being, and full participation in life.

FIFTH. The second book in the series present essays, and these are mostly educational, although some are reflective, motivational, or inspirational. The first two essays are the most important. They set the scientific stage for the book series. The first essay explains psychology from the perspective of the book series. It introduces critical

concepts and key models in psychology. It defines many terms that appear in the ensuing books. Rather than having a glossary of terms after each chapter in the remaining books, I included these terms in the essays. This helps avoid cumbersome footnotes and endnotes, too. The essay on psychotherapy is critical to the book. It is based on an article that I wrote for the journal *Psychological Injury and Law* in 2008. It is based on 10 areas at which psychotherapy should be targeted in the individual, aside from the possible need for family therapy and other interventions. The second portion of the essays includes ones on a model of development that I presented in a 1997 book that I wrote. This model emphasizes a cognitive developmental model of five stages in development over the lifespan, and it presents affective stages in development acquired in coordination with them.

SIXTH. The sixth book in the series presents my line drawings and, generally, they are relaxing. Many of the drawings have a nature, environmental, or “green” theme. For the first chapter in the book, I added short paragraphs for each drawing. They underscore our connection with nature, and the vulnerability of the planet, animals, and plants, and the need for us to protect them. An additional message of the drawings is that art is easy to do, and any one at any age can do it. The drawings are simple, and often consist of one continuous line. I emphasized movement, as well, for example in drawings of dancing flowers and dancing people.

Some of the art is motivational, inspirational, or spiritual, such as some of those drawn on a visit to the holy land.

SEVENTH. The exercise workbook that I have written to accompany the book series on *Rejoining Joy* is particularly unique. Due to the self-explanatory introductions that accompany each exercise in the workbook it can be read in conjunction with the other books in the book series or it can be read by itself. The exercises in the workbook are meant to be educational and motivational. Often, readers are asked to list their positive attributes or psychological strengths, how they can become more positive, or how they have handled well, or can handle better, a negative among their psychological characteristics and strengths.

To summarize, the book of workbook exercises that I have written present a useful summary of the main points of the book series through the introductory paragraphs preceding each exercise. The items that follow the introductory comments are written in a way to be motivational, and the reader can look forward to being both educated and inspired by this book.



Vigor

**Saying on wall of
self improvement:
Vigor needs rigor.**

The Best of Rejoining Joy and Destressing

Excerpts

VOLUME I — Essays, Introduction

Stress is constantly present in our lives, because there are always, at least, *a*) minor daily hassles that are stressful, *b*) past situations that have been stressful and have left sequelae, or *c*) anticipation that future events will be stressful. Thus, it is important to develop a positive attitude to get us through rough times. A positive attitude consists of both little and big components. Grand wishes or magnificent dreams can pull us through the roughest of times, but this may not be enough. Small positive efforts, ideas, and approaches are needed to pave the way, as well, and they add up. For example, when we need help, a positive nod, a smile, a laugh, and kind words offered by an acquaintance can help. Or, when others need help, support offered by ourselves can help. These efforts act to moderate stress, to put it in perspective, and to open different avenues. That is, when we are determined to maintain a positive attitude despite stress and to maintain basic civility and decency in our dealings with people despite stress, we may break a vicious circle that stress could induce, and, instead, we may end up creating a better mood for all concerned. Small things also consist of using learned ways of destressing, such as breathing techniques, visualization, meditation, and muscle relaxation exercises.

We have two sides to us as we face the stresses around us, even though we may not acknowledge it. We all know that we have the side that feels overwhelmed but, at the same time, we should recognize that, even if it is just a

small part of us in the beginning, there is a side that is trying to cope, to organize our resources, and to resolve the problems or situations that confront us. This side is helping us in determining options, seeking solutions, and calculating possible outcomes. We all have a resilient side. Perhaps in moments of difficult stress, that side may be buried and seem lost or incapable of functioning, but it is still there. We have to work to uncover it and bring it back to the surface. **No matter in what situation we find ourselves, the resilient side may be the core kernel of our response to stress and we must keep seeking it.** That is, in each of us, no matter how dark it seems, there is not simply an attitude of resignation to stress but, also, an attitude of hope for recovery. Moreover, as we confront stress, we should always hope to learn from it, if we find ourselves in situations where we cannot master it.

We can come to tip the balance toward the positive, recovery side of our reaction to stress. We can even learn to deal effectively with stress before it arrives in our lives, through appropriate daily stress-reduction exercises and through appropriate daily actions and attitudes aimed at enhancing the quality of life. **Just as our body has an immune system, so does our mind.** Moreover, the number one antibody in this drama between the “bad guy” (stress) and the “good guy” (resilience) is our self, or our will (wanting to beat or accommodate to stress). We are our own psychological antibody.

Bad habits are not born in us. They are created in us by circumstance and by things that happen to us—they are learned. Thus, they can be unlearned. Moreover, we are the best teacher for unlearning our bad habits. We did not choose to have bad habits. They appeared because of things outside of us. But we can choose to replace them. A good way of doing this is by creating good habits that take their place and lead us to better outcomes.

Our core self is still there even when bad habits are present. It may be hidden by the stresses that caused them, and the bad habits that resulted. There is no reason why we cannot be victorious in our battle with stress. Note that by victory, I do not necessarily mean that there is a war against stress and bad habits, and they have to be eradicated. Victory also means learning to control stress and bad habits, learning to co-exist with them, learning to live with them, and learning to live well despite them and be oneself. This is the best victory possible, because it means that when the next stress and bad habit comes along, we will be better able to handle the situation.

Often, I ask clients to recall some pleasant scenes of childhood, the laughter they once knew. Children display not only laughter and smiling when they are having fun but, also, open their mouth wide as if to laugh, such as during rough and tumble play. The function of childhood is to play. Each of us can recall such scenes of total engrossment in the moment. A good suggestion is to share memories of your childhood while on a walk in the park with a friend. Is the vegetation as verdant

as that of the neighbourhood park of your childhood? Do you see the rich colouring and delicate shapes of the flowers? Do you hear the wondrous array of vibrant songs of the park birds? Can you feel the soft, caressing breeze of the day? Can you smell with deep breaths the fragrant scents of the roses? Do you notice the busy flight of foraging honeybees? Do you spy the refined webs of the master weavers, the orb spiders?

There are natural highs that we can experience that are unforgettable. Moreover, our brain is equipped with natural pleasure centers, biochemicals that bring pleasure, and drug-free pain-killing molecules. Our body is not only a temple deserving respect but, also, it is a bank of biological wisdom filled with products of millions of years of evolution that cannot be obtained either over or under the counter.

An inner calm allows us to remain focused and determined, and brings other rewards. By seeking out our natural inner calm in natural ways, daily living becomes more enjoyable. For example, instead of having an easily activated chip on our shoulder, more likely, a sense of peace and contentment imbues us when we have this attitude. Additionally, this kind of peaceful attitude is attractive to others, at least when compared to an attitude having aggressive elements. People are more likely to gravitate to and favour an individual who is calm and wholly present. The attraction felt by people toward such calm individuals inevitably creates opportunities for them, leading to both personal and work satisfaction. In this way, an attitude of being calm is self-reinforcing, bringing calming and bene-

ficial experiences to its practitioner. Calm begets calm, and brings advantages.

Some people deal with stress better than others; they show a calmer attitude, keep their smile, and remain communicative. Partly, they perceive stress differently than others and, partly, they can channel it better. But, also, they have learned that no matter what attitude they adopt, whether positive or negative, the stress is the same. Thus, they have learned that when they are stressed, given the choice between being more negative or more positive, there are benefits in being more positive. It becomes easier for them to think clearly and to get the help of other people. In the end, because they have a more positive attitude when confronted by stress, compared to other people they clear up the source of the stress earlier and easier.

This book series has been influenced by another book that I wrote, entitled, *Adult Development, Therapy, and Culture: A Postmodern Synthesis* (1997). That book suggested that human psychology is a continual, ever-changing growth process throughout the lifespan from birth through the elderly period. Thus, the book presents a psychology of hope, change, and adaptation. Therefore, following this tradition, in their therapy, clients and I work together to learn to tell more positive stories about their stress and how they can handle it. For example, I work together with clients to find in the stories that they tell to themselves about themselves even some minor positive signs. As sessions proceed, a new story is built around clients' increasing coping skills, problem solving, and psychological growth. At the heart of each of us are positive qualities, but,

because of stress, bad habits are generated that may encircle us and overwhelm our coping mechanisms and resources. However, with appropriate social support (including from mental health professionals, if necessary) and our own inner resources, we can begin to develop alternate and better ways of behaving, allowing us to move forward to control our stress and any bad habits that it had caused us to develop.

I have labelled this type of therapy "transition" therapy, because, no matter what our age, we are all capable of learning to tell more constructive stories to ourselves about ourselves and, thus, growing psychologically. Clients should not consider therapists to be problem solvers and mood changers. Rather, therapists should be thought of as facilitators of one's own abilities to solve problems and change moods. **Each of us has an unending growth potential waiting to be activated.** The therapist's role is to get the ball rolling, and the best way to do this is to get clients to roll the ball themselves.

In the following book of essays, we explore further the topics of psychology, stress, destressing, and Rejoining Joy. The first part of the essays consists of 10 sections on fundamental concepts in psychology, often providing definitions. I add, in particular, an essay on rehabilitation, also in 10 sections. The second part consists of a collection of short works dealing with various topics that can help accomplish these objectives. Also, they present a 25-step model of development and its implications, first described in my 1997 book. Key themes in these essays relate to our growth imperative and our sense of responsibility.

ESSAY

On Psychology, Therapy, and the Multiple Determinants of Behavior

Fundamentals in Psychology

P psychology is a fascinating discipline that we think we know well by virtue of constantly encountering situations in our daily lives that we believe require psychological acumen. However, it is important to realize that, beyond our personal knowledge of the psychology, it is a complex field of inquiry that is carefully studied scientifically. Because psychology is embedded in the scientific perspective, it seeks relevant theory, knowledge of core behavioral and brain processes, and advances in therapy through empirical research, or investigations producing data.

Psychologists trained to help people with their psychological difficulties are called clinical or practicing psychologists. A major focus of clinical psychology is on stress, in terms of explaining stress to clients, instructing them on stress management, or destressing, and facilitating recovery from the effects of stress. In order to better understand psychology, I review these topics and others, such as science, psychopathology, the biopsychosocial model, cognitive-behavioral therapy, pain, the brain,

emotions, coping, rehabilitation, motivation, assessment, forensics, and causality. For a more specific introduction to psychology, and the many terms and concepts in the field, the reader should consult an introductory textbook of psychology.

PSYCHOLOGY. Psychology is defined as the study of behavior, and it seeks to describe behavior as well as understand its origins, mechanisms, determinants, or explanation. Psychology is part of the social sciences, which also includes sociology, anthropology, and the like. Typically, social sciences are considered soft sciences compared to hard sciences such as the natural sciences, medicine, and engineering. But this does not make psychology any less scientific; it is just that it is harder to study with controlled experiments given the complexity of human behavior, so that there are less established or well-accepted facts in the field. Despite the difficulty in studying psychology scientifically, there are thousands of psychological investigations undertaken each year.

Through its experimental side, psychology is based on carefully developed theories, models, approaches, concepts, hypotheses, and definitions. In its scientific investigations, it uses rigorous research methods, and each study emerges with empirical data (concerning numbers). The psychologist applies descriptive and experimental statistics; the latter describe the data in terms of averages, norms, and the like, whereas the former tests for significant differences, e.g., is the average for one group significantly different than that of another, taking into account the variations of the data in each group around the average. Once the researcher obtains the data of interest, e.g., do boys and girls differ on a measure of verbal skill or a measure of mathematical skill, the researcher submits the write-up for publication.

Behavior seems just a response to the environment, until we think about it.

The best journals use peer-review (i.e., publication follows acceptance of the article after several drafts responding to criticisms and suggestions, given in blind review by other researchers).

Psychology undertakes research on basic, core human processes, such as attention, memory, learning, development, personality, tests and measurements, psychopathology, or abnormal psychology, and brain-behavior relationships. This research provides the foundation of knowledge on basic human psychological functions and their capacity for change and adaptation, which is important to know in order to help individuals in need of psychological services.

Through its practical side, psychologists help a wide variety of individuals. Psychologists apply standard models of

assessment, testing, and therapy in order to help individuals of all ages with many different types of difficulties. For example, psychologists work with young mothers experiencing postpartum depression, children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or Learning Disorder, teenagers trying to find themselves, or establish their identities, young adults in need of career counseling, men in midlife transition, the elderly feeling lonely, prison inmates needing management, businesses requiring organizational restructuring, marketing agencies needing to know consumer preferences, and insurance companies requiring evaluation of disability.

Psychological research and practice are becoming increasingly positive, in the sense of seeking how to prevent psychopathology and promote wellness. We are exploring healthy lifestyles, and factors that facilitate them or, if psychological treatment is needed, we are emphasizing coping, solution-focussed therapy, resilience, enablement, and so on.

Although treating psychologists use innovation in their work with clients and use individualized, or eclectic procedures, we do so from the framework of established theory and treatment modalities. We value applied research to help us in dealing with clients in assessment and in therapy. We use assessment procedures well-supported by scientific research, and use psychological treatments shown to be appropriate for clients' conditions. Cognitive behavioral therapy is the treatment of choice for many conditions. Ethically, psychologists

should offer the best evidence-based therapeutic procedures to their clients, and need to keep up with the literature.

PRACTICE. Practicing psychologists are called clinical psychologists, and there are specialists such as neuropsychologists, rehabilitation psychologists, family and couple psychologists, child psychologists, industrial/occupational psychologists, forensic psychologists, and so on, each with defined areas of professional competence. Psychologists may work in multi- or interdisciplinary teams. Psychologists formulate treatment plans for their proposed psychological treatments. Treatments are also called interventions, therapy, counseling, and so on. They may reflect broad theoretical approaches, models, or schools, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, or they may refer to specific techniques or procedures, such as deep breathing techniques to control panic attacks or visualization of pleasant scenes to counter fears. Psychologists may use therapeutic aids, such as complex biofeedback equipment to monitor heart rate, or simpler pamphlets, workbooks, or self-help books distributed to clients. Psychopharmacological treatment may take place in conjunction with psychological treatment, e.g., when clients are receiving anti-depressants. Psychologists do not begin to treat clients before obtaining voluntary and freely given informed consent, e.g., where the risks and benefits are explained. They assure clients about confidentiality, or keeping information private, while specifying any limits that may apply in this area, e.g., if a client represents an immediate real danger to her/himself or to another.

Medical doctors see “patients,” and psychologists and other mental health professionals see “patients,” as well. However, in some psychological traditions, psychologists avoid using the term “patient,” because its use reflects a power imbalance, potentially creating an attitude in the psychologist that renders passive the individual needing treatment. Also, the term “patient” speaks to the medical model, which seeks biological explanations for disease, in contrast to psychologists who seek multi-causal explanations for disorders. Clients are also called customers, consumers, complainants, and claimants, depending on the context, or may be referred to as individuals in assessment or in treatment.

Psychologists are regulated professionals, who have passed stringent examination and other requirements, getting extra supervision and internships after graduation, in order to be licensed by governmental boards. They mostly have doctorates, Ph.D.s or Psy.D.s, rather than having M.D.s like psychiatrists. Psychologists engage in “talk” therapy, but only after an assessment that may include the use of psychological instruments, for which we specialize in our education. Psychiatrists are medical doctors who complete a residency in psychiatry after getting a general medical degree. Like all doctors, they prescribe medicines as possible cures, although they are also trained in certain models of talk therapy. A psychotherapist may be an unregulated mental health professional without the necessary qualifications to be registered, who nevertheless engages in treatment, or a psychology graduate who has not continued to be supervised and licensed, or a medical

practitioner who would rather do counseling than regular medicine. Mental health professionals include not only psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychotherapists, but also social workers, guidance counselors, some rehabilitation professionals, and so on.

SCIENCE. Psychologists are trained to be objective rather than subjective; i.e., we are trained to base our assessments, diagnoses, and treatment plans on comprehensive data gathering, observable data, scientific evidence, and the like, rather than only on client report in interview, our intuitions, and so on. Also, we are trained to avoid the use of psychological instruments that do not stand up to scientific scrutiny, and recent fads in psychotherapy that have not been objectively verified by scientific investigation, as part of the rigorous scientific training that we receive.

Clients report to us their subjective feelings, their pain experiences, and so forth. We may ask them to give an account of their feelings, pain, etc., in terms of a 10-point scale. For example, we may ask, "On a scale of 1–10, how much psychological distress are you experiencing at the present moment?" Or we may ask them to fill in self-report questionnaires about their symptoms, where the answers are given on 5-point or similar scales, e.g., from always absent to always present. So we attempt to transform their reports of their subjective feelings and bodily symptoms into objective data with which we can work. Because there is still the subjective impression of the clients underlying these numerical values, we also include in our questionnaires that are given to

clients measures of response bias, such as symptom exaggeration or minimization. Even with other psychological instruments that are apparently more objective, such as intelligence tests with their intelligent quotients (IQ), where the average score for the population may be set at 100, the apparent objectivity of the numbers may also reflect subjective factors. For example, with respect to IQ, results may be affected by response biases and other confounding factors, such as test taker fatigue, poor motivation, being influenced by examiner race, and so on. Psychologists may use physiological measures, which may appear to be more objective, such as heart rate and brain activity in scans. However, even with the most objective measures in psychology, one is never truly free of subjective factors.

This underscores the need for psychologists to proceed with caution in working with any individual, in using any instrument or measurement, and in applying any therapeutic technique. The psychologist must always work from a scientific perspective in all aspects of her or his work.

CHANGE, SELF-HELP, AND THERAPY. Individuals in unmanageable distress seek help. They attempt to redress disequilibrium set into their psychological fabric. Psychological disequilibrium may be occasioned by psychological conflicts developed in the past, upset brought out by a new stressor in the present, or experiencing distress at prospects for the future. Mental health professionals are consulted, or referrals are made, and psychotherapy begins after a comprehensive assessment.

Reading a self-help book is another way of dealing with psychological difficulties. We all change as we grow through the lifespan, but sometimes we are stuck, or even fall backwards in our growth. Self-help books may help readers who feel stuck in their general developmental growth. Furthermore, at any one moment we may feel that we are doing fine, but

we want to change some bad habits for better ones. Self-help books may also help those readers who want to change at this simpler level. However, change does not happen just by reading about psychology. We need to want to change, or get good social support or professional advice that would help lead us to that transition point.



V

Coping and Therapy

R**EHABILITATION.** Rehabilitation psychology concerns helping individuals who are experiencing chronic conditions to optimize their psychological health and functional activity. Rehabilitation psychologists typically work as part of interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary teams, often from the beginning of the hospital stay, should this be involved. Rehabilitation typically refers to helping individuals with illness or injury deal with the impact, which can be devastating. They experience varying degrees of pain and of mental anguish, such as anxiety, depression, adjustment difficulties, and posttraumatic stress. They may develop headaches, sleep difficulties, multiple somatic complaints, problems with substance abuse, etc. As the time course since onset unfolds, vicious cycles propagate, especially if there is concomitant job loss, family stress, inability to work, financial stress, and so on. The pain experience and the stress experience interact, exacerbating each other, so that pain and distress are maintained and even worsen, lasting well beyond what

may be expected in cases without such co-occurrences, or comorbidity. In the acute phase after an injury, for example, stress may facilitate the eventual development of Chronic Pain Disorder, which is a persistent, pervasive pain experience that comes to dominate client lives.

Therefore, stress management is a fundamental priority in rehabilitation, to help clients control the worsening effects of stress, and control any exacerbation of the psychological effects of illness and injury. The psychologist needs to help clients come to terms with any permanent impairments, disorders, disabilities, or losses, if these are at issue, and to facilitate the use of assisted devices/environmental accommodations needed for them, which often means working with interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary teams on the case. Rehabilitation psychology, therefore treats the whole person, and facilitates an integrated recovery by structuring an optimal quality of life as best as possible.

Psychological impairments are lacks, losses, derangements, abnormalities, deficits, or deviations in a psychological

structure or function. A psychological disability is an inability to meet important daily functions, such as working or raising children, due to psychological impairments. Invariably, a psychological disability concerns the relationship of one's array of impairments with one's contextual demands, and the limitations and restrictions imparted by the impairments. A handicap may be either a negative self-perception, or a negative perception by another related to one's impairments or disabilities, which is difficult to deal with.

Note that a disorder usually relates to a psychological diagnosis or label listed in a professional classification manual such as the DSM IV-TR (Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders, Text Revision, 2000, American Psychiatric Association) or the ICD 10 (International Classification of Diseases, 1992, World Health Organization), and each entry is comprised of a list of symptoms that must meet specified thresholds of clinical significance for the diagnosis to apply. However, in and of themselves, a diagnosis of a disorder does not automatically imply a disability; for example, a banker with a fear of heights may still be able to work, unlike a construction worker with the same disorder, or a nurse with a mild traumatic brain injury may not be able to work, unlike a factory worker with the same condition.

Psychologists must deal with the after-effects of events such as trauma and accidents, and undertake a comprehensive assessment of an individual's symptoms, impairments, disorders, diag-

noses, disabilities, and handicaps, in order to arrive at an appropriate treatment plan, assuming that there are no complicating factors such as conscious malingering for monetary gain. Psychologists implement treatment plans using psychotherapeutic procedures consistent with their education, training, and professional experience, such as using cognitive behavioral therapy.

COPING. Good stress management is cardinal for good mental health. Stress management refers not only to appropriate use of our internal coping resources, but also to appropriate recruitment of external sources of support. It refers not only to passively absorbing well the impact of stressors, but also to actively increasing our coping skills, widening our social supports, knowing what resources in the community are available, and so on. Coping is not just about meeting and moderating stress, it is also about circumventing and preventing it. It involves specific distressing skills, such as breathing techniques and visualization, but also higher-level skills, such as effective social skills and effective problem solving skills. Coping may involve reduction of the negative around us, but it should also involve an increase in the positive, ensuring that we get distraction and relaxation time. The shorter that stress dominates us, the less deleterious its effects.

There are two major modes of coping, emotion-focussed and problem solving. The latter is considered an optimal coping technique because, by problem

*Hoping is the
start of coping.
Acting is the end.*

solving, the source of the stress is addressed. For the most part, the former concerns either a passive resignation or an overemotional reactivity. Emotion coping often is criticized for being too passive or reactive, less skilful, and more damaging to the other or the self. But, at the same time, I would add that emotions are integral to the coping process. Emotions give us messages about how our adaptation to the environment is proceeding, and they inform others about how we feel about our adaptation. Moreover, problem solving cannot take place without the impetus of emotions. Social skills are intimately emotional. Thinking and emotions go hand in hand and, in fact, are not really separate aspects of mental or behavioral activity. We separate them to simplify our own reflection about them, but this leads to the false premise that they are separate processes, and conjoin at times but not at other times. To conclude, emotion-focussed coping most often is ineffective, but this does not mean that emotions are not integral to coping, and should be excluded in better managing stress.

COGNITIVE-BEHAVIORAL THERAPY.

The predominant psychotherapeutic approach used by psychologists is cognitive-behavioral. The psychologist attempts to alter distortions in cognitive schemas or structure, and to provide behavioral techniques to help eliminate maladaptive behavior. This may be difficult to accomplish, because cognitions provide a filter or focus through which experience is analyzed and synthesized. They feed forward, (a)

eliminating behavior inconsistent with their framework, (b) channelling behavior consistent with it, and (c) canalizing the behavior of other people towards behavior that confirms their validity. For example, if we believe that people are not trustworthy, we perceive all people this way, and those who manifest trustworthy behavior are analyzed for hidden motives. Also, we may behave in such a manner that encourages other people to suspect that we are not trustworthy, setting in motion a dynamic where our worst fears may become justified, in a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Individuals enter counseling with such maladaptive cognitions. In general, such cognitions relate to (a) issues of control, with self-control or self-regulation being either excessive or not enough, or control by others perceived as being either excessive or not enough, and (b) issues of warmth in relationships with others, e.g., someone being too cold with us, or even abusive, or ourselves seeking better ways of finding a caring relationship. In successful outcomes, emotional difficulties and distress are reduced as the individual acquires more adaptive cognitive schemas and, consequently, better coping skills and good habits.

Some cognitive techniques concern learning positive self-talk statements, seeking evidence for and therefore refuting maladaptive cognitions, analyzing underlying cognitions the moment one experiences them in chart keeping, and learning to reframe maladaptive cognitions. Clients learn to analyze their maladaptive cognitions, and to

replace them. Specific examples of maladaptive cognition include catastrophizing, or thinking the worst, all or none thinking, perfectionism, overgeneralization, having irrational or poorly supported thoughts that persist, and attributing good things that happen to us to events or people outside of our control (“I passed the exam because it was easy”; high external locus of control), and bad things that happen to us to ourselves (“I failed because I’m dumb”; low internal locus of control).

Some behavioral techniques concern learning: progressive muscle relaxation therapy, visualizations to relax, problem solving skills, applying appropriate reinforcement contingencies, teaching parents or partners better behavioral management techniques, meditation [single-object focussing while in a relaxed state], and systematic desensitization to reduce fears [where relaxation techniques are coupled with imagining feared scenes, from the least to the most fearful in a fear hierarchy]. Individuals also can learn communication and social skills, when to be assertive, anger management, etc.

CONCLUSIONS. Surveys of the scientific research comparing different therapies consistently support the cognitive behavioral approach. However, it is no panacea, i.e., it does not solve all difficulties for all clients. Moreover, although it is supported by the scientific research, the danger is that it is used as a technique without considering the individual needing therapy.

Children learn by instruction and by imitating those who have learned.

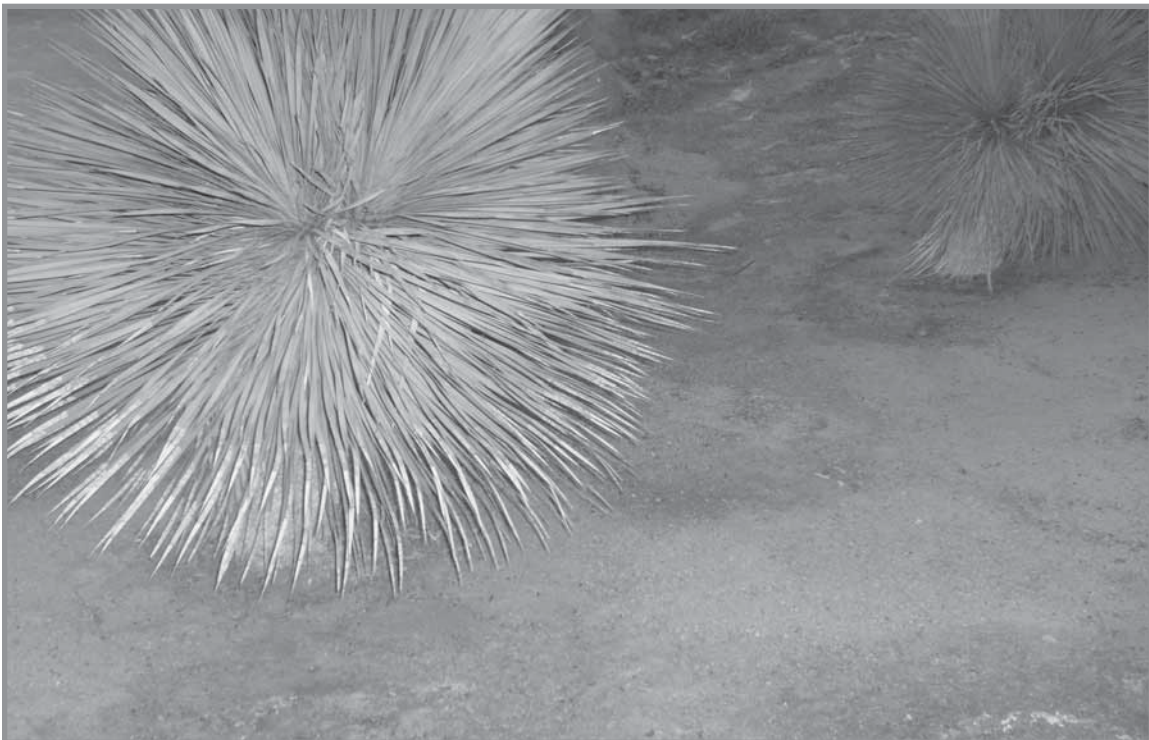
That is, it could be followed too strictly according to manuals, resulting in the loss of therapeutic flexibility. Moreover, other schools of thought of psychological treatment have evolved which emphasize interpersonal, relational, attachment, and other forms of treatment. Moreover, the roots of behavioral therapy lie in the psychological model of behaviorism, which refutes the concept of mind and anything associated with the mental, such as cognition. Finally, research shows that creating rapport is an important component of any therapy, and cognitive behavioral therapy will not have much effect without this component of the therapeutic process. Nevertheless, cognitive behavioral therapy is the treatment of choice for many individuals and many conditions that psychologists encounter in their practice. However, in choosing an appropriate treatment for a client, not all psychologists uniformly adhere to a strict, evidence-based practice, as they may maintain that they consider the particular needs or values of a client, their own clinical opinions, and so on.

This being said, psychologists need to be wary of new fads in psychological therapy, but sometimes when new therapies appear they seem very innovative and powerful. There is a temptation to use them not just in a prudent, preliminary way before all the research is in, but across the board for many clients. For example, when it was first introduced, facilitated communication was considered a major way of getting autistic

individuals to communicate their inner thoughts and feelings. The facilitator would hold their hand over a device which permitted them to spell out their ideas, and some autistic individuals seemed to have an intelligence quite above what had been previously found by conventional means. Moreover, some of the statements purportedly made by the autistic individuals involved allegations of abuse and the like. Careful scientific study, e.g., by blocking sight of the communication device by the facilitator, showed that the autistic individuals had not really communicated in an improved manner. The conclusion was that the facilitators were the ones who were producing the ideas, for their own reasons. When it comes to innovation in therapy, it is best to build on existing therapies, to apply them in individual ways to clients, to integrate

different accepted therapies in an eclectic manner for clients according to their needs and, in general, to find the right individualized match out of available therapies for clients.

As for myself, I refer to the therapy that I use as transitional therapy, because we are always growing psychologically, unless there are factors blocking that growth potential. This approach is systemic, narrative, developmental, and so on, but at the same time incorporates standard cognitive behavioral techniques. Keep in mind that psychological treatment works when clients are ready for it, that is half the battle. It facilitates compliance with treatment, insight or awareness, undertaking psychotherapeutic “homework,” and so on. Transition therapy accentuates the capacity of change in all of us, no matter what our developmental level, age, or stage.



The Best of
Rejoining Joy
and Destressing

Excerpts

VOLUME II — Destressing, Introduction

Each stressful experience need not be an overpowering or overwhelming one, but could be an occasion to learn how to deal better with stress. We can be preventative in our confrontation with stress, and do things beforehand as part of our everyday routine to help us deal better with it. The techniques described in this book are easy to learn and master. They can help us get through many stressful situations that we may face in our lives. We all have grown up with stress throughout our lives, and many times we have dealt with it effectively. For many typical stresses that we encounter in our daily lives, we have developed basic problem-solving skills, have basic coping mechanisms, and know people to turn to for help (family, friends, or other supports in the community). Often, we have dealt with daily stresses successfully and we go on with our lives.

At other times, these stresses are too much for us to handle or, at least, they seem that way to us. Or, a stress comes along that feels like it is the last straw on the camel's back. It can send us over the edge and we lose control. We become anxious, depressed, irritable, and fearful. Our thoughts become full of negative ideas, become pessimistic, and turn catastrophic, as we think the worst. Our bodies tremble and shake, our hearts beat faster, and our breathing gets out of kilter or becomes laboured. We do not know what to do. The stresses build, vicious circles develop, and our world seems like it is falling apart. In moments

like these, it is normal to forget that in the past we have dealt positively with stresses, have adapted, and we can do so again.

Sometimes, stress is of our own making, and not from the outside. Ulcers and other related illnesses are pandemic not only because of difficulties that people experience in their daily lives but, also, because of their perceptions that, despite relatively good things happening, they are not perfect or have not turned out exactly right.

For some people, the stresses that they experience are too difficult to face, because they are enormous by anyone's standards. This book speaks to handling stress even when it is most difficult. Stress occurs in varying degrees; however, destressing or countering stress can take place in varying degrees, as well!

One of the goals of Volume II is to remind us of the basic and effective relaxation and stress management techniques that we can use in our everyday lives. The more we can relax, perform pleasurable activities, distract ourselves, and break the vicious circle of unremitting stress, no matter where we are, the more we can remain in charge of stress and continue to adapt to the difficulties of modern life.

When clients visit my office in order to deal with their problems and stresses, our therapy involves a shared therapeutic conversation along these lines. During these conversations, I try to motivate clients to tell themselves a more positive

story about their stress-handling skills, their ability to solve problems, and their ability to see and to follow options.

At the same time, I have them realize that each of us is an individual. We live in particular contexts (specific in place, people, time, and responsibilities), with particular backgrounds and histories, with particular problems and stresses, and with particular personalities and idiosyncrasies. In this book, even

though I describe destressing techniques that are applicable to many people, we must always remember to value our individual difference and that of others. There is no one best destressing technique—one size does not fit all. Throughout our lives, we have to seek out new ways to deal with our stresses, ones that work especially for us, and that lead us to more resilience, better coping, and better personal and social growth.



Have Your Say With Stress.

*Stress can turn us inward.
Destressing can turn us outward.*

Wherever we find ourselves, we can find ourselves.

*Each crawl of the caterpillar is a
step toward the butterfly's flight.*

*Everything has two sides—except when
we walk the line that we want.*

*Stress raises blood pressure—when
we do not raise our patience.*

To turn stress upside down, stand up to the problem.

*Stress has a habit of finding us
when we have bad habits.*

*Sometimes stress comes uninvited—it
always leaves at our invitation.*

Stress stops electrifying us—when we take charge.

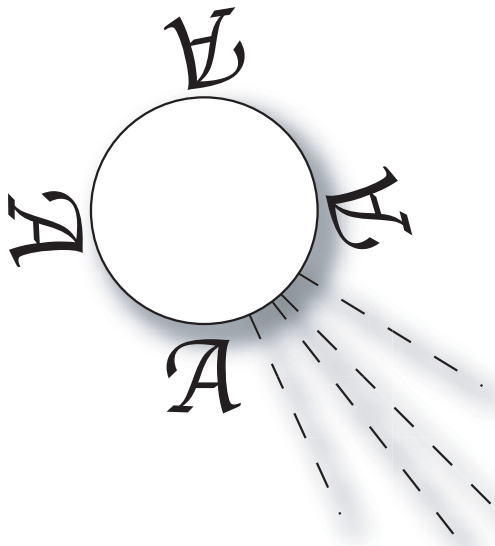
To beat stress at its game, find an inner stroke.

*Stress remains a problem only when
knowing how to solve it is a problem.*



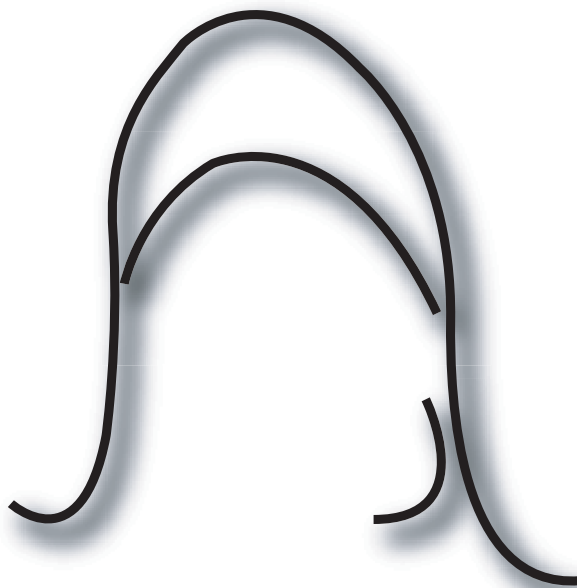
Chapter 1

Stress and Destressing



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"A" is for
always trying.*



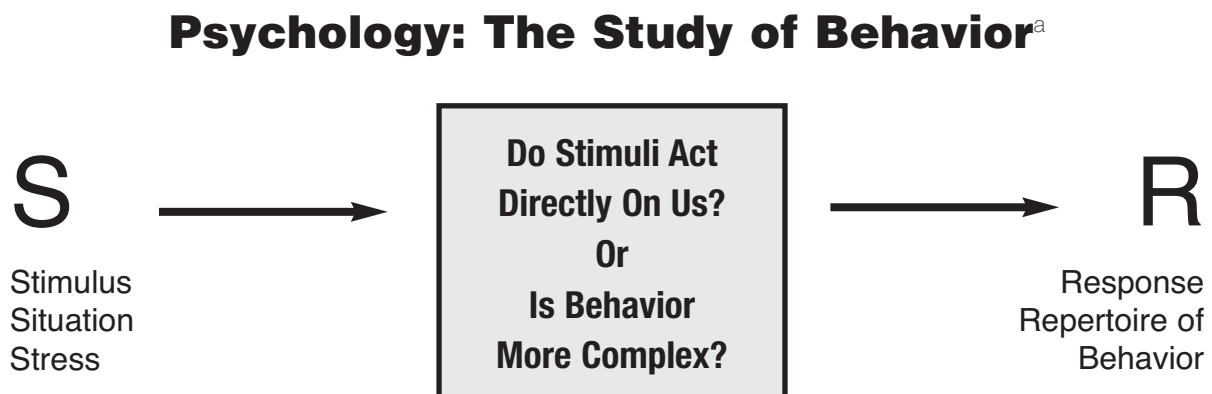
.....
*Psychology gives theory
and techniques.
You give positives
and practice.*
.....

In **Figure 1-1a**, we see that behavior needs to be examined both in terms of the responses that constitute its actions and action tendencies and the stimuli that elicit it in its contexts. Behavior is comprised not only of muscle movements but, also, of physiological activity and nervous system activity, including in the brain. Together, these movements and underlying components are expressed in contexts, and often are considered responses to those contexts.

The context of the environment in which our behavior develops produces positives and negatives in our perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and actions. The context embodies many aspects to which we can react, including people's actions and events. The context also consists of many aspects that can act on us, especially people's actions and events. The components in the environment to which we are exposed are called stimuli, situations, conditions, contexts, elicitors, events, and so on, but also stress. A major positive aspect of the context is that it consists of people who care for us, such as our parents. Parents often give children affection and reinforcements, such as giving praise after appropriate behavior or buying favorite toys, respectively. The context also provides negative elements, including work difficulties, home troubles, and social and political problems, which can be a major source of our stress.

Figure 1-1a

Psychology is a discipline that has both a scientific and a practicing side. It is concerned with the study of behavior, and applications to help people having psychological difficulties. Behavior varies in terms of the stimuli, situations, and stresses that elicit it in the environment and the responses that result. Psychologists seek to understand the causes of behavior, questioning whether it is sufficient to understand stimulus-response connections.



The causes of behavior are never simple to ascertain and, at times, they remain unfathomable. Some schools of thought simplify too much their understanding of what determines behavior. As we shall see throughout the book series, my approach is that behavior is the product of multiple influences, from the biological, such as the brain, to the environmental, such as the social, to the personal, such as motivation. Moreover, the latter types of influence on behavior are crucial. **We can have a voice in the unfolding of our own behavior, being actively involved in the direction it takes.**

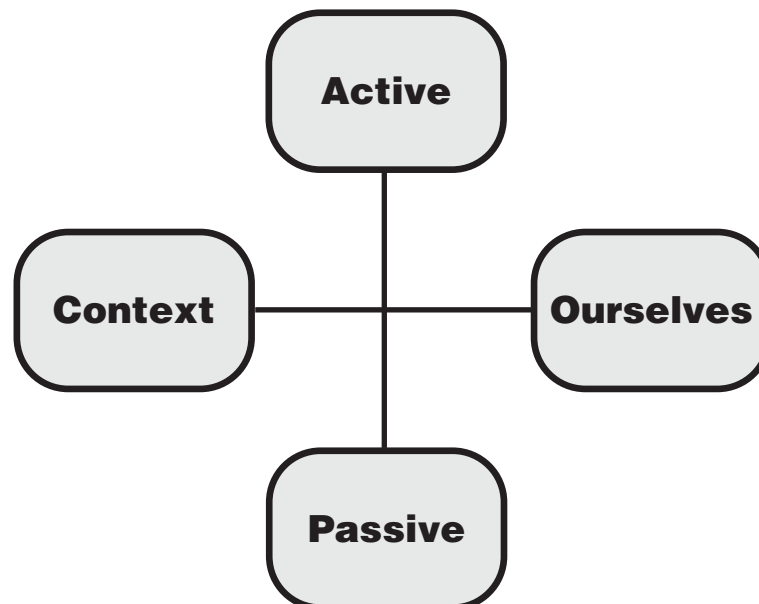
Figure 1-1b indicates that there are two major ways to look at human behavior—either as a passive reaction to context or as an active action in context. The passive view of human behavior suggests that stimuli in our environment elicit behavioral response based on our history of experienced reinforcers and ongoing and anticipated reinforcers. In the active view, our manner of approaching, dealing with, and

.....
Psychology is life's course.
.....

Figure 1-1b

Our behavior varies in terms of an active-passive dimension. As well, the environment can be considered more active or passive.

Psychology: The Study of Behavior^b



.....
*Stress answers to us—when
we answer to ourselves.*
.....

reacting to the environment is more important in understanding our behavior than is the nature of the reinforcements experienced. In this view, as conscious adults, we always have a choice in determining to which things, people, events, stimuli, and reinforcements that should be of focus. What are the priorities in our context, deserving our attention, concentration, planning, and evaluation? Because we are active beings who are conscious, capable of learning, flexible, determined, and wise, we can find solutions to the stresses about us. The environment also can be considered active or passive; that is, does it impinge directly on us or not, does it convey an urgent sense to respond or not, and so on.

Thus, **despite the continual presence of stress in our lives, we are not reduced to reactive responses to stress, without thinking.** The stress may be a direct type or not directly involving us. However, no matter what the type, our perception, or appraisal of the importance and degree of the stress, is critical to how we behave. No matter what the perception, we all can learn to confront stress actively by using our coping skills in conjunction with other resources, and put it behind us once we start dealing with it.

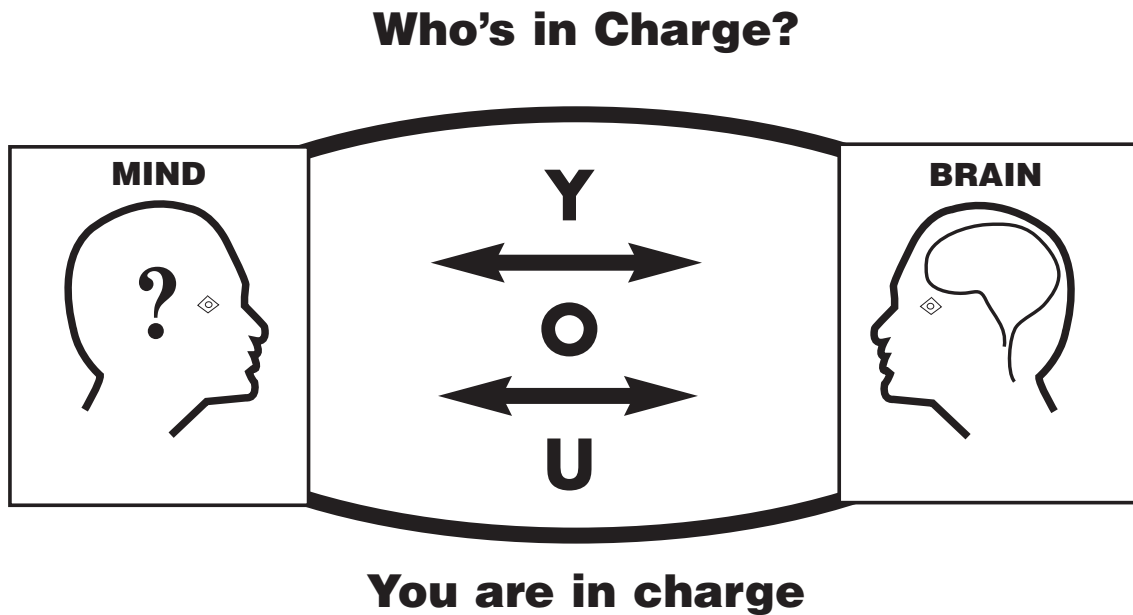
In **Figure 1-6**, I underline a most important point in this book series. That is, when it comes down to brass tacks, we are in charge of ourselves, of our psychological condition, and of our stress. **We are more than our minds, and we are more than our brains, for we are ourselves.** We can direct our minds how to think. We can direct our brains how to react to the stresses and pain in our lives. Without a doubt, the mind and brain influence each other. However, ultimately, each of us has dominion over both. If we become too focused on the past, we become controlled by it and our capacity to be in charge is compromised. If we see only the stresses and strains in the present, and not the challenges and possible solutions that they may allow, again, our capacity to be in charge is compromised. If we live only in an abstract future, with unrealistic dreams or with dreams from which no deviation is accepted, once more, our capacity to be in charge is compromised.

An appropriate way not to become overly focussed on the past, present, or future is to see time as a whole. The past

.....
*Life!
The study of psychology.*
.....

Figure 1-6

So much of doing well psychologically concerns keeping control. This does not mean simply to always try to control the other, but it means to keep a sense of dignity, keep anger at bay, keep focused on the goal, keep family and friends in mind and together, and so on. When we take control in these positive senses, no one takes a leave.



- The mind and the brain influence each other
- The past offers lessons, not limits
- The present offers learning, not liabilities
- The future offers itself

may be filled with regrets, but we can learn from them. The present may not be ideal, but we can try to improve it. The future may seem closed, but we can see it as an opening to possibilities, as a pathway to options, or as a stepping stone to taking charge of our self and our surroundings. We are all capable of increasing the probability of developing such an attitude, of being in charge and having a vision that includes past, present, and future in one whole. We can act to try to improve what we learn from the past, how we cope with the present, and how we dream about the future.

*Stress will need a good lawyer—when you bring it to **your** trial.*

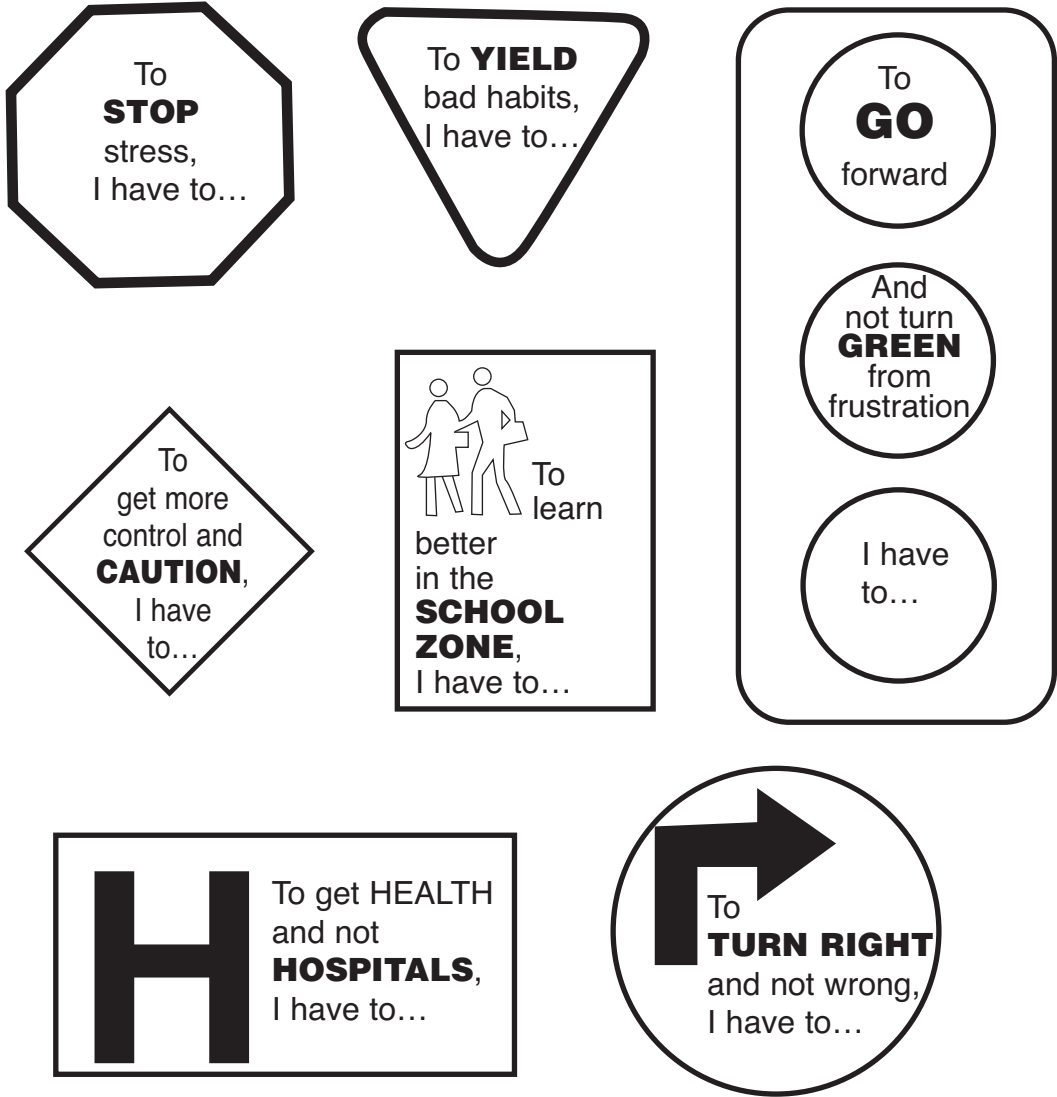
Stress comes when it is least expected. We can still expect that we can handle it.

.....
*Adopting a healthy lifestyle
includes nourishing
a healthy mind.*
.....

Figure 1-9 asks us to play a game of filling in the blanks. Too often, our mind is blank when it comes to making the important choices in life that will keep us on the right track. Instead of asking the right questions, we question if we should even ask. **We sit passively, waiting for magical solutions for our problems instead of seeking practical solutions for them.** The game in the figure is not the only game that we can play in times of trouble. For example, if we are stressed, we can play Chess to checkmate whatever gets in the way of destressing and Rejoining Joy.

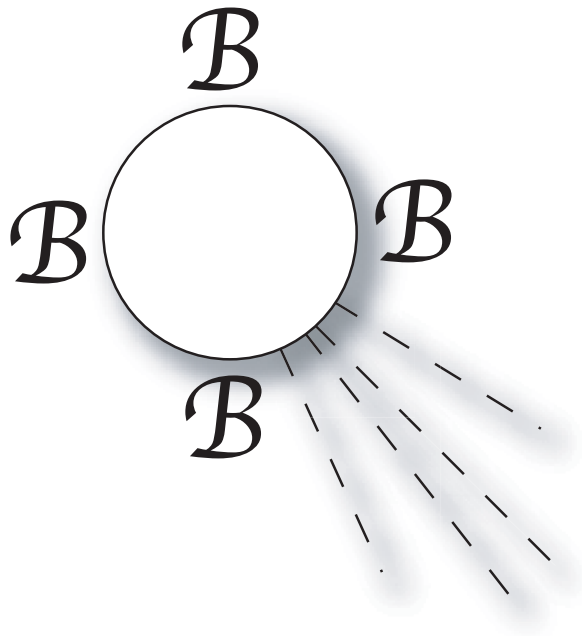
Figure 1-9
Traffic signals tell us when to stop, slow, and go. Our own signals tell us when to get motivated, try, and keep going.

Fill in the Blanks



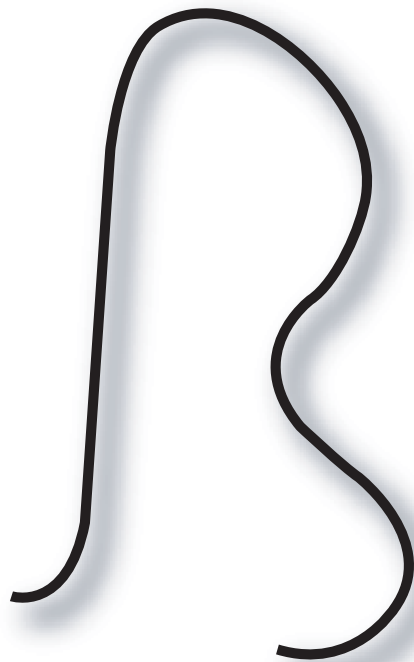
Chapter 2

Stress Control



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"B" is for believing
in ourselves and
our capacity to grow.*



.....
*When stress wants to boss
you around, tell it there is
no room for two bosses in
your company.*
.....

Figure 2-3 is entitled, “We are all butterflies.” It offers a metaphorical way of indicating that each and every one of us is capable of change. Like the butterfly, we pass through stages in life, even though it may not be apparent to us. It may seem that we have reached a point in our life where we cannot change. Or, it could be that in our present circumstances, especially if we are experiencing difficult stress, we may feel that change is impossible. Or, it could be that we feel that we do not want to change, that there is no need for change. However, change is always happening.

Change is a constant process. We are always evolving, even if we feel stuck at a particular level of psychological development or cannot see how we can get out of a particularly stressful circumstance. If we take a lifespan perspective

Figure 2-3

When we grow, stress does not. Our growth is like that of a caterpillar in metamorphosis; it changes us toward maturity.

We Are All Butterflies

Butterflies begin life as crawling creatures. Some are already beautiful. Others are bland, or prickly or poisonous. None fly. Then a biological program kicks in during their development. They metamorphose. It is part of their make-up. All butterflies metamorphose. Change is part of what they are. First, they stop. They rest. They let change happen. They build a cocoon where change can take place, a protected place, a peaceful place, a relaxed place. When they stop and relax, they change. Then they struggle to let their changes show. They emerge, discarding their old covering. Their old way no longer works. Crawling is finished. They can no longer go back. Everything about their change supports a new way of being. Tentatively, they try out their new way. They stretch their wings. They flutter them. They hold them open to the sun. Their beauty is striking. Their new way dazzles in the sunlight. They feel urges to communicate with other butterflies. They grab their energy and release. Both hesitant and confident in their new way, they fly. The sky greets them.

and realize that even adults change, as they move from one decade to the next, it is clear that we are all constantly growing organisms and learning beings. An important part of how we grow is by dealing with the difficult situations that we encounter in our daily lives, by using all of our skills to do so, and by getting all the help that we need. If we trust this growth process and this change process, it makes life easier, both for us and for the people around us. **Stress becomes easier when we see it as a means to grow rather than as an obstacle to growth. Stress gives fodder not only for problem solving but, also, for personal evolving.**

But that does not mean that we should seek out stress and then sit passively, hoping that it will make us change and grow. This approach will not work. There is a better way. When stress comes into our lives, and it will always come, initially, we should look at it as manageable, no matter how overwhelming that it may seem. Then, as we deal with the stress, we should adopt the attitude that it is providing challenges to us. Through attempting to deal with stress, we can test our coping skills and problem solving skills, refine them, improve them, learn others, and so on. Finally, as we get a better handle of the stress, we should look forward to a well-deserved reward.

If we adopt such a positive attitude to stress, we will see that it will stop giving us headaches and heartaches. Rather, it will give us opportunities for changing for the better and for growing. Stress can provide the medium not only for its management but, also, for our personal growth. The more we manage stress, and are not managed by it, the more likely our metamorphosing psychological butterfly will come closer to flying.

.....
*Prepare stress for
 the worst—by being up
 to its challenge.*

.....
*Put stress in therapy—
 by having it regress.*

<i>Thinking is stress's opposite— have them meet.</i>	<i>Emotions can help us when we are under stress as long as they stay under control.</i>	<i>Stress stays below the radar— when we fly above the “louds.”</i>
<i>When stress begs to differ, have it go to its knees.</i>	<i>Stress is unfair—so undo it.</i>	<i>Although stress is universal— you are still an individual.</i>

*Walking round the block gives
direction to the mind.*

Laughter is the best mental sun.

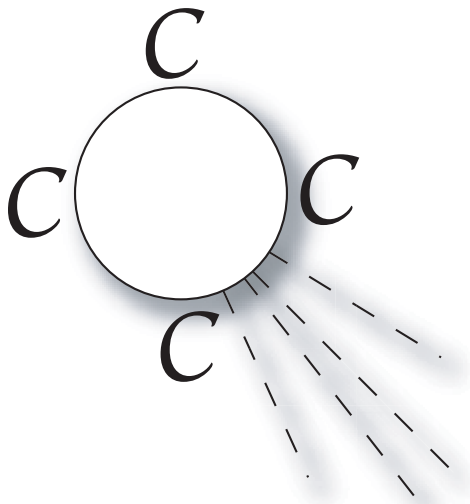
Humor avoids stupour.

*Give the best of yourself—
share what you feel,
what you think,
and what you are.*



Chapter 3

Relaxation Techniques



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"C" is for calm
and learning how
to reach it.*



.....
*There are David
destressing strategies for
the Goliath of stress.*
.....

.....
*Have a party—instead of
being a party to stress.*
.....

.....
*Stress cannot hold
our partner's hand—
when we do.*
.....

Figure 3-1 illustrates that the expression, “Action and Distraction,” is a catch phrase that I ask clients to remember when they find themselves under stress. It refers to the longer expression, “**Action, Distraction, and Positive Attraction.**”

“Action” refers to the simple, positive things that we like to do or experience, such as walking in the park, talking to a friend, relaxing in front of the TV, or engaging in a favorite leisure activity. Of course, it also refers to our everyday activities with family and at work. Whether referring to the simpler activities or to our daily responsibilities, a positive approach to such actions can help induce destressing and a return to joy. Because our basic life tasks especially involve work (or school) and family, the more that we can learn to destress well in these spheres, the better we can deal with stress of any kind.

“Distraction” refers to getting our mind off the source of our stress and relaxing at the same time. When we have too much stress, we express it through our mind and body in three basic ways, all of which speed up the pace of our normal rhythms. First, our breathing speeds up. It may become very irregular and forced. We may even begin to hyperventilate. Second, our muscles get more active. We move or fidget excessively or we become frozen as the muscles tense up. Third, our mind goes ever so fast. We worry about the stress. Our mind goes in many directions at once as we try to deal with the stress, or as we try to get away from it because it is too overwhelming.

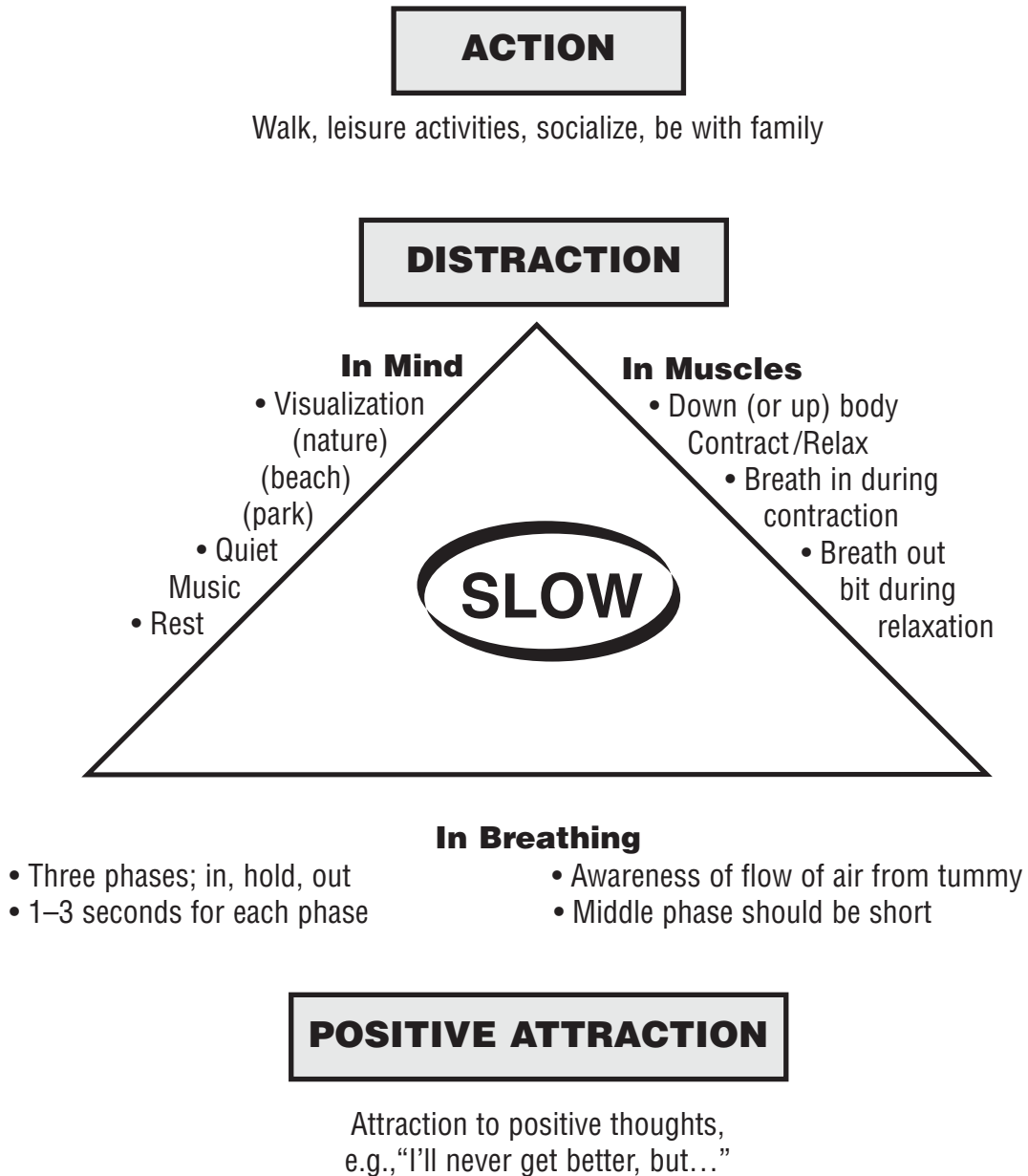
Thus, when under stress, we should use techniques that slow down all three of these speeded rhythms. There are breathing techniques that we can use to slow down the accelerated breathing that occurs when we are under stress. There are muscle relaxation techniques that slow down the fidgeting, ease the muscle tension that accompanies stress, and encourage relaxation. Finally, there are mental techniques that slow down our mind and ease excessive worrying.

In using destressing techniques, there is no simple one-size-fits-all formula, because **psychological techniques are not meant for use by everyone in exactly the same way.** Stress is an individual experience and, therefore, destressing techniques should be individualized, as well. We need to apply the techniques in individual ways, using ways that work for us. Some people find that the breathing techniques work best, and there are many different methods of

Figure 3-1

The basic techniques for dealing with stress are simple to use, and they are enjoyable, too.

Action, Distraction, and Positive Attraction: Simple Techniques



.....
*When each day starts anew,
stresses cannot accumulate.*
.....

.....
*When stress comes to
memory—empty the store.*
.....

.....
*Breathing right
makes pain wrong.*
.....

breathing techniques that one can use. One particular technique may work best for one person in one situation but not in another. Another individual may not be able to use this breathing technique at all, and needs a very different one. Finally, some people may find that breathing techniques are not beneficial at all to them, but that slowing down muscular activity is the most important way for them to cope with stress. Again, there are many different muscle relaxation techniques. Yet other people may find that using mental techniques, such as visualization, are the most important way of handling stress. Of course, there are people who can combine two or even all three types of techniques. The point is that, as we deal with stress, by using the techniques in these three areas (breathing exercises, muscle relaxation exercises, and mental or visualization techniques), in one way or another, each of us can find the best way of distracting ourselves. At the same time, the techniques provide the added benefit of helping us relax and rejoin joy.

Mental exercises include visualizing a favorite nature scene, such as the beach, park, or garden. Listening to quiet music always is helpful. As for breathing exercises, by breathing in with a regular rhythm for up to several seconds in each of the in and out phases, one can help get control of stressed, irregular, or fast breathing. In pushing out the tummy rather than breathing from the chest, the air goes deeper. By concentrating on the airflow, distraction takes place, helping matters. For muscle relaxation, one contracts and then relaxes the muscles at each zone or joint of the body, moving from head to toes. The contraction-relax cycle may be coordinated with our out and in breathes. There are many ways of breathing to relax, destressing muscles, and calming the mind. These should be facilitated by use of positive thoughts and positive self-talk. **The more one practices such positive psychological techniques, the less there is room for stress and for negative habits and thoughts.**

To help to destress and regain joy, we need more than action and distraction. We need to remember that the mind can influence the body just as much as the body can influence the mind. The things that we tell ourselves when we are under stress play a critical role in how we deal with it, our hopes about it, and how to proceed to resolve it. **Positive attraction to a positive attitude is a positive step in destressing.**

Figure 3-2

Positive thoughts are a good balance to negative thoughts, especially when used consistently and quickly after a negative one.

“Positive Thoughts,” Not “Thinking Positive”

Examples

- I’ll never get better, but as long as I keep trying you never know.
- I’ll fail that exam, but if I start studying slowly but surely I’ll do O.K.
- I never do my work to my supervisor’s satisfaction, but I just have to keep doing it to mine.
- He never appreciates what I do, but he can learn as long as we keep the lines of communication open.
- It’s so hard to discipline him, but if I learn to do it right, he’ll listen.

Principles

- Negative thoughts are a natural part of life.
- We do not have to avoid them, fear them, persecute ourselves for them, etc.
- They have important messages for us, so that we can learn about ourselves and about others.
- They only hurt us when they continue too long because we do not know how to deal with them.
- We need to learn how to tackle well the problems that underlie them, and control our reactions to them.
- They always come back, that is their job.
- We can always come back from them. That is our job.

**It is too easy to say we just have to be positive.
The negative should not be hidden or ignored.
It is the balance that counts in the positive and negative.**

Thus, **Figure 3-2** emphasizes that when we are under stress, we need to have positive thoughts. Notice that I did not say that, when we are under stress, we must think positively. I realize that it is impossible to force ourselves to keep thinking positively when we are under stress. As much as one tries, the negative keeps coming back. Although we cannot stop this process when we are under stress, we can cut it short. Negative thought fuels worry, leads us to see the worst, and stops us from trying to solve the problems underlying the worry.

.....
*With the habit of positive
thoughts, there are less
“maybe’s,” “no’s,” and “not’s.”*
.....

We can try to reset the stress thermostat and reduce the worry. We need to learn to monitor ourselves as we worry, so that when it is constant and excessive, we can act to control it. That is, as much as it is possible, we need to turn the worry and stress switch from the “On” to the “Off” position.

I suggest that a practical way of encouraging positive thoughts to emerge when we are under stress is not to try to stop outright the negative thoughts, but to tag on a positive thought after each negative thought appears. For example, we can catch ourselves saying a negative thought to ourselves, such as, “I’ll never do it” or “I’ll never get over it” (a soured relationship, a painful injury, etc.), and then add on a more positive statement to counterbalance it. Instead of continuing with statements made silently, such as, “It will never go away” or “I will never get better,” we can learn to say to ourselves, “It will never go away, but I am trying my best,” or “I will never get better, but I am working at it.” The more that we use these kinds of positive statements after negative ones, or the more that we cut short negative thoughts or interrupt them, the less constant becomes worry, the less things appear overwhelming, and the more we give our body and our mind their needed rest so that we can recover from stress.

*We cannot change
what stress brings.
We can change what
we bring to stress.*

*The more stress feels
empowered—the more we
should empower ourselves.*

*When stress heats up,
freeze it out.*

Figure 3-3 shows one breathing technique that I teach to clients when they are under severe stress or in severe pain. It involves three basic steps. There are three phases in any breathing—breathing in, holding the breath, and breathing out. In the technique that I use, each in and out phase lasts about 2–3 seconds, or counts, depending on what is needed and what works. A silent counting procedure adds to the effectiveness of the breathing technique, because it further helps to distract from stress. Therefore, in this breathing technique, first we breathe in for the counts, slowly and evenly, then we hold our breath for a second or so, and then we breathe out for the counts, using the rate needed at that point. The whole cycle of the three phases may take about 4–6 seconds to complete (this duration varies with each person). After one cycle is completed, we repeat the breathing cycle for as long as it is needed. **With repetition of good breathing techniques, they take over and help control any stressful breathing rhythm that had occurred**

Figure 3-3

Breathing techniques calm the mind, body, heart, and head. Call them all-in-wonders.

Breathing Brakes

Technique 1

- Mouth closed; eyes, too
- Breathe in for 2–3 seconds
- Counting 1, 2, (3)
- Perhaps stop briefly at each count—this creates a slight stutter in the breathing
- Hold for 1–2 seconds, counting
- Breathe out for 2–3 seconds, counting perhaps in a stutter
- Repeat over and over

OR

Technique 2

- Mouth closed; eyes, too
- Breathe in and out for 2–3 seconds each phase
- Deeply from tummy
- Concentrate on air flow or anything to distract
- Let stress come and go
- Repeat over and over

OR

Technique 3

- Mouth closed; eyes, too
- Keep regular rate of breathing
- Observe relaxation and stress sensations in body
- Work on stress sensations
- Repeat over and over

before their use. Gradually, the stressed rhythm of breathing slows down, becomes more rested, and is more peaceful. If the heart had been beating rapidly, it slows down, as well, adding to the relaxing experience and setting up a rhythm of rest.

Variations of this breathing technique involve concentrating on anything that distracts, instead of counting. This may include concentrating on tense body parts or even the actual stress or pain that is of focus. However, we try to let it come and go, or observe it as much as possible, instead of

.....
*I never met a hot stress
that liked cool breathing.*
.....

Stretching sands
shrink stress.

being overwhelmed by it. To conclude, this breathing technique helps when we are in distress or when we are in pain. Our breathing becomes regularized, or occurs at the right pace, and we end up breathing more easily through the distress or pain. Once we reach this stage, we can move on to performing more regularized breathing exercises.

When the evening is
shared—stress stays alone.

Figure 3-6 indicates that we can distract ourselves from our distress and pain not only by the use of breathing techniques but, also, by mental techniques, such as mental visualization. I introduce the technique by asking clients, “If you closed your eyes, what scene in nature would you like to

Figure 3-6

When stressed, go to the beach, to see if it is as good as what you imagined.

Life’s a Beach

Ingredients of Pleasant Imagined Beach Scene

Sun *Warm*
Sea *Waves*
Shore *Sounds*
Sands *White*
Touch *Trickling Sand*
Salt *Smells*
Sky *Bright*
Serene *Stretched Out*
Breeze *Cool*
Dunes *Horizon*
Flowers *Colors*
Sea gulls *Songs*
Shells *Beauty*
You *Rested*

imagine? If you were relaxed, what would you see?" Typically, clients answer by saying that they would imagine a beach. Other favorites are other water venues, such as waterfalls, rivers, and lakes, whereas gardens, parks, fields, and mountains are some other common examples. Once a favorite natural scene has been chosen, the client and I imagine the scene together. Either I describe it or they tell me what they see.

Typically, in the beach scenes that I describe, the sun shines brightly. It sends rays of light that feel warm, and the clients are asked to visualize themselves lying on the sand absorbing the relaxing energy. There may be a cool breeze caressing their faces with its light touch, balancing the warmth of the sun. The breeze rustles the leaves, creating a whispering sound that soothes. The clients are asked to feel deeply relaxed in the velvet, ivory-white sand, with its pleasant softness and warm sensations. Looking out toward the horizon, the clients are asked to sense the marked blueness of the sky. Perhaps it is dotted with wisps of clouds. The bright blue of the sky contrasts with the vibrant yellow of the sun. The clients are asked to focus on the colors of the ocean; perhaps it is aqua or a deep blue. It stretches out peacefully across the horizon like a blanket on the shore. Waves dance in from the ocean. The waves roll in one after the other, lapping at the shore, in a peaceful rhythm of relaxation. Their white caps break near the shore, gurgling. The constant beat of the waves as they strike the shore creates a melodic chorus that meshes with the ebb and flow of the body's internal rhythms, harmoniously restful and deeply tranquil.

The clients are asked take deep breaths and smell the refreshing saltiness of the ocean. They turn their heads to scan the vivid colors of the wildflowers on the dunes. Another breath is filled with rich, wafting odors of the flowers. Blossoms drip with beads of dew that sparkle in the sunlight. The clients are asked to slowly look skyward, focussing to hear the songs of birds serenading them as they lie on the sand resting. Gulls glide on wings spread out. The messages exchanged are ones of rest and peace. Each species is supremely happy in its natural medium. The beach brings a quiet tranquility, a warm inner glow. The clients are asked to imagine getting up from lying on the sand. They walk along the wet sands of the shore, lulled by the drumbeat of the

*Finding solutions makes
stress lose its problem.*

*Work hard, then love hard.
Sure makes it
hard for stress.*

.....
*Stress is to leave as
destressing is to you.*
.....

waves, remembering happy scenes of childhood. The sun still warms them both inside and out. They pass by a cluster of seashells that appear striking in their form, their colors, and their magic. The entwined circular hollows of a conch twirl toward an opening in which they can hear the sounds of the ocean. They pick it up and listen, recalling how, as children, they had loved to gather shells, animated by their mystery. Or, perhaps they recall how they had seen beautiful shells in pictures.

This is the kind of language that my clients and I exchange as we visualize and imagine peaceful scenes of nature. However, some clients are too distressed or in too much pain to start, but all eventually join in the meeting places of nature that we find together. Not surprisingly, clients readily continue to perform these exercises at home. Note that these visualizations are not exercises in the true sense of the word. Rather, such **visualizations of nature are lost parts of ourselves that we can reclaim**. They are natural ingredients of our peaceful memories of childhood and of the parts of our mind that are calm and destressed. They may be dormant, but they are still there, waiting for us to activate them and to give them their rightful place in our daily thoughts. The return of joy will not be far behind.

.....
*When we create choices,
stress gets too
confused to think.*
.....

Figure 3-7 shows that aside from performing breathing and visualization exercises, the third major way that we can destress and relax is by engaging in a muscle-related exercise. This technique may involve either stretching or mild muscle use, and, as with other types of relaxation exercises, there are many ways of performing them. The morning stretch, which we often perform as we get up, illustrates well the principle behind the muscular contraction-relaxation exercise that I teach. When we get up in the morning, we do not just stretch. Rather, we contract first before stretching. This indicates that when doing a formal relaxation exercise involving muscles, we should also first contract our muscles before relaxing them. In fact, the standard muscle relaxation techniques reflect this principle.

.....
*Stress and relaxing are
opposites. So let stress go its
separate way, by relaxing.*
.....

To introduce this exercise, I adopt the typical contracted position of the so-called morning stretch. Invariably, clients state that I am stretching, and this leads to a discussion that

Figure 3-7

Muscles get tense, but there are ways of reducing the tension. Muscle stretches are mental stretches, too.

Melting Muscles Quickly

- Get in relaxed, seated position
- In about 10 breaths, we clear the body
- With each breath, one muscle group will be contracted, then stretched or wiggled
- Start with the toes and work up to head
- As you breathe in, contract muscle group
- Hold contraction for a second and at the same time hold breath. Breathe out, and stretch, wiggle, etc.
- Feel toe muscles relaxed and light yet heavy and rested
- With next breath, lift ankles upward, then hold breathe, and then wiggle
- Go on to each of your legs (calf-thigh squeeze), stomach (tummy tighten), and chest (awareness of lungs), holding breath then wiggling for each
- Then go on to fingers (massaging finger tips together after contraction), to arms (forearm-upper arm squeeze) and to shoulders (lift)
- Then go on to face (squeezing eyes, tightening mouth), finishing by rubbing eyes, massaging face
- For Grand Finale, stretch like getting up in morning
- That is, contract the whole body first, then stretch out
- Feel whole body relaxed, rested, stretched out, and both light and heavy

I am doing the opposite—I have contracted my muscles before I actually engage in their stretching. With this introduction, the explanation of the exercise proceeds easily. In this demonstration, I begin with the lower portions of the body and move upward. The toes are easy to wiggle, for example. If we begin at the head and work down, we work the face, neck, and shoulders. Because only about 10 contractions are involved, we get through the body quickly. The clients quickly learn the exercise. However, without working through all the body zones, or joints, it may be hard to liberate muscular tension in these key areas where such

.....
*Muscles tend to tense up—
until we attend to
tendering them down.*
.....

.....
*When we improve old ways,
we shine a new.*
.....

A controlled response to stress allows control of stress.

tension often collects. Note that the contraction-wiggle cycle can be broken down into more steps, depending on what works (e.g., left and right side separately, or any one contraction-relaxation step repeated).

The basic type of muscular relaxation that I teach is structured around a relaxed breathing rhythm, where we take deep breaths to clear the body of its tension. With each breath, we contract one part of our body as we inhale. For example, we squeeze the toes for a second or two as we breathe in; then, for a fraction of a second, we simultaneously hold our breath and the muscular contraction. Next, as we breathe out, we wiggle the toes. No matter how many steps are involved, in performing the exercise, **we create a peaceful rhythm of muscular contraction and relaxation that follows our natural breathing cycle**, because, with each breath, we involve another body part, letting the exercise flow naturally.

Some clients need adjustments to typical muscle relaxation exercises, either because of excessive muscular tension in a particular muscle group, such as in the posterior portion of the neck, or because of physical injuries and pain. In these cases, the clients and I establish an appropriate series of muscular contractions and relaxations based on individual needs.

Usually I demonstrate the exercise by moving up from the toes. We squeeze the toes on the inbreath, hold, and then wiggle on the outbreath. In the second step, as a new breath comes, we lift our feet at the ankles, then we hold in place at the same time both the foot movement and our breath, and finally we let both go, breathing out and wiggling the feet. Third, we move up to the legs, and here we begin by contracting the calves and thighs as we breathe in, for example, by contracting them around the front edge of the seat in which we are sitting. We hold and then let go, as with the other steps. With the fourth breath, we hold our tummy tight and wiggle our torso as we let go. Or, we may lean forward in this step. With the fifth breath, we focus on our chest muscles and, in breathing, we become very aware of the sensations involved. As with the prior step, as we let go, we wiggle, in this case, our torso. With the sixth breath, we squeeze the fingers of our hands, and after the holding phase, we wiggle them, letting out our breath. With the next breath, we work the wrists, lifting them or bending them and, then, wiggling them in parallel with the breathing cycle.

By combining stress reduction techniques, stress splits.

The clearer our vision, the more invisible the stress.

Next, at the elbows, we squeeze our forearms against our upper arms, hold, and then wiggle slightly our arms. With the ninth breath, we lift our shoulders, hold, and then wiggle. With the tenth breath, the neck is involved, so that there is no contraction, per se. We rotate our head in a slight circular motion, by lowering our chin to the right, bringing it up on the right just over the shoulder, and so on. Then, we shift the rotation in the opposite direction, as a counterbalance. Finally, with the next breath, we squeeze our face muscles tightly; and for the letting go phase, we do what we typically do when we are under stress; that is, we put our hands up to our eyes and massage our face, until we feel relief. This portion of the exercise can be split across the lower, middle, and upper portions of the face (mouth, nose, forehead).

Now, with the end of the multi-step cycle, where we have contracted and relaxed our muscle groups sequentially from the toes to the head, we are ready for the grand finale. Just like when we get up in the morning, we contract our whole body—feet, legs, tummy, torso, arms, hands, shoulders, and face. We hold our breath, and then we let go, stretching everything that we had just contracted. I would hope that therapists who demonstrate the technique get as much pleasure from it as I do; it sure helps destressing the body in the course of sitting during a series of therapy sessions. Similarly, office workers may find the technique useful to use every hour or every few hours, when they must sit for prolonged periods.

With the demonstration well-mastered, clients can move easily to more complex scenarios of muscle relaxation. This would involve lying down, getting in the right mental state, proceeding from the head downward, undertaking the contractions and relaxations of each flex-extend action for more than one breath, ridding tension in all muscle groups, repeating each action as needed, and performing the exercise for minutes on end to complete the full cycle.

This concludes the presentation of the basic techniques of destressing that I teach my clients after listening to their stories of stress. These techniques are the simplest forms of the various destressing techniques. Moreover, they are based on the typical relaxation strategies that we employ spontaneously in our daily experience, or are found in the common folklore in our culture of how best to deal with stress. We all know about the destressing advantages of establishing regular breathing, imagining pleasant scenes, and perform-

*Stress beats a hasty retreat—
when we advance with
determination.*

*When we think upright—
stress downgrades.*

*Even complex destressing
strategies are simply easy.*

*Breathing exercises
are a bridge that
stress does not cross.*

ing muscle stretching but, normally, we do not systematically use these techniques when we are placed under stress. Unless we are educated about the advantages of using them systematically in dealing with stress and are reminded that we should use them when under stress, we will not know of their full benefits and we will not employ them each time that they are needed.

Figure 3-8 displays more advanced techniques of action, distraction, and positive attraction. For distraction, I teach more specialized techniques in the three areas of breathing, mental relaxation, and muscle work. For breathing, I explain how to engage in continuous deep breathing for minutes on end, like in meditation. In doing so, we breathe from the stomach. For example, deep breathing is encouraged when we breathe with the diaphragm, or by pushing out. However, even the normal way of breathing can be used, as long as the breathing is deep and slow. The point is that, through experimentation, each person can find a comfortable deep breathing rhythm.

*Imagining the warm
sun melts stress.*

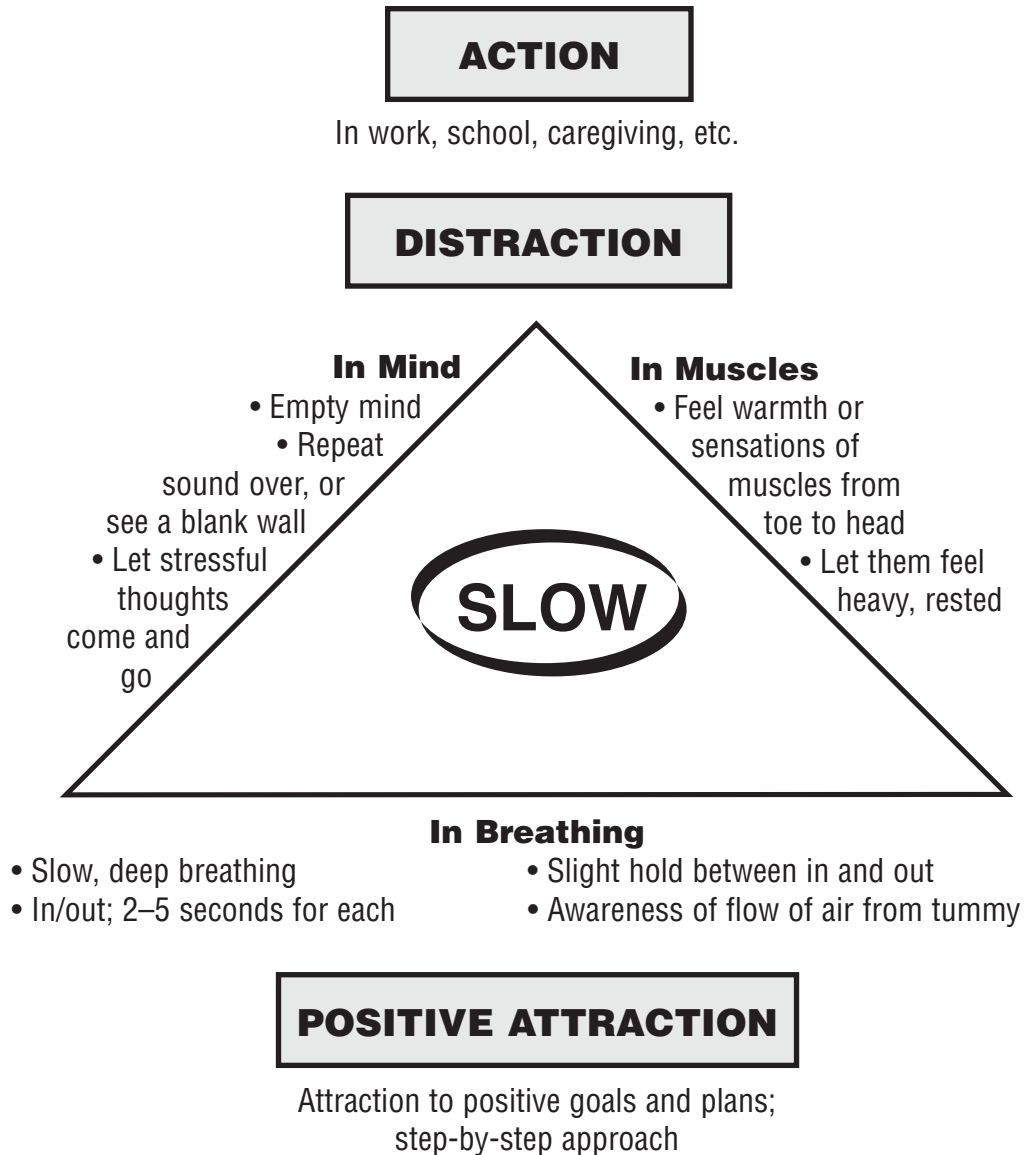
It may help to concentrate on the breathing process right from the beginning when the air begins to move down the nasal passages. The inhaled air feels cold, at first, as it begins to enter the nostrils. We sense an expansion of the nostrils as they open better to let the air flow in. Then, we notice the lungs, as they fill gradually. It seems to us that our breath is getting deeper, as the lungs begin to expand. We become very aware of the expansion of the chest, as the lungs fill. After the full inhalation period, we are completely focused on the chest area, its stretched muscles, and the sensations emanating from the lungs. Then, we begin the second phase of breathing out slowly but surely. We feel the exhaled air coming out of the breathing passage. This time it feels warm. We stop breathing out, and rest for a fraction of a second. Then, we take another slow, deep breath. We breathe this way repetitively. Over and over, we concentrate on the cool air moving down and the warm air flowing out, while sensing simultaneously the lungs expanding and diminishing in size. The added procedure of concentrating on the changing air and lungs serves as a good distraction technique.

*Shoring up the
mind beaches stress.*

Figure 3-8

There are so many action, distraction, muscle relaxing, and positive thinking techniques to control stress, that it is a wonder how there is any room left for stress.

Action, Distraction, and Positive Attraction: Advanced Techniques



We now turn to the other advanced relaxation techniques that I teach. In the advanced muscle relaxation technique, rather than an active approach where we first contract the muscles and then relax or stretch them, here, we simply

.....
*Small steps can
trip up stress.*
.....

.....
*Reading opens us to others,
minds and to our own.*
.....

.....
*By learning to calm down,
stress ups and leaves.*
.....

.....
*If we look at a picture
of the beach, the waves
will wash away stress.*
.....

experience the muscles without movement. For example, we may focus on a muscle's sensations, concentrate on its flow of energy, feel its warmth, or feel that it has a warm liquid moving over it. We repeat this procedure with the other muscle groups, moving up the body from toe to head, or moving downward, as with the contraction-relaxation technique. Muscle tension diminishes as we proceed, and psychological relaxation increases.

In the advanced visualization technique, rather than filling the mind with positive scenes of the beach, or the like, we try to empty the mind. The best way to accomplish this is to engage in a repetitive experience. The experience could be visual, as in visualizing a blank wall but, also, it could be auditory, as in repeating a sound over and over. Typically, I ask my clients to stare at an empty portion of the wall or even into the lights and, then, to close their eyes immediately. This creates a negative, anti-, or absent image, if you will, distracting them from their stress. Another way of emptying the mind of stress is to visualize the source of stress as an object that has neutral properties. For example, we can visualize pain as a red ball that gradually turns smaller and black. In the auditory modality, to empty the mind of stress, we can repeat over and over a nonsense sound, such as "ohm." The sound is already devoid of meaning and, by its repetition, the mind clears even more.

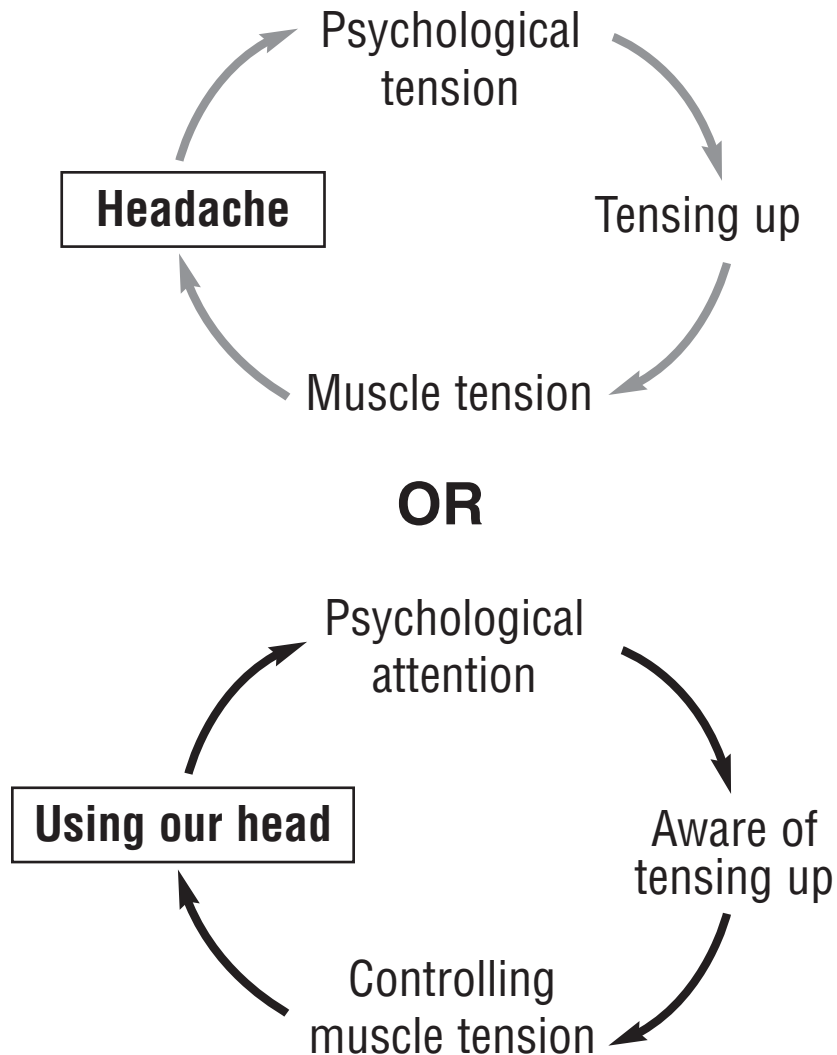
Inevitably, stress or worry comes back as we engage in mental exercises that try to clear the mind. However, as we get better and better at repeating the visual image or sound that we have chosen, there is less room for stress. By persisting in the use of mental relaxation exercises, each of us can distract ourselves from our stress and, at the same time, increase our relaxation, thereby Rejoining Joy. In this regard, the positive effects of performing actions such as listening to music or talking to friends should not be forgotten. **Stress is controlled when we put it on hold.**

Figure 3-10 illustrates that, by being more aware of how we tense up due to psychological tension or stress, we can begin to control muscular tension, headaches, and pain. When stress begins to take over, we experience actual physical signs. A

Figure 3-10

Give headaches a pain, by reducing them through psychological exercises.

Prevention of Tension Needs Attention



tightening mind leads to a tightening body. At the same time, when we become aware of the process as it builds, we can begin to control it. We can interrupt our negative thinking in a variety of ways, we can calm our bodies using simple techniques, and we can act for ourselves instead of letting stress act on us. I never met a stress that liked someone who knew how to handle it.

*By lowering the bar for
depressing, we raise the
barrier for stress.*

.....
When catastrophizing seems close, do not give it comfort.
.....

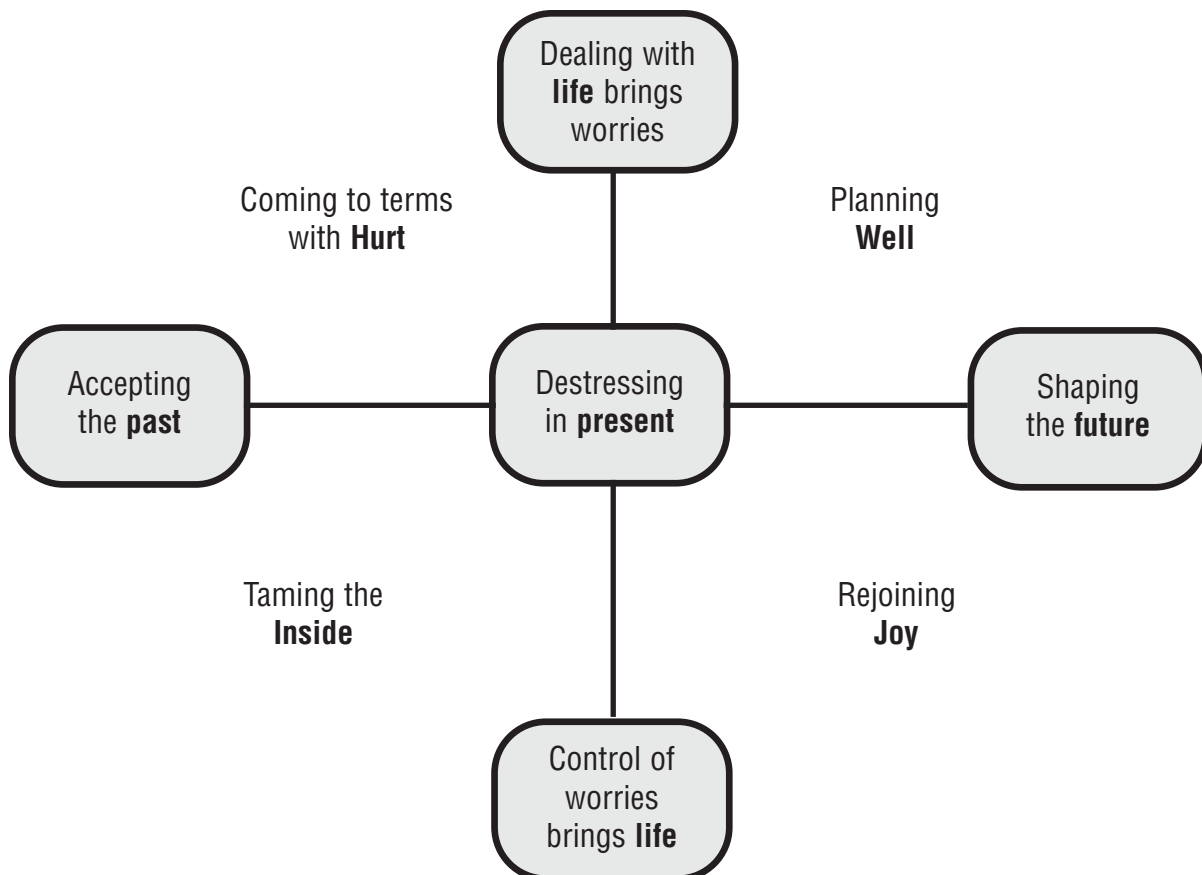
.....
Stress has no rhythm—Dance.
.....

Figure 3-14 emphasizes that trying to cope while thinking the worst does not make a good mix. The first step in coping is controlling our perception of catastrophe, or of thinking the worst. When we feel stressed, whether due to past hurts and feelings, present circumstances and worries, or fears of future uncertainties and problems, it is better to be positive. When we let past issues dominate, we perceive them as unresolvable and they get in the way. When we get overstressed about what is going on in the present and do not destress, things feel overwhelming and we cannot stay on our way. When we feel that there is no future, we give up planning and lose our way. By eliminating thinking the worst, we

Figure 3-14

The worst thing we can do under stress is to catastrophize. We all do it. We all can undo it by facing the past, present, and future. Catastrophe becomes the past when we refuse to give it a present or future.

Coping, Not Catastrophizing



improve the best types of thinking. This opens avenues, such as seeing the past differently, using destressing techniques in the present, trying to solve the problem, and planning for the future. **When we stop always expecting the worst, we have better chances of getting the best.**

.....
*Rage and courage
are opposites.*
.....

Figure 3-15 illustrates how various destressing techniques can be put together to solve a particular problem related to fear. When someone develops a clinical level fear, or a phobia, the more the particular situation within which they find themselves resembles the initial fear-provoking situation, the more they experience fearful reactions to it. For example, after a motor vehicle accident, the most difficult driving situations on the road are feared worst — the driver's heart pumps rapidly in a snow storm, he sweats on the highway, especially if there is a close call, heavy traffic leads to tensing the hands on the steering wheel, cars coming head on from the opposite lane or cars waiting to turn in front of the vehicle induce panic, and so on.

To deal with clinical-level fears such as these, psychologists and other mental health professionals often use a behavioral technique called "systematic desensitization." In using it, we begin by determining what are the exact fears and their inducing situations and, then, we arrange them from the least to the most fearful. That is, these situations are arranged in a hierarchy of fear intensity.

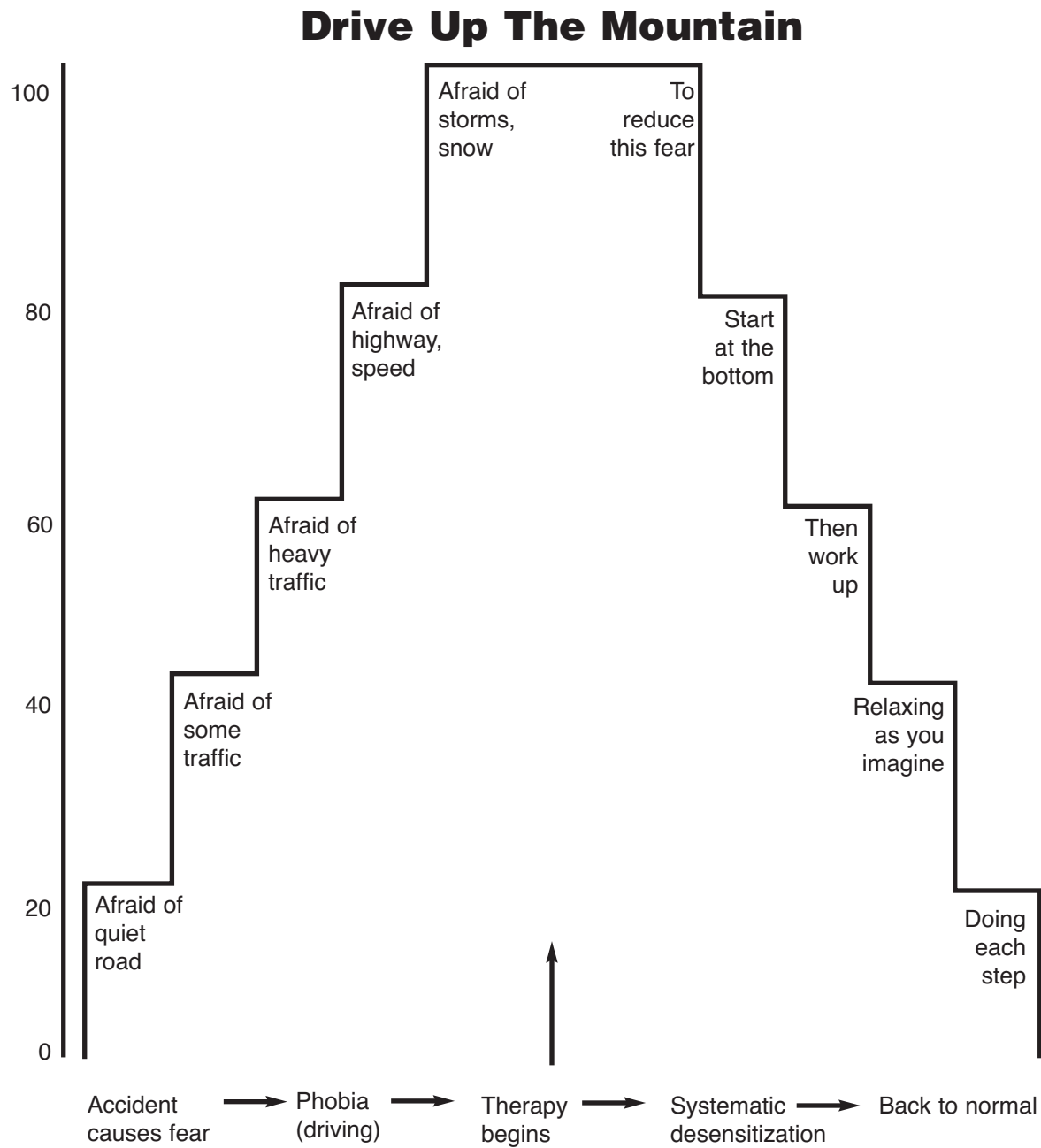
.....
*The worst fear is not
knowing the simple
techniques of
coping with fear.*
.....

Then, we teach clients to relax appropriately, for example, through deep breathing exercises. Then, we have the clients apply the relaxing techniques to the fear hierarchy created about the fears. In the first step, the clients imagine the least intense fear while neutralizing it by engaging in a relaxing exercise, such as deep breathing. Gradually, as the clients work up the fear hierarchy, they neutralize each successive level. This technique is, therefore, both systematic and desensitizing, as its name implies, and it is described in detail elsewhere in the book series. However, note that, as with any psychotherapeutic technique, systematic desensitization works only when we want it to. Psychology may teach us techniques, but only we can decide whether or not we want to learn and apply them. **Systematic desensitization of fears works only when we want to work on the fears.**

.....
*When fear is low on the
totem pole—it cannot
rise to the occasion.*
.....

Figure 3-15

Systematic desensitization is an effective technique for dealing with fear of any kind. We need to know a relaxation technique. We need to create an individualized fear hierarchy from least fearful to most fearful (e.g., easy to do for fear of driving). Start relaxing at the bottom of the hierarchy of imagined fearful stimuli created to neutralize it (e.g., quiet, neighborhood drive, the first of 10 steps, all the way to a feared highway drive). Then work up the hierarchy one step at a time at a self-paced speed.



One Step at a Time

Figure 3-16 can't harm us. It describes the difference between hurt vs. harm. When we are physically injured, part of our treatment includes physical or physiotherapy exercises. The physical exercises recommended to us after injury are meant to strengthen the injured muscles, stretch us where needed, build around the injured areas, increase our aerobic capacity, and so on. **The physical exercises after physical injury may make us sore in the short term, but they do not harm us in the long term. To the contrary, they aim to improve our physical status.** We do not complain when we need preventative vaccines; we take them knowing that they are meant to fight off deadly or debilitating diseases. We should look at the need to do physical exercises after physical injury the same way. When we are injured, the soft tissues involved need physical exercises to recover. Moreover, we get physically deconditioned, or out of shape, and need exercises to stop this effect. Physically injured individuals should learn all physical exercises shown to them. They should perform, too, the exercises in a persistent manner, whether in therapy sessions or while stretching at home, and continue at home when the therapy is completed. Doing physical exercises at home after a rehabilitation program is completed may continue to lead to a temporary increase in pain experience, but this pain is a good sign of effort and continued improvement. To repeat, being sore after rehabilitative physical exercises, does not necessarily mean getting worse, so we need to repeat them daily.

Stress is like a Frisbee—it will twist and turn when we send it on its way.

The better we explore, the more questions we have.



Figure 3-16

After an injury, physical exercises and physiotherapy are essential. They may hurt, but they do not harm. For example, the physical exercise may make us stiff, but will lead to less pain in the end. When we stop these exercises, whether physical or psychological, that is when we harm ourselves.

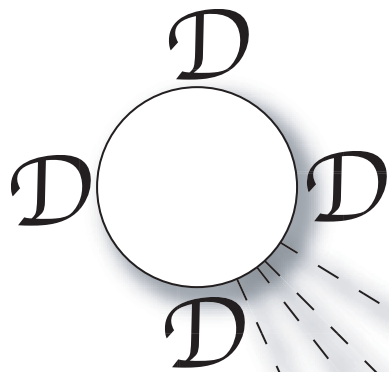
Hurt vs. Harm

Hurt	Harm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing exercises Hurts temporarily • Muscles build, Resistance strengthens • Pain recovers, It stops or stabilizes • Giving up stopping, Going forward begins • May feel sore, But recovery begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stopping exercises Harms • Doing exercises Does not harm • Stopping exercises Lets pain worsen • Doing exercises Stops the vicious circle • Stopping exercises Stops you

<i>The exuberance of dance leaves stress no chance.</i>	<i>Ballet is painting space with the body.</i>	<i>Find a passion—find yourself.</i>
<i>Classical music gives classical relaxation.</i>	<i>Going to the theater sets the stage for playing a more relaxed role.</i>	<i>Stress is like a hula hoop— it runs rings around us, but it lacks substance</i>

Chapter 4

How Stress Works



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"D" is for being
determined to destress.*

.....
*Stress is a poor loser—when
we enrich our resilience.*
.....

.....
*When it comes to stress,
I'd rather it goes.*
.....

.....
*There is more stress in
worrying about stress than
in what stress brings.*
.....

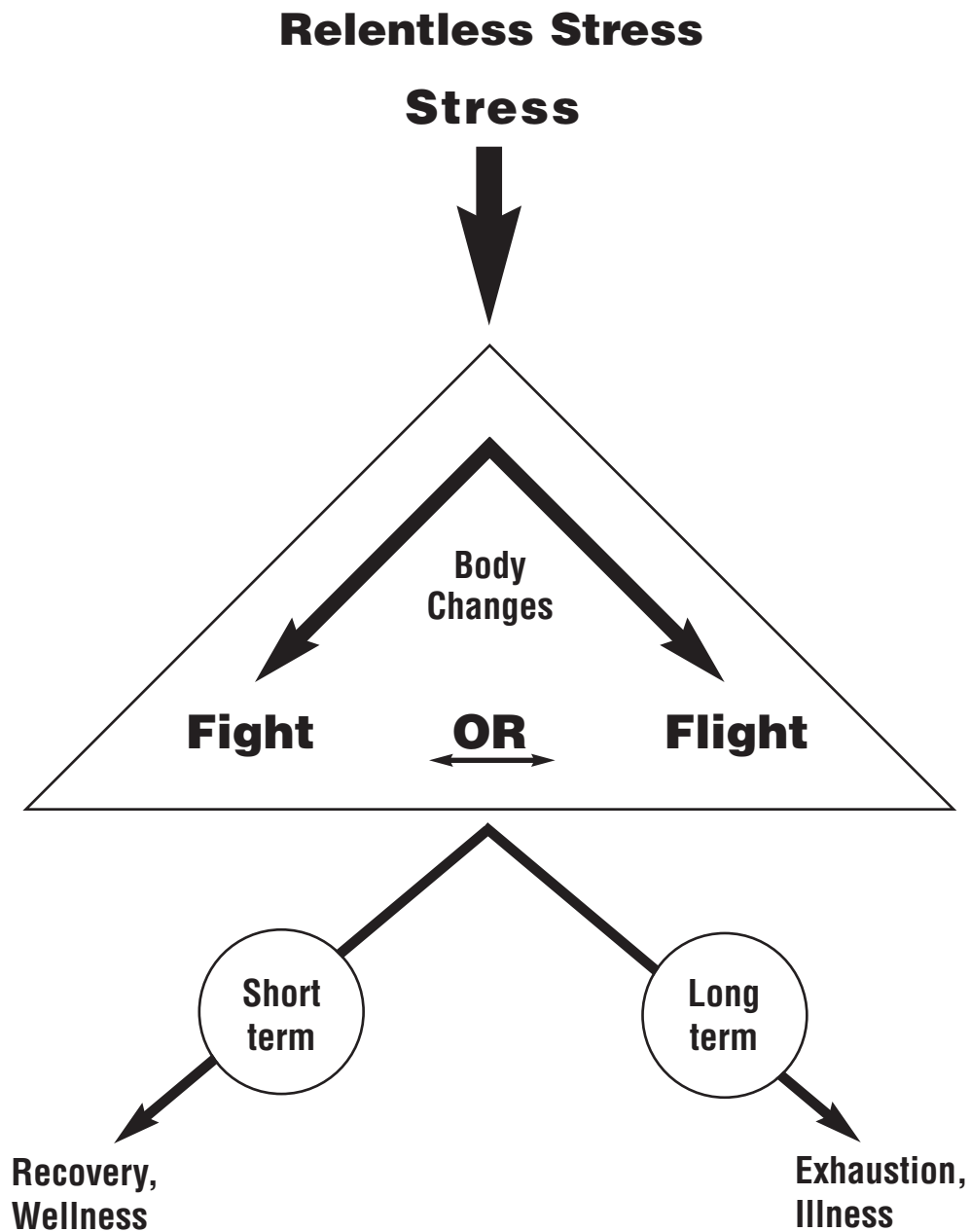
In **Figure 4-1**, the nature of stress itself is examined. Stress induces body changes, preparing us for either “fight” or “flight,” depending on the nature of the circumstances confronting us. Either the stress is faced head on and we “fight,” or, if it is too overwhelming or dangerous (as happened with our ancestors millions of years ago when this biological system evolved), the stress induces a flight response. When the stress continues on a short-term basis, that is, when the fight or flight reaction successfully removes the stress one way or another, then recovery takes place. However, if the stress continues long term, it produces exhaustion. As a consequence, the possibility that we experience further stress, weakness, and illness is increased. So when stress persists chronically, it relentlessly works its negative, deleterious effects. Thus, we need to learn how to moderate stress, how to monitor it, how to resolve the situations that produce it, and how to adapt to it. We can even ask ourselves how stress can become a motivational force more than a destructive one. **Stress mastered well produces wellness.**

The model of stress just described views stress in terms of the body’s reaction to a stressor, and leaves little room for individual variation. The model has important ramifications for understanding the connection between stress and disease. However, psychologists have developed other models of stress. In one important model, psychologists examine the stressors, or stimuli, that produce the stress response. They have produced stress scales, where different types of stressors are rated for their level of stress. For example, the death of a loved one is rated extremely high on the scale, whereas a minor traffic accident would be rated much lower.

However, in this approach, some large-scale events are given about equal weight whether they are positive or negative. Thus, for example, wedding preparations are considered quite stressful. Moreover, the collection of daily hassles is given less weight on the scale compared to large-scale events. One could imagine that the daily wear and tear for some people is unrelenting and, consequently, quite stressful. As well, there is little room for individual variation in approaches to stress that use scales. The stress scales are applied equally to all individuals. Although this approach of using scales to measure stress gives part of the answer in understanding stress, not everyone reacts to the same situation in the same way.

Figure 4-1

When stress is chronic, the risk is exhaustion and illness. By monitoring our stress, we help ourselves.



Instead of conceptualizing stress as a universal bodily response, as in fight or flight, or as a one-fits-all scale of stressors, psychologists have developed a third model of stress, one that considers individual differences. They argue that different people perceive stressful situations in individual ways and that we have different degrees of coping ability to

.....
*Conquer the great
divide—join minds.*
.....

.....
*Stress has many needlessly
bad effects—and many ways
that we can make it needy.*
.....

handle stress. Moreover, we differ in our evaluations of how well we can handle stress. Different individuals may have similar coping skills but, also they may have different degrees of confidence about their abilities to use them effectively in dealing with stress. Moreover, people can change their perception of stress. For example, an individual may come to realize that a particular stressor is not as bad as it seemed at first, thereby reducing its impact, facilitating better handling of it, and speeding its resolution. Thus, there are individual differences in the stress experience for different people, even if the stressful situation in which they find themselves appears on the surface to be equal for them. In dealing with stress, perception matters. **We can learn to be better masters of stress by learning to perceive better what matters in stress.**

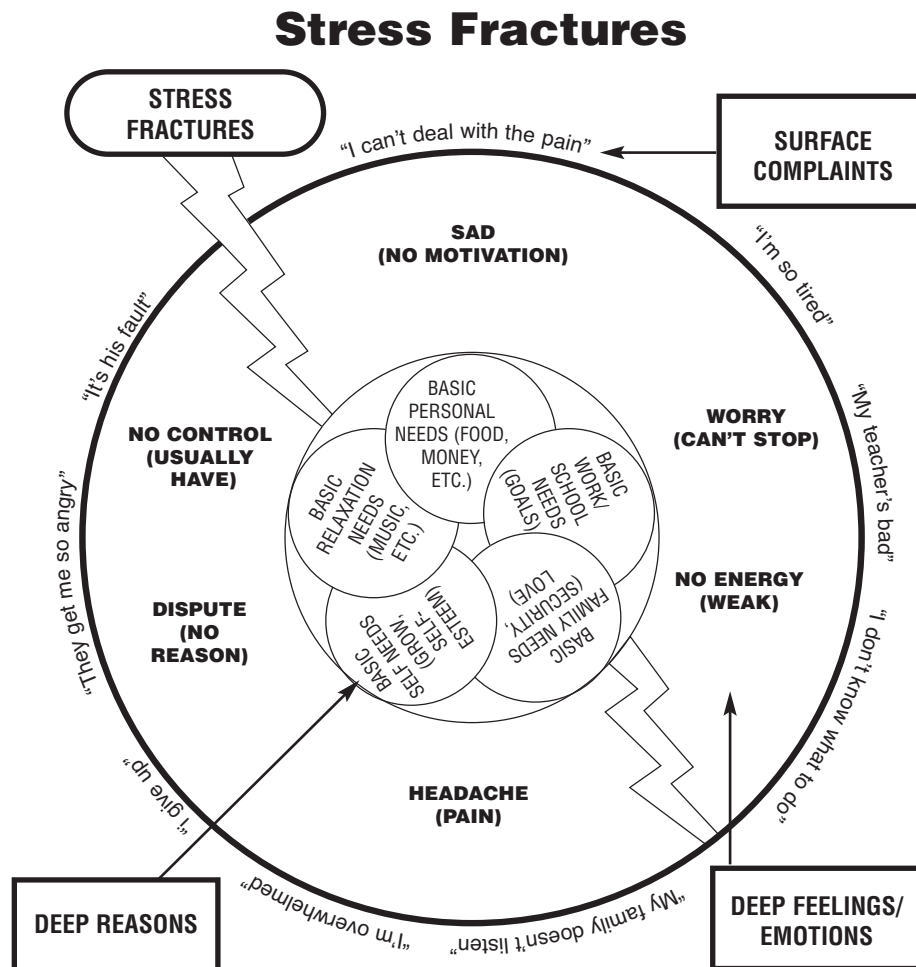
Figure 4-2 shows that there are different levels in understanding the effects of stress. The diagram indicates that we all express surface complaints but, often, underlying them are deeper feelings or emotions, such as worry, sadness, and anger. Moreover, beyond these deeper feelings or emotions are even deeper reasons for the complaints. Usually, these deeper reasons relate to unsatisfied basic needs, such as basic relaxation needs, basic personal needs, basic work or school needs, and basic family needs. Many or all of these basic needs can be compromised or fractured by stress.

However, we are not simply a mirror of the stresses that we experience and the fractures in us that they create. We are made up of many psychological parts, and stress fractures do not reach them all. Stress does not reach into all the corners of our core and its coping mechanisms. Strong parts of us remain intact, we have ways of dealing with stress, and we have people around us who can help. However, when stress arrives, we may lose sight of our resources. **The secret in dealing with stress is to know that we have secret strengths to help us deal with it.** Moreover, in dealing with stress, it is ourselves that constitute our most important resource.

In **Figure 4-3**, we see the different directions that stress can take. These are not actual spatial directions, but possible pathways on the psychological map that we experience when we are stressed. Two of the four directions are less appro-

Figure 4-2

Stress brings complaints, but doesn't alter our fundamental core. By reconnecting to our core, we break the vicious circles of stress.

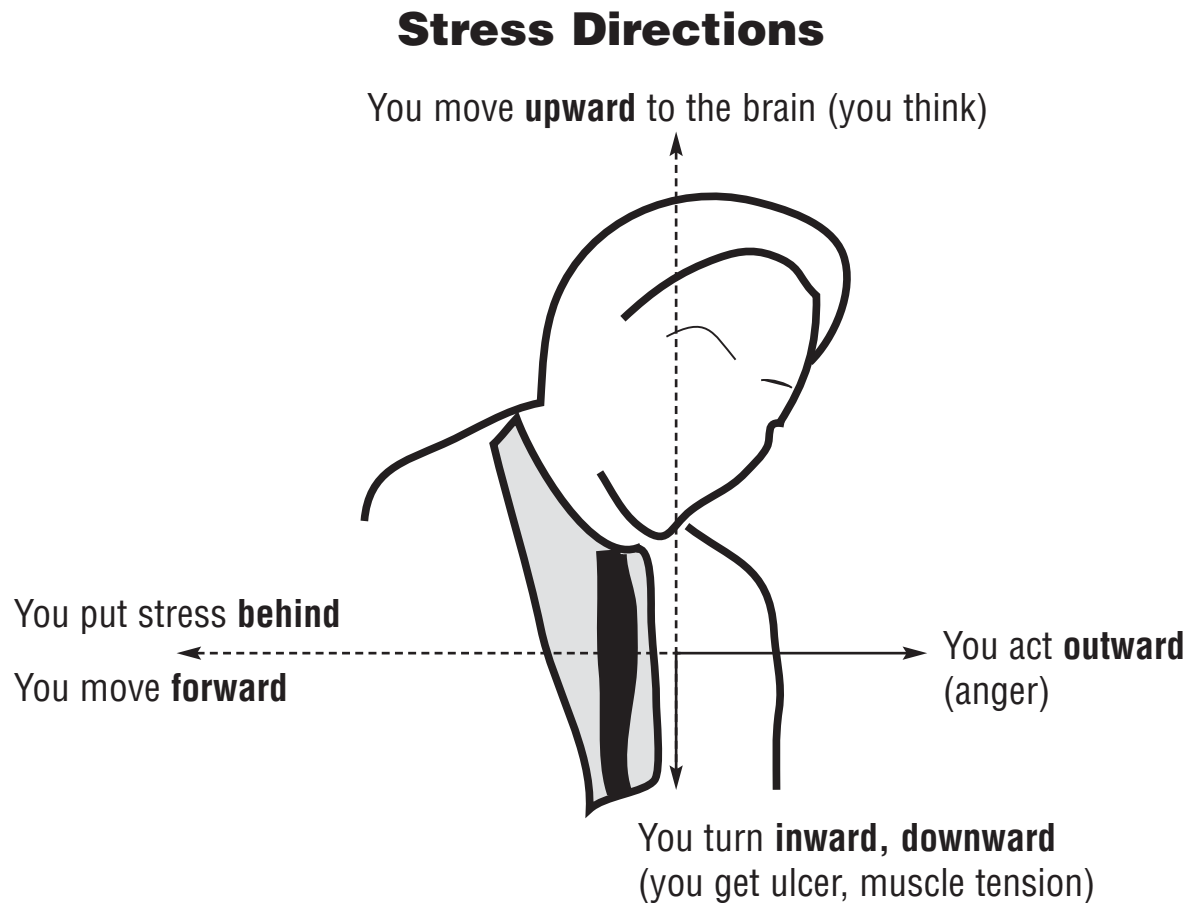


appropriate than the others in dealing with stress. That is, one less optimal way of dealing with stress is to turn in the outward direction, which is a metaphor for expressing anger when we are under stress. Another less optimal way of dealing with stress is to turn inward, or downward into the body, but this situation sets up conditions for increased stomach upset, muscle tension, and the like.

However, there are different, more adaptive pathways that we can follow in our encounters with stress. Stress could

Figure 4-3

Stress pushes us backwards, unless we use our forehead.



.....
Stress warms up to heated discussions.
.....

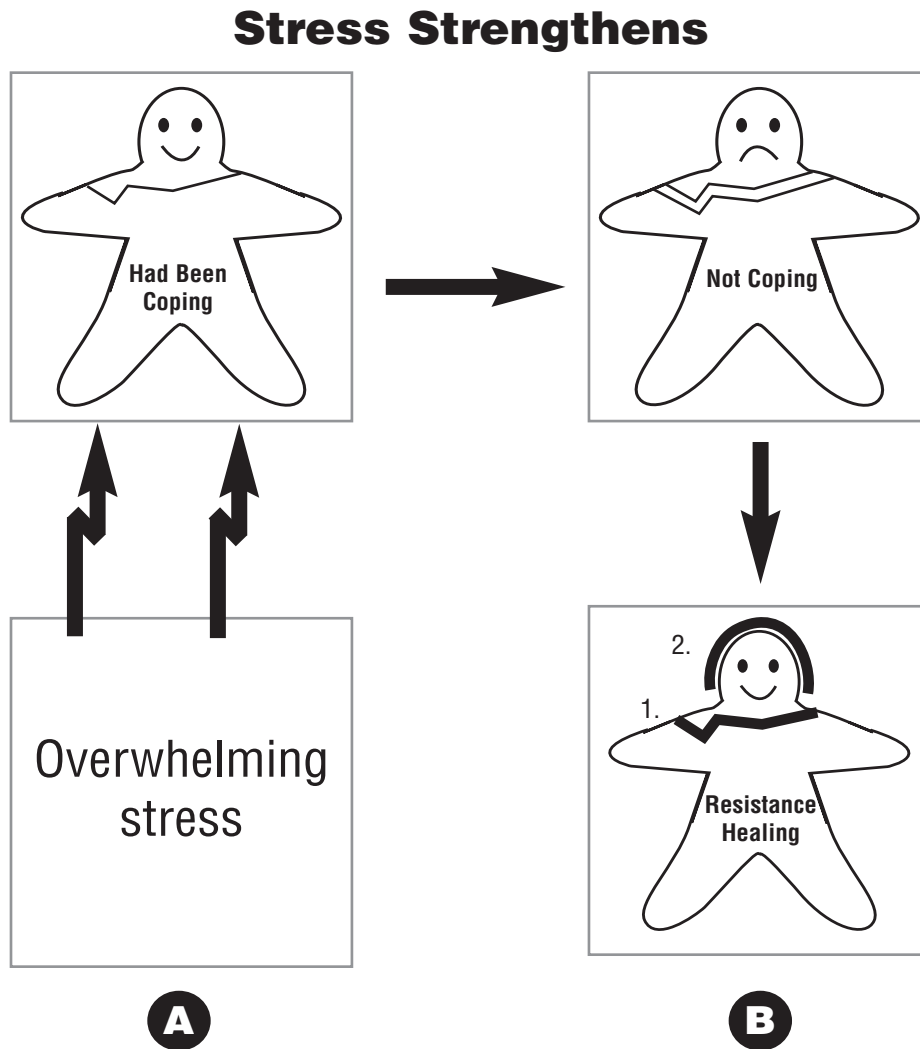
move in an upward direction, that is, in a metaphorical sense, stress can lead to positive activity in our brain. When stressed, we can think about it, preparing optimal plans to solve the underlying problem. Also, to assure that we are thinking straight, we can engage in silent self-talk, trying to calm down. In this way, we could act to put stress behind us, helping us to move forward, which is the ultimate direction that we want to take when confronted by stress. **Stress can come from any direction, but if we stay directed, the only direction that it will go is backward.**

.....
Stress beats a retreat—when we stay upbeat.
.....

Figure 4-4 emphasizes that stress may strengthen us. It induces fractures but, at the same time, healing takes place. Stress comes in different intensities, and is perceived differ-

Figure 4-4

Stress may give us temporary setbacks, but it may also give us permanent strengthening.



ently. Often, it is considered minor. We all have vulnerabilities or minor stress fractures from the minor stresses that we encounter on a daily basis. Normally, these are positive stresses and fractures. For example, muscles grow stronger after having minor tears created during physical exercise. It is the same with most daily stressors; minor stress fractures enrich, motivate, and invigorate. We try to cope with these normal stresses and, usually, we can manage.

.....
*Stress gets a lesson when
we go to school.*
.....

.....
*Make stress a surprise party.
Change.*
.....

However, with overwhelming stress, our coping skills fragment. But with time, we might come to better deal with overwhelming stress. We might develop new coping skills or strengthen prior ones. Therefore, a major stress might have constructive or positive aspects. **By accepting as a real possibility the potential growth factor of stress, it makes that potential much easier to materialize when we are exposed to stress.**

Figure 4-11 explains that there are many individual differences in how we experience stress. The way we experience stress is not simply a one-to-one relationship to the degree of the objective characteristics of stress in any particular situation. Both the personal characteristics that we possess, as the individuals experiencing the stress, and the characteristics of others, as important parties who may be able to help, enter into the equation. Thus, our stress experience can be greater than what should be expected by the objective stressful situation, depending on our personal and other resources. However, to the contrary, our stress experience can be minimized relative to what is suggested by the objective stressful situation.

.....
*Stress blows things out
of proportion when
we huff and puff.*
.....

Stress can derive from external factors or from personal ones. External stresses refer to things like work pressures and family discord. Personal stresses refer to things like studying very hard to get an “A” on an exam at school or examining the effects of one’s past. Objectively, often these stresses are mild to medium in intensity and, normally, we should be able to deal with them. Sometimes, these stresses are overwhelming to us.

.....
*When you are you,
stress cannot be itself.*
.....

However, a moderating factor in how we experience any stress is the nature of our personality, or our enduring behavioral traits and characteristics. These are not constant in every situation in which we find ourselves, but personality has some consistencies. For example, we may be outgoing or shy most of the time, or moody or stable in emotions most of the time. The figure provides one way of looking at individual differences in personality. It indicates that right from the first few months of life individuals may be (1) easygoing in temperament, (2) less easygoing, at first, but then easygoing, (3) difficult and sullen, (4) withdrawn and shy, or (5) chaotic, confused, and confusing, and experiencing most everything as overwhelming. Of course, pure personality types do not exist, and most individuals show at least

Figure 4-11

Not everyone experiences stress the same way. There are individual differences in personality, supports available, and personal resources and control. Accepting our differences is a start in working through stress.

Individual Differences in Stress Experience

Stressors	Personality	Buffer	Experience
Personally generated (mild)	Easy going	Coping resources	Positive experience
External (mild)	Slow to warm up	Social supports	In control
Personal (moderate)	Withdrawn	Work/ school support	Some control
External (moderate)	Difficult	Professional/ institutional support	No control
Overwhelming	Feel overwhelmed	Perception of stressor (as bearable)	Overwhelmed

*Stress slips in when
we clue out.*

*The only downside of your
new upside is that it
becomes your inside.*

*Stress has no room when
we build our mind.*

some degree of combination of types, with perhaps one predominating. Our pattern of personality types serves as a filter in our experience of stress. It colors it, shapes our response to it, influences our internal reactions and behaviors in response to it, and affects the people around us as we try to manage it. Individuals with easygoing and slow-to-warm-up personalities usually should have an easier time with stress, but in some situations the other types may be more adaptive.

The stress experience is not only influenced by our personality but, also, by various mediating buffers or factors that lie between a stressful situation and the responses that we give to it. Some of these buffers are external to us, such as the extent of support that we receive from family, friends, professionals, and at work. Such support can be critical in making a difficult stress more manageable. Other buffers are the ones that we provide ourselves. There are many ways of coping with stress, and some individuals are better at it than others, or some techniques are better than others for one particular situation.

Most important, the stressful situations that impact us are not interpreted or perceived the same way by each of us. One person may deplore overtime at work, a deadline to meet, or a difference of opinion with a friend, whereas another person may relish these opportunities to show what they can do or that they can manage emotional moments. Often, different people interpret a stressful situation in different ways, or they give different meanings to the same event. In the end, stress is only what we perceive, evaluate, appraise, or see. We may experience an overwhelming trauma, but have enough personal and external resources to handle it well right from the beginning. Or, to the contrary, we may subjectively perceive that a major stress is present where, objectively, there is little or none.

Part of what we have to do as students of the stresses of life is to learn to perceive stress optimally. Objectively, perhaps the situation is not as bad as we think. Perhaps, we do have the skills necessary to deal with it. Perhaps, we can learn new skills. Perhaps, we know where to get help and how. Perhaps, we can stay more calm and more in control compared to what we think, so that we can use all the resources available to us to handle the stress.

Thus, whether stress is experienced as positive, as overwhelming, or as somewhere in between depends not only

on the reality of the particular stressor but, also, on the reality of how we typically handle stress. Also, that reality can vary with our mood, the support around us, and our determination. Nothing is predetermined; we are not simple weight scales sinking with heavier and heavier stress. We have psychological muscles that we can choose to flex or not, making the weight of stress more bearable or not. In a certain sense, we cannot change stress, but we can always choose the degree to which we can handle it and destress.

Individual differences are essential to our personal survival and the survival of our species. Life would be boring with no individual differences. And if everyone reacted in the same way to stress, there would be little room for personal innovation and growth in dealing with it. **When we cherish our uniqueness, all stresses become the same—managed well.**

Figure 4-11 indicates that the outcome of any confrontation with stress may range from having a positive experience to having an overwhelming one. When under stress, different degrees of control are possible. As we have seen, the degree of control does not only depend on the severity of the stress but, also, on a host of other factors, such as personality, perception, and support. But when the stress is experienced as overwhelming, is it enough to know that we are unique individuals, even in how we deal with stress? The answer to this question is both “yes” and “no.” By knowing that we are unique, it is more likely that we can find the motivation to deal with the stress. It becomes more likely that we can find the personal resources and buffers needed to be successful in doing so. However, knowledge is never enough; planning, application, and persistence are needed to see us through difficult times. Skills are required, and we need to know that they can be developed. **The worst enemy of overwhelming stress is overwhelming preparation.** Here is one law that does not differ for one individual to the next.

Figure 4-13 indicates that there is more to therapy than technique. Techniques work only when we want to apply them. It is not only a question of mind over matter—it is also a matter of deciding that the mind should matter. When we decide to use our minds, other things fall into place. We become more social, more active, and more involved. **Stress does mind—when we use our mind.**

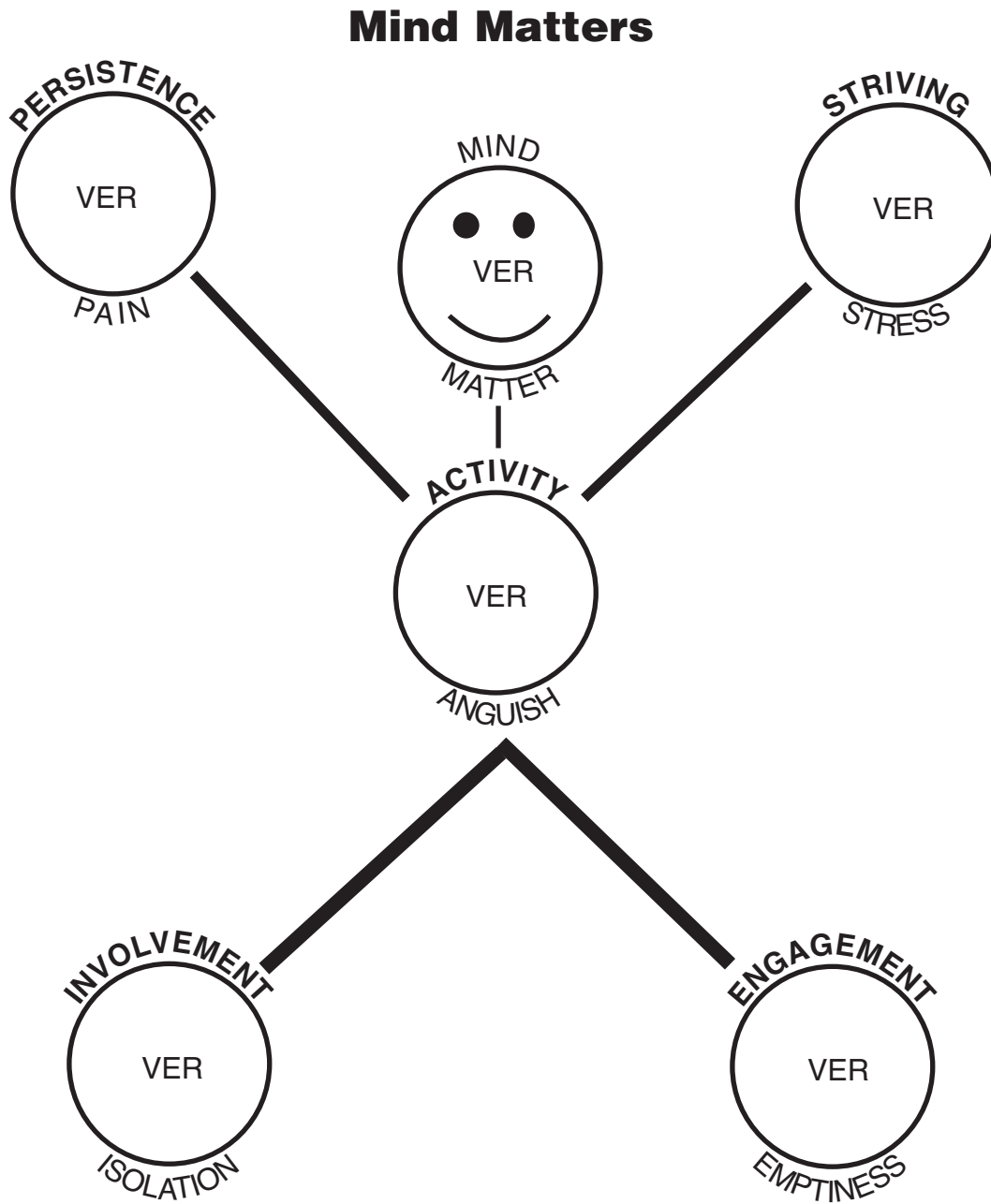
.....
*Stress can be cured—when
we give it the treatment.*
.....

.....
*Stress has no redeeming
qualities—except how it
brings out our best.*
.....

.....
*When we decide to
change bad habits,
the good times begin.*
.....

Figure 4-13

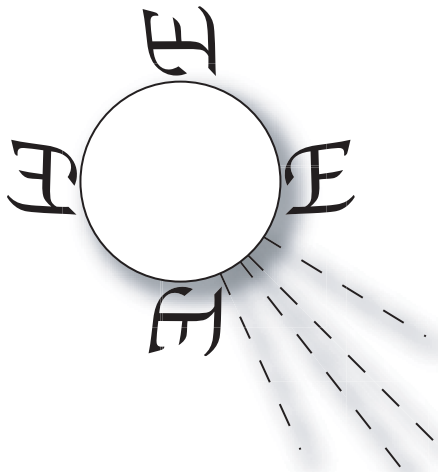
Mind over matter happens only when our mind matters.



<i>We can count stress out— or count on it.</i>	<i>When stress rolls around— roll your eyes.</i>	<i>The best antidote to stress is not to dote on it.</i>
<i>When stress inflates faster than a balloon—blow it up.</i>	<i>Stress lacks a heart— when we don't.</i>	<i>Take stress out on a date— send it backwards in time.</i>

Chapter 5

The Basic Choice



EXCERPTS
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*"E" is for always ending
up on the right path.*

.....
*Sometimes things go faster
when we slow down.*
.....

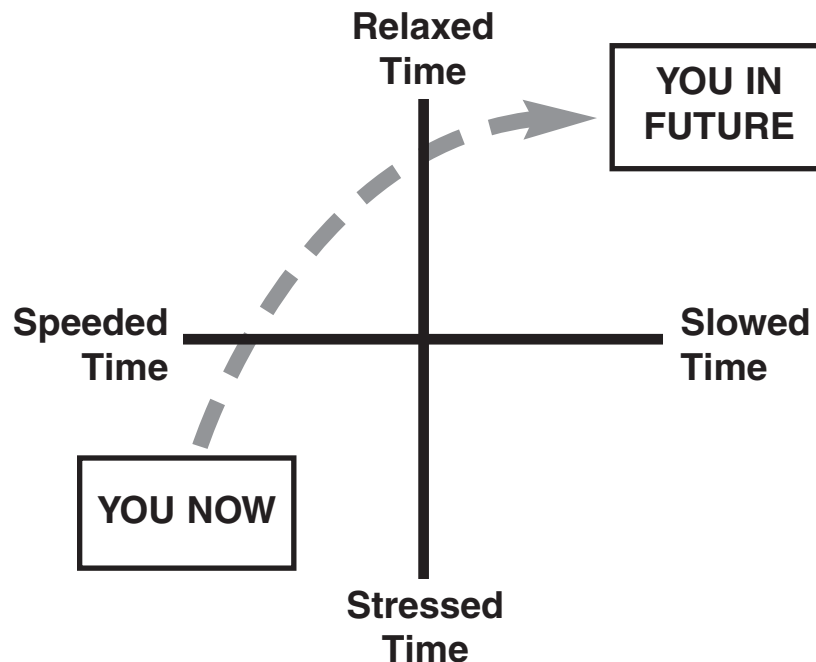
.....
*Give stress the business—
instead of your business.*
.....

In **Figure 5-6**, we realize that stress is like physics, it is all relative. When faced by stress that seems overpowering, sometimes, we need to make a quantum leap out of our current perspective on time and begin to construct a future where we have a better place. The expression “everything in time” tells us to slow down but, sometimes, it is not enough; sometimes, we have to abandon time altogether. To make the jump away from stress into a different universe where time is more relaxed, slowed, or even absent, requires a mental leap of faith. We have to stop running even faster, or else we will slow down even more. Perhaps, we need to perform relaxation exercises or find the right relaxing hobby. Also, the solution could be the opposite. Perhaps, we have too much worry time on our minds and we need to find ways of keeping functionally active, spending time on relevant tasks. **Time may be the fourth dimension, but the wisdom in its use is the fifth dimension.**

Figure 5-6

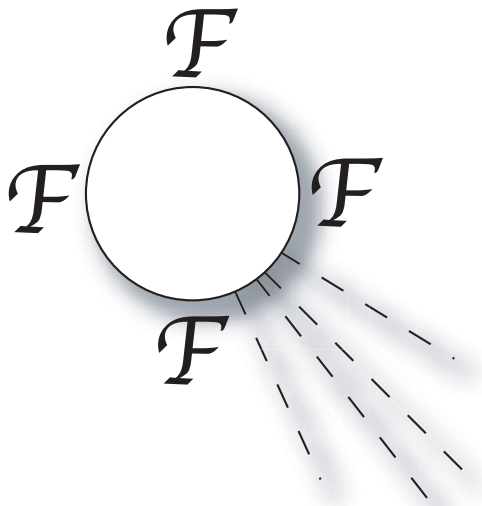
Stress can be darkened over time, and we can brighten over time. Let the good times begin.

Time Will Tell

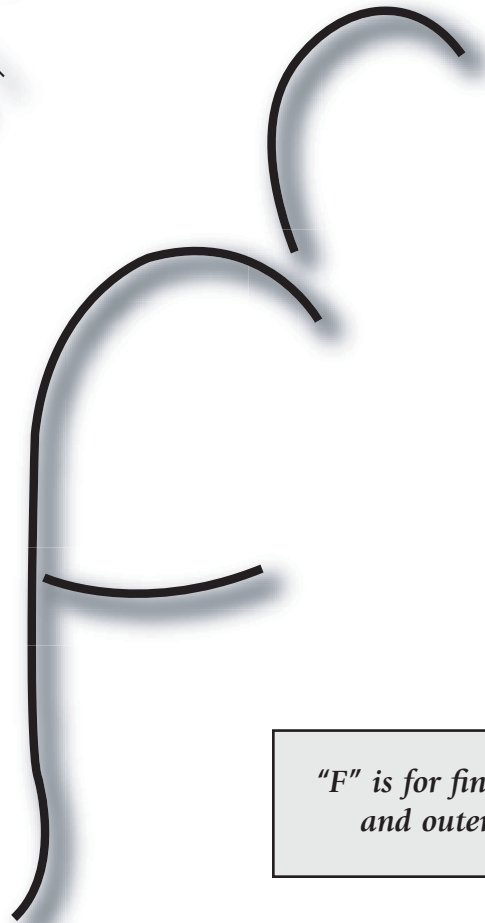


Chapter 6

The Ins and Outs of Choice



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*"F" is for finding inner
and outer peace.*

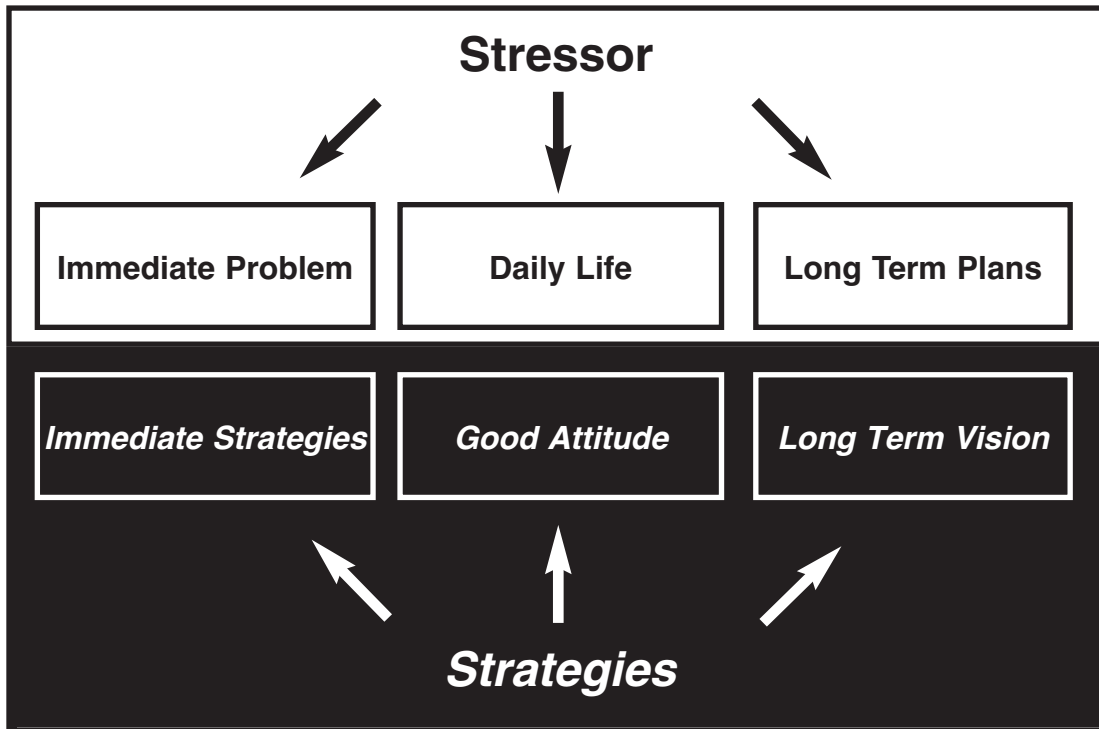
Solutions come in infinite varieties. Plant their seeds.

Figure 6-9 illustrates that stress needs to be examined at multiple levels. Too often, we get fixated on one level or the other. Stress happens at three levels—moment-to-moment, over the day, and in larger units, such as our vision of the future. Once we understand this concept, it is easier to grasp that there are strategies that we can use to deal with stress at all three levels. We can manage our moment-to-moment stress by moment-to-moment techniques, such as breathing exercises. We can improve our daily function by trying to keep busy, being functional, and being social. We can keep the long term in mind more easily once we take care of the short term. Seeing the long term involves seeing the larger picture, taking the high road, planning well, and having hope. To conclude, good stress management requires moment-to-moment psychological presence, keeping on track in our daily responsibilities, and having a constructive, long term plan for the future. **Stress retreats when we advance.**

Figure 6-9

Solutions to problems often can be found in ourselves, especially when we seek them there.

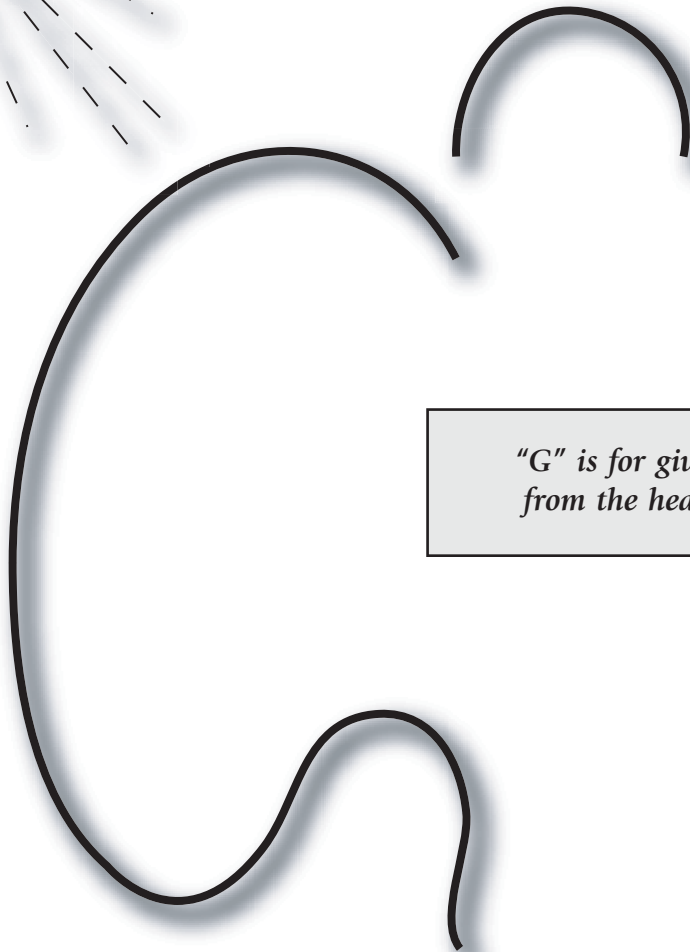
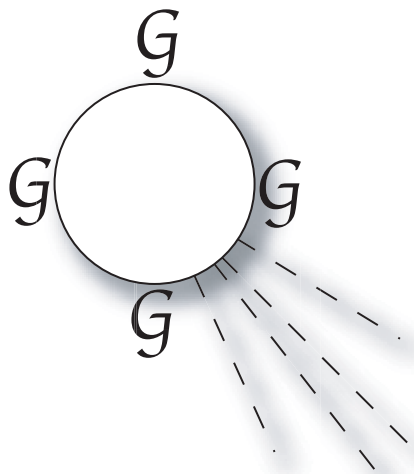
Problems Are Everywhere: So Are Solutions



Chapter 7

Complexities in Choosing

EXCERPTS
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*"G" is for giving
from the heart.*

.....
*Anxiety can be a turning
point turning on.*
.....

.....
*Stress is a sign that
plans are needed.*
.....

.....
*One way to keep stress
down is to avoid
building it up.*
.....

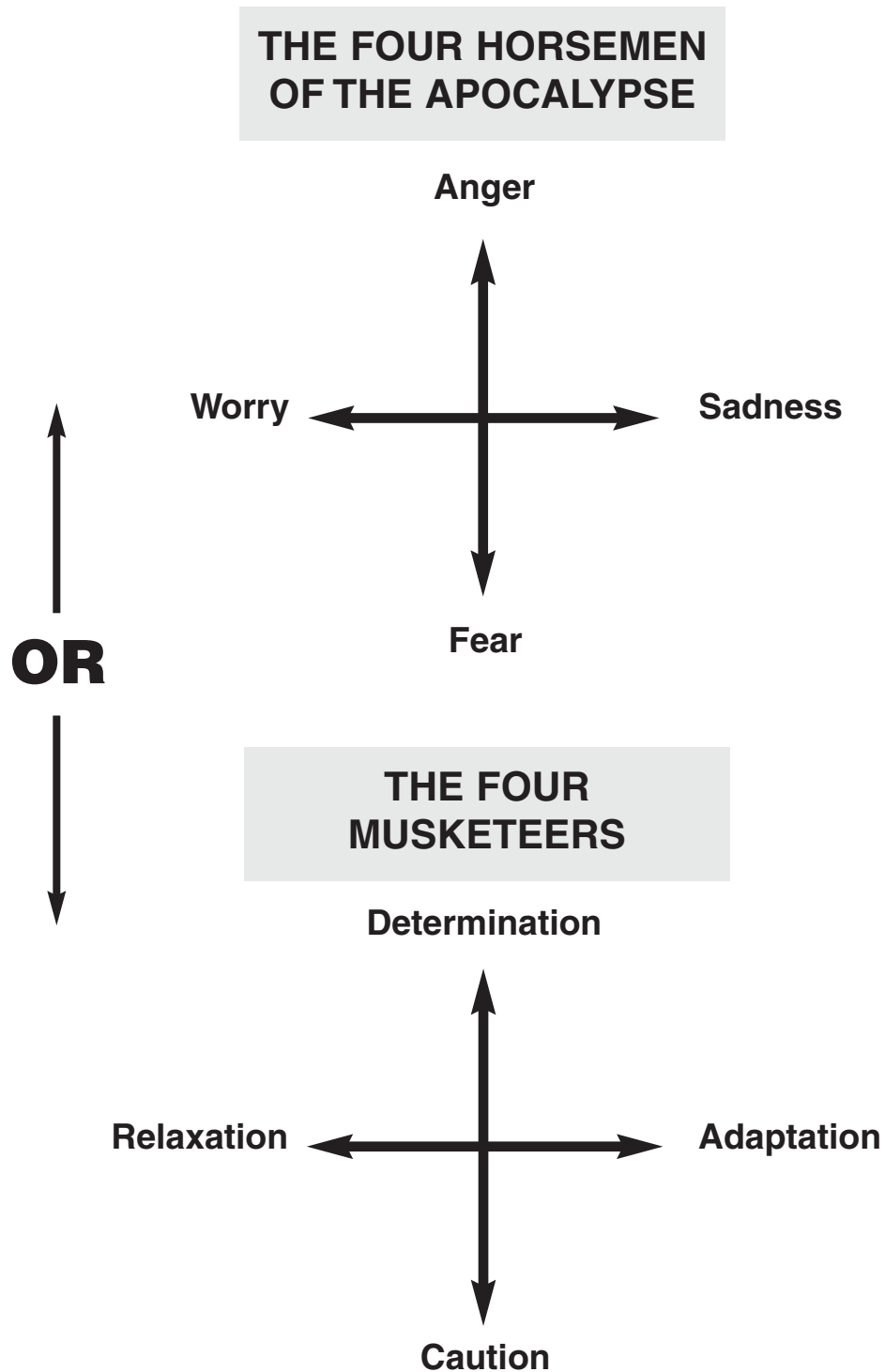
Figure 7-1 shows that, as we deal with stress, we develop negative emotions. When we react negatively to stress, we may feel that such emotions give us an energy boost or otherwise help us get through the stress. However, we need to learn that when these emotions continue, because they are less adaptive than they appear. Are the negative emotions elicited by stress our only choice, or can we see them as messengers, or signs of how to deal with stress in a more constructive and positive manner? For example, if we get angry, is it simply a step toward becoming determined? If we are fearful, does it mean simply that we have to be cautious? If we think that we have lost something and become sad, is it simply the beginning in overcoming that feeling and adapting? If we are worried, is it a signal that we should relax? In all cases of negative emotions after stress, should we really just keep on expressing them in an endless vicious circle? When they persist, negative emotions are maladaptive, and become interfering messages with unclear meanings and less clear plans. When negative emotions cannot be turned around, our minds have to maintain a steady course in the emotional turmoil, and attempt to organize calmly a coherent plan of action despite the interference by the emotions. To do this better, we must channel these emotions, take their power, and orient them to work toward the best plan that we can devise, such as turning anger into determination.

In dealing with stress, if our minds can struggle through the phase where the emotions cloud it, we increase the chances of getting a more positive outcome. In saying this, I am not denying the positive role that emotions play in our thoughts, and I do recognize that thoughts and emotions are indivisible. However, it is hard to be only positive when we are under stress, so we need to learn how to deal with negative emotions. For example, we can switch to some optimism and hope in order to give us more energy and to help produce a plan that works in dealing with stress. We need to be able to monitor which emotions are brought out by stress, regain some calm, and try to think and turn things around. Emotions can be used to hinder thinking or promote it. **When we move our emotions to the positive side, clearer thinking gets in motion.**

Figure 7-1

Stress elicits negative emotions. Make them illicit.

Which Foursome to Choose



*There are many ways that
stress can be countered.
Start numbering them.*

*When stress builds, build
the resources to deal with it.*

*Stress comes freely,
but do not give it interest.*

Figure 7-5 shows that bad habits arise from stress and are not really part of our central core. It indicates that bad habits are not innate, or born within us, but derive from factors external to us, such as stress. In contrast, positive qualities and good habits are the major components of what is central to us. Normally, bad habits are either minimal or are controlled and contained, because the stresses in our lives are not overwhelming. Also, we have coping mechanisms, resources, and ways of relaxing and dealing with stress to help us get through our daily lives. We have our social environment and social support network of family and friends to help us get through moments of stress.

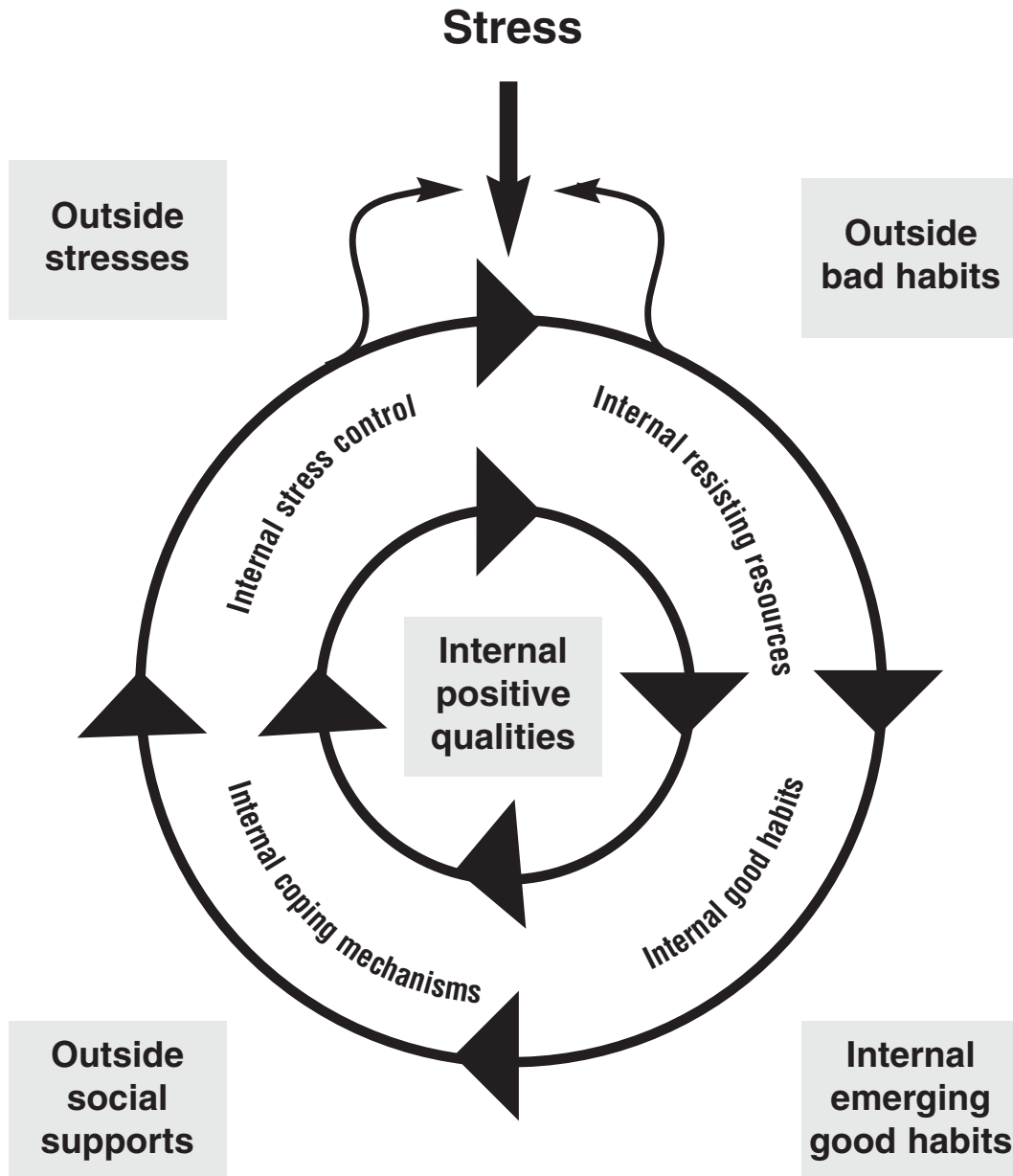
Nevertheless, there are moments when all these stress resistance mechanisms are overwhelmed and bad habits are more likely to manifest. We may become aggressive or depressed, worry too much or withdraw, and so on. If this happens, it is unfair to ourselves to say that these behaviors are only negative and maladaptive for, in the short term, they may help us mobilize our personal and social resources in order to better deal with the stress. Thus, in a certain sense, in the short term, they may be positive and adaptive. However, they can develop into maladaptive bad habits when the stress is too intense or prolonged and we become incapable of dealing with it. The bad habits may become generalized and liable to emerge in any situation. When this happens, we tend to forget our positive qualities and forget to use our personal and social stress reduction mechanisms. We perceive the stress as immense, that we cannot cope or deal with it, and we believe that we have especially bad habits. We become pessimistic about our ability to deal with the stress and to change ourselves.

Part of what we have to learn in destressing is to have confidence in our positive qualities and that our positive core always stays with us. No matter what the stress that we are experiencing and no matter to what degree the stress disorients us and hides our positives, we can stay the positive course. Our central core is not like a chameleon. It does not take on the colors of what surrounds it. Our central core is not an amorphous balloon. It is a well-formed, resilient, powerful core that helps us to adjust, adapt, and move forward. The stresses that we face may appear to make our central core small or weak. However, in times such as

Figure 7-5

Our positives, our coping skills, our good habits, and our social supports can help keep stress on the outside.

The Ins and Outs of Stress



these, our central core is always there, a positive waiting for the call to mobilize so that it emerges as a force that can help us through troubled times. As long as some of it is there, even if it is hidden, our central positive core can become as strong and as big as we will it.

*Stress used to get to me,
now it gets me moving.*

*Concentration requires
a concern to do it.*

*Make your mind a proving
ground—prove to yourself
that you can do it.*

*When it is difficult to choose from
among two options, one option is
to find a better one.*

*First, she formed an idea to solve
the problem. Then, she knew she
could form many ones.*

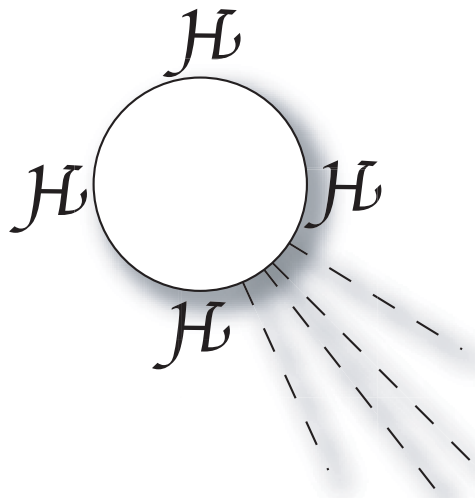
*Incisive decisions avoid
mental collisions.*

*In problem solving, the more
options that we have, the harder it
is to choose. The less options that
we have, the harder it is.*



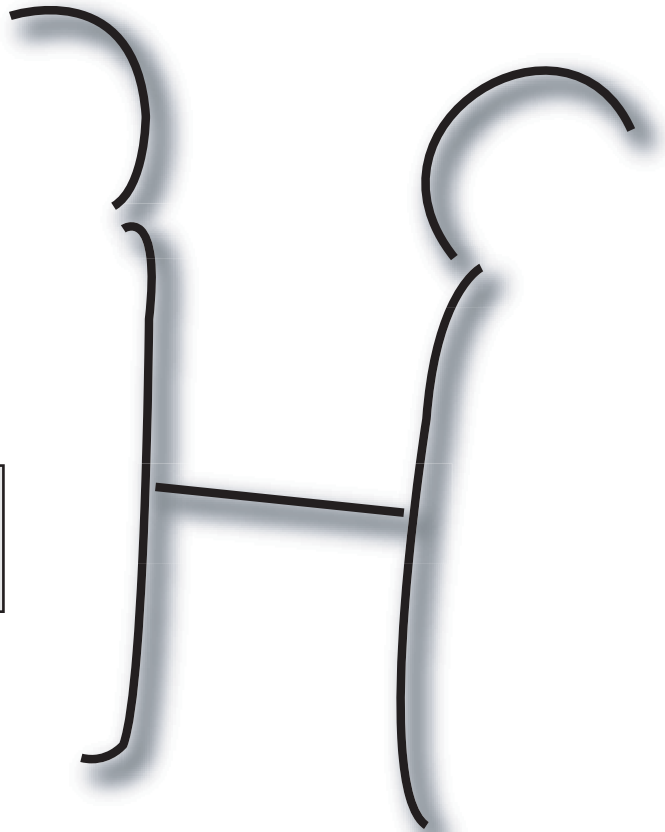
Chapter 8

Think Choice



EXCERPTS
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*"H" is for being
helpful and seeking help.*



When we search for positives despite negatives, it becomes a positive habit.

We should not pinch pennies with common sense.

Figure 8-2 highlights the concept of “But” statements. They are positive thoughts tagged on after negative thoughts. We cannot stop negative thoughts from developing, but we can cut them short by adding “but” statements after them. I provide some examples: “I can’t stand the stress, but I am trying my best.” “I’ll never get better, but I guess there is some progress.” “Sure there’s stress, but there is no reason why I cannot deal with it.” “This stress is tough, but I am tougher.” The sooner we add these “but” statements, that is, positives after negatives, or more optimistic statements after more pessimistic statements, the less we will be needlessly stressed. Each of us can do exercises in positive thinking. We can think of or find positive responses to our negative ideas. We need to let positives be our guides. No ifs, ands, or buts about it.

Figure 8-4 indicates that when optimism becomes a way of life, we develop a way with life. When we actively cope with stress, not only do we handle it better but, also, we feel better

Figure 8-2

We cannot stop negative thoughts. But we can train ourselves to tag on a positive after them. When stress produces a negative, follow it with a positive.

Butt Out

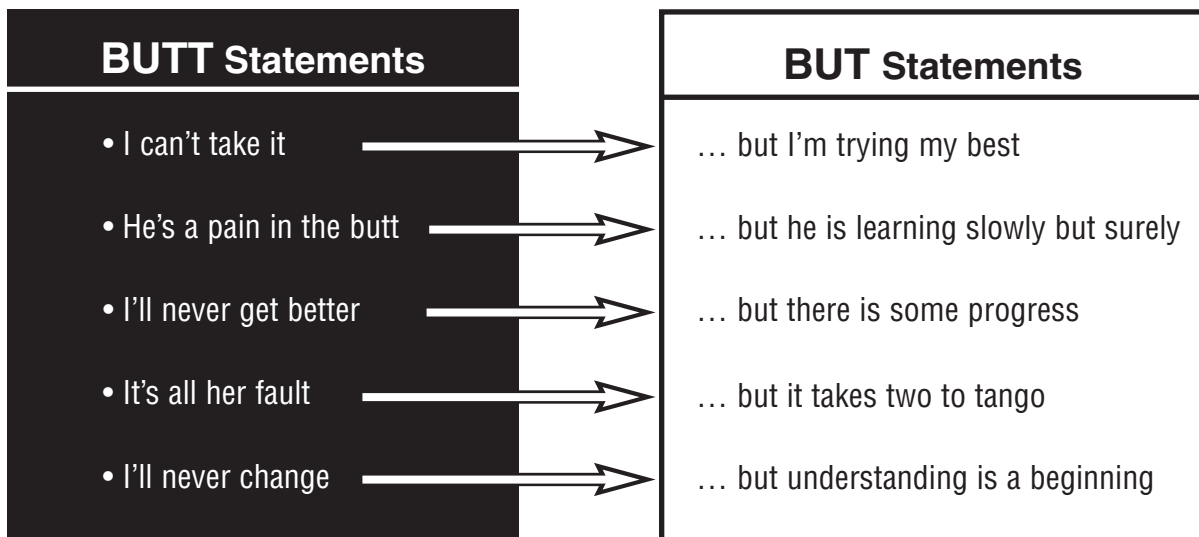


Figure 8-4

Make every day that time of the year when we make a resolution to control stress.

Optimism Fan Club

Dear _____

We've heard that you were in a difficult predicament, and got stressed out, but want to improve.

We are asking you to become a member of our fan club. To be a member, you have to be optimistic. We have found that **being optimistic does not take a mystic**; it's not mysterious when our attitude is positive. In our fan club, we all come out for people who want good outcomes. We heard that part of you is optimistic and wants to be more optimistic. **We applaud your efforts.**

Let us give you a few tips to help you along. First, pessimism is a natural part of stress. It's not something to deny. Let it be there. But let optimism be there, too. Optimism is a start. It leads to other things. When we're optimistic, we can face better the source of our stress. We become active in facing our stress. We cope better. We perceive the stress, plan a course of action, and see the priorities in the problem and also in the solution. We keep going, pacing ourselves as we proceed. We persist in going on as new problems and obstacles arise. We perform better the needed actions. We problem solve well so that the stresses diminish, and we perfect our ability to handle stress for the next time.

Optimism allows its confrere, Active Coping, to do its thing. Pessimism inhibits coping, leading us to cop out. So whenever we get stressed, we need to keep a level head, balance our choices, show balance, and allow optimism in while keeping pessimism out. **When we're optimistic, we don't opt out.**

This is what all our members in the optimism fan club have learned. No one said life was easy. But it became easier when we became optimistic. Optimism allows us to see the future. But the funny part about it is that when we are optimistic and perceive the future, we forget about it because we're trying so hard in the present. Optimism allows us to forget the past. But the funny part is that the past keeps coming back even though optimism allows us to forget it, but when it does it's changed. No longer is the past seen as only a collection of stresses that we have experienced. With optimism, instead, we come to see the past as a collection of challenges that we have lived. This is because when we are optimistic in the present, we come to see any **stress as a challenge**, and then come to re-interpret not only the past but also the future in this way.

Optimism keeps challenging us. Let it stay. Let us challenge stress back. Let us send it where it belongs, around us but not in us, over there and not in here; because in here is us, ourselves, all the people we care about, and all the best that we hope and dream for.



as we handle it. Coping well with stress makes us feel handy instead of handicapped. Optimism is not all or none; even having a little bit is enough. It can empower us with its energy for lengthy periods of time even if we feel it for only a brief moment. **Optimism is atomic—a little goes a long way.**

.....
Often, common sense is a question of calming down.
.....

.....
*Thinking the worst
should never come first.*
.....

Figure 8-6 deals with the particular thinking error of “catastrophizing”. The very act of thinking the worst is the worst thing that can happen. It sets up a negative mood, sending us into a vicious circle that makes catastrophes more likely, in a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, if they are only brief, catastrophic thoughts possibly could serve a relevant function in certain situations. That is, they may alert us to danger and mobilize us to engage in preventative action. However, once they get us going, we should strive to turn down their rhetoric in our mind. It is natural to go over in our thoughts all the negative possibilities that could happen, the worst-case scenarios. However, we need to recognize the catastrophic thought pattern, reorient and reduce it, and then renew, redirect, and return to better ways of thinking. **Thinking catastrophe should be momentary, at best, and replaced on the moment by thinking the best.**

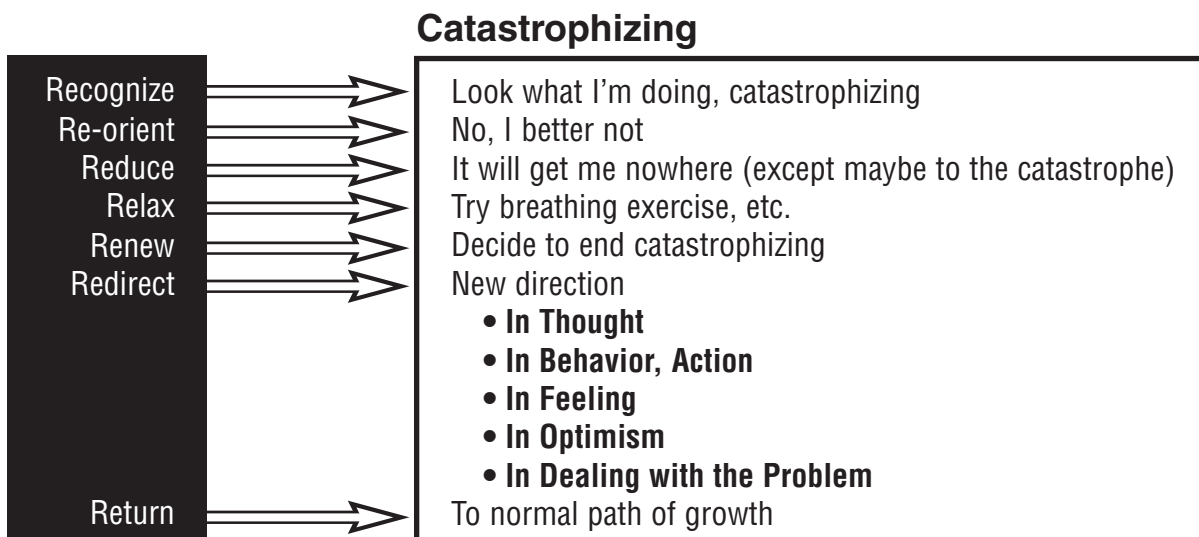
.....
*Attention is not so
much how well we
focus but to where.*
.....

We need to change how we speak to ourselves. We could engage in constructive self-talk, such as in the following: “Is there another way of thinking? Why am I thinking so negatively? What if it’s not as bad as I think? There must be some things that I can do to help. There must be things that other

Figure 8-6

Catastrophic thinking is a pervasive mode of thought that is pessimistic, emphatic, and harmful. It leaves little hope. We can succeed in altering such distortions in thinking, calling on our optimism. Optimism is a self-fulfilling prediction.

Let the Cat Out



people can do to help. I can try to distract myself, find other things to do, tell myself the right things, and try to turn things around. What is important is not so much how I feel now, but my attitude about how things can change; how I think I can use what I've learned from dealing with stress in the past to help me now; and how I can imagine how things will be different in the future." By using self-talk such as this, we increase the chances of dealing well with stress. We always hear that we should think before we act. Blowing things out of proportion usually blows things up. Seeing things for what they are usually tones them down. Yes, think before you act, but think positively and well.

*Educating intuition
does not require tuition.*

I used **Figure 8-8** to give a response to a client who kept saying to me, "What if something goes wrong?" I told her that my impression was that she used a lot of negative "what if" statements, and I came back with the question of what would happen if she used positive "what if" statements. By learning to use positive "what if" statements, she switched from feeling downtrodden to feeling upbeat.

*We get used to
thinking negatively.
Thinking positively could
be something we could
get used to, too.*

Unfortunately, we are masters of using negative "what ifs." "What if" statements can be captured in the orbit of either our positive or our negative moods and attitudes. What would happen if our "what if" statements were captured mostly in the positive orbit? Already, you may doubt that this is possible. Such doubt is normal, but let it work both ways.

At its best, doubt is the great equalizer. It keeps us on guard, or vigilant to anything that can go wrong. It reminds us to be prudent, humble, and sensitive, even if we are also daring, assertive, and action-oriented. It makes us double check our analyses, our plans, and our abilities in dealing with problems and with stress. Doubt reminds us that no two situations are the same, and that we have to be open to continuous adaptation if we are to cope well and realize our goals.

*Stress and common sense
do not mix;
so invite common sense in.*

However, doubt can become too dominant in our thinking. It can lead us to the negative orbit where negative "what ifs" predominate. We need to be wary of where we let our minds gravitate.

To conclude, I ask again, **"What if we used mostly positive 'what ifs'?"** Would possible negative endings not happen because of positive beginnings?

Figure 8-8

If we ask “What if” in a way that promotes positives instead of negatives, we would end up more positive, in general. What if we did that?

Positive “What If” Statements

What if stress drags on, but instead of worrying too much and asking negative “what if” questions, we learn to ask positive “what if” questions, and feel more relaxed and directed in problem-solving?

What if we do this and feel happier instead of worrying? What if this happens?

What if we keep doing this, and it becomes part of us, so that a worry becomes a brief message to ourselves rather than a long mood in ourselves?

What if we had the same attitude for our other emotions, so that when we are frustrated we say to ourselves, “What if I see things differently or didn’t get angry? Would I be able to react better? Would I be able to end the stress earlier, or come to terms with it better?”

Similarly, what if we could see a sad situation as a beginning and not an end, a lack as something to fill, a loss as something to replace, a despair as something to change? What if we did the right thing when feeling negative, helping to turn things around, and did the right thing when positive, helping to keep it going? What if we became better at doing this?

“What if?”

*Let each bad habit
be a “for gone” conclusion.*

Figure 8-13 asks us to analyze when we had felt the worst. It suggests that we should look at the situation that caused it, the thinking behind it, and the result of the thinking in that situation. It asks us to change how we view things,

should we encounter the situation or another one similar to it, so that we do not repeat our worst feelings in such situations. Clients might tell me that this exercise asks them to think too much, or that they get a headache even trying to think so much. Then, I ask them what if they do the exercise and, despite having a temporary increase in stress and headaches, they learn about their emotional triggers and learn how to avoid feeling the worst.

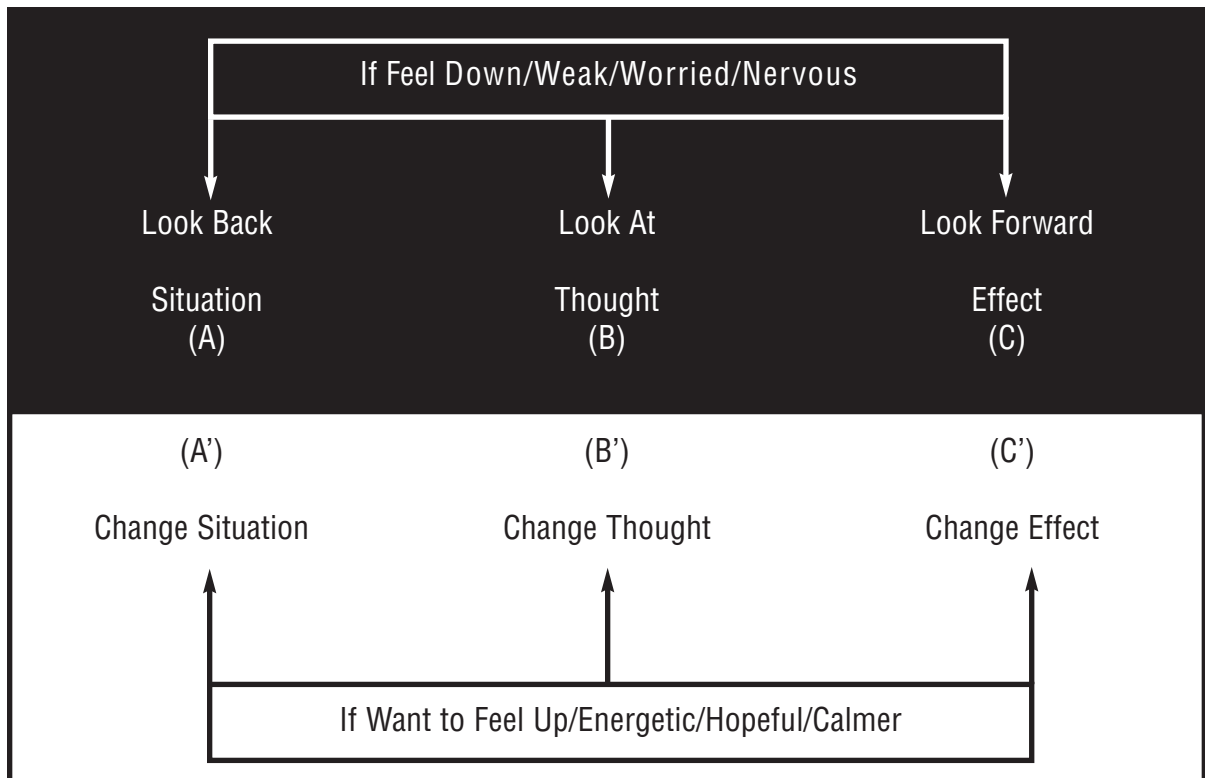
When we work with our emotions, we think clearly.

Handling stress is like grasping reality.

Figure 8-13

Cognitive behavioral therapy helps us examine antecedent conditions that produce distorted beliefs and consequent negatives. It helps us change the patterns in our feelings, thoughts, and behavior. Might as well start it yourself, by trying better ways of behaving and thinking. Better feelings will follow.

ABC Chart: From ABC to A'B'C'



By monitoring our state, we improve our nation.

Common sense derives from sensitivity in common.

Doubt is transition toward certain improvement.

*To see the end,
work the beginning.*

*The tortoise won because it didn't
do anything hare-raising.*

*Buried problems give
surface solutions.*

*The hare lost because it
ran out of "team."*

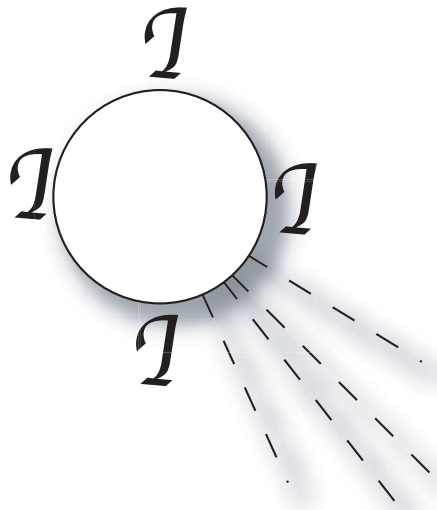
*When we walk a different way,
we may find a different path.*

*See the "for rest"
between the "tries."*

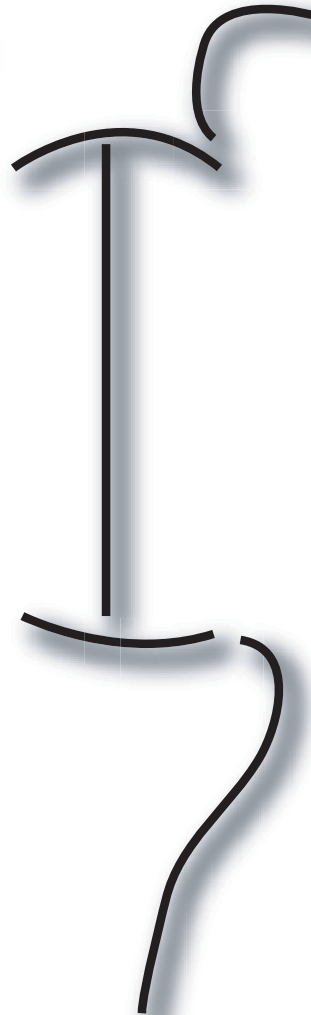


Chapter 9

Multiple Choice



EXCERPTS
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"I" is for "I can do it".

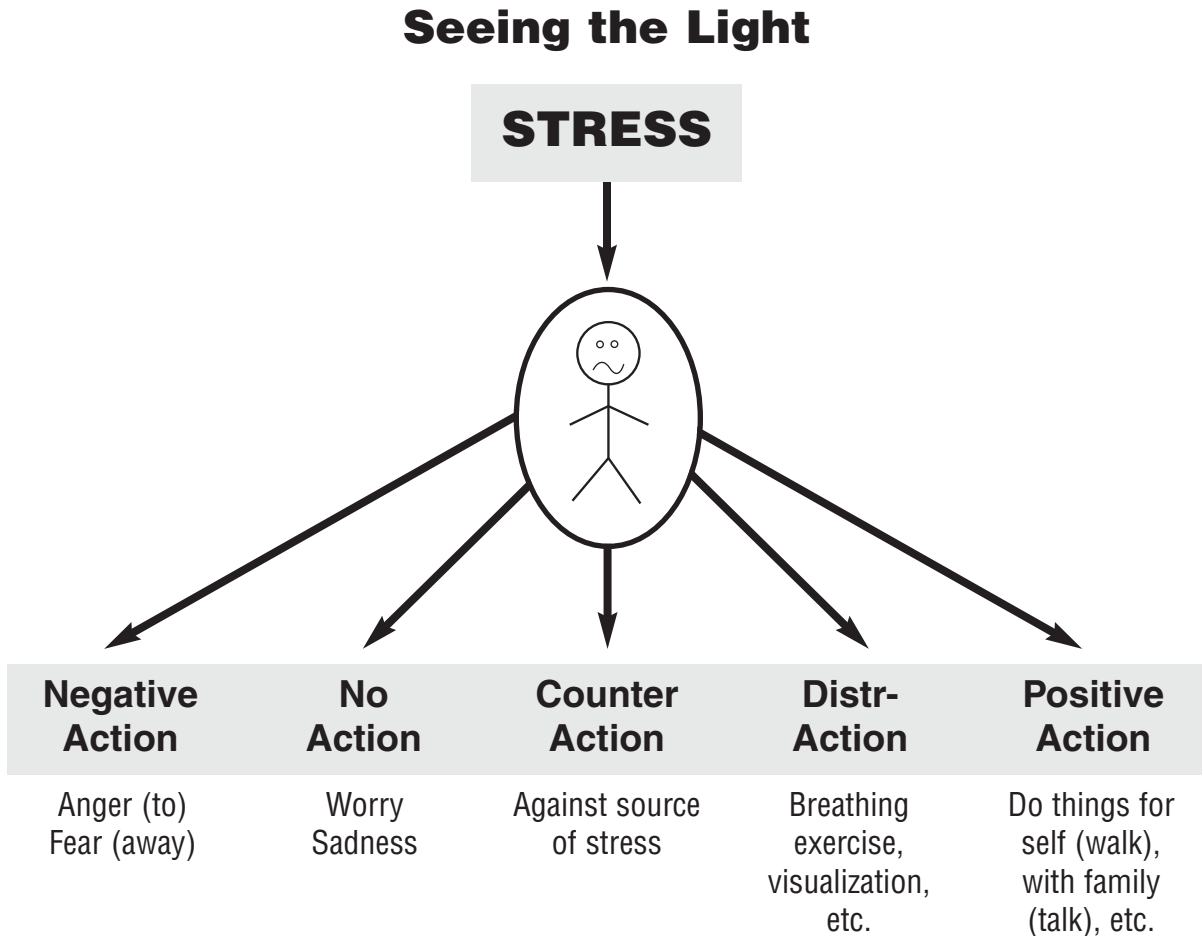
When we see the full picture—stress goes to the margin.

By monitoring our composure, we maintain our posture.

Figure 9-3 shows that our reactions to stress range from negative to positive. On the negative side, there is direct negative action, such as anger, or there is inaction, such as worrying. In the moderate option, we find counteractions to stress, such as struggling directly against it, but without good management of bodily reactions. On the more positive side, we can undertake relaxation and other exercises to help us get through stress without it being much of a struggle. Finally, in the most adaptive approach, we use positive actions and facilitate positive thoughts and feelings, even when we are put under extreme stress. **In manoeuvring around stress, let the negative fall by the wayside.**

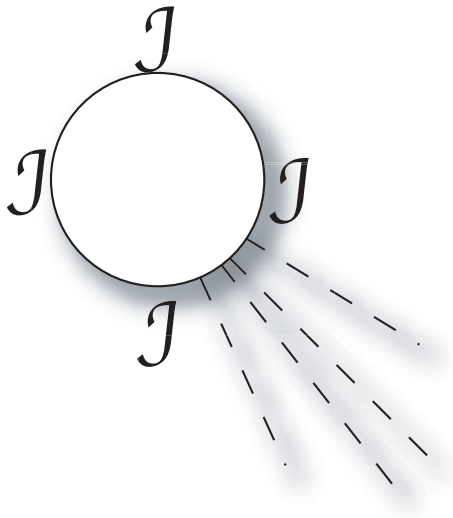
Figure 9-3

When we turn the positive switch, we see stress in the light.



Chapter 10

Recovering



EXCERPTS
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rejoiningjoy.com

*"J" is for the joy in
living well with stress
and with destressing.*



.....
*Being in recovery can lead
to improvements beyond
what we can imagine.*
.....

.....
*Recovery is different
for different people—
Be yourself.*
.....

Figure 10-7 emphasizes that recovery from stress or injury can bring gains that would not have been achieved without the stress or injury. Recovery in any one area can be more than partial, and it need not return only to the point where it would have been had the stress or injury not occurred. It is entirely possible that we can grow with stress, that we can learn from it to the point that we are psychologically stronger, and that our life course has changed for the better from having experienced the stress. These positive outcomes are only possibilities, and there is no guarantee that such improvements will happen. However, **healing can be integrating, when we allow it.**

Figure 10-7

Recovery never means only loss, especially when we want gain.

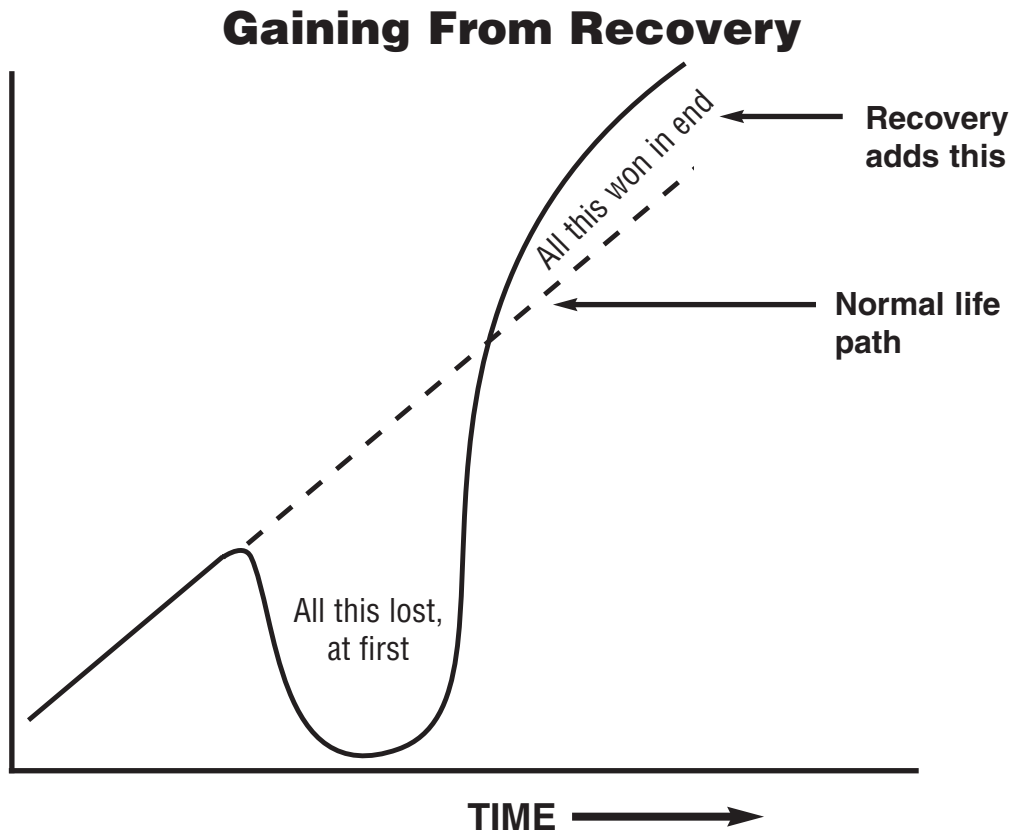


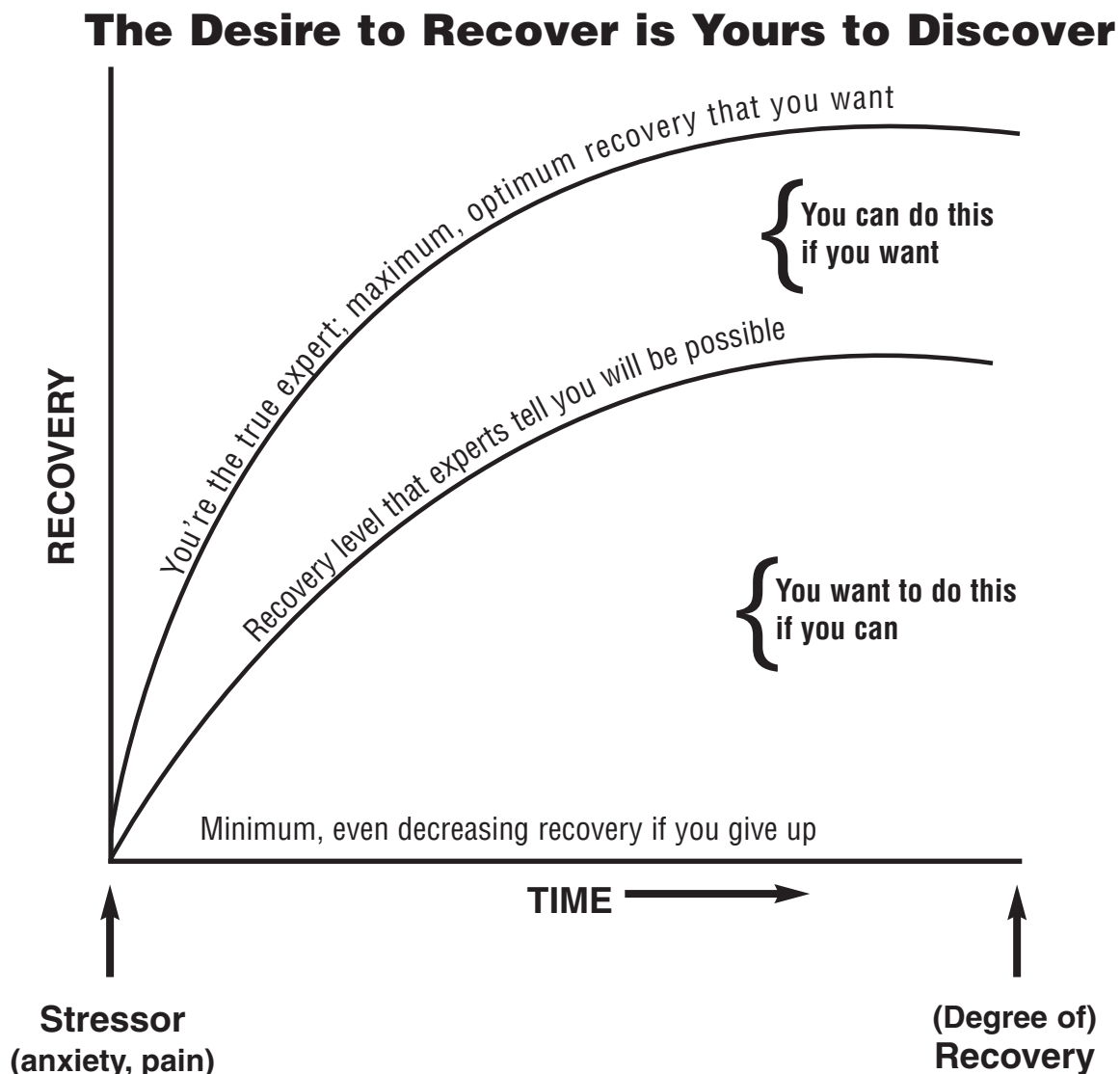
Figure 10-10 brings us full circle in graphing different degrees of recovery. Experts may tell us that we can only recover so far. We have a choice to make: we can choose to believe the experts who give us less than optimal predictions for our recovery or we can choose to tell ourselves that we are the true experts of ourselves and we can go as far in our recovery as we want, within certain limits. Recovery does not follow one timetable for everybody. It varies with factors such as will, motivation, and optimism. Desire speeds up recovery just as despair slows it down. **By seeing beyond the ceiling, we escape the floor.**

Breathing exercises have no side effects.

Recovery can be more than anyone predicted—when we follow our own prediction.

Figure 10-10

The desire to recover brings recovery beyond itself.



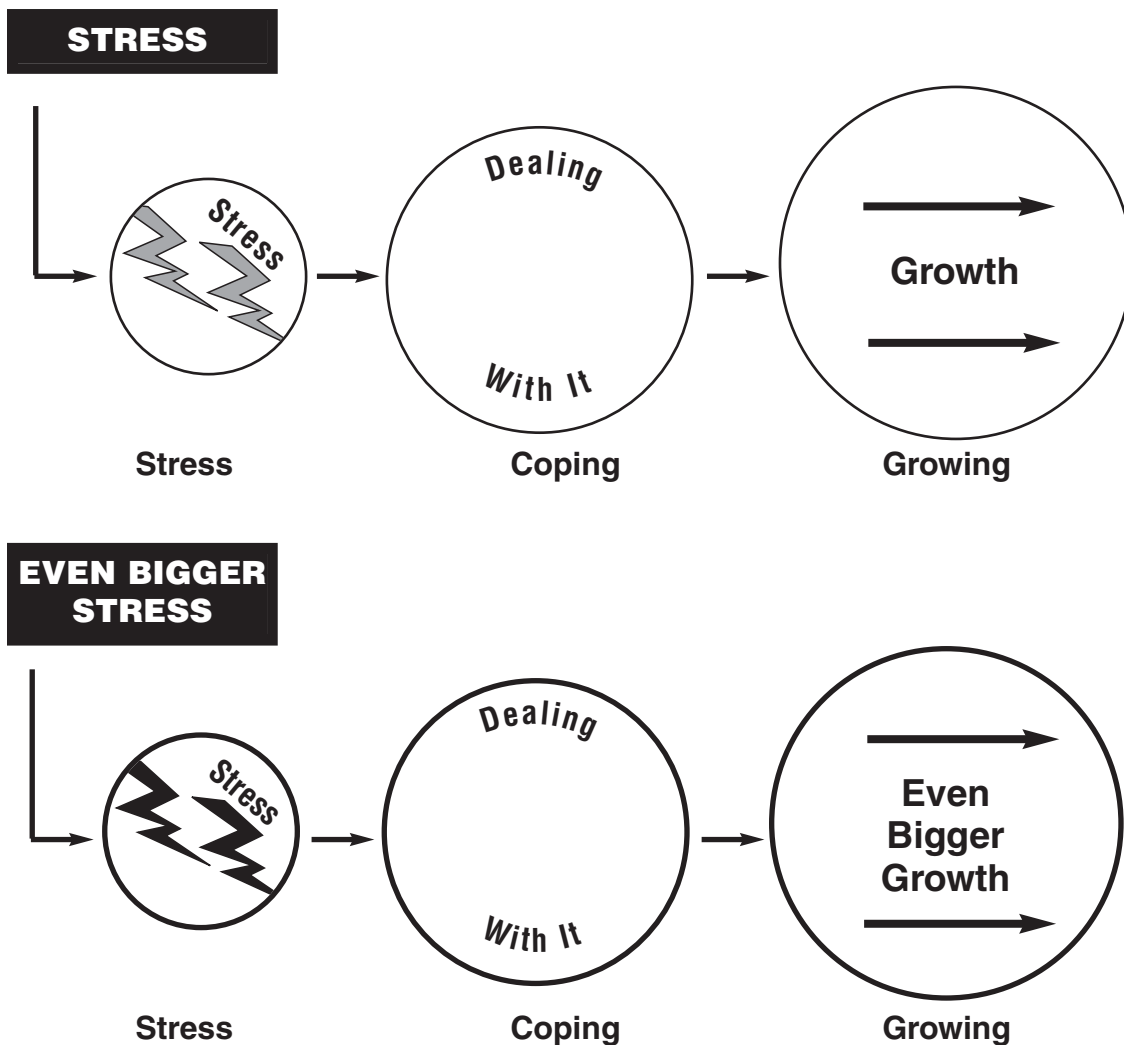
Recovery proceeds slowly but surely—when we believe that surely it will happen.

Figure 10-11 informs us that stress does not always lead to negative consequences. Stress can be seen as a challenge. We can develop the skill to see stress consistently in this way. We can learn that stress is not something about which we must always feel negative. In fact, we can learn to handle stress so that it always leads to coping and growth.

Figure 10-11

Stress can be a good teacher when we are a better learner.

Stress as a Growing Experience



The Best of
Rejoining Joy
and Destressing

Excerpts

VOLUME III — Emotions, Introduction

In the third volume of *Rejoining Joy*, we explore some of the basic emotions that are part of human life. We focus on how these emotions manifest themselves in stressful situations, how to deal with them, and how to make the best of them, so that the stresses that have produced them are dealt with more effectively.

Let's use the metaphor of a drive in nature to explore the various emotions. The shoreline weaves around the cape over tumultuous foothills plunging to the sea, but the driver follows the route hugging the shoreline, admiring the beauty of the landscape. There is a brief frustration at a detour on the road, but it melts into a resolve to continue on and appreciate the view and nature's restive scenery. There is a brief sadness at a bleak, boring part of the road, but it picks up at the sight of beautiful idyllic islands basking in the soft sun of a blue-green inlet. Whenever sadness appears, it is refocused into fond memories that inspire new hopes of finding more such scenes around upcoming bends. There is a brief worry about thunderclouds on the horizon, but instead of imagining the worst, we feel as peaceful as when the dawn or dusk nestles into the natural course of the day. There is brief fear at a close call in the traffic on the road, but it transforms into more careful driving, and the reverie of the trip continues. The predominant emotions are ones of tranquil joy, serenity at the majesty of nature's

craft, and wonder about what we shall see next.

When people are exposed to stress, they react with individual variation in emotions, and of course they might manifest a range of negative ones. Some people will show their frustrations more easily, other people will show their sadness more easily, and so on. These variations add to the complexity of understanding emotions. There are no simple rules for understanding which situations produce which emotions. Moreover, when excess stress is added to the life of individuals, the normal rules of emotional expression and control no longer apply. Core negative emotions are more likely to be manifested.

Part of what we have to learn is that at all times our negative emotions lie under the surface. They can be expressed if we become too stressed, even if our family or culture had taught us rules of control for emotional displays. However, negative emotions are not necessarily negative for us. Negative emotions are there to help us know that there is a stressful, problematic situation. Once we know this, we should begin seeking a solution, taking us beyond the negative emotions that the stress activated.

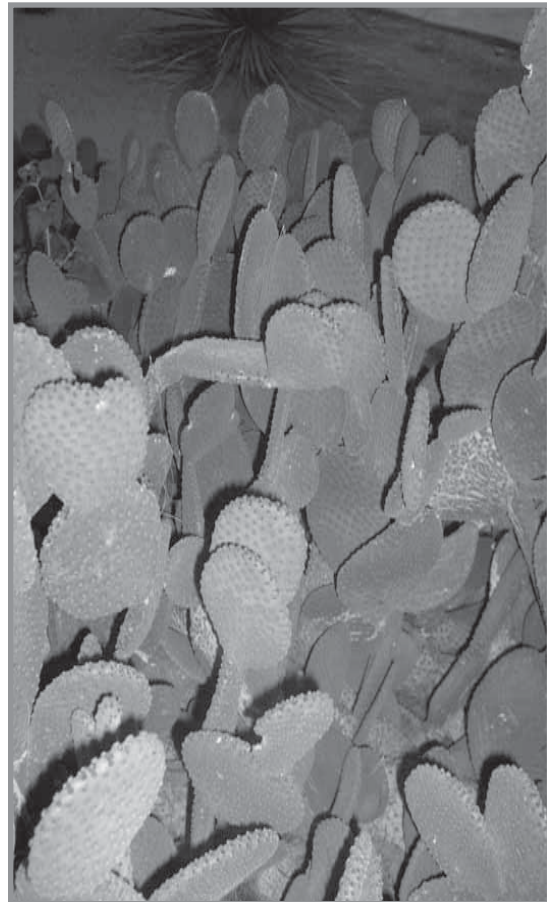
That is, a major purpose of emotions is to help us find the right solution for our problems; that is they are not meant to stay with us but to have us return to our better feelings through actions that they generate in us. Often, it is normal that stress activates negative emotions,

but it is also normal that we act to get the stress that caused them and the emotions themselves under control. Emotions need to be our guides, not our masters. For emotions to be good guides, we need to review the situation that induced them, reduce the emotional feelings once they are activated, and restructure or canalize these emotions into a new direction and a new perspective. For example, anger is a sign of determination that should lead us to constructive actions that free us of it. **Emotions are there to serve us, not enslave us.**

Emotions have become part of the human repertoire not because of their destructive nature when they get out of control, but because of their constructive nature when they are integrated into part of our successful adaptation to daily situations and stresses. The map of our emotions should look like an ever-changing and adapting shoreline instead of a continuous negative line. Emotions should be quickly oriented to the goal they are meant to serve, and then transformed into adaptive action. Anger should become determination and the frustrating situation should be tackled. Sadness should become a call to refocus and we should adapt to the loss or disappointment underlying it. Worry should become positive anticipation or optimism instead of catastrophic thought or pessimism. Fear should channel us toward mobilization of personal and other resources to deal with the threatening situation that is causing it.

Emotions help define who we are, both in terms of the nature of our indi-

viduality and the nature of our species. The more we can act to control and channel negative emotions when they build up or are not redirected appropriately, the more we can free ourselves of their pernicious effects. When they lurk behind every moment, they can seep into our daily lives for the smallest of reasons and become quite strongly expressed, even when not called for. We need to learn to deal with both inappropriate negative reactions in moments of stress and chronic negative emotions that may appear even when there is no stress. By learning how to manage well our emotions, we integrate the best that they have to offer.



*Thank worry for coming—as long
as it does not overextend its stay.*

*Worry is to anxiety as a breathing
exercise is to not using it.*

*Use worry to advantage—Let
it find the solutions to the
problems that brought it out.*

*Become an Olympic champion
of worry—Leap it in bounds.*

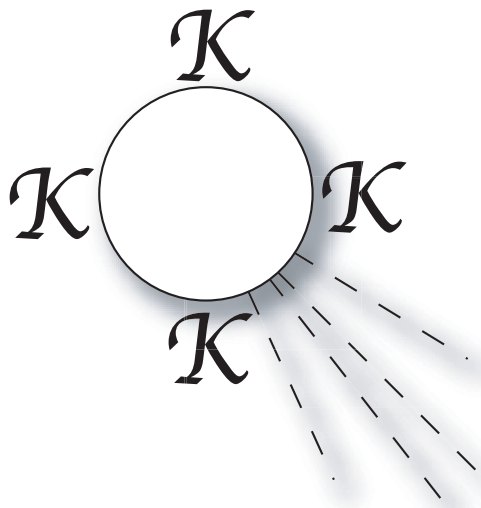
*When worry has staying power—
stay the course.*

*When worry grows out of hand—
grow destressing in your mind.*



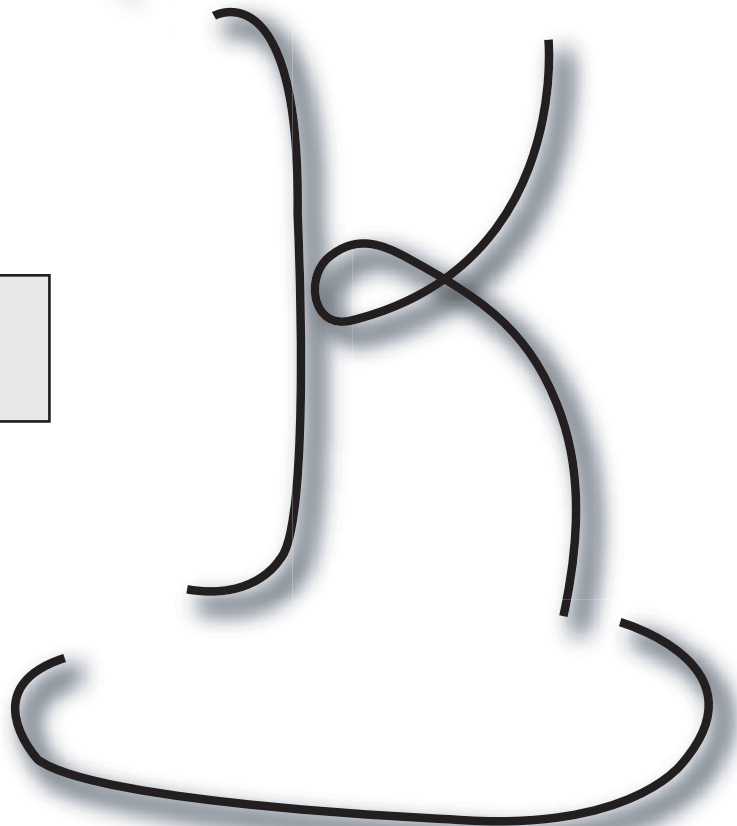
Chapter 11

Worry Wars



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"K" is for Knowledge
of right from
even more right.*



Worry can be stimulating,
as long as it is not stifling.

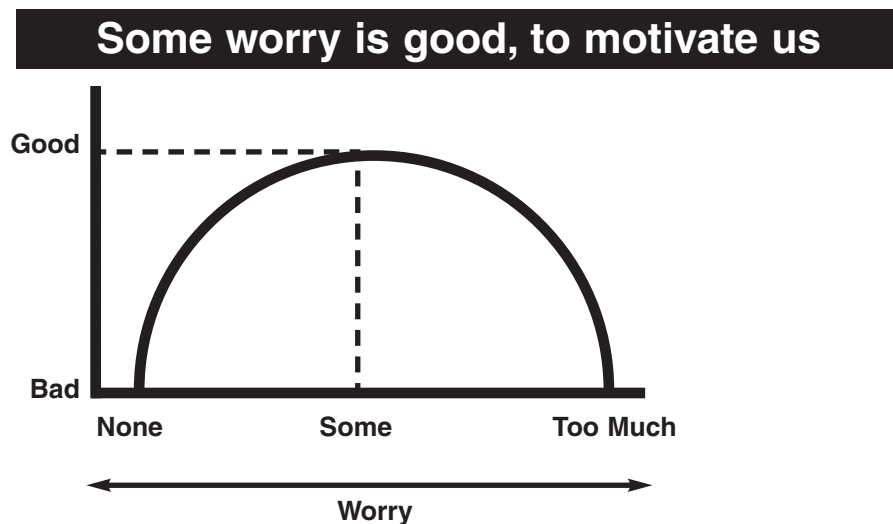
Worry is like a dirty
window. It fogs up
everything—until we
decide to wash it away.

In **Figure 11-1**, I explain some basic concepts about worry. First, we must know that some worry is good for us and motivates us. When we have no worry and there is nothing to worry about, we may become too lackadaisical or disinterested and not motivated to do anything. In contrast, when there is too much worry, of course, we may be overwhelmed. But a moderate dose of worry is beneficial. It should be just enough to get us going to determine what the problem is and how to best resolve it. However, even when overwhelmed with worry, we need not feel helpless and hopeless. Our goal should not be to eliminate worry and stressful situations, but to feel that we can gain control and, thus, be motivated to deal with the problems behind the worry.

Figure 11-1

Either when worry becomes too much or when there is no worry, we lose our motivation.

Winning Against Worry



So let worry know who's the boss

- Enough worry
- It's OK to rest
- It's not helping
- I'm in control now
- I'm listening to you, now you listen to me
- Help me, don't hurt me

Another important point about worry is that we need rest from it. We need to take mental mini-vacations. We need to reset the thermostat, at least for a little bit of time, several times each day, so that we can have time to recover, recalibrate, and find those needed plateaus of rest. Even when the stress feels overwhelming, it is in our best interest to say, “Enough is enough, I’m going to get some rest. I’m going to think clearly. I’m going to get control. **I have listened to you, Worry. Now you listen to me.** Let me rest so that I can listen better to the positive, motivating side of your message.”

.....
*Stress headache?
 Head off stress.*

Figure 11-9 reminds us that stress is inevitable as we deal with the problems that each day brings, and as we strive to reach our goals. Part of what we need to learn is that we need to give measured responses to stress. At the lowest end

.....
*Give worry all the space
 it needs—a small corner
 of the mind.*

Figure 11-9

Constructing positively and catastrophizing negatively are the opposite ends of the worry continuum. Too much worry also leads to anxious bodily feelings, stress, vicious circles, and so on. When we stick to the positives, we do not get stuck on the negatives.

Increasing Degrees of Stress, or Turning Down the Heat

- 1.** Wondering constructively what will happen;
 This is healthy.
 It leads to planning.
 Positive cycle starts.
- 2.** Imagining negative and positive outcome;
 But keeping the negative short, cutting it off, creating confidence in the positive.
 Vicious circle does not start.
- 3.** Worrying over and over;
 Seeing the negative, pessimism, lack of control.
 This leads to complaining.
 Vicious circle starts.
- 4.** Anxiety/ Worrying gets to body;
 Creating stress, emotional turmoil, etc.
 This leads to somatic reactions.
 Vicious circle worsens.
- 5.** Catastrophizing/ Seeing the worst;
 Putting the end of world first.
 This leads to body pains.
 Vicious circle out of control.

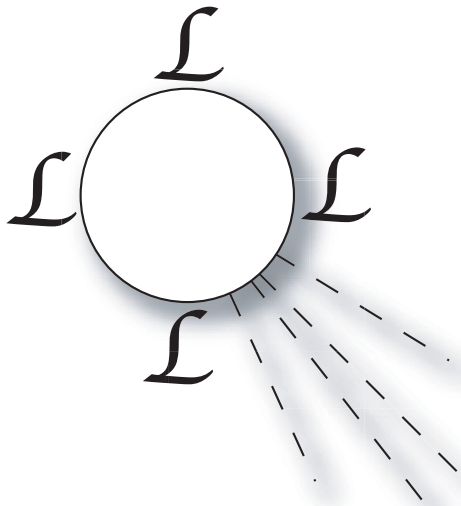
*Nothing is the end of
the world—until we
believe that it is.*

of the scale, when we are worried, we should plan constructively. As we move up the worry scale, worry begins to get toxic, because it starts controlling us and gets in the way of our planning. It escalates into more serious levels and blocks our ability to function well when it degenerates into anxiety and our body becomes a battleground of nerves and emotions. Finally, at the highest end of the worry scale, the only thing that we can see is the worst in everything, and any positive adaptation to the stress is ruled out. We need to understand which level of reactions to stress that we experience, and learn thoughts, actions, and emotional and other techniques for turning down the reaction. In this way, we can begin to gradually descend the worry scale and climb the solution pathway.



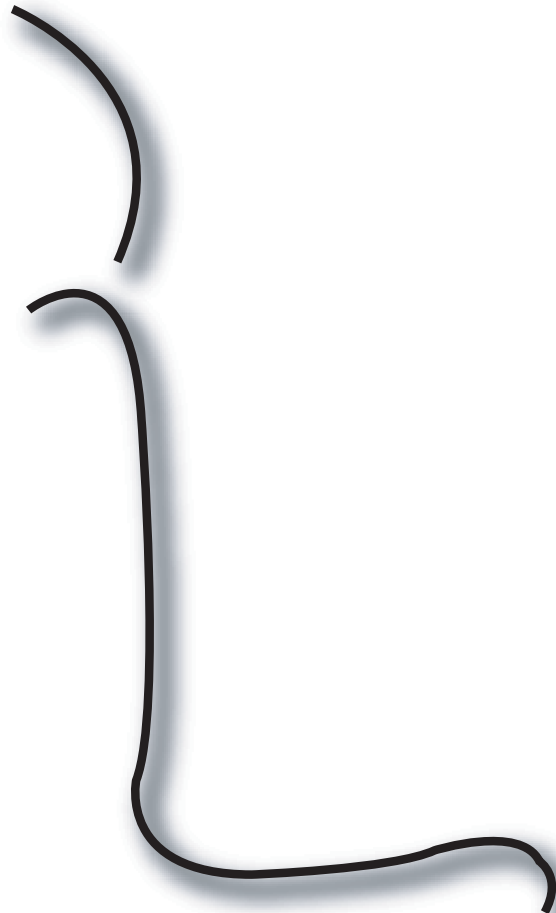
Chapter 12

Sadness or Sadless



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"L" is for Life,
Liberty, and the
pursuit of Love.*



.....
*Sadness opens up
channels to our interior
and to the interior of others.*
.....

In **Figure 12-1**, the two major types of reaction to stress are presented—a negative or a positive reaction. One possibility in dealing with stress is that we perceive it as a loss and we fixate on the loss, producing disruption and sadness and, ultimately, resignation and giving up. Depression deepens with this dynamic.

Depression seems so powerful and permanent when it sets in. We feel terribly down, and we may cry endlessly, either openly or to ourselves. It robs us of our energy, our motivation, and the desire for pleasure and human contact. It tears at the sinews of our personal and daily life.

But sadness and depression, like other emotions, are part of our emotional heritage because they reveal meanings and messages to us. By curtailing their symptoms and listening to their messages, the veil that sadness and depression place over us begins to lift. More neutral reactions and more positive emotions begin to replace them.

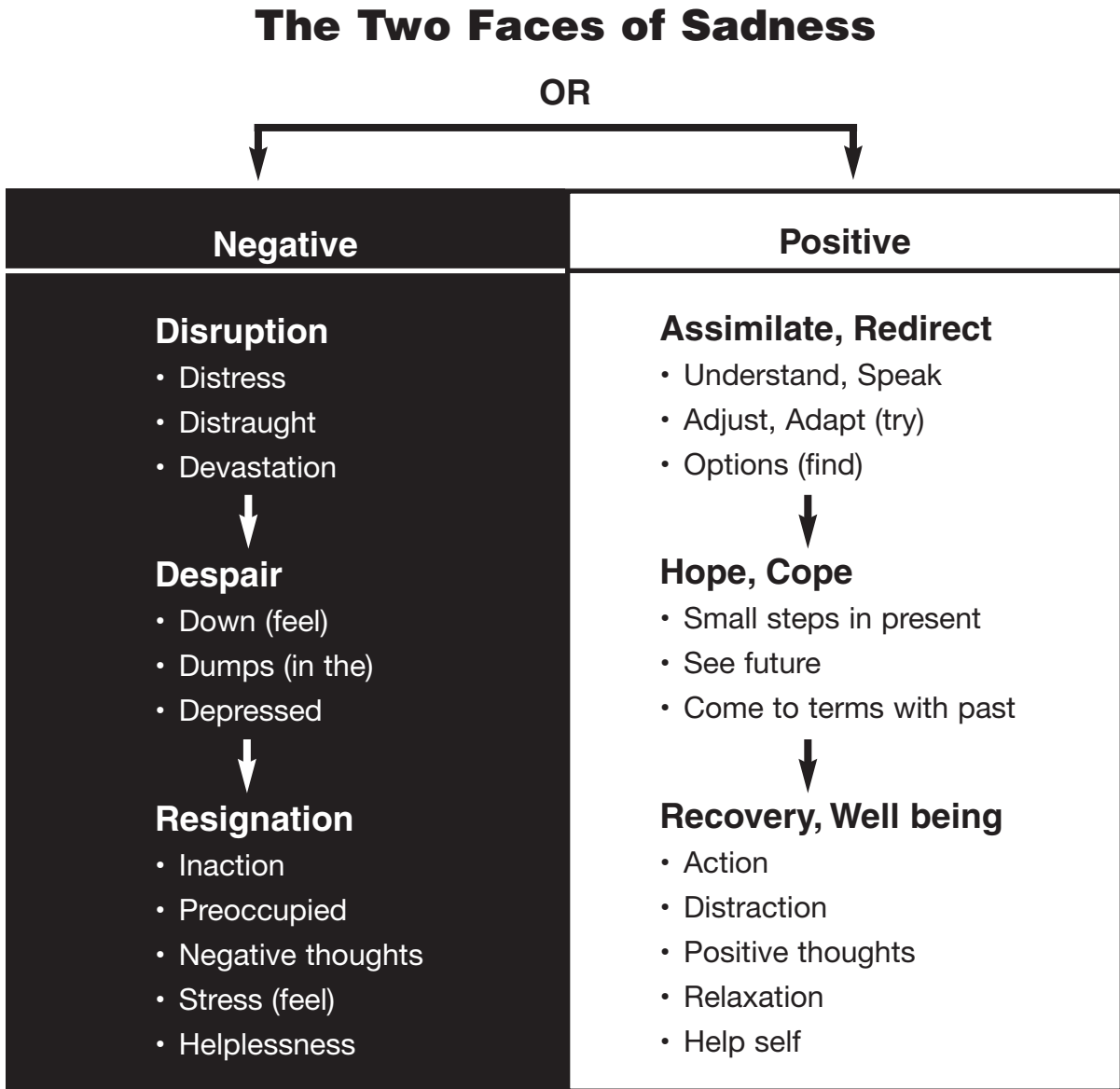
The main message of sadness and depression is that a loss has taken place that is overwhelming. However, embedded in the message is an equally powerful one that, eventually, we can come to terms and perhaps replace the loss. Depression does not mean permanent change in mood and action. If the human species had evolved to cease to function at every setback, it would not have survived the caves, let alone the tigers.

We have evolved to effectively deal with all sorts of setbacks and losses. Our genes could have it no other way. This resilience is part of our genetic heritage, as much as is the vulnerability to loss. Thus, when we are depressed by overwhelming stress, problems, and loss, it is normal to have at least a part of us feel it will be prolonged and terrible, but it is also normal that at least part of us wants to regain ground and not remain so sad and depressed.

Another option to use as a counterweight to depression is to perceive loss as a juncture that can lead to growth. Loss may be accompanied by positives, such as hoping, redirecting, and finding options. For example, in the aftermath of loss, we might better come to terms with the past, helping us in the present, and enabling a more hopeful future. With this kind of attitude, sadness and depression become signposts of change in the positive direction. The sense of loss

Figure 12-1

Sadness is a normal response to an upsetting event. However, it does not have to last. We can assimilate it, cope, and recover. Sadness may be a part of us, but we can make it a small part, and one that motivates us.



transforms to experiencing recovery, a sense of well-being, and an opening to the other. The choice is ours to make when we are sad. **When we are depressed, we can either give up or we can get up and give, both to ourselves and to others.**

.....
Feeling hapless should be considered the start of moving toward happiness.
.....

.....
When we have a plan,
we keep our élan.
.....

In **Figure 12-2**, I explore the time lines of stress. When we are overwhelmed by stress, we feel sad, worthless, helpless, and hopeless. However, we need to realize that there are stresses that we have dealt with in the past and that sadness has not always developed. We have shown courage in our own way in dealing with past stresses, and we should recognize it. We have resources, coping mechanisms, and strengths in the present, and we should recognize them. We have visions of where we want to go in the future, and we should recognize them, too. For example, in order to cope well, if our stresses relate to the past, acceptance is cardinal. If our stresses relate to present conditions, taking small steps toward the goals that we want to achieve is important. Finally, if our stresses relate to difficulties in seeing the future, having realistic visions to guide us is important. This is not to say that we should forget our dreams. One must always remember that reality is stagnant without dreams and that those dreams can create reality. We have to balance the two as we move through the vistas of opportunities before us.

Figure 12-2

Sadness can be about the past, the present, or the future. We feel helpless, hopeless, and worthless. But we can learn to value our strengths. We can learn new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. The past, present, and future would applaud.

Time Line

OLD WAY

- Worthless feeling about — *Past*
- Helpless feeling about — *Present*
- Hopeless feeling about — *Future*

TRANSITION

- Admiration — of courage in *Past*
- Acknowledgement — of strengths in *Present*
- Adoption — of valued vision in *Future*

NEW WAY

- *Past* — Coming to terms, accepting
- *Present* — Small steps to goals, adjusting, working through
- *Future* — Seeing, having vision, adapting

Figure 12-6 points out that self-esteem comes both from within and without. To be sure, it is an internal push, but it needs constant effort and the right context, such as an external push and the right opportunity. It is hard to keep up our self-esteem because of the constant struggle of life. We make mistakes, which threaten our self-esteem. However, as long as we know that the goals that we have are reasonable and decent ones, our self-esteem should weather the storm and keep us on course. **When we have laudatory goals and messages to give, our self-esteem will not dip with the changing conditions of our lives.**

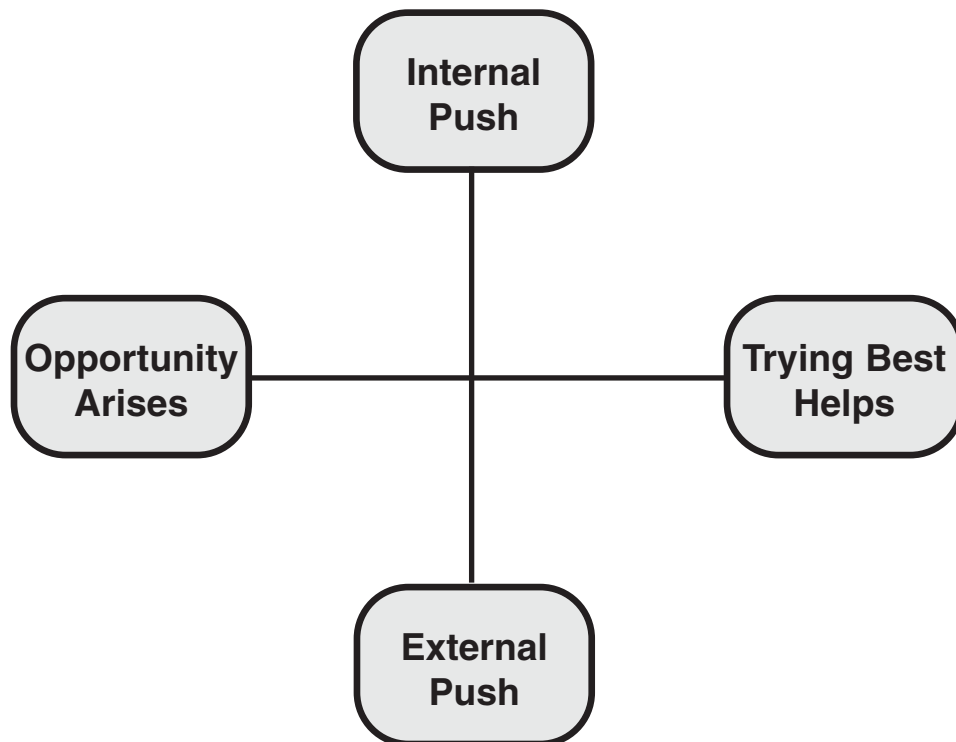
.....
*When we boost our effort,
 we boost our self-esteem.*

.....
*Why would I say that fun
 could be the opposite of joy?
 Why would I say that
 hurt may precede it?*

Figure 12-6

Positive self-esteem keeps us on the ready for whatever opportunity presents itself from the outside. It helps us give of ourselves, from our resources, on the inside. With such an attitude, sadness cannot find too much of a place on our outside or our inside.

Self Esteem Get Ready, Get Set, Go



When we cannot help
but being optimistic,
we help a lot.

Figure 12-7 illustrates how a positive attitude helps us through difficult times. Whether the problem is in us or out there, optimism can keep us focussed and alert. However, we can experience different degrees of optimism and we can even experience pessimism. On the scale of possibilities in optimism and pessimism, the positives points are the ones to activate. **There is little room for feeling down when we perceive that the only direction is up.**

Figure 12-7

Optimism is a positive feeling compared to pessimism. We vary in how much optimism and pessimism that we feel. We can feel either optimistic or pessimistic about ourselves and about things around us. Optimism is an attitude that can help boost both ourselves and those around us, thus reducing distress. We can make the better choice. Aim high on the optimism scale.

Optimism is a Win-Win Situation

Optimism About Self

1. I'm ok
How can I improve myself
2. I got a problem
How can I help myself
3. I got a problem
I need help
and I am asking for it
4. I got a problem
How can I get help
I'm confused
5. I got a problem
I can't be helped

Optimism About Stress

1. Things are ok around me
How can I improve the things around me
2. There's a problem around me
How can I help
3. There's a problem around me
It can be helped
Can I get help
4. There's a problem around me
It can be helped
How can it get help without me
5. There's a problem around me
It can't be helped
I can't help

Figure 12-8 indicates that happiness is a natural. Too often, we fight the mood of sadness by seeking artificial replacements, superficial cover-ups, sensational stimulation, drug-induced highs, or momentary pleasure. **The best source of genuine happiness is genuine being.** Happiness should be an underlying constant that we feel despite the ups and downs of the day, because we know that we have programmed our day to meet constructive goals and that we are open to shared communication and activities.

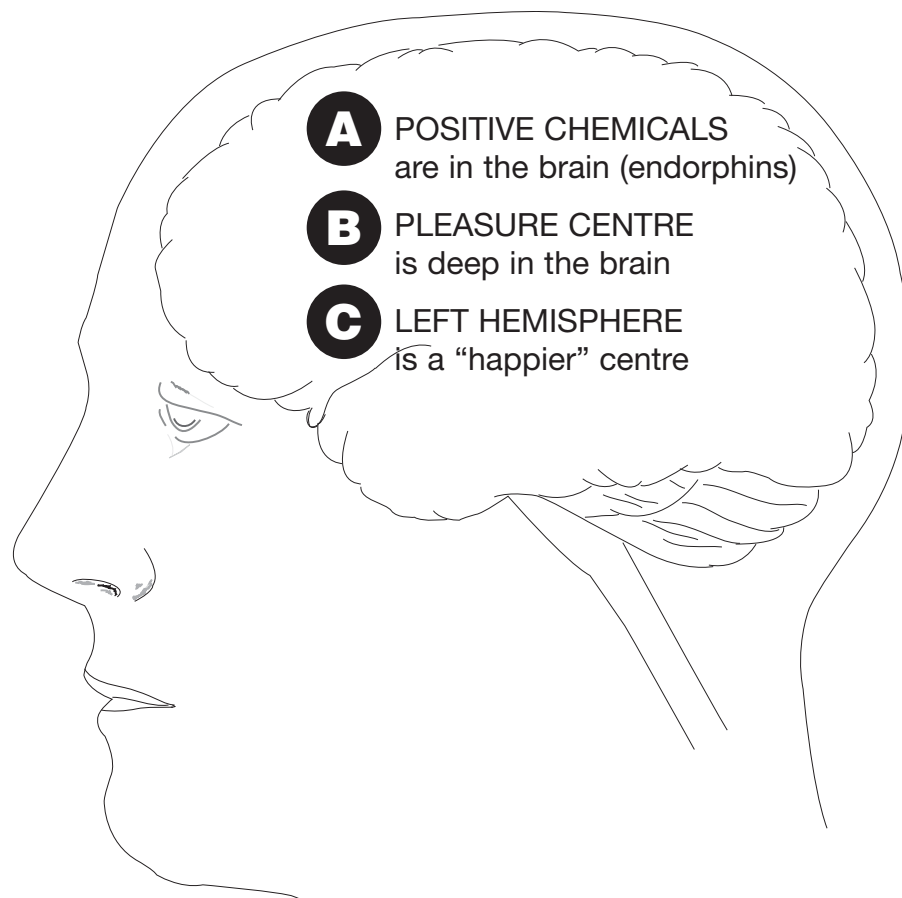
Being positive is as natural to us as being negative is not.

The brain is built for experiencing happiness and dispensing it to others. a) The left hemisphere relative to the right is

Figure 12-8

Normally, sadness is not our natural state. Normally, the brain can be a happy organ, because happiness is built into our species' genes and, in general, the left hemisphere of the brain is specialized for happy feelings. There are ups and downs in the day, but they may occur against a backdrop of a deeper, more positive feeling. We are programmed both for happiness and socializing, and for both giving happiness and receiving it.

Drugs Are Not the Only Way to Get a High



specialized for happier feelings, probably because it is the language specialist and the specialist for refined sequences, such as in social activity. In addition, in this regard, the brain is built for us to be social. *b)* Also, the brain is the seat of neurotransmitters that give positive feelings. *c)* Finally, there are pleasure centers deep within the brain, ones that do not need street drugs to be stimulated in order to make us feel good. We can feel good by ourselves, naturally, without drugs. Our brain is a social, happy, feel good, pleasure center, which street drugs eventually damage and destroy. What could be sadder?

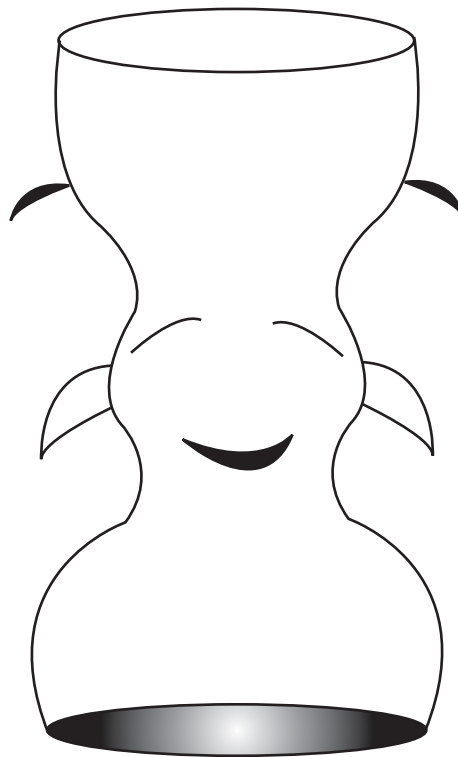
.....
*By honoring depression, we
deal with it better.*
.....

Figure 12-9 indicates that if sadness is all that shows on the outside, it is an illusion to think there is not a part of us that is happier on the inside. Depression feels like a 100 per cent

Figure 12-9

We may appear sad, depressed, or down. However, our internal peace, joy, or contentment may still burn strong. There are many sides to sadness, including the coping side.

Sadness is Not an Illusion



But neither is our internal smile

negative experience that many of us avoid at all costs. We will do anything to stay out of its abyss. However, depression has a purpose that we should respect, for it helps us recover from the loss that underlies it. It is not meant to be permanent or to deny other emotions. As paradoxical as it may seem, depression is an intermediate step to happiness. It calls forth our personal resources and the social support around us, and also makes us more understanding of others and more empathic. It mobilizes our interior so that we may smile again, even if only faintly at first.

In the figure, the predominant facial configuration that jumps out at us is the central one in the cup—the smile. However, there are other faces in this illusion, and they are drawn more boldly and are doubled up. Nevertheless, you may not see them as you look at the vase, because, for our perceptual system, they are not prominent. Moreover, the power of the happy smile inside the cup captures our attention.

However, should you look carefully at the outside of the cup, you will see on each side a silhouette of a sad face, with both eyes and lip corners pointed down. Now that you notice the depressed faces outside the cup, these faces will attract your attention as much as the smiling one in the cup.

Just as we find both a happy and sad look in the figure, sadness and joy are symbiotically-related emotions. Thus, when depression seems too powerful, we should respect its force but, at the same time, we should dig deep below its surface in order to find the serene self that it can never fully hide. In this figure, **the most powerful illusion is that sadness cannot change.**

Figure 12-10 indicates the careful planning and moment-to-moment strategies needed in order to control and turn around a depressed mood. **Changing a bad habit, negative mood, or difficult situation takes hard work.** The more we work at life's stresses, the more life lets us rest, be happier, and grow into our good habits and have them grow.

.....
*Sadness can be short
and sweet—when we
stop having long faces.*
.....

.....
*The paradox of accepting
that things cannot change is
that, in doing so, they might.*
.....

Figure 12-10

Sadness progresses in steps, and at each step there is something we can do about it. We can react as we see it coming, and even before it appears, in that we can prepare for it. Sadness happens, but so can sadness control.

Sadness Termination & Ongoing Protection: S.T.O.P.

1 Feeling It Coming

- Try to focus on something else, move somewhere else
- Do something to change (e.g., hobby, read, music)
- Think positive thoughts
- Talk, socialize, phone
- Relax self (e.g., deep breathing, meditate)
- Try to find humor, things that make you smile, laugh

2 If It Gets Stronger

- All of above; more of it and/or strongly
- It is OK to cry
- It is even better to stop when you get it out and feel relief
- Think ahead to the plan that you will follow when sadness lessens

3 After It's Controlled

- Perform favorite activity (e.g., listening to music)
- Meditate (deep breathing, focus thoughts)
- Congratulate self (even if don't have perfect control)

4 When Feeling Not Sad

- Use self talk (e.g., "I'm OK; my health is important"; "I can deal with stress in this other way I like")
- Let happy talk prevail ("There is a part of me that's happy." "I'm happy a lot and I like myself like that.")

Figure 12-11 was made during my first encounter with a grieving client. The death of his wife was traumatic for him, and he became extremely depressed as the anniversary of her death approached. Depression is one of the expected responses to bereavement, and it can last a long time. Memories of a departed love one are never forgotten. However, bereaved partners can end up learning that the loss of a loved one does not mean that their lives stop forever. The departed would not want such an eventuality; nor does the adaptive part of the grieving individual. **Death brings us closer to the meaning of life, and one aspect of this is that the search for living and meaning continues no matter how bad the situation appears.**

The worst tragedies may lead to profound discoveries.

Depression is a stepping stone to sturdier foundations.

Figure 12-11

Loss of a loved one can lead to intense grieving. This can be understood as a capacity for an regrowth and looking for a different route.

Life Therapy

Learning
Integration
For
Emerging

Therapeutic Transformations

Mourning	→	Morning	Shrinking	→	Sharing
Bereaving	→	Believing	Feel Down	→	Wisdom
Grieving	→	Growing	Despairing	→	Repairing
Procession	→	Progression	Weeping	→	Weaving
Losing	→	Leasing	Dispirited	→	Spirituality
Depressing	→	Repossessing	Moving Away	→	Moving On
Hurting	→	Honoring	Longing	→	Living
Alone	→	Aplomb	Giving Up	→	Giving
Suffering	→	Buffering	Surviving	→	Surmounting

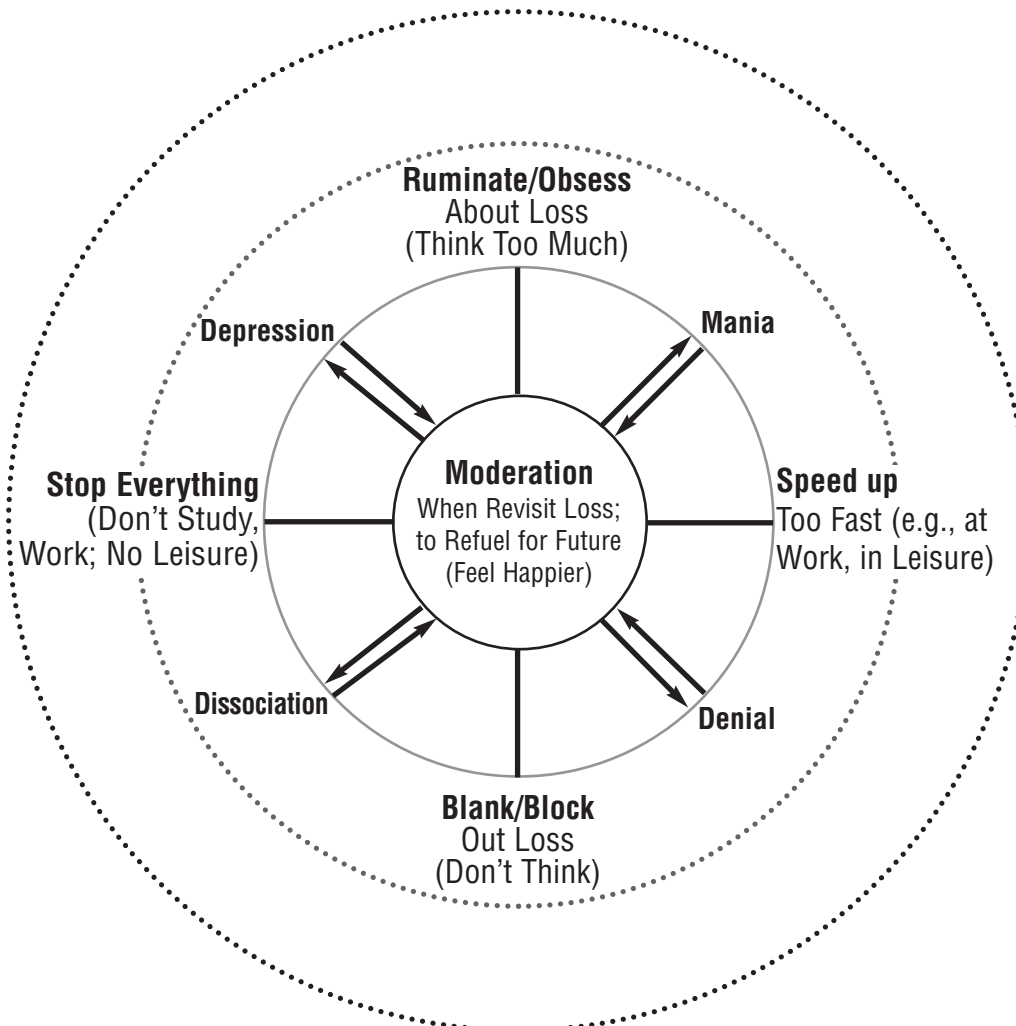
Seeking balance sets the worst disequilibrium in positive motion.

Figure 12-14 shows us that after loss, excessive emotions dominate, but that we gradually move to more moderate feelings and reactions. At first, we stop everything and feel extremely depressed. We may clue out, try to forget, dissociate, or blank out, trying to block out everything. Or, we may speed up everything that we do, become manic and hyper, trying to deny or avoid our loss. Usually, we experience all of these in the confusion after loss but, gradually, we re-acquire balance and equilibrium. When moderation begins

Figure 12-14

We need to learn moderation in dealing with loss, both in terms of our thoughts and our actions. This helps deal with depression and associated emotions and deal with trying too hard to forget and what accompanies that.

Getting Back to the Middle



to take hold of our feelings after a loss, which happens through self-reflection, expression of our deepest feelings, support from others, and a desire to return to a balanced lifestyle, we can recover. We revisit the loss easier, refuel to help us get going, and move forward toward feeling happier. **When moderation controls our extremes, depression is easier to challenge and master.**

Pleasure is not joy—being is.

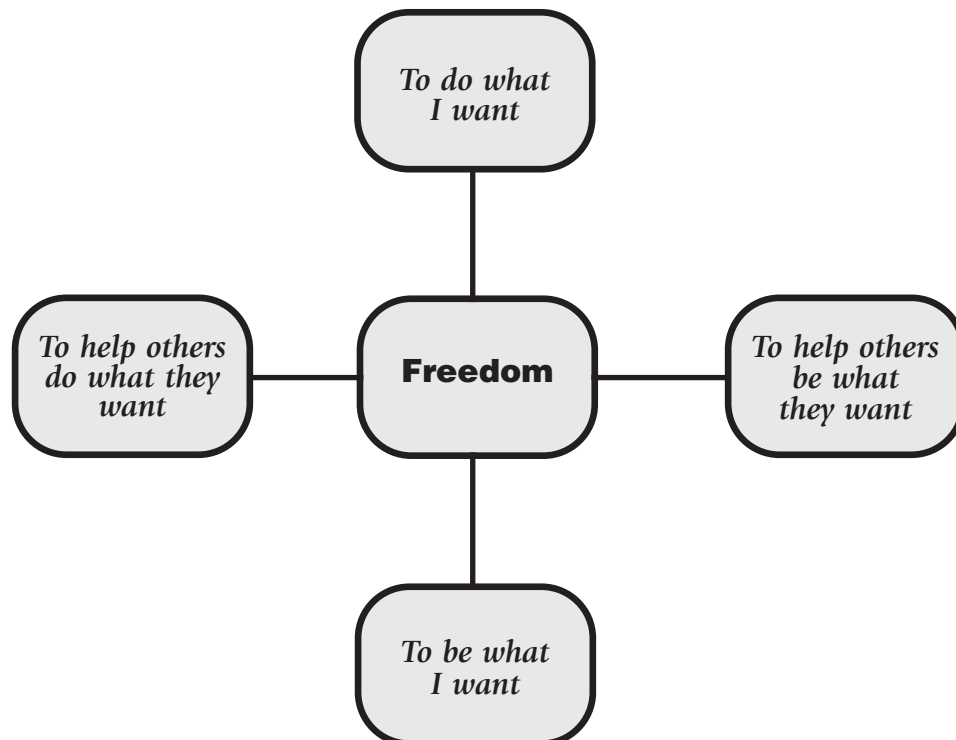
Figure 12-16 examines the concept of freedom. People find themselves without freedom in so many ways. Political, cultural, religious, and associated freedoms are the cornerstone of our society. We need to be vigilant about their erosion and we need to support other societies in their efforts to acquire the same rights. But the freedom being discussed here is not the socio-political or similar kinds. Rather, it refers to the perception of freedom for ourselves

Activity is to depression as helping oneself is to cure.

Figure 12-16

Freedom is not only being free to do what we want. It goes much deeper than that. It is also about the freedom to be the best we can be in a moral, meaningful, ethical sense, and about the freedom to help others feel the same, as well. Sadness may be a lack of appreciation of this inherent human pulsion.

Freedom is What We Mean of It



*The search itself may be
all that is necessary.*

*Freedom is not
for the taking.*

that we carry in our personal lives. Each of us lives in a particular context with multiple levels. Each context has its advantages and disadvantages, pros and cons, opportunities and limitations, or catalysts and constraints. We continually attempt to seek mental space or psychological freedom within our context. However, sometimes, due to misfortune, accidents, or circumstance, our context changes for the worse. After a negative event, the personal visions that we have—to continue to enjoy freedom of action and being—may be seriously compromised. For example, if we get hurt in an accident or if we become a caregiver for a loved one struck by disease, our sense of personal freedom may evaporate.

We need to keep in mind that **freedom is a perception of an inner state more than a right given by a political state.** Freedom is not something for us to take—it is something that comes from giving to others. Freedom is not an emptying of the vessel so that we may fill it as we wish, but the filling of the vessel, so that we can transport it where there is emptiness. In this sense, every context can be perceived as a freeing one, because every context is a potential opportunity to help. When every context becomes potential help, freedom becomes continual and contextual.

How can there be freedom in every context? When we are chained to unfortunate events, tragedies, and losses, can there really be freedom? To answer this question, first, we need to look at the opposite scenario. When everything is going “perfect,” when we can do exactly everything we want for ourselves, is there really full freedom? For several reasons, there is not. First, we may be too self-centered and ignore the plight of others. At least a part of us realizes this fact, and our conscious is bothered. We are not really free of ourselves. Second, and more important, the whole concept of freedom as a search for personal space and action is a false one doomed to make us slaves and to make us unhappy, rather than to make us independent and joyful. The more the search for freedom is egocentric, the more it is isolated from core human values, and the more we grow distant from our core humanity, where civility, good, morality, empathy, and caring are found. **In life, we need to provide for our basic needs, which means not only for our own needs but, also, for the needs of others in need.**

How can a context that is much reduced or even devoid of freedom of personal space and action be freeing? Every

context, no matter how devastating, can be helpful. The grieving adult who has lost a loved one can still show thanks to mourners for their concern and ask how they are coping. The caregiver burdened by responsibilities for an ill loved one can still undertake the care with sensitivity and feel spiritually uplifted by the opportunity ... and so on.

These examples illustrate that freedom is what we make of it. **Context does not provide freedom to us. We provide freedom to context.** Freedom is what we see, what we construct, and what we mean, or find meaning in. We should not seek to find the means to freedom, but we should seek to find the meaning of freedom. In addition, we should seek to find the freedom of meaning, the meaning in any context, and the means to free ourselves from concepts of freedom that do not free us.

Figure 12-17 underscores one of the major themes of this book, that of taking responsibility. There are unwritten social contracts that bind us. We are obligated to fulfill them, starting with making other people feel at ease and learning and respecting their needs and, in turn, communicating our own needs to them. This process includes determining the conditions for discharging our responsibilities to ourselves and to others, and for allowing others to do the same, so that relationships continue to be mutually beneficial. Even when a social contact is a fleeting one between strangers, we are required to be civil and to not infringe on others' space. There are mutual responsibilities, even here, that is, to be and let be.

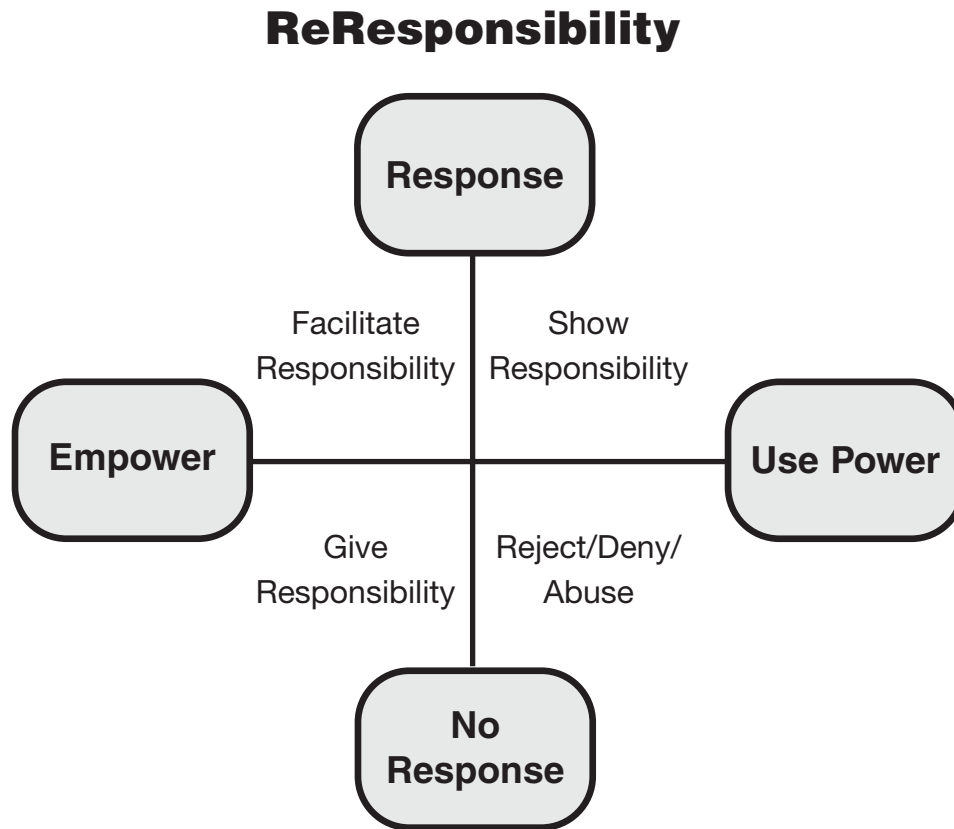
Responsibility can be mutual or more one-sided. Being a parent or a caregiver is an example of having a more one-sided responsibility, but there are emotional benefits in being a parent that far outweigh the burden of the task. The same applies for the work in most teaching and helping professions with children. They bring their own rewards. Any form of guidance or mentoring also can be considered a more one-sided responsibility, yet we enjoy its intangible benefits. For example, we feel quite positive in sharing our knowledge at work with people whom we are training.

Responsibility takes place at several levels. When we have great responsibility, usually, we are responding to a need. For example, the parent shows responsibility in raising the child because the child is relatively helpless and powerless.

.....
*When we are active,
curious, learning, and living,
sadness cannot fit in.*
.....

Figure 12-17

We are born to live responsibility each moment of our lives, in a process of re-responsibility. Behavior varies in degree of control and responsiveness. In terms of responsibility, this means that we can increase our sense of responsibility, and counter its lack. The peaceful feeling from being this way gives us strength to deal with any sadness.



*In times of trouble,
double your help.*

However, when parents neglect their responsibility, we find conditions of rejection, denial, and even abuse. However, these excesses are not the norm. As the child grows older, in the typical case, the parent acts responsibly, and part of this attitude is that the parent aims to facilitate a sense of responsibility in the child. At one point, the parent augments this process by giving the child responsibility. Then, the parent empowers the child to be responsible for herself in increasingly wider areas of life, culminating in launching her into the adult world. The parent's responsibility is a life-long task. No matter what their age, children are always children to their parents. Moreover, a parent's sense of responsibility does not stop with their children. A parent may have to raise a grandchild, for example. The task of parenting illustrates that responsibility is unending.

We need to approach responsibility as the human imperative. It springs forth with our conception and continually asks us to participate fully in life's activities. Even as we play as children, we actively engage in sharing, behaving responsibly in mutuality with others. Responsibility is ongoing, stretching from childhood to adulthood, from morning to night, from home to work, from self to other, from family to stranger, from friend to foe, from human to animal, from neighborhood to planet, and from time to timelessness.

Because of responsibility's pervasive and continual call to us and its potential constant presence in our lives, I call it, "Re-Responsibility." It is the stuff of life. On the one hand, we have an inherent, intuitive knowledge of the constant request by life for our responsibility. Additionally, society, our parents, and our surroundings all teach us to be responsible, reinforcing our natural tendencies.

Although we are repeatedly called to responsibility and reach out to it, context can undermine our commitment to it. At the worst, there may be lifelong privation seriously compromising our sense of responsibility. A lifetime of stress can defeat purpose. When we find children or adults who have lived such a past, our responsibility as a society or as individuals is palpable. Often, we respond in order to help. However, more frequently, life is unfolding with some but not overwhelming stress for people, and they do not need help. But, then, external events of a stressful nature confront them, taking away their capacity to undertake well or fully their responsibility, even to family. In these cases, often, we may also respond in order to help. Either communally or individually, we express our concern for people in need; respect their needs; feel for their difficulties; show sensitivity to their stresses; and give advice or more direct aid. Our goal should be to maximize resilience and growth in all those who are experiencing difficulties. Some people possess the inner and social resources so that stress never appears insurmountable to them, and all responsibilities that are undertaken are always experienced as fulfilling. However, other people need help even for simpler stresses. All people should receive the help that they need. When we get the help that we need, we may end up giving help to others.

Sadness is a simple emotion—simple things dampen it and simple things replace it.

To Overcome Pain, Overrule It.

*We should deny neither our pain
nor our capacity to control it.*

*When we believe that
we can control pain,
we relieve better our pain.*

*Change your approach to pain—
because it gets arrogant when we
approach it as if it were the boss.*

*When pain gets naughty—
treat it naughty.*

*Accepting pain—improves
the prognosis.*

*Take advantage of pain.
When it lessens, do what you
need to do or want to do.*

*The best pain program—
is living life.*

*Pain control is like
the universe—infinite.*

*Pain has a nasty habit of reducing
in intensity—when we use our
good habits in its control.*

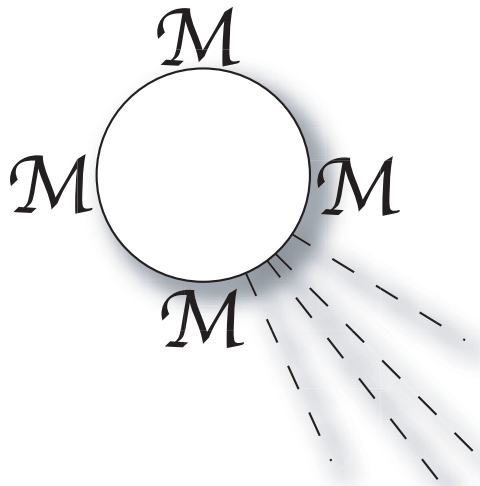
*Give pain a pain in the neck—
by massaging the message
that you are in control.*

For pain to pass on, press on.



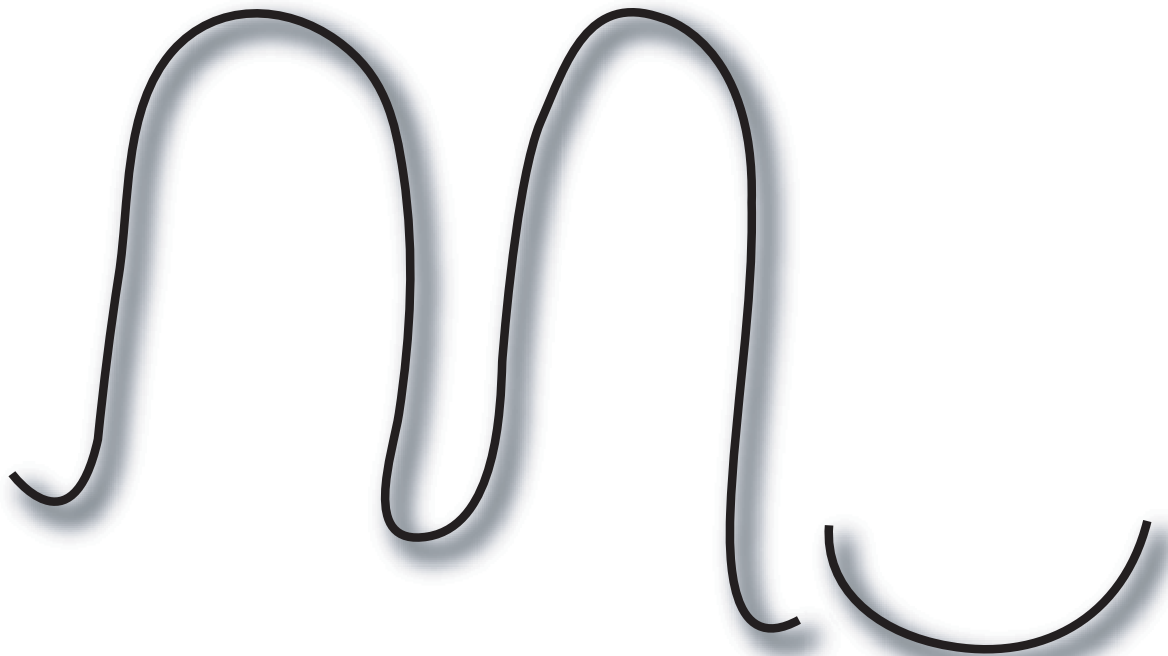
Chapter 13

Abstain from Pain: Part One



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"M" is for Motivation
to do better.*



Pain is not all in the mind—but the mind can help.

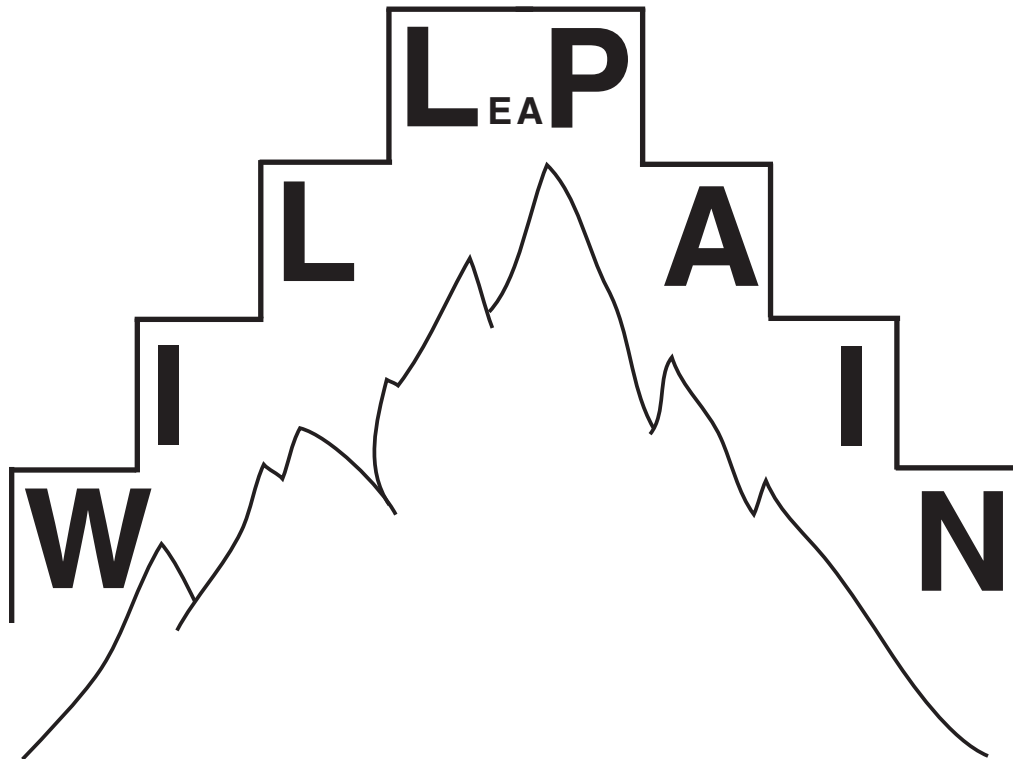
Pain may not get better—but we still can feel better.

Figure 13-1 clarifies that pain can be controlled to some extent by our will and motivation. Pain can be overpowering and demoralizing, but medication is not the only answer. We need not stop everything because of pain. We can decide to struggle through it as best we can, to go around it, and to find other ways. Nothing in life comes easy. We always have to be patient, to persist, and to take one step at a time toward our goals. The same attitude helps with pain. In life, there should be no hurry to get to the top of the staircase, because the stairs never end. **Pain can be disabling, but we can be enabling.**

Figure 13-1

Pain is psychological as much as it is physical, if not more. When we keep positive, keep active, and use psychological techniques, pain can be willed lower. This does not mean to say that pain is all in our head but, rather, that our brain can reduce our pain.

Stepping Stones



**To climb down a mountain, first we have to climb up.
Pain is persistent; we have to be, too**

Figure 13-2 shows how stress causes headaches, neck aches, and other aches, if we do not know how to deal with it. Tension headaches are generally muscular, and migraine headaches are often considered vascular, but they can be exacerbated by tension. In either case, psychological exercises can help deal with the pain. **Headaches are the same as any other problem; they are waiting for solutions.**

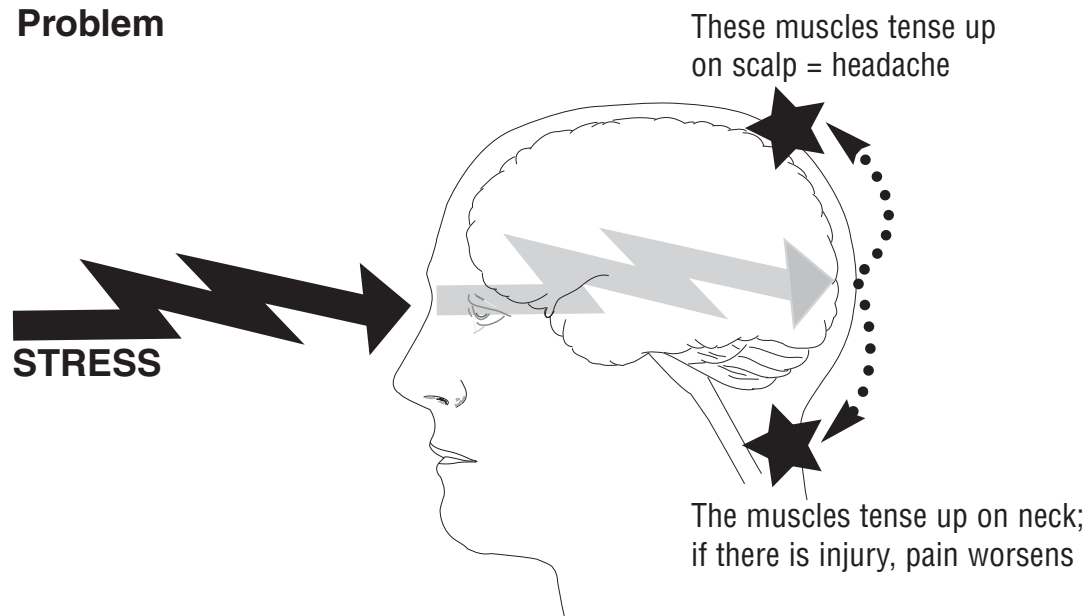
.....
*Headaches can be cured
without medicine—
would you believe it.*
.....

Figure 13-2

Headaches may be experienced physically but, often, their origin is psychological. Stress can make us so frantic that we tense up, tighten up, and make a headache appear. Muscle contractions worsen, worsening our pain. By using the right psychological techniques, headaches can be controlled or lessened, for example, even when we try to solve problems while we are under stress. When we learn to lie low, headaches lie lower.

When You Have a Headache, Use Your Head

Problem



Solution

1. Physiotherapy exercises
2. Psychology exercises

A headache is not in the head; it is on the scalp or neck
A migraine is not in the brain, itself; it is in the blood vessels in the brain

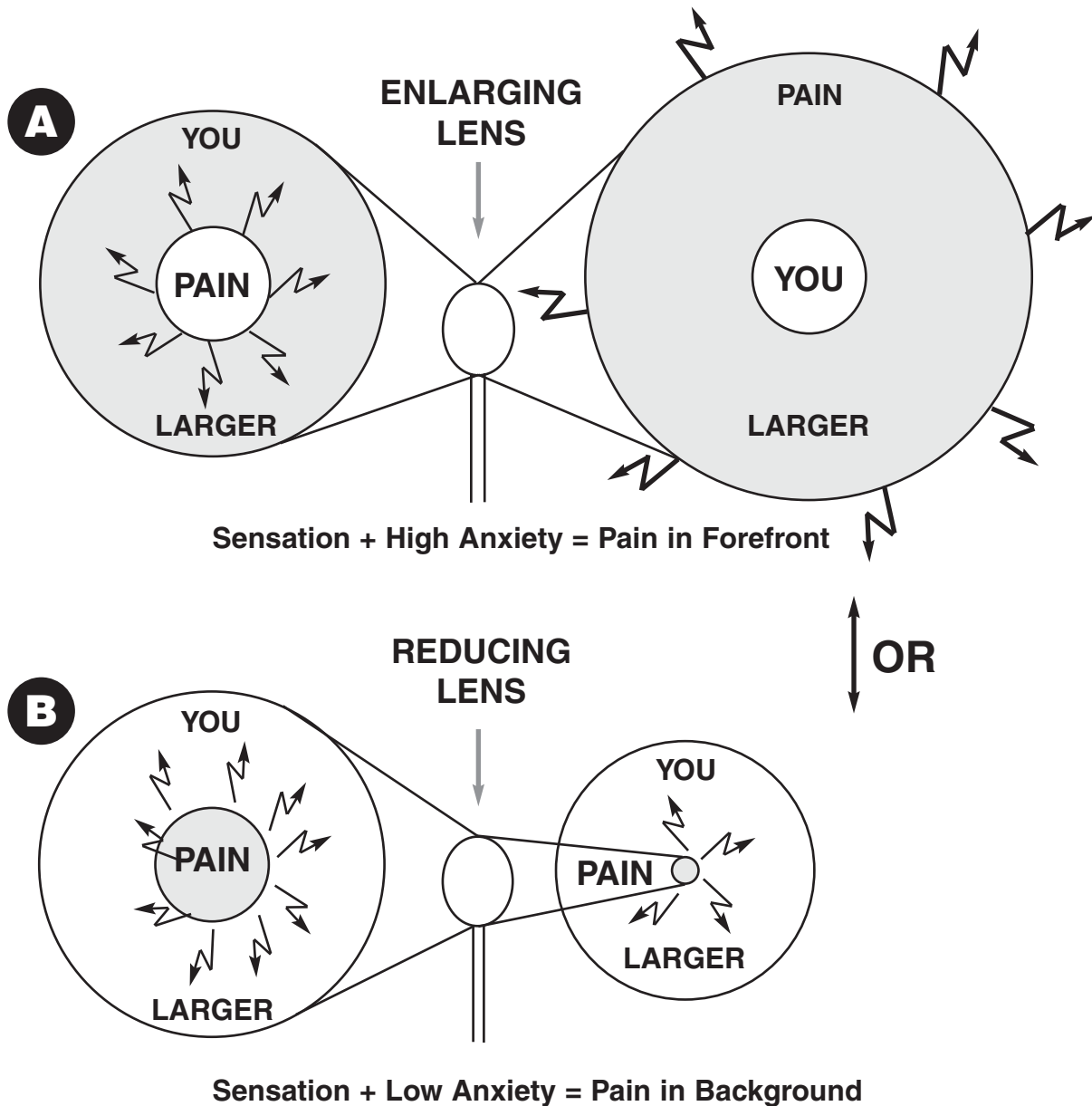
When pain feels worse, perception may have increased it. Perception can also lessen it.

In **Figure 13-3**, we see how pain experience can be magnified beyond its initial sensations. In a figurative sense, it can even become larger than we are, dominating us and becoming the focus of our lives. It is important that the pain experi-

Figure 13-3

When pain starts, it may be very strong, but our strengths are still present. However, pain may make us very anxious, we become fearful, and the pain magnifies. It may become larger than us, taking up a large part of our lives. By learning how to control anxiety, we are already helping our pain.

The Pain Magnifying Glass



ence not get worse, but heal as we deal with it. We can do this better by keeping it in perspective, keeping it as background instead of foreground. Two people with the same pain sensations can respond to them with very different magnifying lenses: they can either turn the magnifying glass of the sensation toward the magnifying side, or they can turn it toward the reduction side. In many ways, the pain experience that we have depends on which attitude that we adopt. **When we perceive pain as less, it may become less.**

Figure 13-9 describes a different approach to pain management compared to the ones described up to now in this chapter. There are two basic psychological strategies in dealing with pain—to distance oneself from it, such as in trying action and distraction, and to approach it directly. In the latter approach, techniques are used that lead to focussing on the pain in order to better control it, such as imagining the site of the pain becoming smaller, less inflamed, and less painful. For example, we imagine that the pain is going from a subjective intensity level of 8 out of 10 down to 7 out of 10.

Exercises such as this have a three-fold function. First, in concentrating directly on the sensation of pain, the emotion and worry associated with the pain are not exaggerated. The sensation is dealt with for what it is and not for what it may become or for what it evokes emotionally. Second, slowly but surely, by concentrating on the pain sensation, the exercise becomes a somewhat meditative and relaxing one. The muscular and psychological tensions that are usually associated with bracing ourselves to deal with the pain experience begin to dissipate. Third, the pain experience actually lessens. Healing is promoted not only by subtracting the interfering stress but, also, by the curative powers of the exercise. By imagining the pain intensity reducing, we have the power to actually reduce it. By visualizing a pain area shrinking in size or becoming less inflamed or reddened, we invoke powerful healing mechanisms in the body that deploy and can soothe, which they begin to do. The pain experience becomes more bearable. A cascade of healing begins, with the site of the physical pain coming more under psychological control. With each success in dealing with pain as it intensifies, we become more confident in our abilities to control it. **Pain**

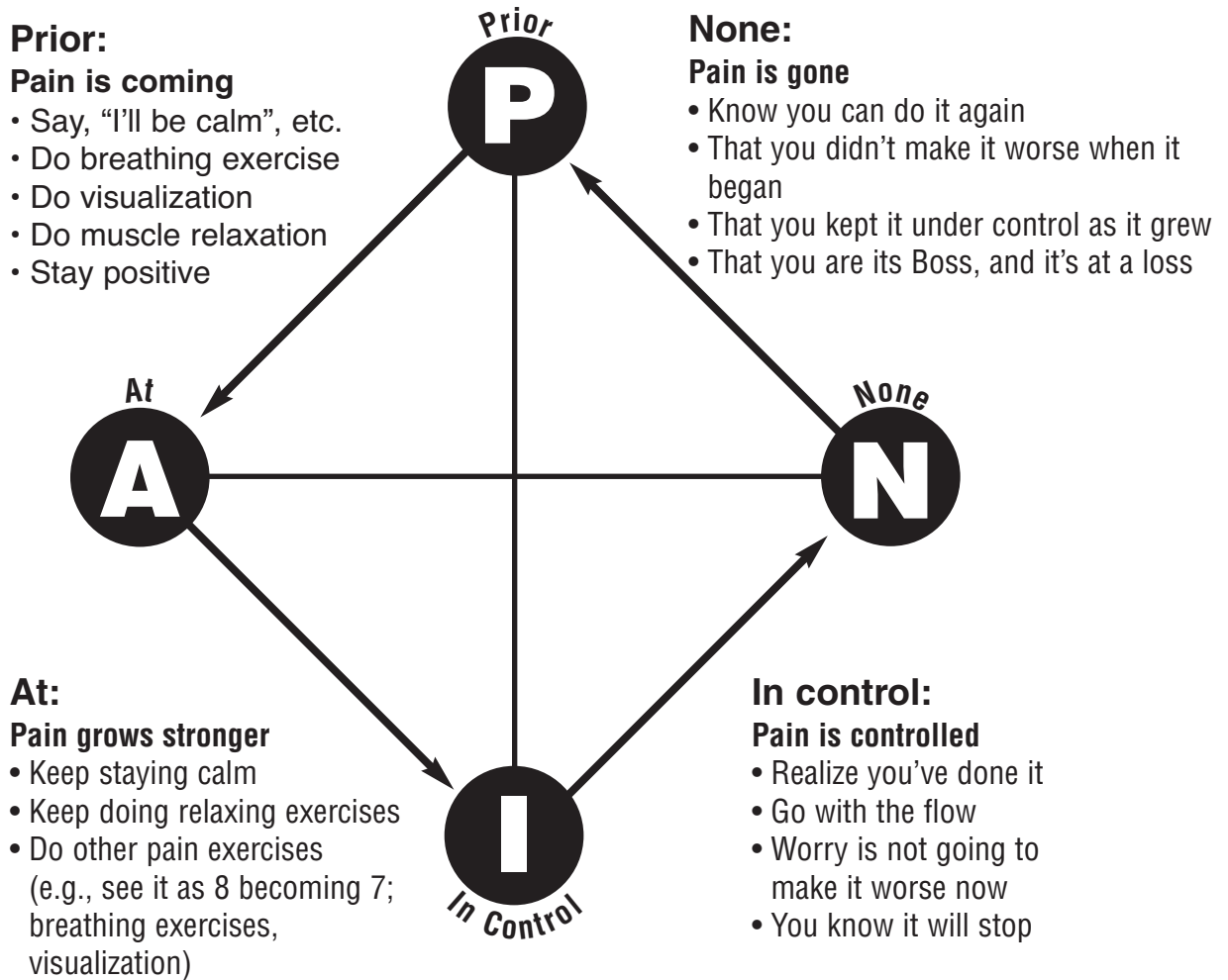
.....
*By doing right things
for pain, it cannot
take a wrong road.*
.....

.....
*When we focus on
what works, pain loses
its job of bothering us.*
.....

Figure 13-9

There is no need for pain to spiral out of control, especially when we keep control. At its first appearance, we should use appropriate techniques. At its height, we should match its increase with increased use of the techniques. As it lessens, we should realize that we've strengthened.

Pain, Not Suffering



can become an event in our lives that challenges us, rather than an event in our lives that masters us.

In a similar vein, we can imagine the energy of our body to be like our planet Earth’s central core of heat. We can imagine that the internal energy in our central core radiates to pain sites, soothing and healing as it goes. In addition, as our internal energy passes outward through painful or

.....
When pain makes you give up—get up to the challenge.
.....

injured areas, we can imagine it is helped by the energy of the sun radiating down onto the surface. We can imagine that the two powerful energies, inside and outside, join to calm and cure, both alleviating the pain felt and providing hope that our control over it has increased and will continue to increase. With techniques such as these, and others that we learn about, the mind begins to re-integrate the body, and can begin to imagine a healthier future. We can open the psychological gates to possibility and close it to pain. The message is that we can influence pain just as it can influence us. We can decide to keep motivated and to remain ourselves. We can try to think clearly, cope with the pain, and perceive it as something that we can manage. We can continue on in our daily lives, being active. **If we fight through the pain, pain will lessen the fight.**

*Partnering pain with
optimism decreases
its hope to stay.*

*Pain can take away some
of what you do, but not
any of what you are.*



You Become More Personable When Pain Becomes More Manageable.

Give pain a taste of its own medicine—by using less medicine and more psychological techniques.

Give pain a warm welcome—lots of sweat and exercise.

Do not take pain lightly—but control it strongly.

When we stay busy, pain gets exhausted.

The best recipe for pain control includes two parts medication, two parts psychological techniques, and ten parts motivation.

When pain builds, physiotherapy builds the body, psychology builds the mind, and you build pain control.

Pain begins in the body and finishes in the mind.

To deal with pain, take many small steps and a few great thoughts.

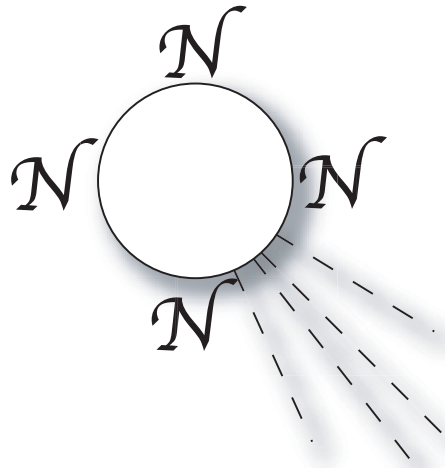
By pacing through pain, it persists in lessening.

Pain control is a sample of self-control.



Chapter 14

Abstain from Pain: Part Two



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
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*"N" is for Never
having to say,
"I'm sorry, I didn't
give my best."*



Pain can persist longer than normal, and accepting this is normal.

Pain responds to the games that we play with it. Monopolize recovery.

In **Figure 14-1**, we see that someone who has chronic pain is not making it up. Stress and pain form a volatile mix, keeping each other going. Stress stops healing; pain causes stress. So vicious circles develop. If healing is delayed too long, the pain becomes burned in and comes to dominate our lives. The pain even worsens. The best cure is prevention. We need to learn how to destress, including when we have pain. **When we destress well, the life expectancy of pain, and not our life satisfaction, will lessen.** Only in this sense is pain in our head; that is, to lessen pain we must use our head.

Figure 14-1

Chronic pain is real. Stressors may keep strong an initial acute pain, even though we may be trying our best, and the stress may even stop healing. Stress may make our pain pathways hypersensitive to it, so that they fire easily, and create neuronal circuits in the brain that are hypersensitive to it. These circuits, too, may fire easily, even without incoming triggers from the damaged tissue. Even if the physical damage seems healed, pain may remain present. Other people may deny someone's experience of pain, but it could be that this idea is only in *their* head.

Chronic Pain is Not in the Head

Step 1

- Immediate **Stressor** (e.g., accident) → **Tissue damage**
 - Pain signal → **Pain experience**
 - Feel hurt

Step 2

- Need to consider **All Stresses** (e.g., before accident) → **Tissue damage does not heal**
 - Pain sensitivity → **Pain experience**
 - Continues beyond expected
 - Pain pathways easily fire

Step 3

- Stresses worsen, and so does the pain. **Vicious circles develop** → **Tissue still damaged**
 - Pain sensitivity even increases → **Pain experience worse**
 - Persistent
 - Permanent, pervasive
 - Chronic, intransigent
 - Burned in

It's in the Body; It's in the Brain

Figure 14-9 asks us to pace our activities when we are in pain so that we can do them well. To succeed on a task even if we are under pressure, have pain, or have any other interference, we need to have a plan, to work at it at a reasonable pace, and to see it through to the end. We need to know how to monitor ourselves and to adjust constantly, so that we keep on track, do not get fatigued, and work at it step by step, keeping our goal in mind. We need to know the task, give ourselves to it, watch ourselves doing it, and adjust to it, as needed, so that we can keep going until it is done. **When we take small but steady steps when we are in pain, we take small but steady steps against pain.**

*We fear pain.
Let it learn to fear us.*

*Sometimes we become our
pain, but pain is not what
we need become.*

Figure 14-9

Experiencing pain is so unpleasant that we can become dominated by a fear of it, even to the point of fearing things that may help it improve. For example, we may avoid stretching and physical exercises. When we learn the dangers of the fear of pain, we back off less and try more, lessening pain.

Fear of Pain

When it controls us	When we control it
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back away • Half-hearted effort • Give up • Avoid • Freeze • Fear of pain lifestyle • Too stressed to see • Feel overwhelmed • Aim too low • Through with work • Think the worst • Try to hide from stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide to go on • Full effort • Work through • Accept • Move forward • Free lifestyle • See parts and whole • Feel overcharged • Have reasonable expectation • Working • Think through • See stress as a motivator

.....
*Pain may start weak,
and finish strong.
We may start weak,
but can finish strong.*
.....

.....
*There really is no mind,
brain, or body.
There is only all three
indivisible.
Use them to divide pain.*
.....

.....
*By taking our time,
pain loses speed.*
.....

Figure 14-15 underscores that **pain is what our bodies and minds make of it and make it**. For example, some people can walk on hot coals without feeling pain during or afterwards (although the cinders on top of the coals may not be too hot). At Easter, some people volunteer to be crucified with nails through their wrists, and they recover quickly. In some cultures, individuals swirl, or otherwise get in a trance, and bear well painful experiences, such as being pierced. In war, some people can be shot with a bullet and feel elated, because they know that they survived the war and are going home; so they do not feel pain.

For every example where pain should be felt but is not, there are other examples where it should not be felt at all or not at an intense level, but it is experienced as terrible and excruciating. For example, people who have had a limb amputated may experience sensations, including intense pain, in the missing limbs. This is called “phantom” limb pain.

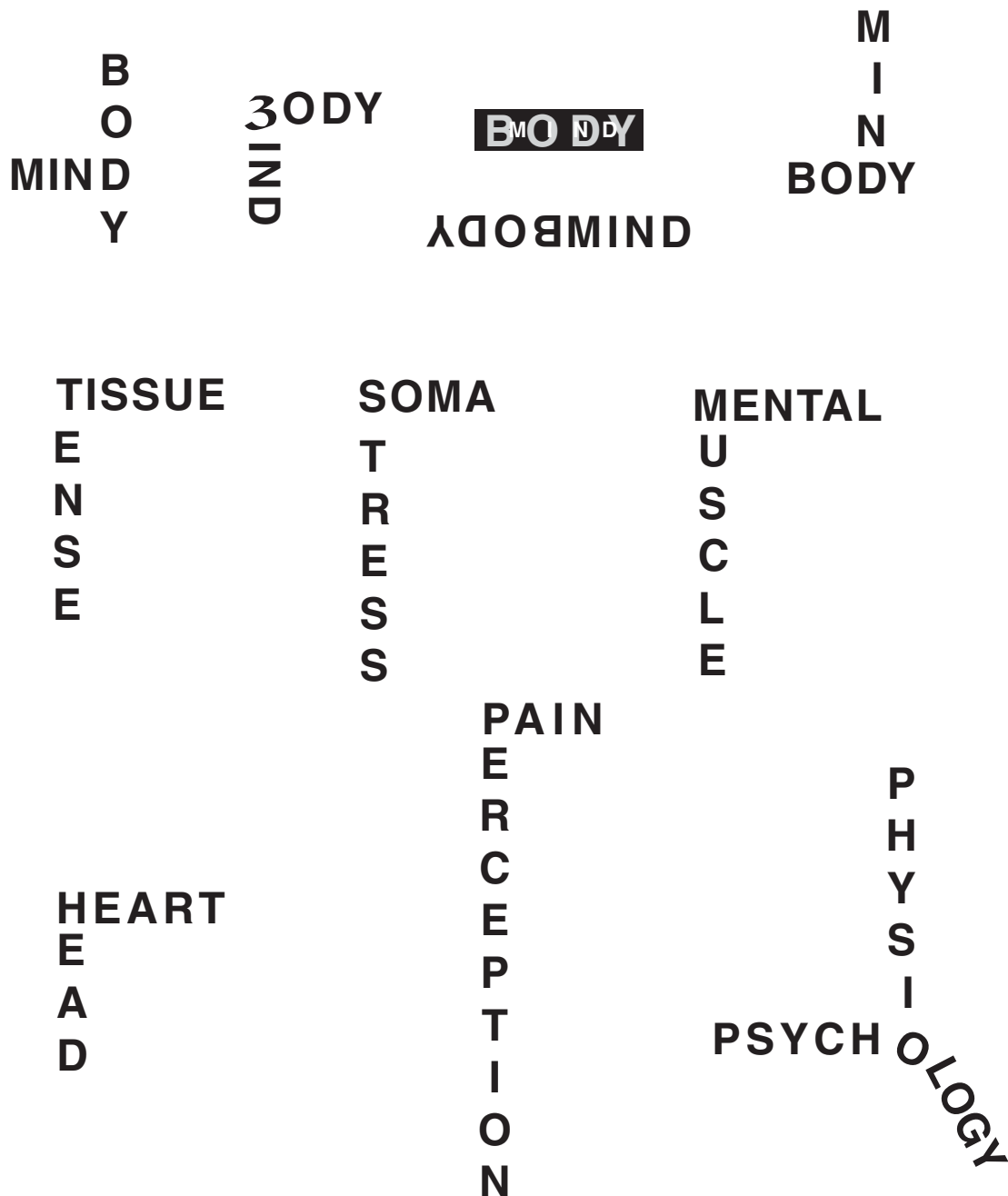
Another example is that relatively minor physical injuries may produce long-lasting, strong pain, because of an interaction with stress, emotions, and other psychological factors. Stress produces biochemicals (such as cortisol) that do not let function properly other biochemicals that help heal tissue injury. In fact, stress can even increase tissue damage through these negative biochemicals. The pain increases, becomes chronic, intense, and widespread.

Moreover, the pain and stress centers in the brain are, more or less, the same ones. This shows that the body and mind are not really separate, but are intimately interconnected. Therefore, what happens with one affects the other.

The mind has dominion over the body. The degree of pain does not, simply, reflect the degree of tissue damage, because psychological factors and individual differences play a role. For example, two people with the same injuries do not experience the same pain, partly depending on their attitude to the pain. Further illustrating the role of psychological factors in pain, pain may spread to regions that were not originally injured. Further, for some people, from day to day, pain may change its location, breadth, and intensity. It may come and go inexplicably. Moreover, it may vary in its responsiveness to treatment. Generally, for those in chronic pain, pain defies prediction about when it should get better. It lasts longer than predicted. The consequence is that it

Figure 14-15

There are many ways to show that the mind and body form one system, mediated by the brain. This does not deny that there seems to be free will, or even a soul, and the like. However, these may be simply products of brain activity, emerging from it, as much is happiness and other emotions. Understanding the system allows us to realize that we have personal resources that we can use when we have pain, such as coping better, thinking positively, and willing it lower. Because the mind and body are connected, we can mind our pain.



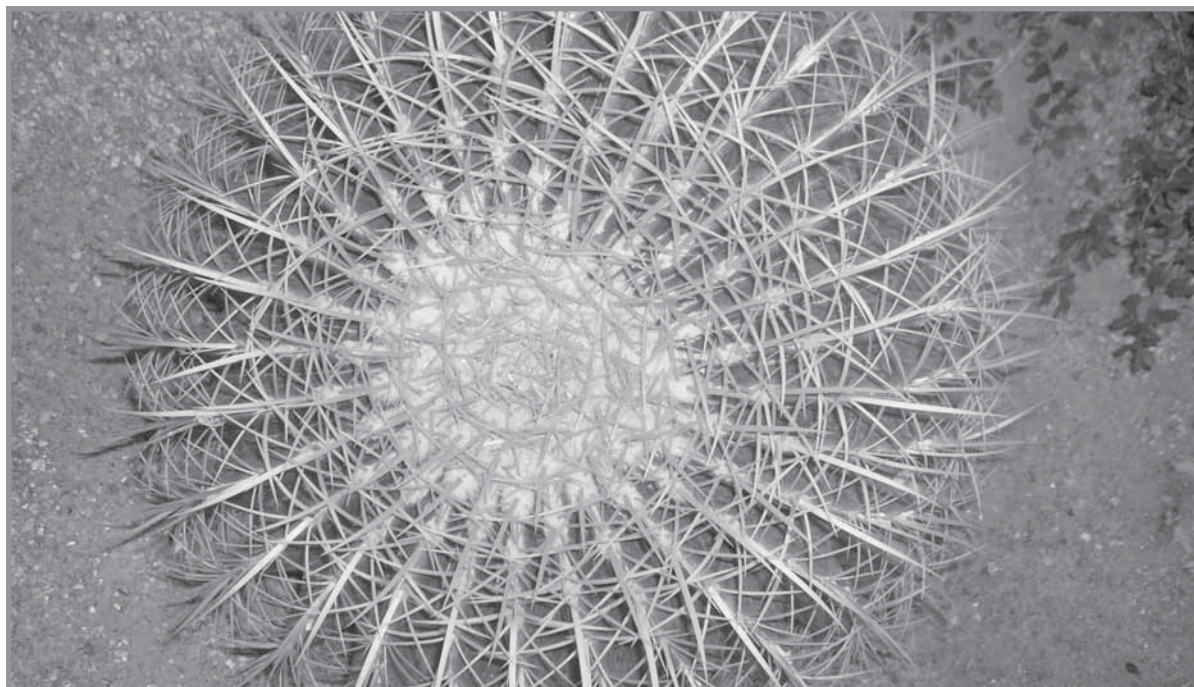
.....
*Serious pain? Get serious
with rehabilitation.*
.....

.....
*Pain loses ground,
when we stay grounded.*
.....

drives people to seek endless explanations and endless cures. Finally, because of all this, it may make people give up.

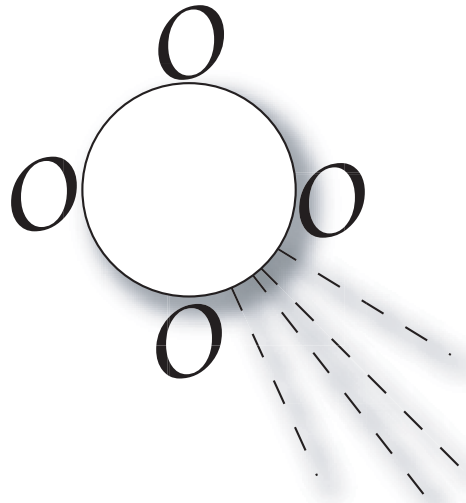
Yet chronic pain sufferers may be told that the pain is all in their head, or without physical cause, because they should be better by now. However, this perspective fails to appreciate that what should happen for the average person in the recovery process from pain does not really happen to any one individual, because there is not one person who is really the average; it is just a statistical expression. Each of us is different, especially when it comes to pain. In cases of chronic pain, in the sufferer, pain centers and circuits stay sensitized and are aggravated easily, out of proportion to and beyond the effects of the original physical injury, illness, or tissue damage. Because, in these people, neurons are firing beyond the normal, the pain is experienced as real and, because the circuits and centers are influenced by stress, emotions, and other psychological factors, they fire more than we might expect.

Just as the mind-body connection is the source of elaborate pain experience, so can it be used as the start of a cure or of some healing. When we come to realize in our mind that we can begin to control our pain, we begin to take the path to the reduction of its intensity. **When we let the mind and body reconnect in the right way, our ills begin to re-correct in the right way.**



Chapter 15

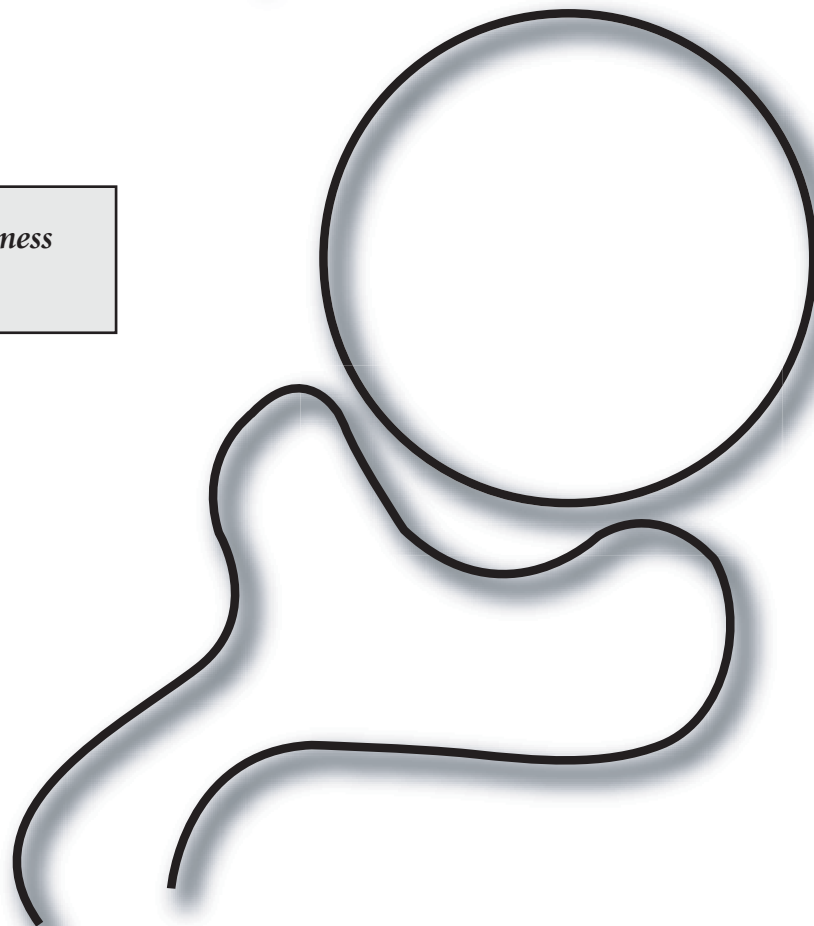
Unfazed by Fear



EXCERPTS

**Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com**

*"O" is for Openness
to accept.*



By learning distressing,
we can learn to grip the
wheel on any fear.

Make fear angry—better
yet, make it leave.

Figure 15-8 provides a description of the major fear reduction strategies that psychologists use for phobic drivers. In order to get control of their actual driving in a vehicle, I emphasize to my clients that they can use on the spot psychological techniques, before the drive begins, during it, and after it. First, to prepare for the drive, before they enter their vehicle, they can perform relaxing breathing exercises or visualizations. As they leave the home and approach the car, clients can undertake visualizing the beach while engaging

Figure 15-8

There are helpful techniques that we can use when we are fearful about driving, after the fear starts. *a)* First, we can imagine positive relaxing scenes and, *b)* then, imagine combined relaxing and driving scenes. *c)* Then, we can climb relevant fear hierarchies, which are created, in part, with the person in fear. By using the right techniques, we can reduce the mountain of fear that we may have. By moving up the hierarchy of fear while doing psychological exercises, such as breathing exercises, we are engaging in a procedure called systematic desensitization. We can add more steps after step 5 in the figure, like driving at traffic hour, on the highway, in the rain or snow, at busy intersections, turning left, and so on.

Driving Strategy

A Surround Negatives with Positives

- e.g.,
1. Do breathing exercise before getting into car, and when getting out
 2. Do the exercise after each upsetting incident in car

B Visualization of Beach (Nature Scene)

Do it at home and in car, to get better used to it

- e.g.,
1. In living room
 2. Near car
 3. In back seat

C Visualization of Driving

- e.g.,
1. Visualize beach scene/nature scene
 2. Walk to car excited about going for refreshments
 3. Get in car, thinking of favorite refreshment
 4. Drive on quiet street, still happy (short drive next to beach)
 5. Add more complex driving situations as get used to each new step

in relaxed breathing. Also, they can use these techniques afterwards in order to take off the stress that the drive had induced. In this way, they are surrounding the negative psychological experience of the drive with positives. That is, some of the edge is taken off the fear reaction that might develop in the vehicle, because clients are calming down before they enter it.

Performing such exercises before beginning to drive interferes with any anticipatory fear reactions and provides an opportunity to engage in appropriate self-talk. Performing them afterwards helps clients use positive self-talk in preparation for the next drive. Most important, once in the car, clients can use breathing techniques whenever necessary, such as to contain physical reactions at close calls, at honking, or at the sight of a passing truck. The techniques have positive benefit when used before, during, or after the drive is completed, because it helps both the body and mind reduce the stress levels that had been induced.

The primary procedure outlined in the figure relates to a technique called systematic desensitization. In this fear-reduction technique, clients are exposed to a graduated hierarchy of stimuli or situations related to their fear and, at each level, are asked to simultaneously perform relaxation exercises. The hierarchy is called a fear hierarchy, because the stimuli are arranged from the least fearful to the clients to the most fearful. The hierarchy is elaborated on an individual basis, depending on the nature of the fear being treated. The goal is to associate positive feelings with the negative ones at each level of the hierarchy, eliminating or greatly reducing the fear at each of the levels as the clients move up the hierarchy. This progression reduces the anxiety at each phase of the hierarchy through a canceling process called reciprocal inhibition, where a new learning is taking place overriding the maladaptive one.

As each new increasingly fearful level of the hierarchy is worked through and neutralized by its association with a simultaneous relaxation technique, the clients become free of its hold and ready to move on to the next level. At each level of the hierarchy, the therapist verifies the clients' subjective anxieties, or personally felt degrees of distress. This is accomplished by asking how they are doing, according to where they would place themselves on an 11-point subjective

*Fear will take a step back—
when we come to the front.*

*Breathing techniques
slow fear's heart beat.*

*To deflate fear,
breathe life into it.*

*Fear is one part of us.
Courage is another.*

*Emotional memories
can become memories
of emotion.*

*To get back on the horse—
horse around.*

distress scale, with 10 units considered the highest point on the scale and 0 the lowest.

If, for any one level of the hierarchy, clients score themselves on the scale in the range indicative of an uncomfortable degree of anxiety (e.g., 5–6, or more, out of 10), the exercise is terminated at this level. Then, the therapist makes sure that the clients return to a relatively relaxed state by engaging in relaxation procedures. The clients continue to work on the level that is troublesome until it becomes less anxious for them. Then, the clients are ready to move up to the next level of the hierarchy.

When this technique is applied to phobic motor vehicle accident victims, the first step of the fear hierarchy may involve imagining a drive on a quiet, empty road, with pleasant natural scenes around or, perhaps, imagining something pleasant before arriving at the car. Instead of dreading the drive normally visualized in their mind, with this relaxing drive that they are imagining, the clients are relaxed. For example, perhaps they are imagining a beautiful drive next to a beach or they are walking to the car, talking about the pleasures to come.

Then, once this step in the fear hierarchy is mastered well, in the next step, some added stressful dimension is included in the scene that clients are asked to imagine. For example, distant traffic may be added as the next step of a fear hierarchy once a client is used to imagining driving on a pleasant, empty road.

For each of the levels of the hierarchy, as the clients imagine the scenes, they are asked to use appropriate self-talk, such as “I’m OK with the driving, I’m doing it,” reinforcing a sense of control. As the steps continue, the clients learn to control fear in more problematic situations, such as cars approaching slowly from behind, minor close calls, night driving, large trucks, highways, bad weather, and difficult close calls.

Not all clients can visualize a pleasant scene of nature in a relaxed manner. For example, as soon as they try, they will get intruding thoughts of their accident. This illustrates that clients need to be treated as individuals, and not have standardized techniques applied to them without required modification.

Psychologists have been successful in treating client fears. However, we are learning that some clients are more difficult to treat than others, and some fears are harder to treat than others, especially when they are long term, or there are pre-morbid or preceding fears or traumas, or comorbid or accompanying conditions, such as chronic pain. Nevertheless, psychologists keep their hopes that they can treat any client as long as the case is within their limits of competence. **Fear can be a terrible legacy of an accident, but it can be treated and healed.**

*Deal with fear openly—
and it will stop popping up
from behind closed doors.*

Figure 15-9 illustrates a technique called exposure, which is used when clients experience an incident that is especially traumatic. This exposure technique is used only when the therapist already has helped clients obtain some control of their traumatic memories, even if it by simply listening to their story, and a rapport has been created. In addition, before the technique is used, the clients need to have learned their relaxation techniques well enough to induce a relaxed state at a subjective level of 2 or so out of 10 on a scale of subjective distress.

*When fear poisons
your mind—poison it
with your mind.*

In exposure, clients are asked to relive the upsetting incident by talking about it, by reviewing a tape recording of their description of it, or by writing it down. Destressing or relaxation exercises are used both before and after the request to relive the traumatic incident. Moreover, the technique can be combined with a systematic approach, where exposure is paced by the clients' capacities to handle the recall. For example, in my practice, clients may be asked to recall the drive before the accident, as we work up to the accident itself. Moreover, when clients are finally ready to remember the accident itself, at first, it may be just for seconds at a time.

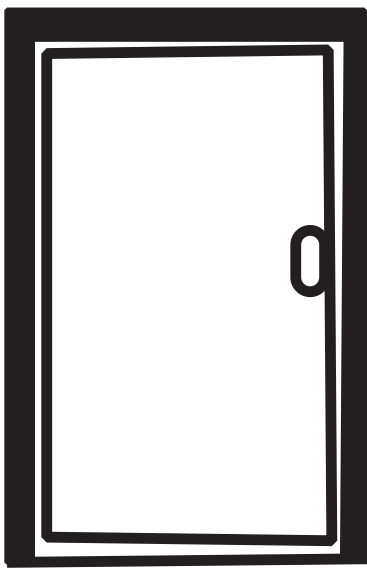
Therefore, in exposure, first, clients are prepared by asking them to use learned relaxation techniques. When they are ready, depending on the degree of anxiety that the therapist anticipates, they are asked to proceed to the first trial of recall of the trauma or its precursor moments. The request may be to undertake the recall from a few seconds to up to many minutes, depending on the individual. Then, the clients use the learned relaxation techniques, again, to return them to a more relaxed state.

*Nightmares?
Daydream the beach.*

Figure 15-9

When fear is deeply ingrained, one technique that is used is called exposure. We may fear the fear so much and try to hide it so much that we really do not deal with it. Exposure is a controlled manner of letting the fear come out and dealing with it. It is never done at a level to harm the person, for it is guided by the person's feedback. It is an imagination technique, and it is accompanied by relaxation exercises, such as breathing techniques. It may involve exposure to the fearful situation in a graded manner and in increasingly longer durations.

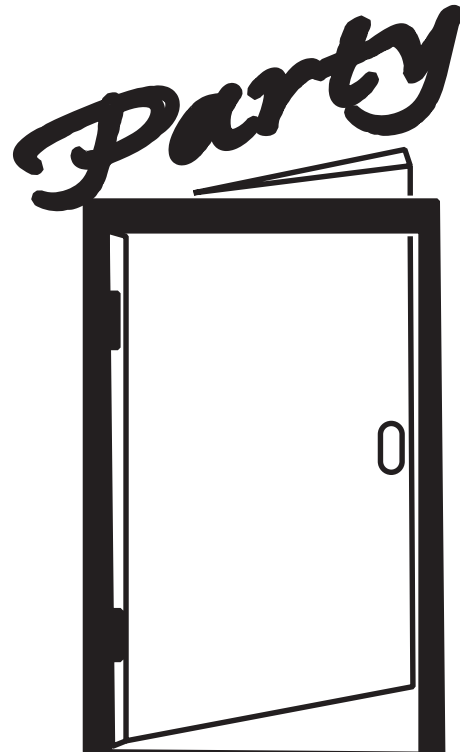
Expose Fear for What **it** is



Locking
it in the closet
does not really
stop
it

Give
it
a coming
out party.

It
will make
it blush and leave



The principle is that when clients repetitively expose themselves in a safe fashion in a psychologist's office to a trauma, the psychological reaction to it gradually lessens. It may be difficult for clients to do this at the beginning, for it is hard for them to describe an incident that has been so stressful. However, by engaging in the exposure exercises, improvement generally takes place. As I tell my clients, if we hide our stress in the closet, it can pop out at any time, so it is always better to bring it out and deal with it. **Often, controlling fear is a question of controlling the self.**

Because exposure therapy can elevate anxiety too much, psychotherapists need to use it carefully. As mentioned, the clients should pace themselves when their anxiety at the idea of participating in exposure therapy is too great. Moreover, once clients complete a trial, they should use a relaxation technique for as long as it takes to bring them back down to a more relaxed level.

In complex cases, where clients have been victims of a great trauma or repeated trauma, and even just thinking that they may have to do the exposure exercise elicits intense anxiety, the therapist may have to delay participation in exposure therapy until the clients are ready. Perhaps for some of these clients, exposure therapy is not appropriate for a long while. In such cases, eventually, I may begin exposure by requesting a brief flashback between extended relaxed breathing exercises. This illustrates that exposure can help not only with traumatic events stored in memory but, also, with clients' ongoing flashbacks and accompanying distress, because the clients are learning techniques to use that can be applied right away after they occur.

Figure 15-10 addresses how trauma or hurt may make us psychologically numb and withdrawn. When we go to the dentist, to protect us from being overwhelmed, we get an injection of an anesthetic or freezing agent. When we are traumatized, we may freeze psychologically to protect us from being overwhelmed. That is, we may dissociate or engage in a similar reaction to protect our sense of self from being overwhelmed. Memory of the event may be so overwhelming that we try to block it, do anything to forget it, and so on. If we have had prior traumas, a reaction of feeling

*Instead of allowing fear
to be self-destructive,
allow it to self-destruct.*

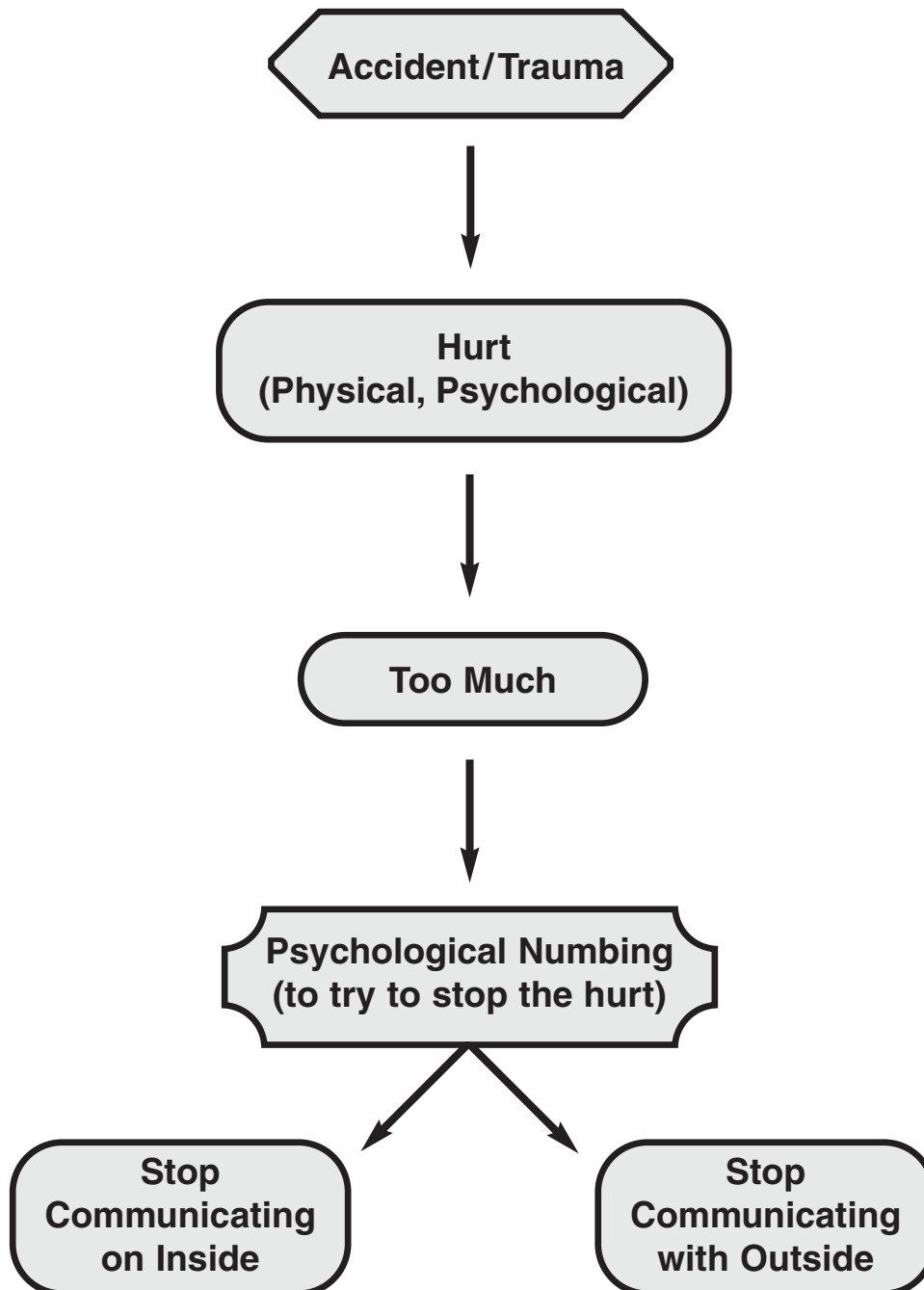
*Finding ways to express
fear sends it away
by express courier.*

*Be intolerant to what fear
does to you—and tolerate
what you can do without it.*

Figure 15-10

After a traumatic experience, we may be so overwhelmed that we try to block out memories of the trauma, blank out, dissociate, and go numb psychologically. This may help us by stopping communication on the inside with our hurt selves, but it is a short-sighted strategy because it also stops communication on the outside with others around us, whom we, therefore, end up hurting. There are ways that we can get help when we block our hurt, involving exploring and releasing the traumatic memory in a controlled fashion.

Stopping Communication Misses the Message



overwhelmed and becoming numb psychologically to a new trauma may be evoked more readily.

But a corollary of this self-protective response is that we may not only block out the memory, we may also block out communication with ourselves and with others. We then withdraw. The world is no longer seen as a safe place. The world no longer seems just. We clue out. We believe that stopping to communicate with ourselves and with others provides relief from the burden of our shattered perceptions of the world. However, this may only lead to a long term worsening of the negative psychological effects of the trauma.

Instead of numbing ourselves after trauma, withdrawing from others, and stopping to communicate with ourselves and with others, we need to recreate our will to communicate when that communication is lost. There are many advantages for recovery when communication with the self and with the other is maintained after trauma. **By keeping open the channels of communication after trauma, the soothing words of others help us, and our internal dialogue helps us.** By communicating, the turbulence from the traumatic event will be shorter-lived. The communicative part of us knows this, so we need to let it speak.

Figure 15-11 addresses how memories of trauma can get locked in our long-term memory without adequate means of freeing it. As much as one of the reactions to trauma is an attempt to block the memories, another one is that we cannot stop thinking about it. When we just go over the trauma in our mind without it bothering us much, we are ruminating. However, too much rumination itself can be bothersome, because it interferes, takes over, and so on.

If we keep remembering a traumatic experience, and it is bothersome as it happens, we are doing more than ruminating, in that we are having intrusive memories of trauma that hurt us to recall. Flashbacks are visual memories of accidents that are bothersome or hurtful to recall. They are unpleasant memories that we have lived that get to the point that in recalling a trauma we think that we are actually there again, reliving it. This may be the worst type of traumatic memory.

Trauma touches all our senses. It is not only a visual experience but, also, an auditory one. Often, other senses are

*Do not face fear—give
it a kick from behind.*

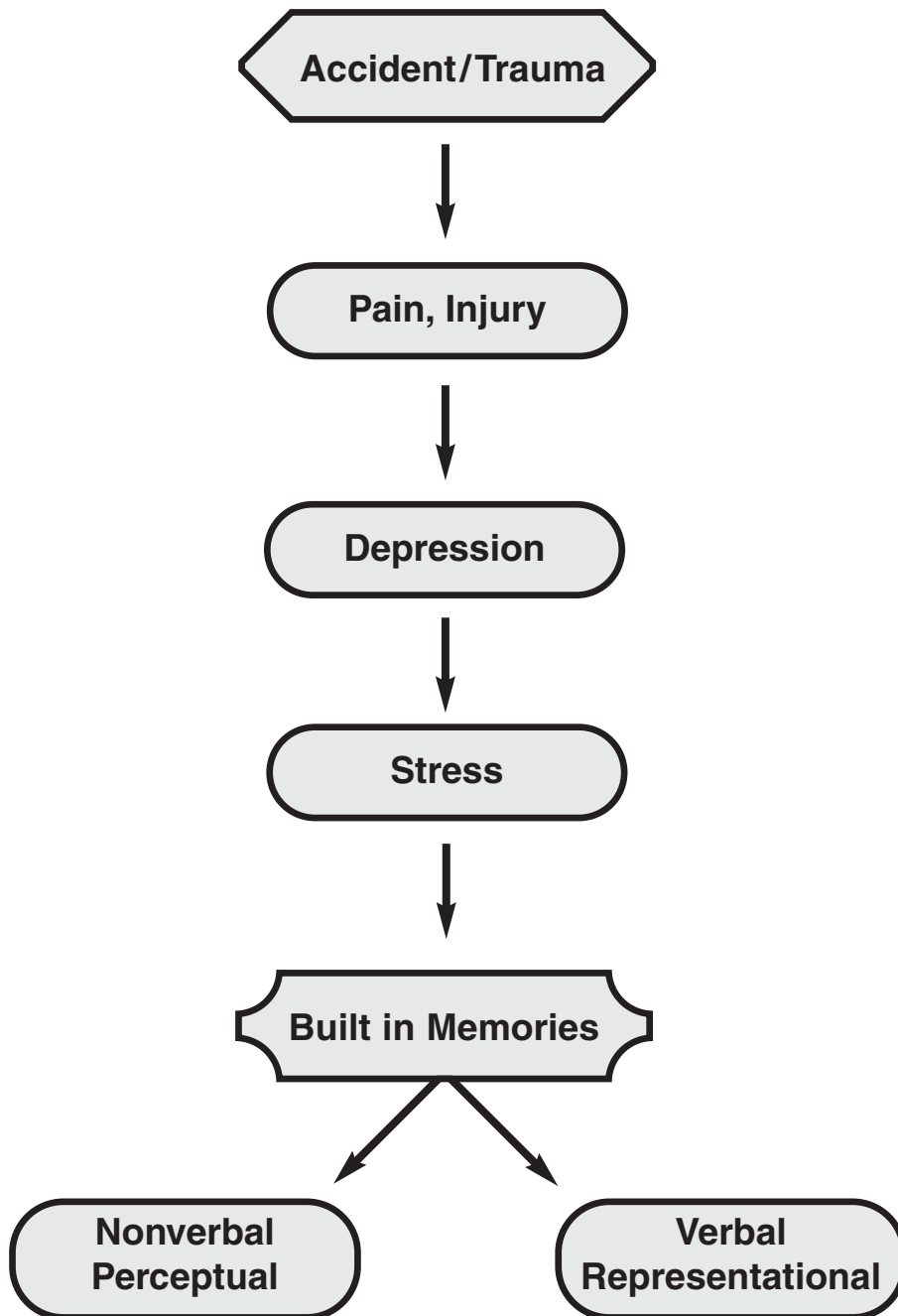
*To have fear back down—
get your back up.*

*Get addicted to
having fear leave.*

Figure 15-11

Memories of trauma are stored in nonverbal modalities, such as sights, sounds, touch, and smell. They may be locked in until they are translated into, expressed, and dealt with in the verbal modality. Talking or writing might help with what we would rather leave unsaid, or out of mind.

Therapy Frees Talk of What Can Not be Said



involved, for example, those of smell, touch, and taste. Think of the multiple senses affected by a devastating motor vehicle accident or the major impact of a personal assault, sexual assault, and so forth. These sensory memories are non-verbal; we do not give ourselves a running verbal narrative as trauma unfolds.

When psychotherapy is needed for a victim of trauma, it may be most helpful to translate the nonverbal memories into verbal ones. By talking out the nonverbal memories, the trauma victim can deal better with them. By creating verbal memories as she or he talks about the trauma and its effects, the victim adds a new dimension to the memories. By rendering the memories verbal as much as nonverbal, talk therapy can act to help the memories lose their traumatic edge. The danger in turning nonverbal traumatic memories into more accessible verbal ones is that we add to the trauma, by doubling the memories, so to speak. A good psychotherapist will be aware of these issues and deal with them. **Fears are for freeing.**

Figure 15-12 indicates the heightened sensitivity that we develop once we are exposed to a trauma, especially when it is complex. For example, when there is associated pain, our normal defenses and coping skills are weakened, and anything can set off a negative response out of proportion to the initiating stress. Once we are made more vulnerable, little things that we may not have noticed previously take on large roles, because the thresholds for considering them as frustrating are quite lowered. Also, once our stress responses are triggered, we respond with great nervousness, irritability, upset, anxiety, and so on, well beyond what is called for and well beyond the way that we had acted to the same little things before the trauma/injury. Many stimuli or situations in our daily lives become easily frustrating to us, and the responses that are initiated become easily elevated to the maximum in intensity, confusing and perhaps angering those around us.

The other half of the coin is that our social life takes a nosedive, as we increasingly withdraw, irritate others, and lose the will to socialize. Before, we may have used any excuse to go out and have fun. Now, we avoid social situations unless we have to go and, once there, we go through the motions rather than really enjoying ourselves like before.

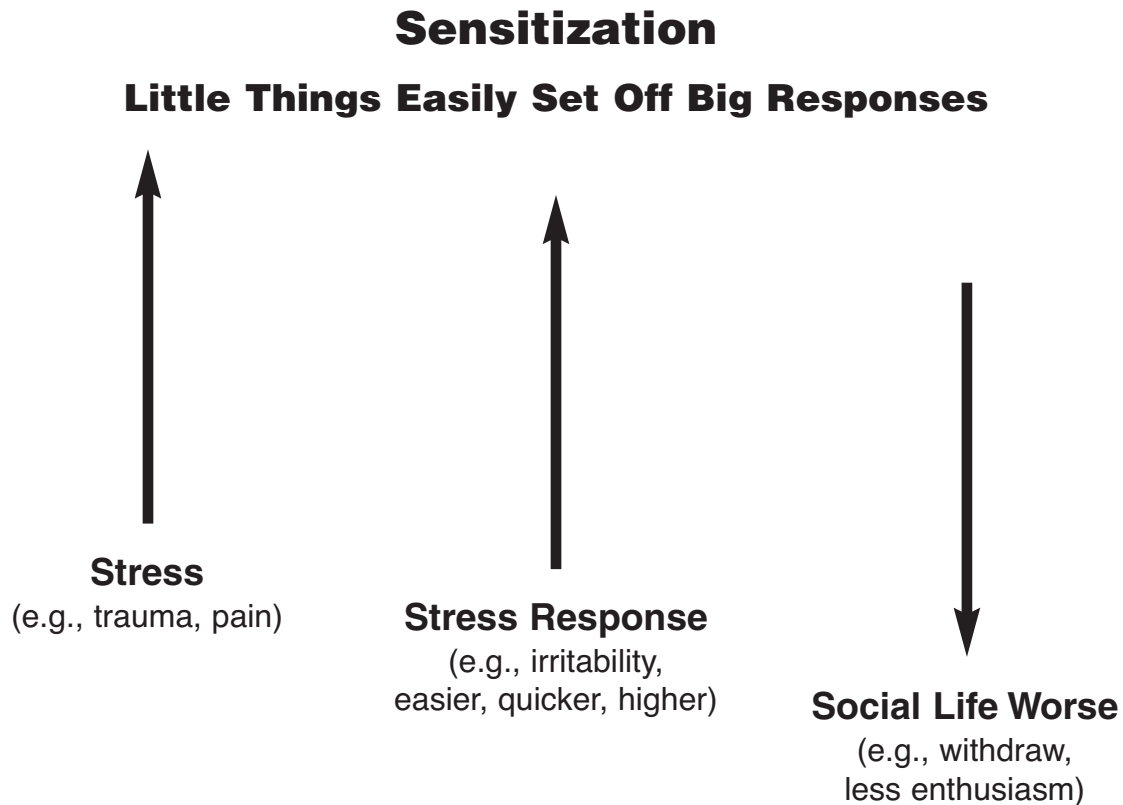
Shake, rattle, and roll fear.

*We can become sensitized
to any little hurt,
or we can become
sensitive to the other.*

*Give fear presents—
presence of mind and
the gift of garble.*

Figure 15-12

Trauma, stress, pain, fear, and injury can lead to sensitization, where little things get blown out of proportion, including having a quicker emotional response and an easier activation of feelings of pain. Effects include a reduction in social life, and less enthusiasm when having to socialize. When we overreact, we need to underscore that there are solutions.



.....
We can get on our way when fear is put out of the way.
.....

.....
Fear is temporary when learning is permanent.
.....

The figure indicates that when we experience trauma, injury, or other stresses, instead of responding positively to any social situation, we may seek to avoid them and, moreover, we do not respond with enthusiasm. Similarly, when we experience trauma, injury, or other stresses, our negative responses are more easily set us off and, moreover, our responses are sky-high, in contrast to the situation before.

This process of having our thresholds altered by trauma, injury, or other stresses is called sensitization. It refers to both physiological and psychological processes. For example, when we develop pain, our peripheral (e.g., skin) sensors are fired more readily and we may experience more pain relative to the degree of tissue injury. Similarly, there are

central sensitization processes at work; for example, pain pathways are fired more readily when pain persists.

Psychologically, sensitization refers to the broadening of the stimulus or situational base that can elicit stress reactions and to the increased ease in elicitation, increased intensity, and increased duration of those stress reactions. This refers not only to increased susceptibility to negative emotions and related phenomena, such as irritation, fear, and pain but, also, to negative cognitive associations that may accompany them, such as catastrophizing or thinking the worst. Sensitization can lead to always being on the edge of negative perceptions and consequent negative reactions. However, it can also make us more sensitive to ourselves and to others. We need to learn to let this part of sensitization predominate.

Psychotherapy gives us the techniques to deal with trauma, injury, fear, pain, and so on. Part of what therapy activates is our ability to reduce these sensitization effects. For example, we no longer jump at the slightest irritation of an injured area of our body. Also, we learn to control our startling to fearful reminders of our trauma. It is important to learn how to control the sensitization to fear and pain after trauma and injury. **Learning coping increases hoping.**

To move up, talk down fear.

*Be good to yourself—
be bad to your fear.*



Stress leads us to withdraw socially; sociality leads stress to withdraw.

Fear winds us, until we decide to do the breathing.

Figure 15-13 illustrates that, by learning coping, we can bootstrap our recovery to points beyond where we may have been before trauma or injury. Psychotherapy for the effects of trauma, such as for fears, and for the effects of injury, such as for pain, can mold us into better copers for not only memories of the trauma/injury that had taken place but, also, for any future ones that might arise. There will always be stresses in life, and learning any coping skills increases our ability to apply them to any situation in the future. Each time coping skills are used, they create inner strengths that make them easier to apply. It is in this sense that stress strengthens. **Coping skills empower the person, not the stress.**

Figure 15-13

Trauma, stress, pain, fear, and injury, at first, reduce our coping capacities and strengths, but once we learn new coping skills, our strengths can be even greater than before. Growth is always an option, even in the worst circumstances.

Stress Builds Coping Skills and Strengths

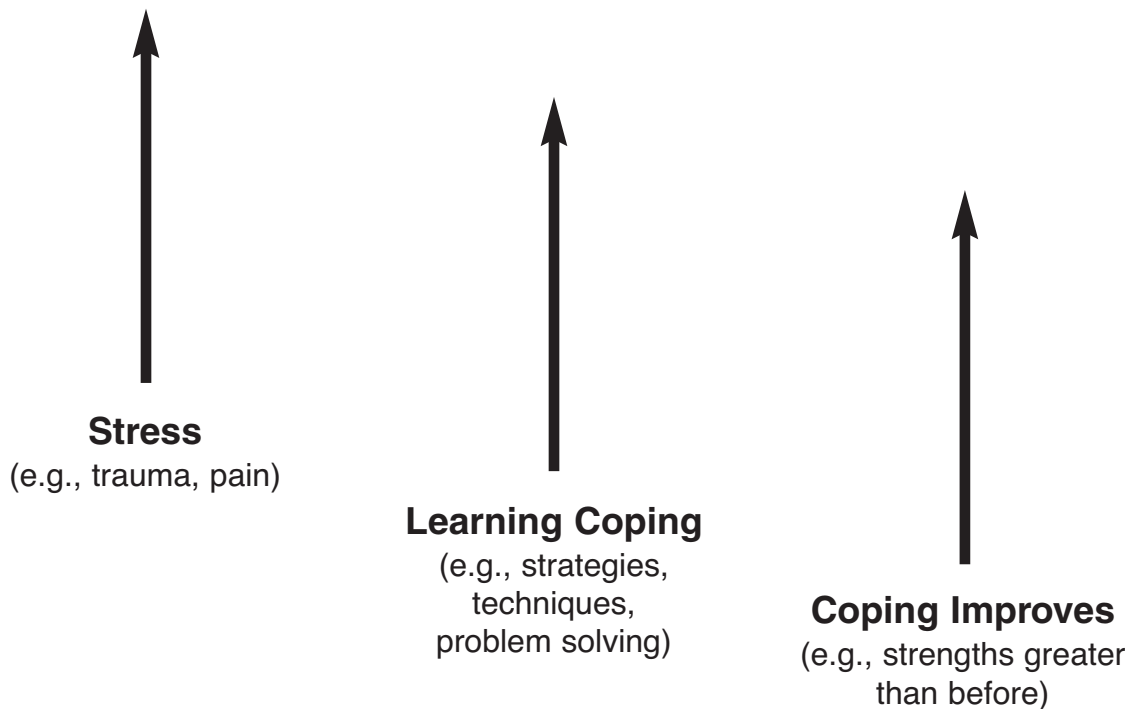


Figure 15-14. In this figure, sensitization is shown as a cumulative process, where each stress, trauma, fear, pain, or injury adds in its effect on us. With each successive incident, it becomes easier to have more problematic stress reactions each time that we become stressed. The stress response becomes activated by more situations, and more strongly and longer each time. However, by learning to use destressing techniques as soon as possible each time they are needed, we put ourselves in a position to contain the aggravating effects of successive stresses, so that even accumulating stress can be controlled. **Stress can lead to successive successes when we apply successful strategies to it.**

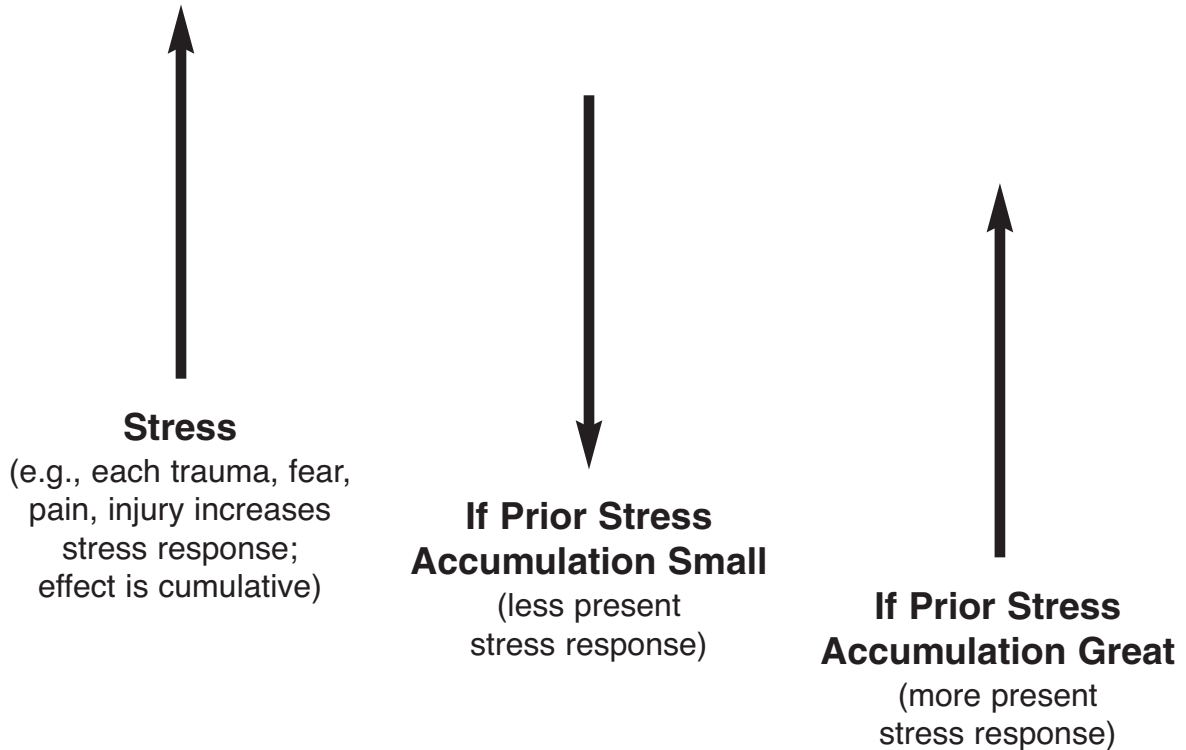
.....
*Fear is a terrible thing
 not to waste.*

.....
*Rehabilitate fear—
 Give it the treatment.*

Figure 15-14

Each incident of trauma, stress, pain, fear, and injury sensitizes stress reactions, making them broader (to more situations), deeper (more intense), and longer (in duration). Each incident of learning how to destress reduces stress reactions. Make stress your scapegoat; keep beating it.

Each Stress Adds to Stress Response



Agree That Anger Is Answerable.

*When we write our own play,
anger has a minor role.*

*Anger feeds itself—until
we snack somewhere else.*

Anger helps no one—except itself.

*Anger is full of itself—
until we empty its air.*

*Help share the greatest mystery
in your universe—how you got
self-control of uncontrolled anger.*

*Be gracious with anger.
Tell it ever so nicely that
you have gained control over it.*

*When it comes to anger control,
a word in the head is
worth two from the bush.*

Grow up—Make anger regress.

*Give anger an expiry date instead
of an extended warranty.*

Be a good shopper—buy out anger.

Train anger to fetch control.

*Anger blows off steam—
until we stop “smoking.”*

*By seeing the whole,
anger has no part.*

*We show others only one side of
ourselves—until we stop the show.*

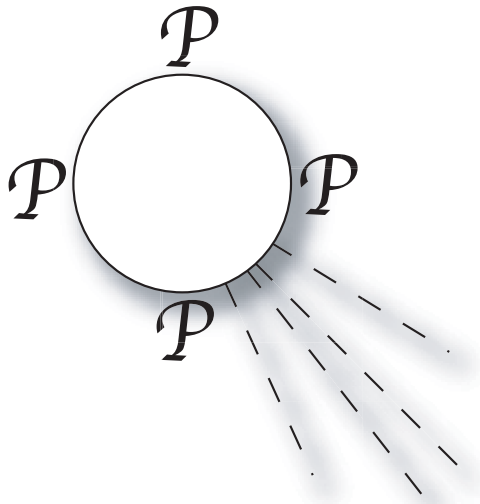
*Anger control is a question of
principle—Do not show it.*

*When we give someone a piece of
our mind, we leave it there.*



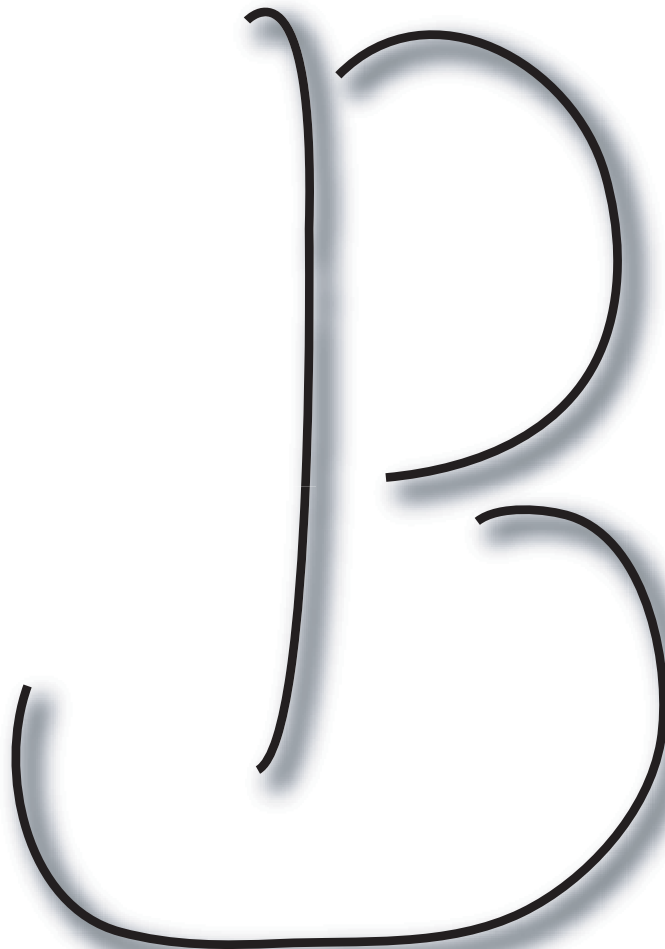
Chapter 16

Snap Off Snappiness



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"P" is for persistence
in face of resistance.*



.....
*Anger responds to
 the tried and true.
 Try anger control and
 be true to yourself.*

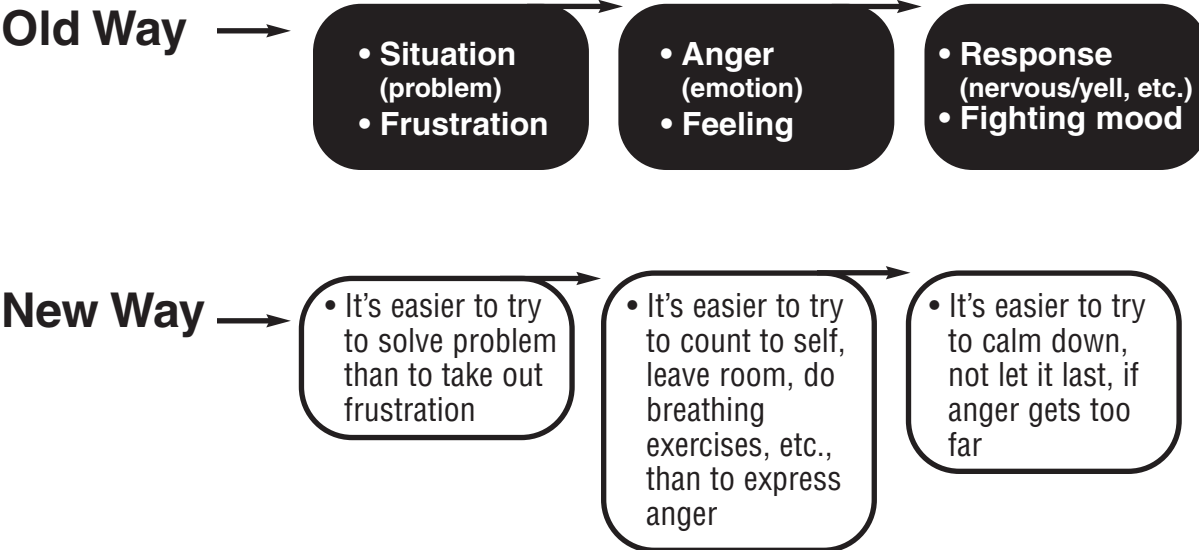
Figure 16-1 explains the way that the anger response develops, along with options for dealing with it. The emotions that we have considered previously in this book are worry, sadness, fear, and reaction to pain. All these negative emotions are inward-turning reactions, or a part of the feelings that we have inside us. Anger is different, for it can result in outward and even violent behavior. Ultimately, the same kinds of strategies that we have used for dealing with other emotions are involved in anger management.

First, we need to understand the situation in which anger is developing. Perhaps the situation is not as frustrating as it seems. Second, we need to control the initial anger impulse, using techniques such as relaxing, reducing its intensity, circumventing it, and cutting it off. Even if anger develops, it need not be overwhelming and lead to violent actions. We always have a choice when anger manifests. We can see things differently, feel things differently, and behave differently. We can talk to ourselves differently and talk to others

Figure 16-1

Anger is controllable. When we feel frustrated, by taking simple steps, we can prevent escalation to anger. If it is a personal dispute, we can even take a big step, and walk out of the frustrating situation and return when everyone is calmer and ready to discuss the matter. New ways of dealing with frustration and anger are contagious. Spread the bug.

Saying Good-bye To Anger



differently. If our behavior in the past had involved easily getting irritated, and reacting in a frustrated manner to a frustrating stimulus, the issue is how can we frustrate that anger response, and how can we learn a new habit to replace the old one.

If we become determined to change angry behavior, we must keep in mind that, aside from its negatives, anger has a message that is constructive. That is, anger is an emotion that communicates determination. Moreover, anger is a reflection of our vital energy and motivation. In this regard, aside from its negative aspect, anger has a positive message and we do not have to obey its destructive impulse. **There are options that we have even when the expression of anger comes easily and it is hard to undue its effects.** I am not suggesting that we should eliminate anger at all costs from our behavior, but only that we should channel it appropriately. By renewing our approach to anger and redirecting it to appropriate motivation, not only are the old ways controlled but, also, we renew our determination to handle constructively the source of the anger.

*Frustration is always
at anger's doorstep.
Make it your doormat.*

*Anger can turn
around quickly—if we
turn our back to it.*



.....
Road rage is not street smart.
.....

.....
*When he lets anger go on,
he is asked to go out.*
.....

Figure 16-8 emphasizes that anger control starts with a lot of questions. We need to be self-analytical and self-critical, especially when there is a frustrating situation. When our eyes are open, we see different scenes. When our minds are open, we create different scenes. When we limit ourselves to a partial view and select the interpretation of the frustrating situation that is most conducive to inflexible, old ways of thinking, anger is facilitated. If we remove the blinders to see the whole horizon and remove the color filter to see not only red, anger is less likely to develop and other options will come to mind. We will realize the deep reasons for the anger and understand that we can act to control it. **When we question anger, it cannot give a good answer.**

Figure 16-8

We need to better detect what is behind the situations that makes us angry. What are the stresses, cues, and so on? What are the reasons on the surface and, more important, what are the deep underlying reasons? How much is our anger a learned expression of feelings, and how can it be unlearned? Anger can be a good student, when we teach it control.

Questioning Anger Gives It An Answer

Questions

1. When does it happen?
2. Where is it happening?
3. Why am I angry?
4. How can I control my feeling?
5. What can I do to cut it off?
6. Which options do I have?
7. Who can help me besides myself?

Answers

1. Anger is less and last when I ask more questions first.
2. Anger tells me, "I'm determined"; so I determine to tell Anger thanks and so long.
3. Anger does not mix well with people, especially the ones it hurts.
4. To get the best feeling, Anger is a feeling best left controlled.
5. When you get angry with Anger for going too far, you will begin to get further.
6. When we see the whole picture, Anger is never in the scene.
7. Parts of us get angry wrongly, so part ways with them.

Figure 16-15 is about being stupid. There are a lot of stupid drivers on the road and they make us angry. We may be afraid by what other drivers do on the road and our heart may beat faster than a drum. Then, anger sets in and we may mutter to ourselves, but this does not mean that we should carry it further, because a first small step in anger may lead to a bigger one. It is not too bright to let our emotions get us so angry on the road due to an incident that we end up exhibiting aggressive. In road rage, we put ourselves at risk for a prison sentence because we had “lost it.” Rather, we should use whatever techniques that we know to help us calm down, such as the techniques of deep breathing and talking down our anger. **It is always better to lose anger than to lose our freedom from its extreme use.**

Anger can't speak—when we don't give it a voice.

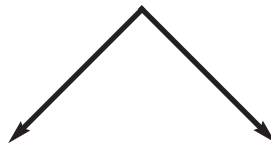
Anger becomes gargantuan—when we super size it instead of grounding it.

Figure 16-15

Road rage is one way of dealing with stupid drivers. But the judge will tell you later in court that there are better ways. Anger control techniques can work when we get frustrated on the road. Even when anger seems justified, as when our life has been threatened by someone's stupidity on the road, there are better ways of staying on life's road.

Road Rage or Act Your Age

Incident on Road



Stupid Response	Studied Response
<p>Anger Get out of vehicle Give story to other driver Get story Get jail sentence (You're not OK. He wasn't worth it.)</p>	<p>Anger Get control Give self a talk Get calm (in mind) Use self-talk sentence (I'm OK. It's not worth it.)</p>

Use Deep Breathing Instead of Seething

Addictions Are As Lost And Not Found, Not Additions.

Swear off drinking—after your partner swears at you.

Bad habits need good resolve.

To hobble bad habits, hip hop to your inner harmony.

To defeat self-defeating habits, meet them no-way.

Stress leads to over-indulging. Control leads to you.

Get to be a great gambler—before you go broke.

Gambling stops you from worrying about what to do with the money in your savings account.

Drinking leads to impaired reviving.

Truth in advertising: There is less alcohol in light beer so that we can make you buy more bottles.

When bad habits knock at your door, tell them knock-knock jokes.

Gambling stops gambling.

Second hand smoke is third rate.

Start a compulsion that should not stop. Eat only healthy foods!

Truth in advertising—Addictions cost all of society money, except our company that profits from it.

Drinking less leads to living more.

Eating without exercising judgment builds us up in the wrong places.

To keep your balance, use neither the left or right hands at slot machines.

When you are taking Drinking 101, the course mark is always failure.

When good habits fill living, bad habits are left to fill dead time.

When food is the enemy, enlist an army of support.

When you are drinking, you lay low—like on the floor.

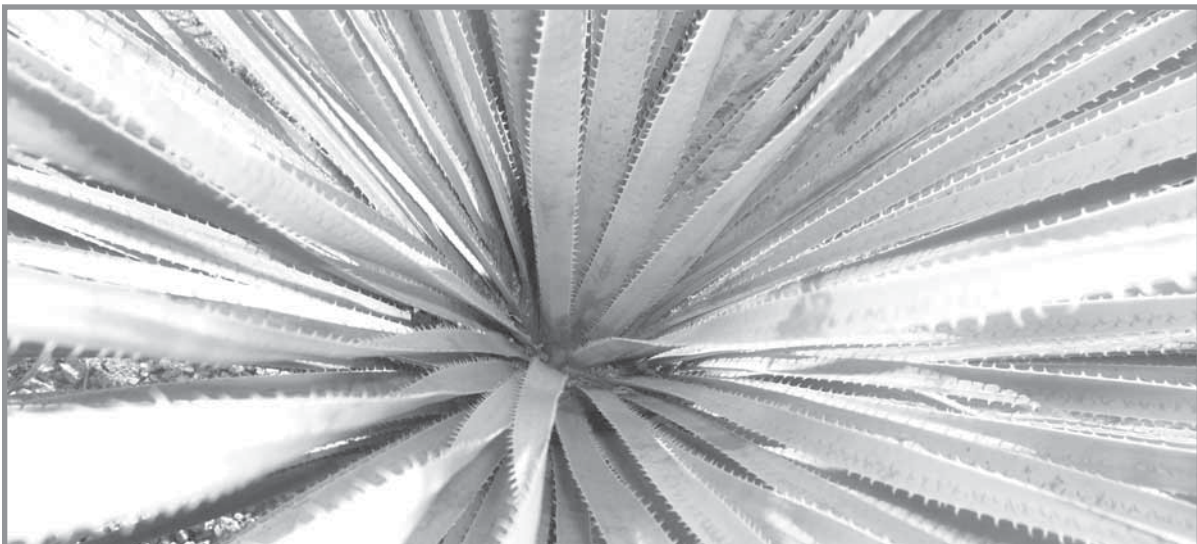
When bad habits are last on the list, the top part grows.

Bad habits can better us or get the best of us.

Adopt a scorched-earth policy. Burn poppy derivatives.

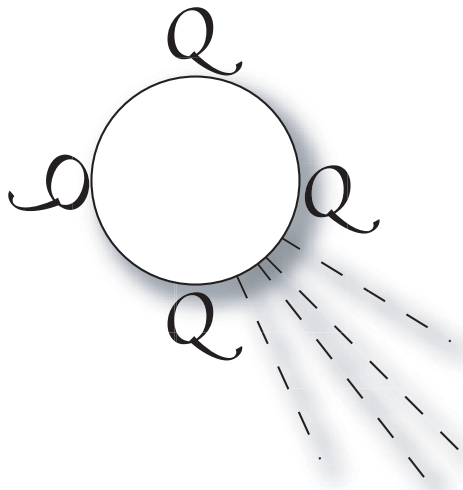
Bad habits need your good hobbits.

Tell bad habits whatever works—to get them unemployed.



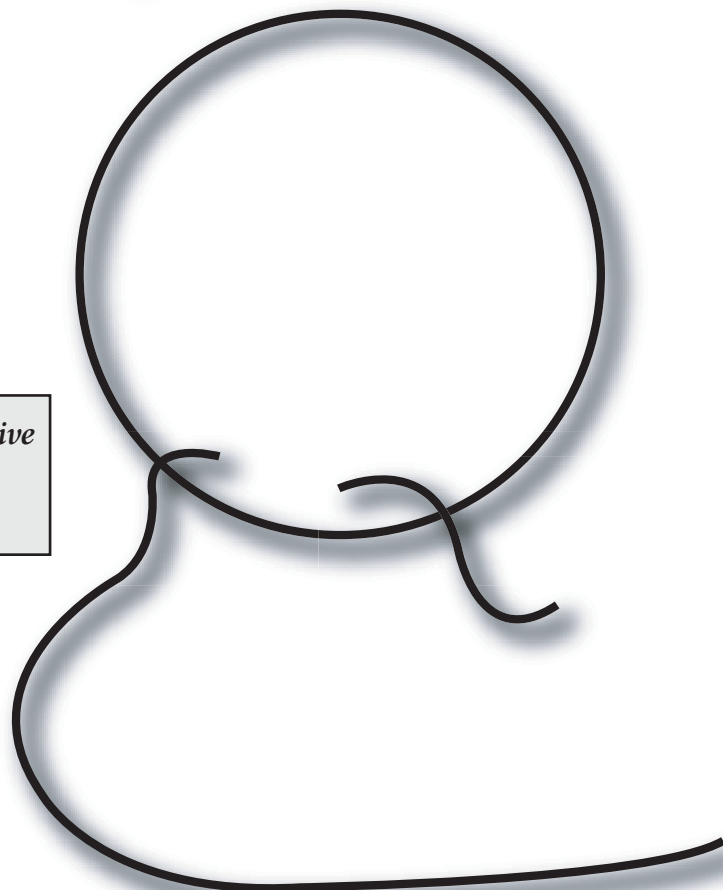
Chapter 17

Drinking and Other Addictions



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"Q" is for being inquisitive
about healthy ways to
quench thirst.*



.....
*Drinking control begins
with brain patrol.*
.....

Figure 17-1 shows that alcoholism is not an incurable disease but a curable condition. It is not a medical disorder but a biopsychosocial one that we can control. It is not treated best by medicines but by approaches that use psychology, aside from tackling biological and environmental components. Part of the psychology needed in dealing with alcoholism is learning to develop and use a belief in free will. **Believing in free will is believable, livable, and able.**

Figure 17-1

Alcoholism is not a disease but a biopsychosocial condition that you can control, biologically, psychologically, and socially.

Free Will and Alcoholism: Give the Drink No Choice

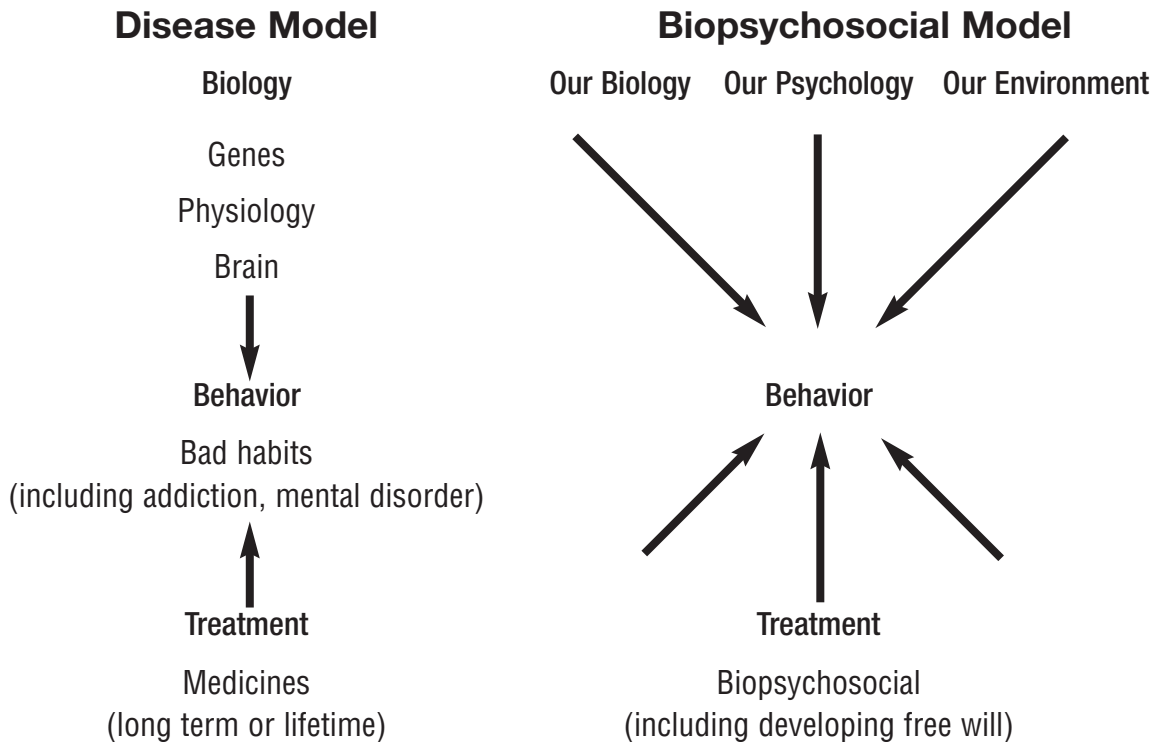


Figure 17-11 examines the issue of weight control. Addictions are not necessarily involved in this problem, but the approach to helping those with this concern is essentially the same as described in this chapter. Poor weight control is a product of biological and environmental influences but, nevertheless, can be corrected by starting with the person. **When we begin to build the self, we begin to take control of the body.**

If we overeat to avoid life's difficulties or engage in any other bad habit, life does not become easier but becomes harder. The problem remains and another has been created. In contrast, when we work through problems, we avoid the negatives and create a positive—we can take a well-deserved rest with a clear conscience. When our conscience is clear, it does not need displaced comfort-giving activities, such as overeating. **When life becomes lifelong learning and growing, the only thing in which we wish to overindulge is life itself.**

.....
Ultimately, the best weight control is wait control.
.....

.....
Once you feel better by having a healthy weight, you will gain pounds of self-esteem.
.....

Figure 17-11

Bad food habits can be controlled, by better weighing the options.

Waist Control

- Eat **once** each meal
- Cut out the **seconds**
- **Double** the walk
- **Triple** the motivation
- **Quadruple** the exercise
- **Quintuple** resistance
- **Sextuple** the debate whether you should
- Leaven **seven**-course meals
- **Eight** times ate less
- Refuse food after **nine**
- **Ten** times **no**

To Get Ahead In Life—Find Your Heart.

*Partners who live in truth,
lie down.*

*When arguments go back and forth,
life goes up and down.*

*For love to be the epitome,
think more than “me.”*

Love is a communicable need.

*Love is biological, illogical,
psychological, and logical.
See what I don’t mean?*

*Love is like clockwork.
It needs your electricity.*

*The more we love longingly,
the longer the love.*

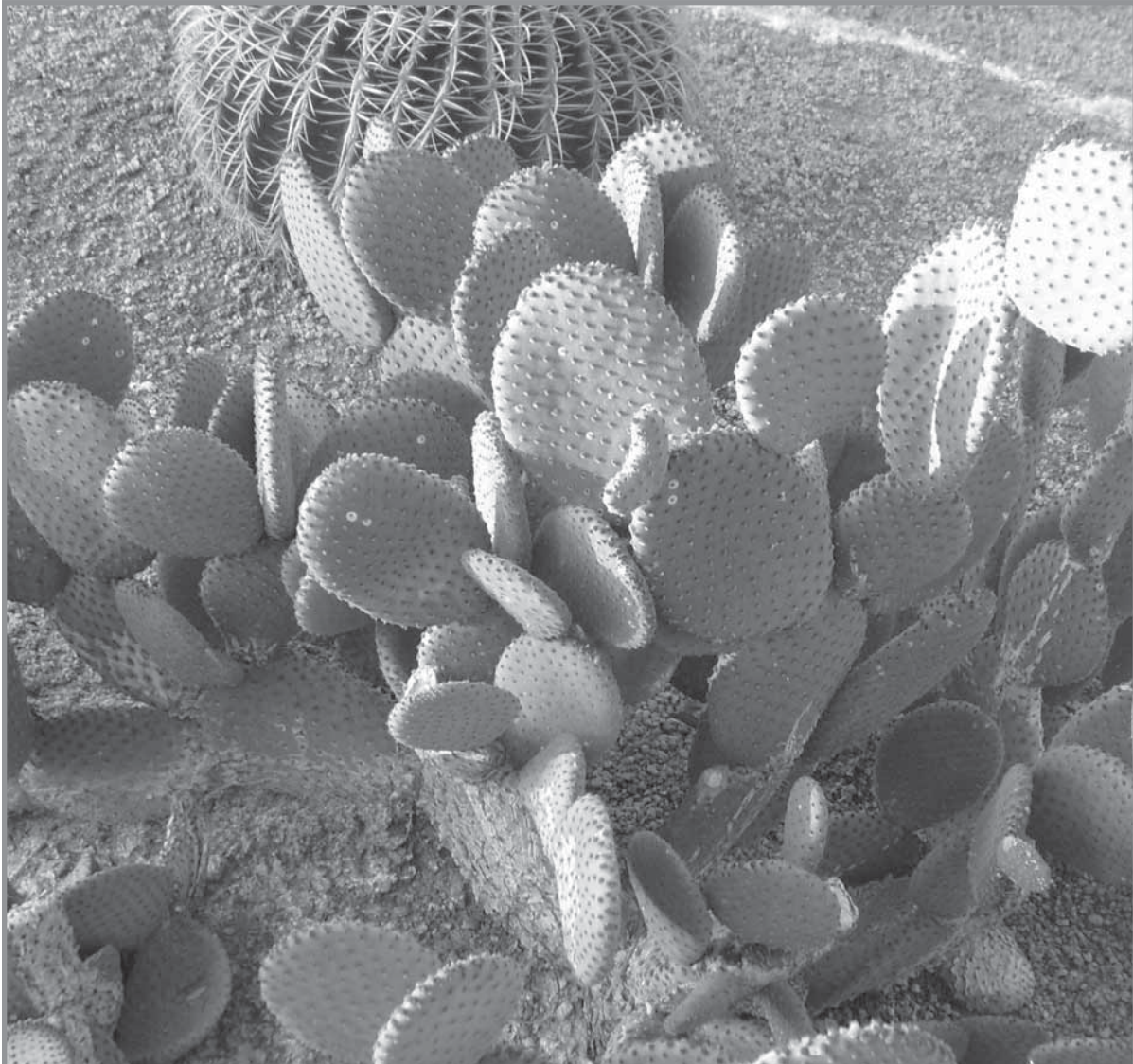
Tie the knot—without tying one on.

Love is a growth machine.

*A relationship that lasts
puts the other first.*

*By the grace of good, I pronounce
you wife and husband.*

*Love evolved in the universe so that
we can help the universe evolve.*

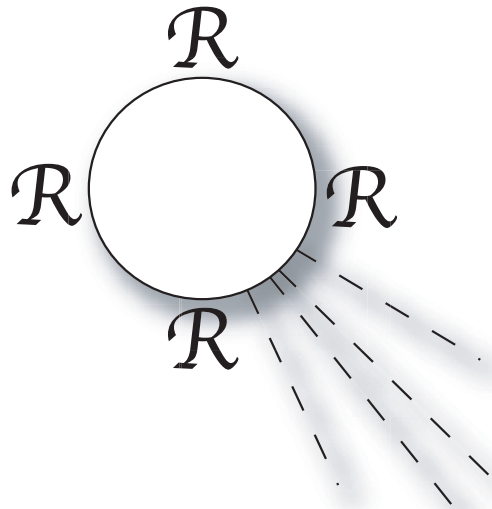


Chapter 18

Love

EXCERPTS

**Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com**



*"R" is for Responsibility—
for everything that we
do, think, and feel.*

.....
*Love is a worthy cause.
Give your all to it.*
.....

In **Figure 18-1**, we see that love is associated not only with the heart but, also, the head. Love is not just physical attraction and a beating heart. It is also sensitive communication and the art of talk. **The more that both members of a couple put head and heart together, the more likely that they will create are love and intimacy.**

Figure 18-1

When we love with our mind and heart together, we stay together.

The Art Of Love



Paint your heart and head together



In **Figure 18-4**, we examine steps in the growth of love. **One would think that love is an all-or-nothing matter, but it develops through stages.** In a stage model, we go from one step to the next. However, in practice, in relationships at the adult level, we simultaneously live many of these stages. For example, at the beginning of a relationship, even though we may be involved in only the early stages, we are also planning, looking forward to, and hoping for the later ones.

a) In terms of the stages themselves, first there is a physical stage that often takes place, one of attraction. *b)* In the second stage, the physical becomes emotional, as deep attachment forms. *c)* Next, the couple reaches a point where commitment is important, where each partner wants a long term relationship. *d)* Having developed security and commitment in the relationship, the couple can move into the fourth stage, where each partner feels personally comfortable, allowing growth in personal psychology, motivation, and so on. Each partner becomes more aware of the self, of others, and of the world around her or him. *e)* Finally, in the fifth stage, a mutual sense of growth is perceived as developing through the relationship with the other. This is akin to a more spiritual stage.

Figure 18-4

Love starts with attraction, which converts to attachment. The critical level is the next one, of creating commitment. Then, personal and mutual growth are facilitated. The stages of love are stepping stones for a long life together.

The Stages of Love

Stages

1. Physical	Attraction
2. Emotional	Attachment
3. Cognitive	Commitment
4. Consciousness	Individual Growth
5. Spiritual	Emergence/Mutual Growth



Say Yes To Yourself.

*A little bit of effort
goes a little way.*

*To succeed well, consider
success immaterial.*

*Should motivation falter,
bring it to the alter.*

*Motivation to help
helps motivation.*

*Ladders extend to the sky
from feet on the ground.*

*Time slows down
when effort speeds up.*

*When victory is considered
a process and not a product,
it always ends perfect.*

*Wanting without effort
is wishful sinking.*

*To starve your bad habits,
feed them your will.*

Going full out never leaves out.

*To avoid that sinking feeling in
your stomach, lift your horizons.*

*Motivation is not like a plough
slicing through fields—it is more
like plants growing in them.*

Hard work brings easy living.

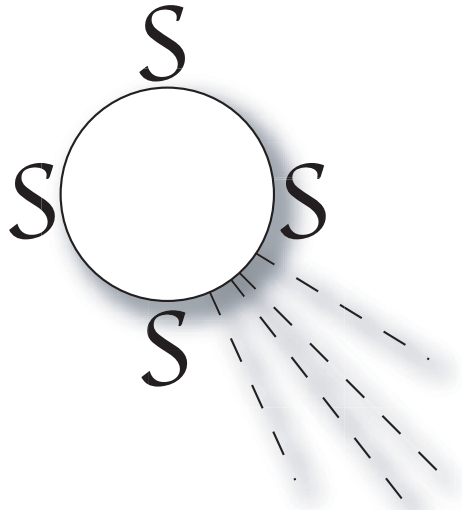
Make wisdom your kingdom.

*To have a meeting of minds,
have a meeting of hearts.*



Chapter 19

Motivation



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"S" is for search
and simplicity.*



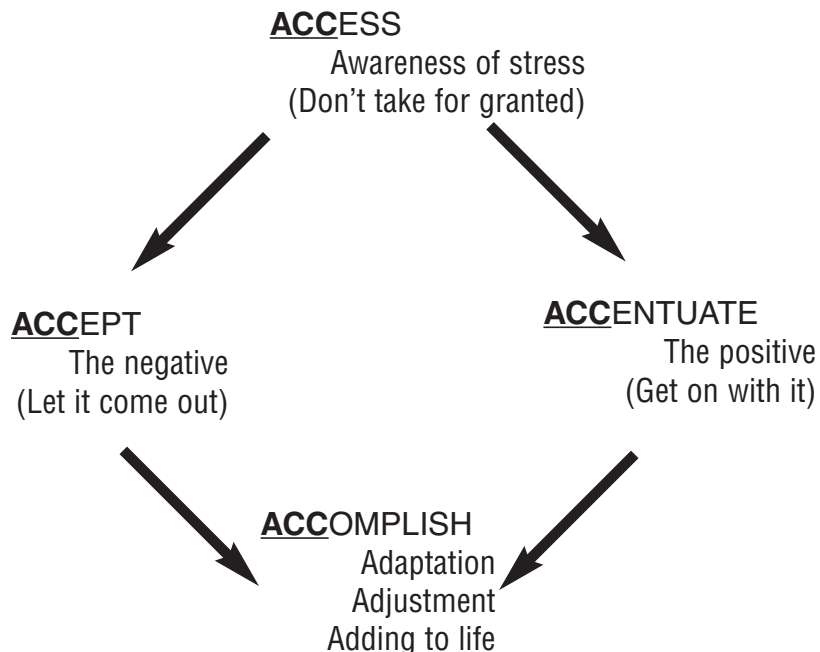
In **Figure 19-6**, I emphasize the importance of acceptance. Stress can be devastating, and some experiences and their consequences can never be erased. We may live and relive a past stress, and retreat from the present, forgetting that there is a future. Or, we cannot escape the stress in the present and we forget the strengths and supports of the past and our hopes for the future. Or, we cannot see the future changing for the better, so that we deteriorate in the present and fixate on the past. There are many possible combinations such as these that lead to the same outcome —a lack of acceptance. However, sometimes acceptance is our only solution. Although it may not seem like a solution, there are hidden benefits that may derive from acceptance.

The more we are calm and accepting of our current situation, and accept that it may not change, paradoxically, the more we may be alert to new possibilities. Acceptance is a powerful healer in its own right. At the same time, it facilitates awareness of not only our problems and everything

Figure 19-6

Motivation succeeds best when management of stress that might interfere with it is best.

According Yourself a Positive Future



around us but, also, of new elements in our environment, or new options. Consequently, acceptance increases our motivation toward new ways, should a viable one arise, and it increases our commitment and effort to improve our situation.

Additionally, a benefit of accepting that there may be no change in the external situation that faces us is that such acceptance may facilitate movement toward internal psychological change. **Even if our circumstances cannot change, there are always inner changes that can take place through acceptance.** Acceptance of what has happened when things cannot change may lead to great changes inside of us.



Find A Safe Haven—Yourself.

*Seeing deep inside brings
us farther outside.*

*Self-construction builds
with others, not on them.*

*Choices are easy to find.
Choosing good ones
is easy to delay.*

*Find yourself—
meet a nice person.*

Love grows—when we do.

*To weather the storm,
be a lighthouse.*

*Self-doubt should
double putting effort out.*

*In the great scheme of things,
there is no scheming.*

Cuddle Coddle Kindle.

*When we reject for rejection's
sake, expect rejection.*

Recognize the hero of your ways.

*Change is an
accommodating mode
in the life work of growth.*

*We all have faults—We
all have ways to change
them for the better.*

*Sensitive assertiveness
asserts sensitivity.*

*Sign at a lawyer's office:
"If you notarize with us,
you get a free will."*

*Sign at a neighboring
psychologist's office:
"If you grow with us,
you get free will."*

*Doing it our way is not
necessarily finding our way.*

*We earn free will when we pay the
price to grow.*

*Motivation sometimes means
saying no to NO.*

*When we stretch our vision,
our actions rebound.*

*Self-doubt lessens
when we give it lessons.*

*Engaging in life
weds us to living.*

*When each moment is
precious, life is golden.*

*Sitting still does not
sit well with plans.*

*Make Rejoining Joy
your gainful enjoyment.*

*Self-doubt may start anywhere.
Learning what to do is
where it may end.*

*By learning to manage our
self-doubt, we can
manage to overcome it.*

Missteps are must ups.

*Facing bad habits
is a good one.*

*Living each day well
may well lead to many
days to live.*

*Mistakes are corrections
in waiting.*

*In your self-construction zone,
put on a steel-toed mind.*

*Each negative thought that we
have about ourselves is a reason
for a good talking to.*

*When you write the story
that you want to about yourself—
use colored pencils.*

*To develop people skills—
learn from them.*

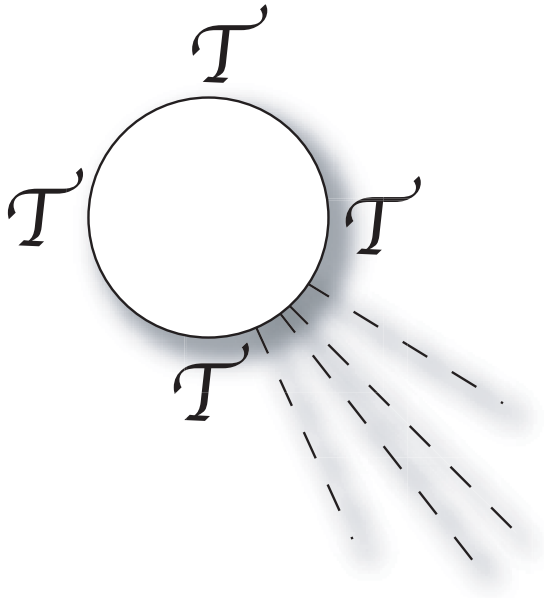
*When someone writes a negative
subplot in your story—write them
out of the script.*

*He who laughs last—
does not hear.*

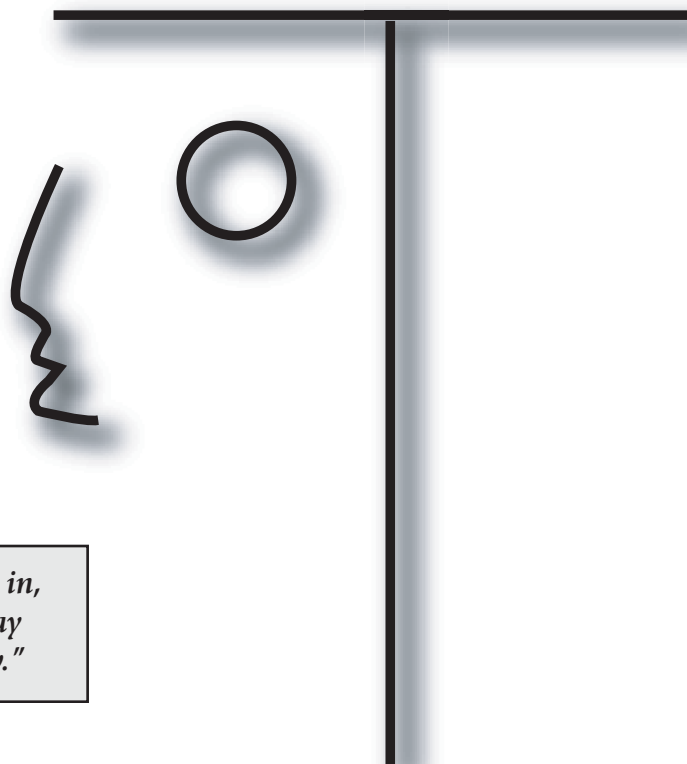
*When you make that
home movie about yourself—
film your kind parts.*

Chapter 20

Changing Our Story



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com



*"T" is for Today, as in,
"I'm doing it Today
and not Tomorrow."*

.....
*Any attempt by others
to control your mind
defeats your purpose.*
.....

.....
*To improve your
mental fabric,
make new ways old hat.*
.....

Figure 20-8 explains the basic thinking or cognitive mechanism needed to help shift from an old way, or old negative story, to a new way or new, more powerful, positive story and way of thinking and doing things. The old story automatically comes to mind when a particular situation arises, such as experiencing too much stress. The old story is automatically kicked into service, because it is so deeply ingrained. However, it has not worked well in the past, and will not in the present. When this happens, we feel overwhelmed, become pessimistic, and eventually give up. We become stressed out, feel frustrated, and do not know what to do. We may feel angry and lash out. Whatever our response, it never

Figure 20-8

Cognitive behavior therapy functions by helping clients learn to analyze old patterns of antecedent-belief-consequence sequences so that the clients can create new ones. New patterns are acquired by disputing the validity of old ones, evaluating the new ones constructed to replace the old ones, and seeing that they help when put into action.

Put DEF Before ABC

O L D W A Y	A ntecedent, Activator of Old Way • e.g., The stress feels overwhelming (100% negative) B elief, Basic Idea • e.g., It'll never go away (100% negative) I'll never get better (100% negative) C onsequence, Condition, Compartment • e.g., Why should I try? (100% negative)
N E W W A Y	D ispute, Disagree, Direct New Way • e.g., But I'll try, step by step (some positive) E valuate, Energize, Effect into Action • e.g., Make a good plan • Follow step by step (more positive) F eedback, Focus, Follow a New Way • e.g., It works, it helps I have to keep doing it This is my new way of getting better (positive growing)

directly tackles the problem. **An old way, or an old negative story, is a powerful attractor that is hard to avoid.**

However, the more we realize that the old way and old story are not functional and only worsen the problem, the more new ways and new stories can take their place. The first step is to stop reading the old lines and to begin writing new ones in the story that we are telling. Some simple, constructive self-talk usually is a good way to begin. We believe better that we can do it when we decide to start believing that we can. **Once a positive story starts, it takes on an unrolling energy of its own and unfolds a positive plot;** that is, we formulate a double plan for solving our problem. Success is facilitated.

Soon, we are writing sequels where other new stories emerge, and even prequels where our past is rewritten with a more positive interpretation, compared to the way that we may have seen it before. Like all good storytellers, we know that one day we may win literary prizes for the new positive stories that we tell about ourselves. Of course, when this happens, the award givers will be ourselves.

Figure 20-9 offers sample old stories and new stories. In old stories, the problems and appropriate solutions are never seen clearly together. The problem is seen poorly, cannot be found, or is denied. The solutions are feeble, or there are no solutions. The only plot that unfolds is one of confusion, stress, and loss.

However, when there are new, better stories about problems that are being written, the plot changes to understanding the nature of the problems, to adopting realistic solutions, and to having a good chance of success in solving the problems. The only subplots in positive stories involve finding alternate solutions, if needed. **By seeking a better storyteller about yourself, you should find that you are best for the job.**

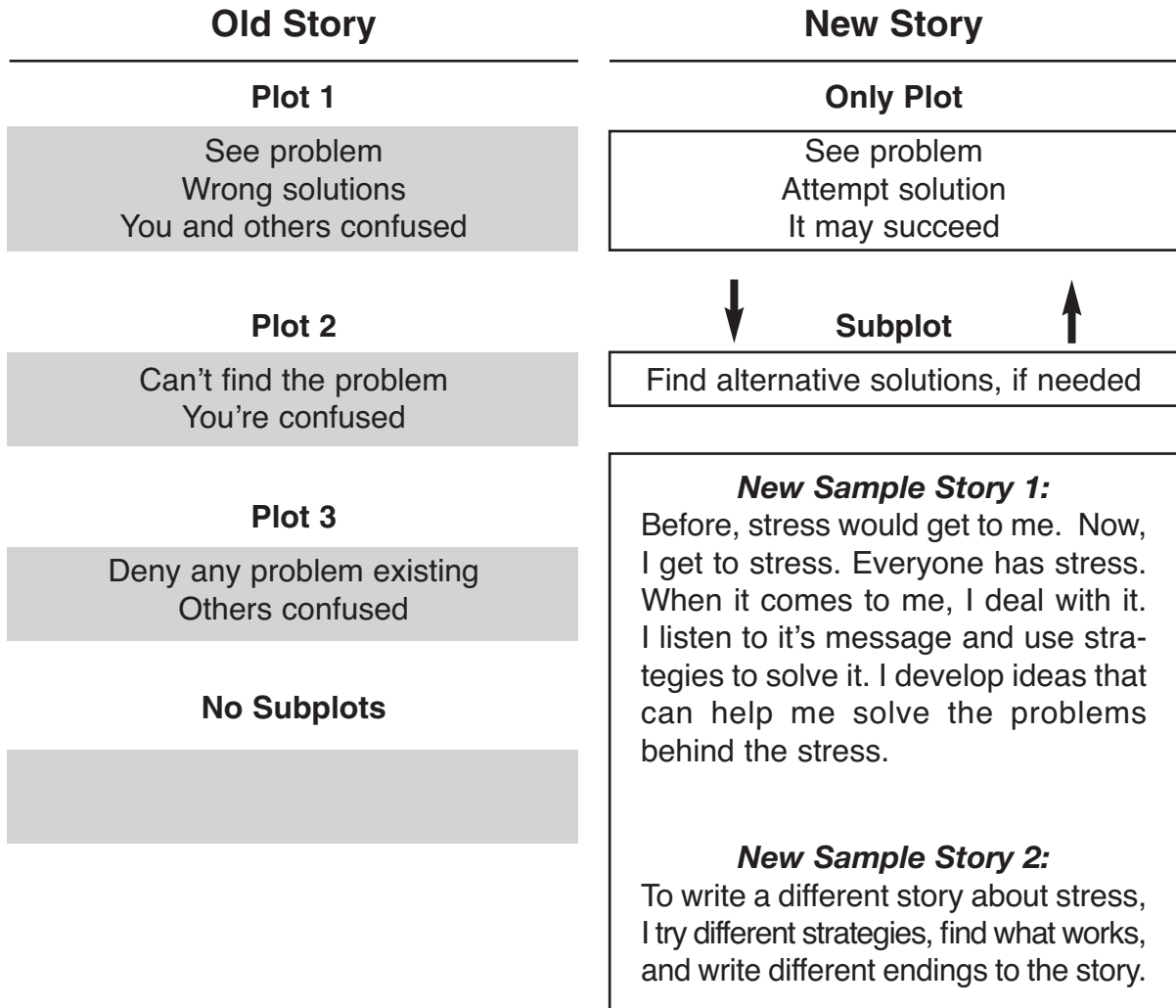
When you make a home video to share about the best of yourself, film what you share best with people.

The new alphabet starts with UBU.

Figure 20-9

Stories have numerous possible chapters, plots, and endings. When we write our own scripts, we limit others trying to write negative stories for ourselves and we open space for unlimited positive themes.

Stop Plotting Along Create New Possibilities



The Best of
Rejoining Joy
and Destressing

Excerpts

VOLUME IV — Daily Living, Introduction

The last two volumes of *Rejoining Joy* have helped provide the basics for living life better in terms of dealing with stresses and emotions. The present book, the fourth in the book series on *Rejoining Joy*, deals with issues that arise in our daily lives.

First, there is a chapter on the self but, inevitably, as well, the chapter deals with others. The next five chapters concern the basics of family life. These chapters deal with communication, children, and teenagers. Together, the chapters deal with issues that may arise with one's partner and one's offspring. Next, chapter applicable to work follows. Later chapters concern more advanced topics, such as change and inspiration. The last chapter examines major perspectives in psychology, especially the biopsychosocial model, which understands behavior as complex and the result of interacting systems.

This fourth volume may appear to be a smorgasbord of diverse topics, but there is one central theme in them—by learning to destress and to deal with our emotions, we can pass through the problems, issues, and crises of life with our head held high and our family held together.

Life forms a complex system of interacting parts and actors inhabiting a vibrant and ever-changing context. It

can appear so overwhelming, when we get caught up in the large forces of stress that daily life may bring. There are dangerous undercurrents that sometimes we do not realize are present, and sometimes enormous problems for which we need solutions. Buffeted by too much stress, perhaps we cannot imagine stabilizing our lives. However, eventually, we act on the stress, and our lives can once more become tranquil and our mind becomes more at ease. We persist in *Rejoining Joy* and navigating well through the other stresses.

Moreover, in the stresses about us, when we keep as calm as we can in the middle of the turbulence, somehow our calm may influence others with us. Sometimes our serenity and our will to destress provide a good role model that acts on the exterior, facilitating others' success in dealing with stresses encountered.

A major goal of the book series *Rejoining Joy* is to help us not only deal with stress and emotions that are experienced on the inside but, also, to better adapt to the social and other contexts in our daily life on the outside. The present book may help the reader to better achieve these goals. Moreover, it provides material that may help readers develop towards increased psychological change, growth, and flourishing.

Tell The Self To Be Itself.

*If you know that sometimes
the self that you show is only
for show, the show can go on.*

*We may be able to fool some
of our selves some of the time,
but we can never fool even
one of ourselves for all time.*

*We have many selves
but one maestro.*

*When we think that our
personality cannot change,
we take away its capacity to do so.*

*Be rigorous in thought,
not in flexibility to change.*

*The self is not for painting by
numbers by others but for
drawing by ourselves free form.*

*The self needs to be calm
and composed by yourself.*

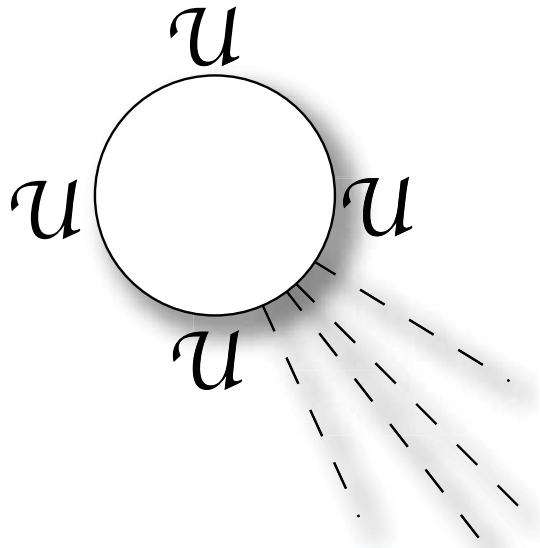
*Like a building, a self should
have a steel frame with many
windows to the world outside.*

*Buildings are built with bricks
and mortar. The self is built
with what sticks and morals.*



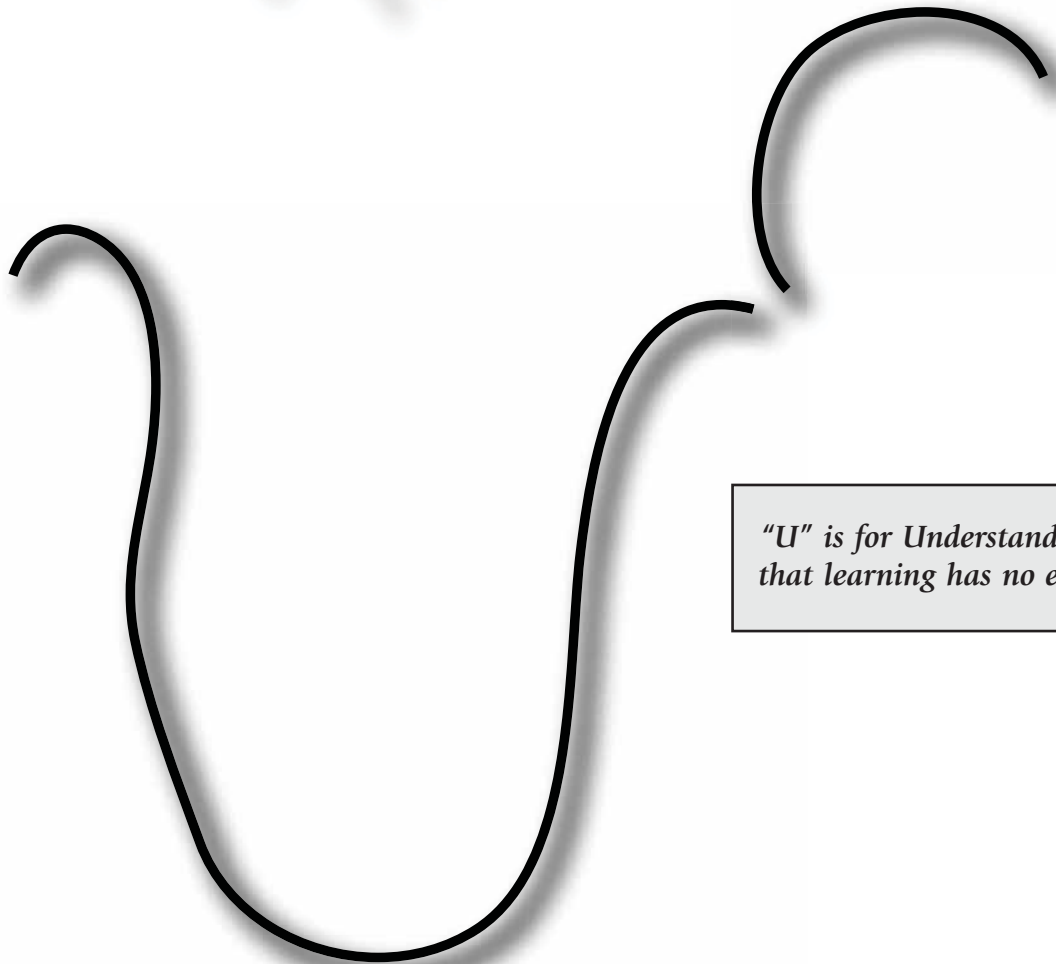
Chapter 21

Self Construction



EXCERPTS

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rejoiningjoy.com



*"U" is for Understanding
that learning has no end.*

.....
*When people tell you that
you cannot do it anymore,
tell them that they cannot
tell you that anymore.*
.....

Figure 21-1 illustrates an important theme about how the self can change. In nature, phenomena often exist in pairs that are complementary, even if opposite. Examples include white and black, animal and plant, left and right, and clockwise and counter-clockwise. Each is partially defined by the other. The same applies to human nature. Opposites or complements form symmetries. For example, yin goes with yang, introverted with extroverted, and individual with society.

When problems arise in our lives, we may experience a negative downturn. Motivation is lacking, we feel stuck, and we cannot see a future. Positive feelings and ideas are overpowered by our pessimism. However, the positives are still there waiting for their flame to be lit. Optimism is pessimism's handmaiden, for it always tags along with it no matter how extreme our pessimism. Though it may be hidden, it is not forgotten. Though struggling to reveal itself, optimism can be seen.

For example, in the weird but wonderful world of quantum physics, subatomic particles can exist at once in two complementary states, and twinned particles proceeding in opposite directions submit to the same forces even if those forces act directly only on one of the particles. Also, particles such as electrons are not considered actual mass, but are considered clouds of probability trajectories orbiting around nuclei of atoms.

This state of affairs can serve as a metaphor for self-transformation. When we are stuck and uninspired, our motivation still can be found, no matter how low we feel. The self may have developed old ways of reacting to problems and to stress that turn us away from the positive in us, but the self has multiple stories it can tell, and one story that it can tell is that turning away does not make the problems or stress go away. Rather, by turning away, the problems or stress may grow.

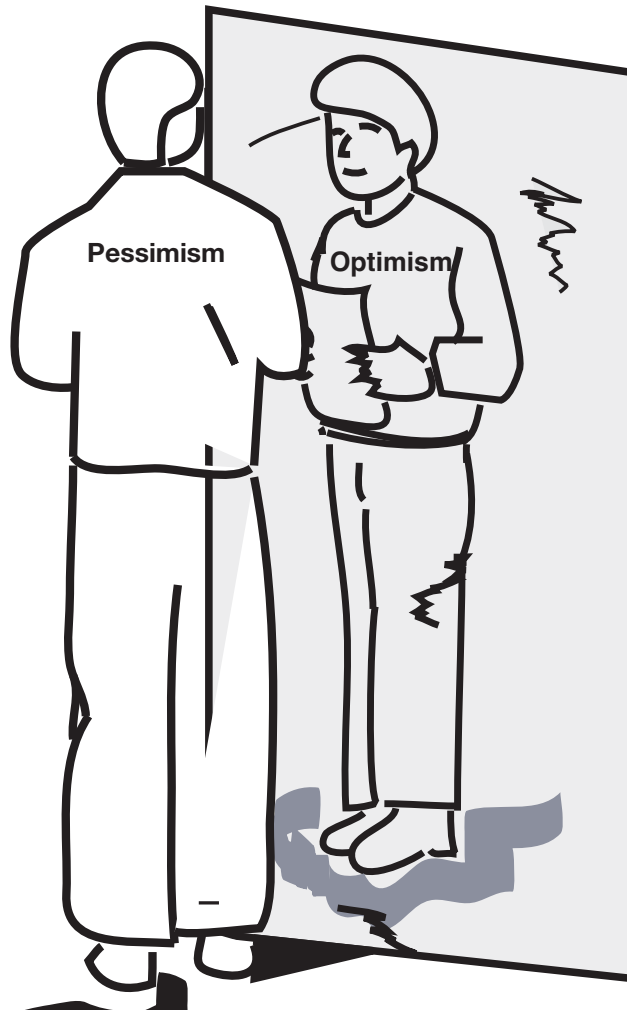
However, by turning to confront and deal with the problems and stress, especially if we display as much calm as possible, they are understood better and can be resolved better. The possibility of being able to take a leap of faith to a more optimistic, competent, problem-solving, calm, stress-handling, and positive self is inherent in the condition of having a self. The self can create great symphonies.

.....
*If pessimism takes hold,
give it a head lock.*
.....

Figure 21-1

Optimism is essential for our well being, both psychological and physical. Optimism enlarges our reflection in the mirror toward more health and hope. For example, a state of optimism before surgery helps the recovery after it. Optimism is the best booster against stress. So give it a shot.

For Every Reaction, There is an Equal and Opposite Action



The self is never one-way; it exists in correlated states of positive and negative, of two possible directions, and of many possible trajectories. In any one situation, multiple responses are possible, no matter how much we may limit ourselves to the negative through our old habits. Quantum physics is only a theory but, at the level of the self, it fits observations.

.....
*Thinking can turn negative
thoughts to positive ones—
if we let it.*
.....

.....
The best information that we can be told is that it is up to us to decide what to do with any information that we are told.
.....

.....
When we get a handle on optimism, we should open ourselves to its possibilities.
.....

In this regard, a **state of a lack of motivation and pessimism can transform to a more positive state in a manner easier than we think.** When stress persists and weakens us, it is important that we are able to call upon our positive resources, the optimistic side of ourselves. We need to look deep within ourselves to find the best of us so that we can see outside of ourselves from the base of the best of us.

Figure 21-4 examines the way the self can be reconstructed or reworked, through the modality of appropriate stories that we can tell ourselves. There are many parts to the self. Some of the most important components are listed in the figure. There are our bodies and brains, our emotions and minds, our behaviors and core selves, and the overall meanings or messages that we tell to ourselves and to others. These areas of self-development may be saturated with enslaving old stories that are pessimistic and negative.

The self can rework the stories to be more optimistic and positive. Script writers are not born, they are made. Life does not have to be a “B” movie or a horror story. We are the producers of our life script, and we can start writing better stories for ourselves. Each of the old story lines that were written for us can be rewritten by ourselves as a new script. The endings may not be entirely happy, because life’s movie is not a fantasy or fiction. However, the endings to our stories, once we take charge of writing them, can always end in dignity and growth. **The stories of our lives may not end in material riches, but they can always end in the best of rewards—inner peace and outer joy, inner calm and outer determination, inner destressing and outer resilience, and an inner satisfied self and an outer satisfying self.**

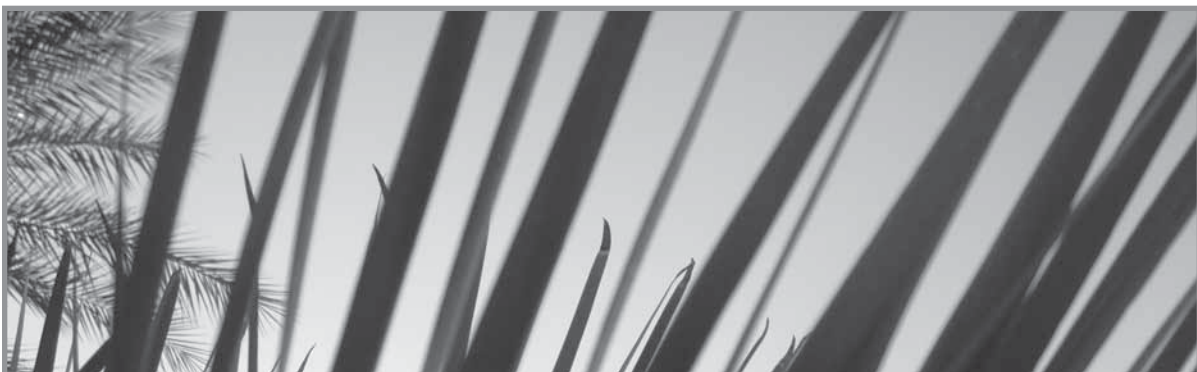


Figure 21-4

The self is so complex that only straightforward, honest stories about it and others keep it working well. We can take away negative ways that we may have had in looking at things, and find positives. The past may be written in stone, but the future is written in imagination.

Writing a New Future

	Old Story Line	New Script
Body	Muscle tension, upset stomach, headache	Relaxation release, breathing exercises, visualizations, muscle relaxation
Brain	Organizational problems, poor memory, cannot read	Compensation strategies, writing things down, reading over
Emotion- Feeling	Depression (loss), anxiety (worry), anger, fear	Coming to terms, solving, resolving, moving ahead
Thought- Expectation	I'll never, reach those heights; I'll never work again	Not seeing the worst; thinking things will work out; taking one step at a time
Self Image	Pessimistic, resigned, poor self-esteem	Optimistic, wanting to re-invest in self
Behavior- Action	Unmotivated, disinterested, withdrawal, frustration	Hobbies, music, getting back into things, socializing
Story	I'm a failure. It was a terrible thing. I have no control	I'm trying my best. Everything is an opportunity. Control is something inside

Self-confidence is a figment
of your imagination.
Visualize it growing.

Drawing back to reflect
is not a drawback.

Figure 21-12 indicates that self-confidence can be built up through our own efforts and by approaching things differently. On the negative side, we can withdraw from the stresses of life or react aggressively to them. However, with the right positive attitude, we can approach stress directly and try to deal with it. However, our positive will to positive action needs an engine. That engine is self-confidence, or having assertiveness with a positive attitude.

The figure contrasts the approach of being assertive while having a positive attitude of self-confidence with the approach of being assertive while having a negative attitude without self-confidence, but with irritability instead. Both are expressions of outward action, but they do not lead to the same results. Self-confidence inspires cooperation. Irritability does not inspire in a positive way. It puts people on guard. When there is anger, the self can never really relax—true self-confidence can never develop. However, there are solutions to irritability masquerading as assertiveness, and they start with ourselves.

Figure 21-12

Self-confidence can be improved, and the effects of its lack, such as irritability, can be lessened. It happens through growth; it happens through motivation; and it happens through learned techniques. Assertiveness, self-confidence, and being oneself are natural accompaniments of positive growth.

Assertiveness is Trainable

OR



SELF-CONFIDENCE	IRRITABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeing the whole • Keeping control • Feeling strong inside • Quiet inner reserve • Investigating fear • Showing resolve • Communicate needs • Insisting as needed • Sensitive to other • Chipping away at barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blinded by anger • Lose cool • Act strong on outside • Ask to be served • Invigorating fear • Vicious circles revolve • Demand satisfaction • Insisting as a lifestyle • Sensitive to self • Chip on the shoulder

Chapter 22

Communication: Part One



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"V" is for Vision of
what needs seeing.*

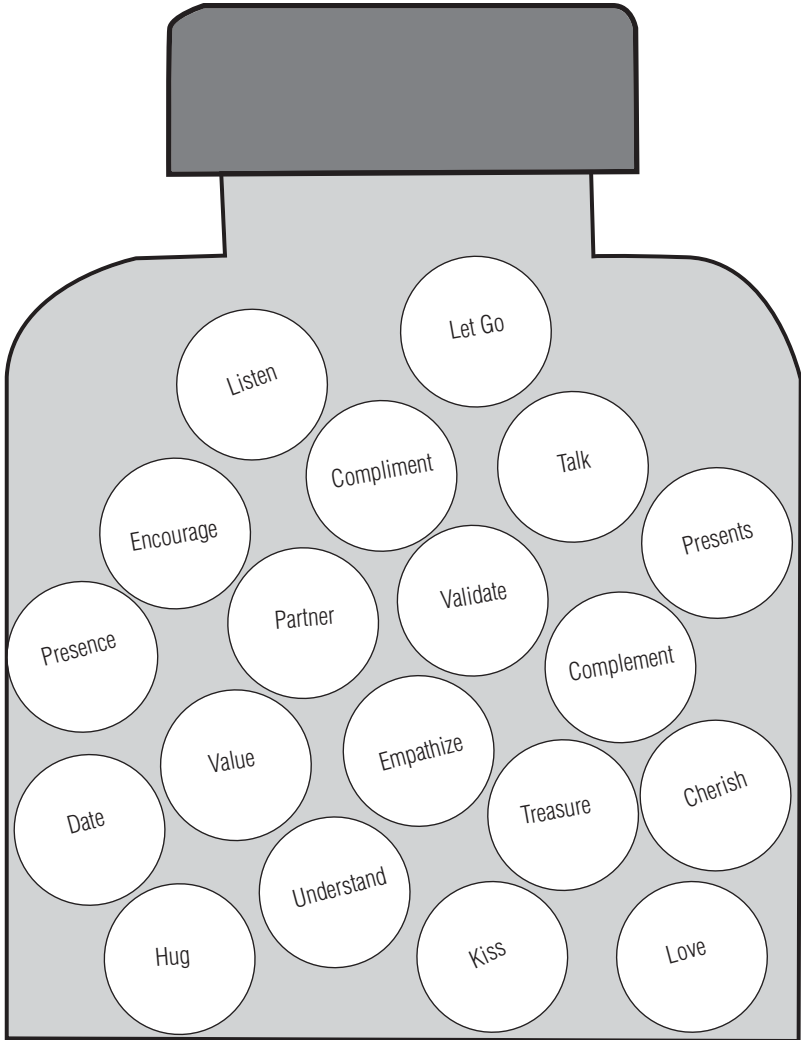
.....
*Communication is to
relationships as vaccination
is to good health.*
.....

Figure 22-1 emphasizes that romantic relationships lacking in genuine communication inevitably will require corrective measures. To get good communication, we need good will. Good communication is collective, cooperative, co-participatory, compatible, and corrective. It respects all others involved and all their voices, selves, faces, and parts. In the same way,

Figure 22-1

Communication is about sharing words, ideas, feelings, and activities. Communication is dialogue, not monologue. Finding balance, the middle ground, or compromise is about meeting someone half-way so that we can continue the other half together. Communication allows full expression of all our parts and encourages the same in the other.

**A Cure for the Common Cold
(in Relationships)**



it springs from all of our voices, selves, faces, and parts. Communication is best when it is dialogue, not monologue, whether the communication is to the self or to the other. The goal of communication should be to facilitate information exchange, problem solving, affective sharing, and the promotion of good. There are good habits that we all use at least some of the time. Difficulties arise when bad habits get in the way, especially in the area of communication. When communication falters in a relationship, love falters. The right mixture of listening, engaging in a dialogue, sharing, giving, and being affectionate can bring back the good habits and the love. **Love's labor replenishes love's favor.**

.....
*Helping someone think it
 through makes the person
 think of you.*

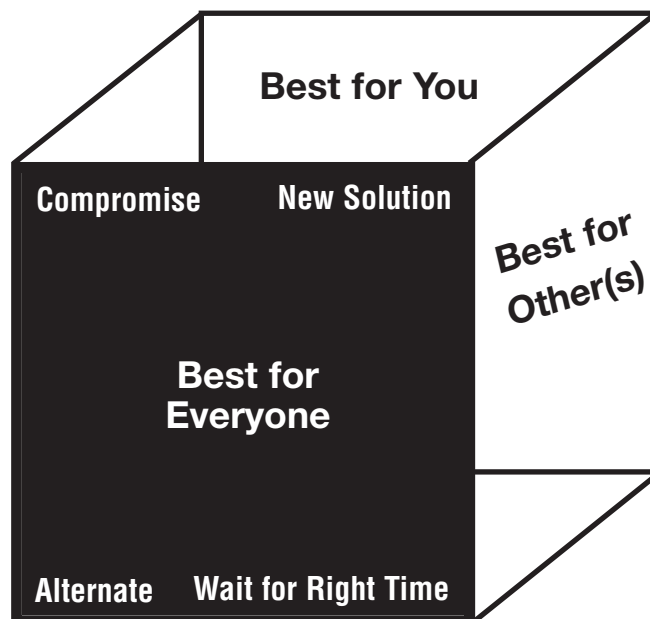
In **Figure 22-4**, we look at the choice box, which emphasizes that we should communicate our options clearly. Individuals in a communicative dialogue are partly searching for their best interests. The positions presented by the individuals

.....
*He who insists only on his
 way is sent on his way.*

Figure 22-4

Communication is not confrontation. When viewpoints differ, point to different views.

The Choice Box



.....
*Even if we are right,
how we communicate
could be wrong.*
.....

during communication may be quite different. One of the best ways of satisfying both ourselves and others in a communication marked by disagreement is to let go of our initial position, when it is problematic, and to search for a compromise, or a new solution. Many times, it turns out that compromises and new solutions go beyond our initial position and improve it. Or, we may simply alternate between what we want and what the other person wants, or even delay making a decision. All of these various options are better than simply insisting on our way, without consideration of the other. **It is not so much what we say to the other that is important, but how we say it and whether we are open to change.**

Figure 22-9 reminds us that when partners in communication are fixed in their ideas, genuine communication cannot take place. When partners engage in sensitive communication, they can take the middle path and not lean too heavily toward their own views. Extremist positions paint us in a corner, and we lose in several ways. First, we defend those extremist positions too vigorously and, thus, we reduce our sense of psychological calm. Second, we deny ourselves a valid perception of the other and reduce our appreciation of the other, because we are too negative. Third, we impede our own psychological growth, because we are fixed in a negative mood and a negative perception. We need balance. Moreover, should we be negative, it is never too late to change. Negatives should be preludes to positives. They should be starting points of change, not centers of resistance. **By finding the middle ground, the couple stays in the middle of the room.**

.....
Sharp words dull talk.
.....

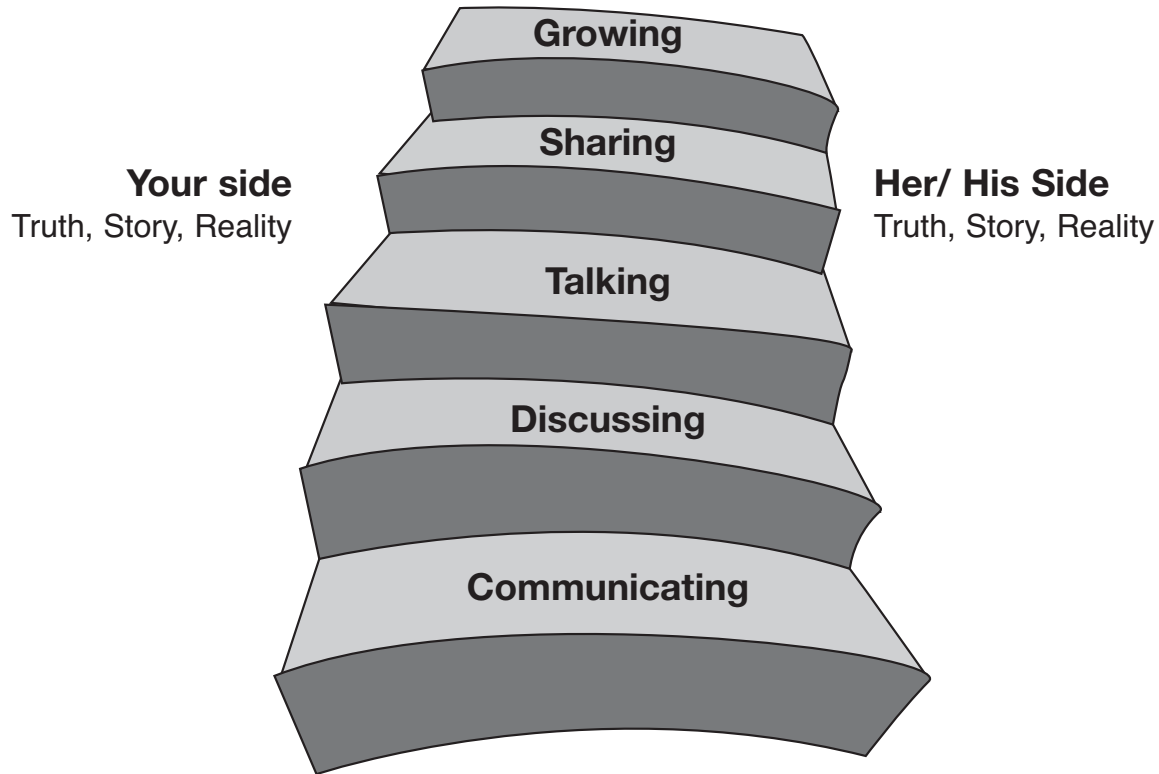
.....
*By reading a good book—we
can create great conversations.*
.....

.....
*By putting in the good word—
others will follow.*
.....

Figure 22-9

Too often, communication comes from one side of the mouth, presents one side of the story, and ends up with each partner on one side of the room. By finding middle ground, the ground becomes more solid.

Climbing the Middle Solves the Riddle



Sharing Words Leads To Sharing Paragraphs.

When partners are on the same page, their book gets thicker.

*Be kind to yourself—
Treat others well.*

*Lifting the weight of books
builds the power of the mind.*

When we give the silent treatment, it gets pretty lonely.

Couples who want to start on the right foot hand it to communication.

*The brain forms ideas.
Communication forms the brain.*

Ideas are dialogues in formation.

Hurting the other while saying it like it is—is an alienable right.

In a couple, stonewalling builds walls between the partners.

Clamming up leads to closing up.

Communication is meeting the other in the creative space of letting the conversation become.

By always going along for the ride in a conversation, we risk never getting to drive it where we want it go.

One word from her and one word from him make a lovely sentence.

Communication takes place at many levels and at many intensities. To find the highest of the first, use the lowest of the second.

She tries everything to get his attention, from screaming to yelling. He does everything not to listen.

To highlight what we mean as we speak, we should underline the coloring that we give to the words.

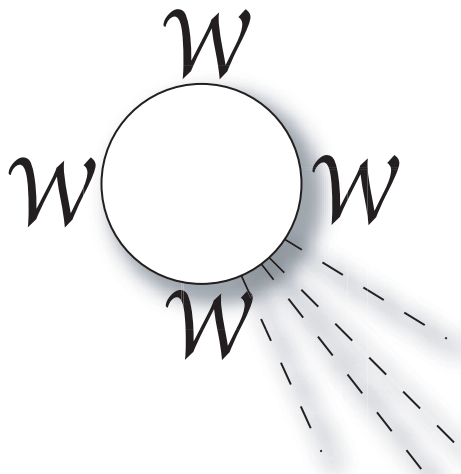


Chapter 23

Communication: Part Two

EXCERPTS

**Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com**



*"W" is for finding
a way to Will.*

When family control is balanced, individual moods do not swing.

A fully present mind cannot get stuck in the past.

Figure 23-5 examines what happens when we are too controlling. Over-control is an insidious, destructive force that is overused. We all want some control in our lives, and we do not want to feel out of control or that we are being controlled. But over-control has limited advantages and serious disadvantages. It may produce short term gains but, in the end, it hurts both the controlling person and the person being controlled. **When we over-control, it ends up controlling us.** We become its victim, reversing what we had hoped for, for ourselves. Instead of being free, we end up chained, the opposite of what we had wanted. Over-control may seem to keep others in place, but can people who are controlled by us really stay in place?

A first step in dealing with over-control is to explore its origins. The next step is to begin to return to more positive ways of engaging in communication. **When one-way control is put by the wayside in communication, optimal two-way control is facilitated.**

Figure 23-5

An overbearing attitude inhibits positive communication. When we act to overcome overcontrol, positive communication is facilitated. As positive communication grows, there is less room for negative communication. To get your bearings in communication, get over being overbearing.

Control Over Overcontrol

Overcontrol Strategies	Having Control Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls other, but controls self, too • Protects self from hurt, but hurts other • Hides wounds, but creates bigger ones • Meant to keep loved ones, but loved ones move away • Looking for love, but lose love • Overcontrol demands respect, but respect lost • Used to avoid rejection, but end up being rejected • Used to avoid pulling back, but get farther from the self • Used to avoid giving in, but end up not getting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave issue of control and find issue of trust • Open self to hurt, and find others who protect you • Expose wounds and find healing • Let loved ones be and find loved ones • Give love and gain love • Open to giving respect and respect earned • Allow the possibility of rejection, yet maximize its absence • Get closer to the self and to others • Fair in negotiation, often leads to receiving

Figure 23-7 illustrates that communication involves more than listening and talking. People in conversation may be paying attention and may be providing information to each other as they exchange words. However, genuine communication is more than a passive mechanical flow of ideas and comments. There needs to be an active participation, where the partners in the dialogue feel mutual support, sharing, and a readiness to respond with constructive action when it is needed. Communicators must not only sit in front of each other to take in what each has to say and set out their concerns. They must also engage in caring, empathy, and appropriate behavioral responses. **When communication involves the whole person, the whole message is received.**

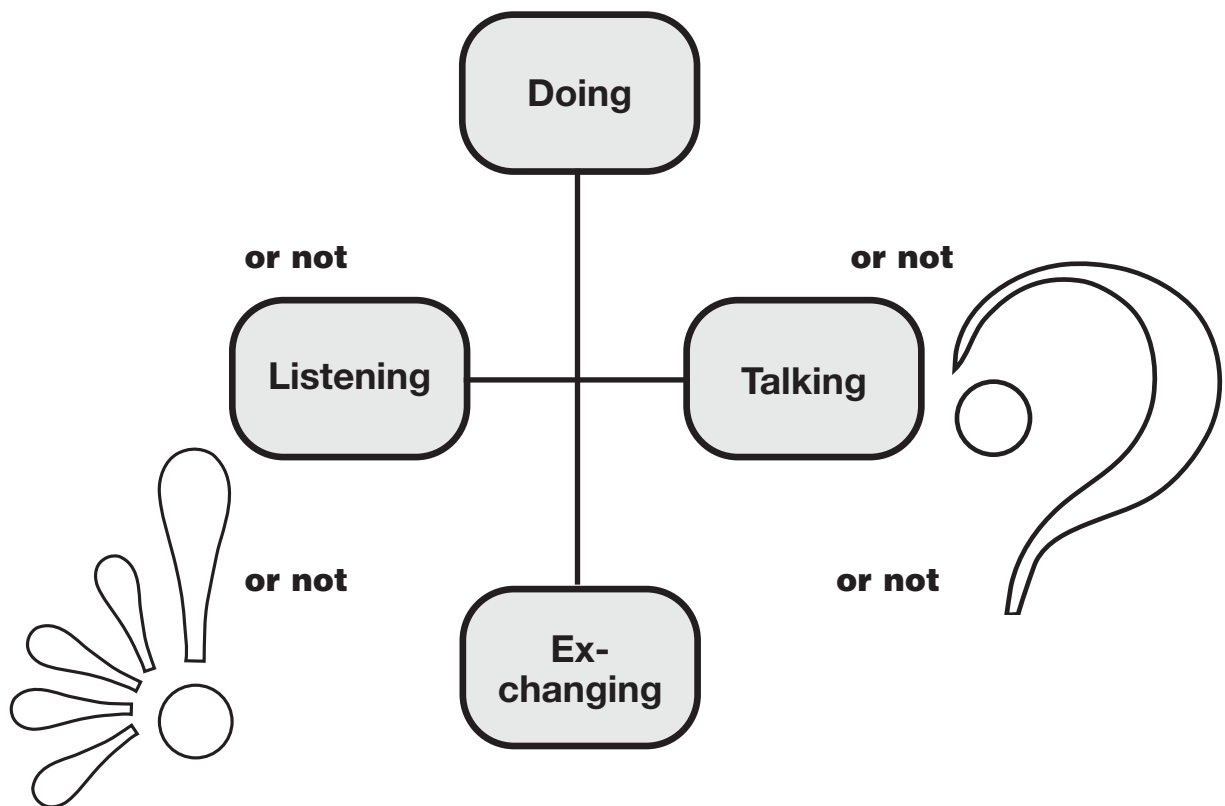
.....
Blocked hurts block words.

.....
*Genuine communication
 is more empathy
 than emphasis.*

Figure 23-7

Communication involves simple skills, such as listening, exchanging words and ideas, and acting for each other. What makes communication so hard is that complex people are the ones doing it. When partners communicate as one, they stay won.

Communicating



.....
*When two people stick
together, they
do not get stuck.*
.....

In this regard, communicating can go wrong at two levels. First, it could be barren, consisting of empty words, and not having genuine support as its goal. Second, it could be negative or even destructive, with words expressed in anger, perhaps even with the goal of harming. Although, technically, this is still communication, it is disabling rather than enabling. Anger disqualifies communication. When words are meant to hurt others, they ricochet back to hurt us. When anger dominates, we are dominated. But there are solutions to an angry communication style. When we feel angry, wherever possible, negotiation and reconciliation should replace uncontrolled reactions. Communication is a tool that we can use to construct better ways of dealing with anger.

.....
*The best solutions are
rarely the first.*
.....

Figure 23-10 speaks to how we can reduce stress by genuinely helping others, and elicit cascading positive repercussions on others and on ourselves. Helping others is its own reward. When we give to another, the other benefits, grows, and is in a better position to give back one day to us or to others, in turn. However, when we help out of convenience, or because it is easy, our motives may not be genuine, although this type of helping may be a start.

Of course, being uncaring, or hurting someone on purpose, not only hurts the other but, in the end, also hurts ourselves. **The worst punishment is not being able to grow psychologically**, and when we cannot grow psychologically because we have blocked ourselves through our own selfish or hurtful actions, we can only blame ourselves as the source of our punishment. We may think that we have gotten away with something when we act selfishly, hurt the other, and so on but, in reality, all that we have accomplished is to have gotten away from ourselves.

.....
*Stress reduces us.
Destressing reduces stress.*
.....

Communication is about more than words. It is about ideas that can lead to action and improvement in the relationship between the communicators. In addition, communication improves especially when we ask what we should want together as partners in communication. **In a relationship, the best communication begins in words, moves to actions, ends in giving, and solidifies the couple.**

Figure 23-10

Helping others in a genuine fashion always ends up helping ourselves at the core. By demonstrating and applying our best human qualities, we become better people.

Helping or Hurting Others

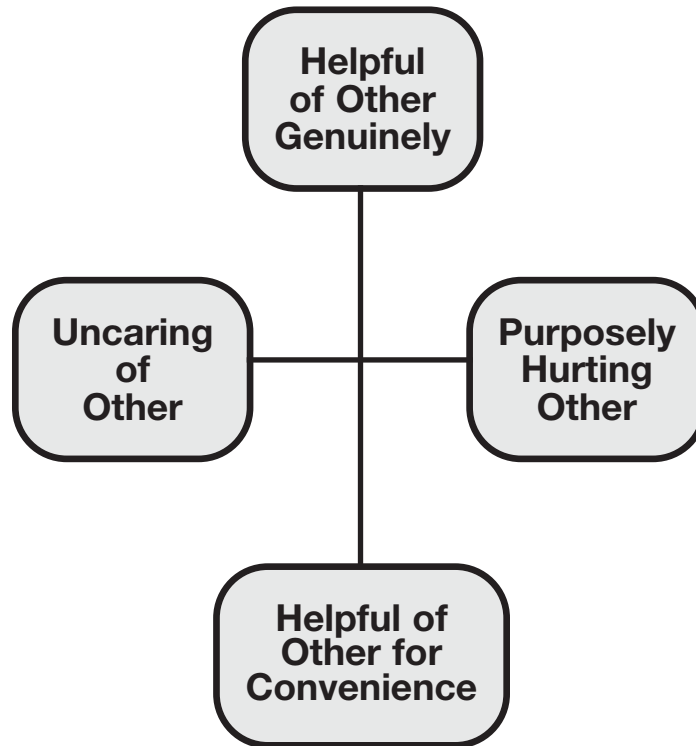


Figure 23-11 emphasizes that communication is a prelude to change. In a couple, the exchange of words is not the goal, but change of each other for the better is the goal. In communicating, if we expect our partner to change without considering how we may need to change, as well, the communication rests on shaky grounds. **When we search for psychological growth in our communication, it changes for the better.**

.....
*A good couple is
"less action, more talk."*
.....

.....
*Communication is a two-
way, eight-lane highway.*
.....

Figure 23-11

We often ask the other to change without looking at how we can change. Or we expect ourselves to do all the adjusting because we know the other will not. Change that involves only one partner goes half-way, is half as effective, and does not last. One-way change shortchanges the couple. Two-way change leads to two-way exchange.

How to Change for the Better

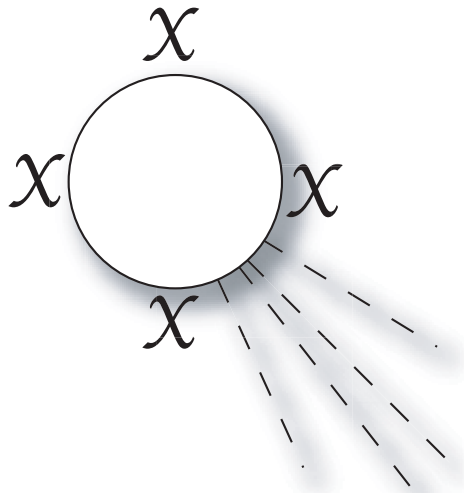
Change	How can I change	How can (s)he change	How can we change
My opinion	c	h	a
Her/ His opinion	n	g	e

Let's work on this table together to make our relationship better!

<p><i>Sharing is a giving for the taking.</i></p>	<p><i>Speech is a product of a part of our brain and communication is a product of all of it.</i></p>	<p><i>Challenge the statement, not the person.</i></p>
<p><i>Intonation has no vowels or consonants, but it explains words well.</i></p>	<p><i>Not giving choice is not an option.</i></p>	<p><i>He has a way with words. It is better he has ways to communicate better with his partner.</i></p>

Chapter 24

Children



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"X" is for extending
beyond one's boundaries.*

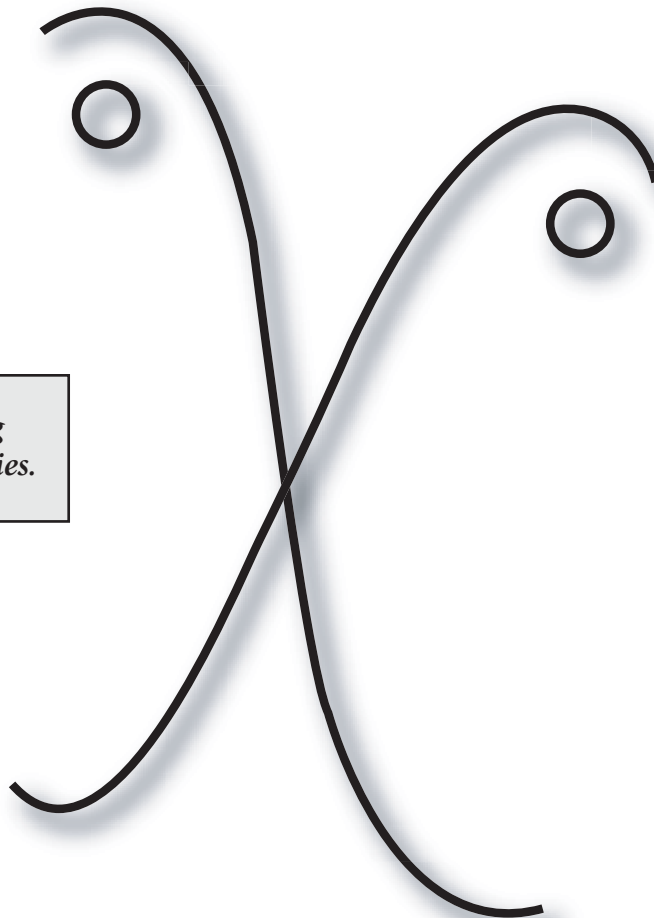


Figure 24-1 examines children’s needs for affection and appropriate discipline, or for warmth and limit setting. In taking care of plants, we need to give them appropriate nutrients early in life so that they can grow quickly and healthily but, at some point, they also need pruning so that they can grow in a well-formed fashion. In many ways, taking care of plants serves as a metaphor for raising children. In parenting, there are two major components: **1.** providing warmth, love, affection, and support, and **2.** providing appropriate limits, discipline, and firmness. When these two aspects in childrearing are provided at the optimal level to children, taking into account family and cultural background, children can develop well.

There is no one formula in raising children with respect to the appropriate balance in providing warmth and setting limits, and there is no simple recipe for what ingredients go into warmth and setting limits. Without a doubt, affectionate nurturing is important, especially in the early years. Also, children will better learn to respect the limits placed on them when the affection that they receive as they grow is optimal.

As for appropriate discipline techniques in parenting, when a family is too focused on setting limits, rules, and regulations, then family warmth may be sacrificed. At the other extreme, if a family is too permissive, either because the parents are unconcerned or because they believe that, in order to provide affection, limit-setting should be sacrificed, the family may be detracting from the development of self-control in its children. When parents alternate or are inconsistent in the kinds of affection that they offer and in the rules that they provide to their children, their children may end up confused, like their parents, thus, compromising their development. Finally, absent parents, either in the physical or psychological sense, who provide neither of the components of adequate parenting, either directly or indirectly, are putting their children quite at risk.

In the end, discipline in children works more easily when children want to absorb the lessons and limits, because they are receiving positive nurturing, they are exposed to good role models, and the limits being set are fair and appropriate. **Children love to listen with respect—when they receive love, are listened to, and are respected.**

Figure 24-1

Good parenting is based on a good balance of warmth and limit setting. If there is too much of one or the other, the parent is more rigid or permissive. The parent could be inconsistent in behavior or even be neglectful and absent.

Parenting Styles

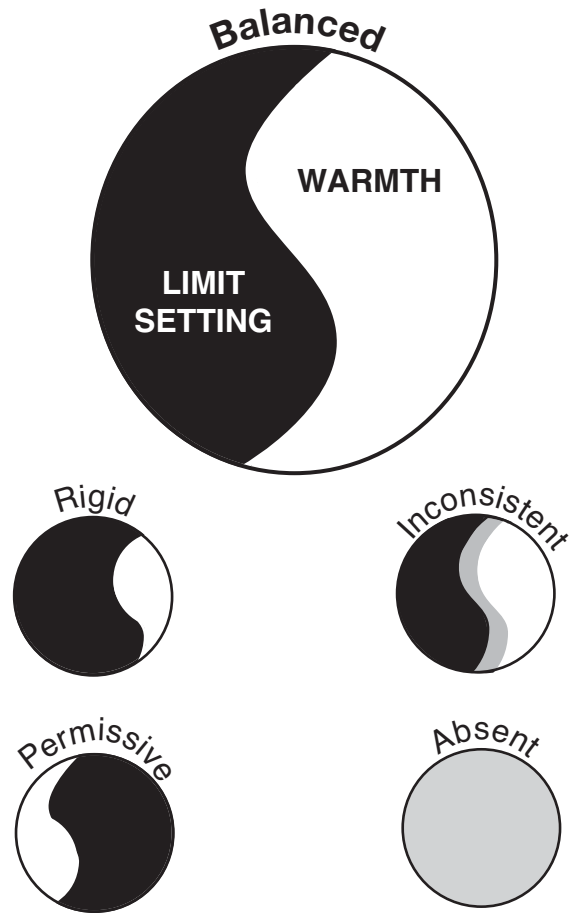


Figure 24-3 shows how to use a series of steps to get a child to cooperate, based on the concept of externalization, or giving the child's bad habit a name or label. For example, we might say to a child, "If Mr. Trouble keeps being the boss, he is going to get you into trouble and you won't be able to play. However, if you tell Mr. Trouble to leave, you know that you will be able to play. So you have a choice. Which one do you choose?" When telling this to the child, it helps to add, "I know that you know how to choose. I know that you have chosen appropriately in the past, and I am sure that you will again. Everyone is going to be happy when you choose appropriately."

.....
By talking about children's good habits, they can join in.
.....

.....
Children did not choose their parents. Parents can choose how to raise their children.
.....

Parenting is a volunteering experience. To do it well with our children, we have to become their Boy Scout, Girl Guide, Big Brother, and Big Sister.

With this kind of approach, children are learning to speak to themselves about self-control. When we get children to stop seeing themselves as the problem, but to see the behavior external to them as the problem, they see the behavior as one that they can control by themselves. The children develop an internal sense of control as they speak to themselves in this way and as they confront the situations that in the past had lead them to problems. They may realize that they are making the right choice, and say to themselves, "I told Mr. Trouble to leave. Boy, am I getting good."

So, in effect, as parents, the choice is ours whether to adopt this kind of language and facilitate disciplining our children. This style should help avoid the old styles that may have not worked effectively in the past. Moreover, for two reasons, this style is easier on parents. First, it is easier for parents because the child learns a sense of self-control, learning a language to use when speaking to oneself. Moreover,

Figure 24-3

By giving a label to a child's difficulty, we externalize it, or have the child feel that the difficulty is a part of him or her that can be controlled, told to leave, and so on. When the child has difficulty complying or otherwise behaving appropriately, there is an increasing level of pressure that can be applied using this type of language, but it should always be used in a constructive manner.

Putting "Bad Mood" in its Place

Use the following hierarchy, starting with the first steps

1. Ask nicely.
2. Explain the situation (e.g., "We're in a hurry"; "It's better if you share").
3. Use the language of "Bad Mood" (e.g., "Bad Mood" came back. Do you want to put it in its place, please?").
4. "I know that you can put Bad Mood in place. You did it 10 times last week. So show me who's the Boss, you or Bad Mood. Show me that you know how to choose."
5. "Maybe you will end up going to your room. It would be easier if you put Bad Mood in place. Which do you choose?"
6. "Bad Mood has to go in your room. So come with me."

Use the following compliment, after any of the first 6 steps are successful

"You see, you know very well how to put Bad Mood in place. Remember how you did it, so that you can do it again. You've chosen well. I'm proud of you."

the child can generalize that control into new situations in daily life that may be encountered.

Second, it is easier for parents because, in using this approach when disciplining the child, parents do not get angry or nervous like before. The parents realize that the child becomes responsible for her or his own behavior. The parents realize that if the child makes the wrong choices, the negative consequences that result are self-chosen. The parents can administer the consequences with calm, saying to the child, for example, "Mr. Trouble got you in trouble. I'm sure that next time you will tell Mr. Trouble to leave instead of listening to him and that you will feel good about doing so." In addition, because the child's bad habit becomes the culprit rather than the whole child, in effect, the parent stops blaming the child.

The technique of blaming the child is a disciplinary strategy that has a whole host of negative consequences that is now easier to avoid. By externalizing the problem behavior with a label such as "Mr. Trouble," the child develops a sense of control of her or his own behavior and a sense of good feeling about the self for having that control. **By empowering the child to make the right choice, parents receive rewards as much as does the child.**

Figure 24-4 reviews the best ways to speak to children when disciplining them. Obviously, on the positive side, we should be giving a sense of security to children and compliment them for demonstrating the behavior that we want to bring out. What about when children do not behave appropriately? It is important to tell them something like, "That behavior is inappropriate," rather than saying something like, "You are bad. I hate what you did." When we want to have the child change, rather than merely express our frustrations, we should avoid using a very harsh nasty label to characterize the behavior of concern, such as "bad," and use, instead, a word such as "inappropriate." Rather than criticizing the whole child by using the word "you," we should refer directly to the behavior of concern to us ("that behavior"). Rather than placing the focus of displeasure on ourselves as parents ("I hate"), we should use phrases that move the child to develop displeasure at her or his own behavior. By saying that a behavior is inappropriate to a

.....
*To get children to sparkle,
answer their questions
with flame.*
.....

.....
*Blood is the gift of life.
So is caring for a child.*
.....

.....
*Praises for children raises
them into adults.*
.....

Figure 24-4

Children respond to discipline strategies that are constructive. By dealing with the difficulty being presented and not coming down on the child, the child can become an ally against the difficulty. By using the language of labels such as “Mr. Fidget,” the child can train her or himself to tell Mr. Fidget, or any such difficulty, to leave.

Appropriate Child Discipline Strategies

Appropriate Positives	Appropriate Negatives
Compliment behavior that you like Hug, hold, give security Compliment child when self-control shown, leading to right choices	“That Behavior is Inappropriate” Create labels like “Mrs. Tease,” “Mrs. Fidget.” Ask her/him to ask the Mister to leave, e.g., “Who’s the Boss, you or Mr. Fidget. Why don’t you ask him to leave?” Give her a choice. “If Mrs. Fidget goes, you get to play. If Mrs. Fidget does not go, which consequence do you choose?”

Consequences

- Child learns to speak to self like this, developing internal self-control
- It is easier on parent. Child cannot easily blame parent for negative consequences that derive from her/his wrong choice

.....
*When we help a child learn,
we write their book.*
.....

child, we are saying how much we love the child and want them to improve their behavior, thereby opening the child to learning, changing, and growing. This behavior is appropriate.

The language of creating labels to represent bad habits in children resembles the strategy of telling to children that their behavior is inappropriate. Yet, it carries it one step further, because it speaks to children at their level, and they can begin to use it right away. **When parents externalize a problem with a label, it is easier for children to end up internalizing good habits in conjunction with controlling bad ones.**

Figure 24-5 graphs a discipline strategy to use with children. There are three columns in the chart. The first column lists the normal privileges children may have. The second lists

Figure 24-5

A good way of disciplining a child is to use the language of consequences, and to let the child know that it is the nature of her or his behavior that is determining the nature of the consequences. The child should lose privileges in increments matching the difficulty being presented by the behavior of the child, e.g., 15 minutes is lost from a pleasant activity when the child has been involved in a minor difficulty. Greater difficulties should lead to greater losses. Of course, the child can also earn privileges, gain rewards, get back losses, and so on.

The Win — Lose — ReWin Chart

Normal Privileges	Rules	Losses-Gains
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 hours playing with friends• 2 hours TV• 2 hours video/movie• 2 hours videogame• 2 hours on phone• 2 dollars of allowance• 2 desserts/juices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• listen• be honest• homework done• certain mark obtained• don't bug• no trouble at school• clean room• do chores• extra reading• exercise• eat healthy• be home on time• no trouble with friends• show respect• no trouble with siblings• curfew respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time out given• 15 minutes lost in an activity child likes• If incident bad, can lose 30 minutes or more (e.g., didn't do homework)• Use language of choice, "You have chosen to lose time this time"• Sometimes give child choice about which loss he should get (e.g., TV or videogame)• Grounding possible• Also, child can earn back time lost (e.g., being good, trying hard, doing the homework)• Of course, child can gain extra time if good (e.g., cleans room well, so gets to play with friend more)

the rules children should be obeying. The third indicates how normal privileges can be reduced or increased, depending on how the rules are respected. Such charts should vary with the particular situation of each child. For the particular child for which the figure was created, I suggested to the parents that, in determining the normal privileges for their child, that they work in units of two, that is, in time periods of two hours, money intervals of two dollars, and so on. The child, depending on his behavior, could gain or lose some of these privileges. In losing privileges, the child could lose units worth 25%. For example, if the child's behavior had been inappropriate, the child could lose priv-

.....
The type of discipline the child receives is more important than disciplining the child.
.....

.....
Children learn to read and write. Teens learn to think right.
.....

*The glow that we see in
children brightens the
future.*

*When we take children into
their imagination, the
dreams are theirs to fill.*

ileges in 15-minute blocks, in 25¢ blocks, and so on. On the positive side, the child could earn 15 minutes of playtime with his friends, 25¢, etc. Finally, the system we created allowed the child to win back lost privileges. If the child had been deprived of a privilege, but had clearly compensated well the rest of the week, the lost privilege was to be returned. **The goal of disciplining children is not to punish them for the negative, but to change them toward the positive.**

How do we speak to children about choices such as those shown in the chart? When children gain privileges, for example, we might tell them that they have chosen to listen and have put “Mr. Trouble” in his place. However, if children lose privileges, we might say that they have chosen not to put “Mr. Trouble” in his place, that “Mr. Trouble” has had too much influence over them, and that they have lost privileges because of their lack of control over him. We can end the conversation by saying that, as their parents, we are sure that the next time they will do the right thing and try to gain back their lost privileges. Children respond to this language because it allows them choice, and it places the decisions on their shoulders. Parents respond because their shoulders feel lighter.

Figure 24-6 describes five ways to try to get children to cooperate when we want them to do something. It also lists the corresponding effects on their psychological development of the five ways that one can use in addressing children.

In the abusive style, the parent can scream, threaten, verbally abuse, or even physically abuse children. Unfortunately, this approach is more widespread than we would like. Far too many children live daily with this regime. Children are silenced. They can become psychologically chaotic.

In the imperative style, the parent gives orders in an authoritarian fashion. The parent is King. Children learn submission and do not really listen. This type of parenting attitude may induce a rebellious attitude when the children are older.

In the third approach, the parent is more neutral in asking the children for something. The parent puts in place a system of rules to follow and rewards to receive. The children listen, but learn that control is on the outside of them,

Figure 24-6

Children can be taught to do what we want by negative or positive means. For example, we can scream at them or praise them. Negative strategies lead to negative results. Children may comply, but they will revolt, resist, etc. They need to develop internal control and a desire to please us, and to comply naturally to our requests and prohibitions. The more positive their relationship with us, the more likely children will accept our goals and the manner that we suggest for them to succeed in achieving the goals.

Getting Results with Children

Options To Get Goal

Behavior	Scream, threats	Imperative style (order dryly; ask nervously)	Request neutrally, relating to rules, rewards	Appeal to something inside child	Relate to child openly; requests are embedded in positive relationship
Example	"You better, or else"	"I'm telling you to ..."	"If you don't clean, ..."	"I'm sure you'll choose right to ..."	Child always makes right choice even without request
Outcome	Creates chaotic child who won't listen well	Creates rebellious child, even if listens (sometimes)	Develops external control, motivates, but resistance probable	Develops internal control, owning responsibility for actions	Child free to fully grow psychologically



or that the application of punishment and the acquisition of privileges are controlled externally to them. Later in their search for internal control, they may develop resistance to the parental discipline system.

The next two techniques move control to children's inner self. In the fourth approach, the parent promotes internal control by using techniques that appeal to the children's sense of responsibility. Children are given the freedom to explore the outside world, and learn about the self at the same time. The danger is that when the children get older and can understand more, the parent restricts their exploration about certain matters that she or he, as an adult, have yet to explore. Their children risk turning inward.

The fifth approach shows that when the parent is fully open with their children, when there are no issues for children that are closed for a lack of exploration on her or his part, and when their relationship is mutually sensitive, shared, respectful, and guiding, any request by the parent to the children has a good chance of being respected. Children consider it from the point of view of their whole relationship with their parent. They acquiesce even if they disagree with the request, because they sincerely want to agree for the sake of the overall relationship with the parent and, moreover, they may even appreciate the argument that it is for their own good in the long term. They do not see such occurrences as sacrifices, but as part of their obligations, and even as possible growth experiences. **In being raised with sensitivity and guidance, children develop not only an internal control and curiosity about the external world but, also, a profound commitment to their parents and to their own psychological growth.**

.....
Children need wholesome nutrients. Read them the whole book.

.....
When children need to turn to someone, head straight for them.

.....
When children play follow the leader, lead by example.

.....
Playtime does serious good to a child's brain.

.....
Praise earned is priceless.

.....
Children watch our every move. Turn on your best programme.

.....
Preparing a child for learning prepares the teacher for teaching.

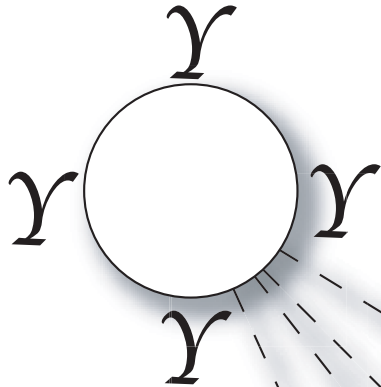
.....
Children flourish—in global warming.

.....
When our own past is considered a source of lessons to learn, it is easier to teach our children.

.....
The thought of a child can make us smile. The smile of a child can make us.

Chapter 25

Teenagers



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"Y" is for finding yourself
through growing yourself.*



By keeping tabs on our teens, they cannot run up the tab.

Get a good head on your shoulders—hug your parents.

Figure 25-2 shows that, with appropriate limit-setting and parental affection, adolescents can develop a sense of strength and security. This prepares the way for them to develop an appropriate sense of responsibility with respect to work and family. Children who do not receive an optimal upbringing can still develop well. Whatever their childhood beginnings, adolescents can develop positively, but hard psychological work may be needed when early experiences had been very difficult. As parents, we need to work hard at home, because the best savings that we can make concern the future of our children.

Figure 25-2

Adolescents can pass through the transition years easier when they have a secure base of affection that had been developed in the childhood years. Adolescents respond better to the limits that we set for them when we have treated them well throughout their infancy and childhood.

Give Your Children Their Wedding Rings

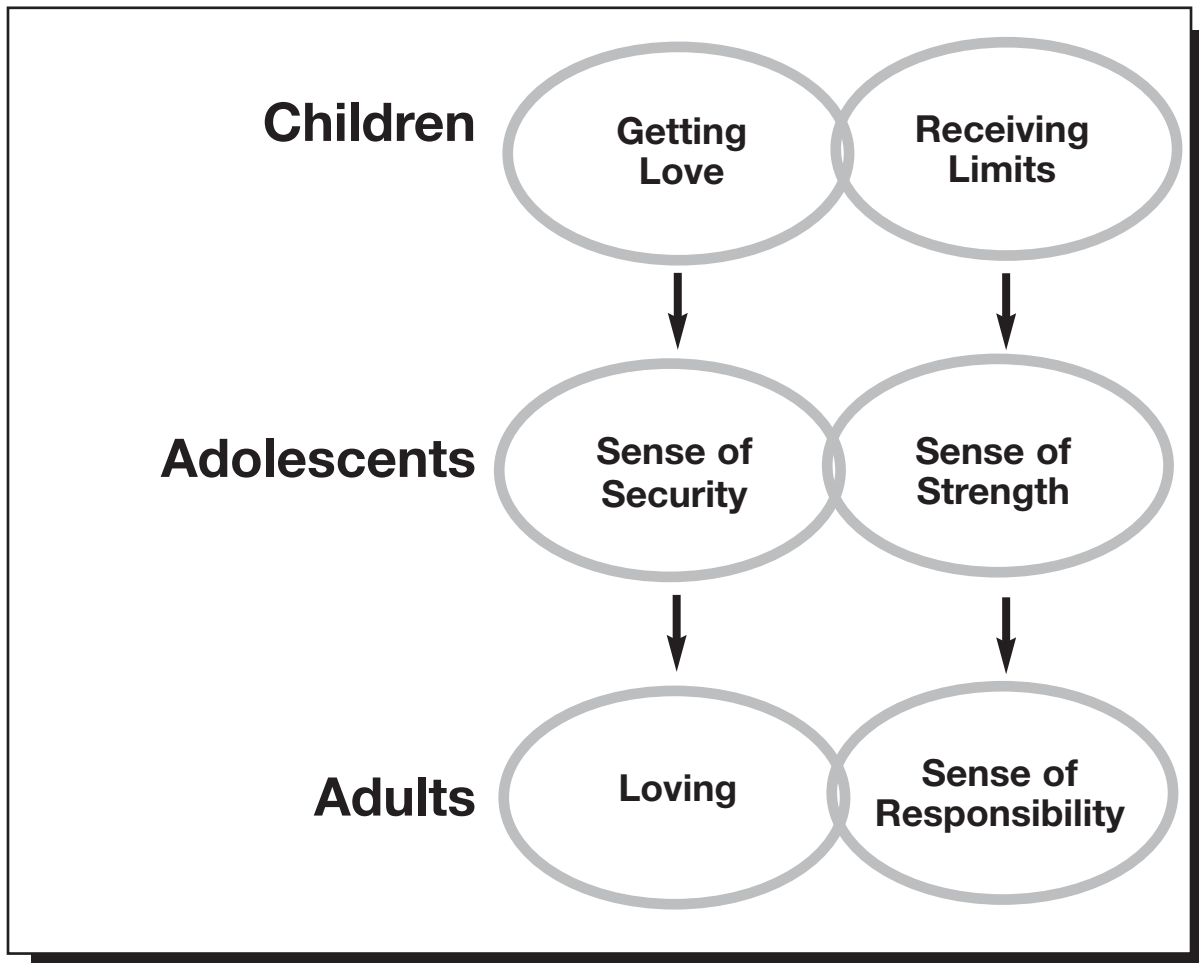
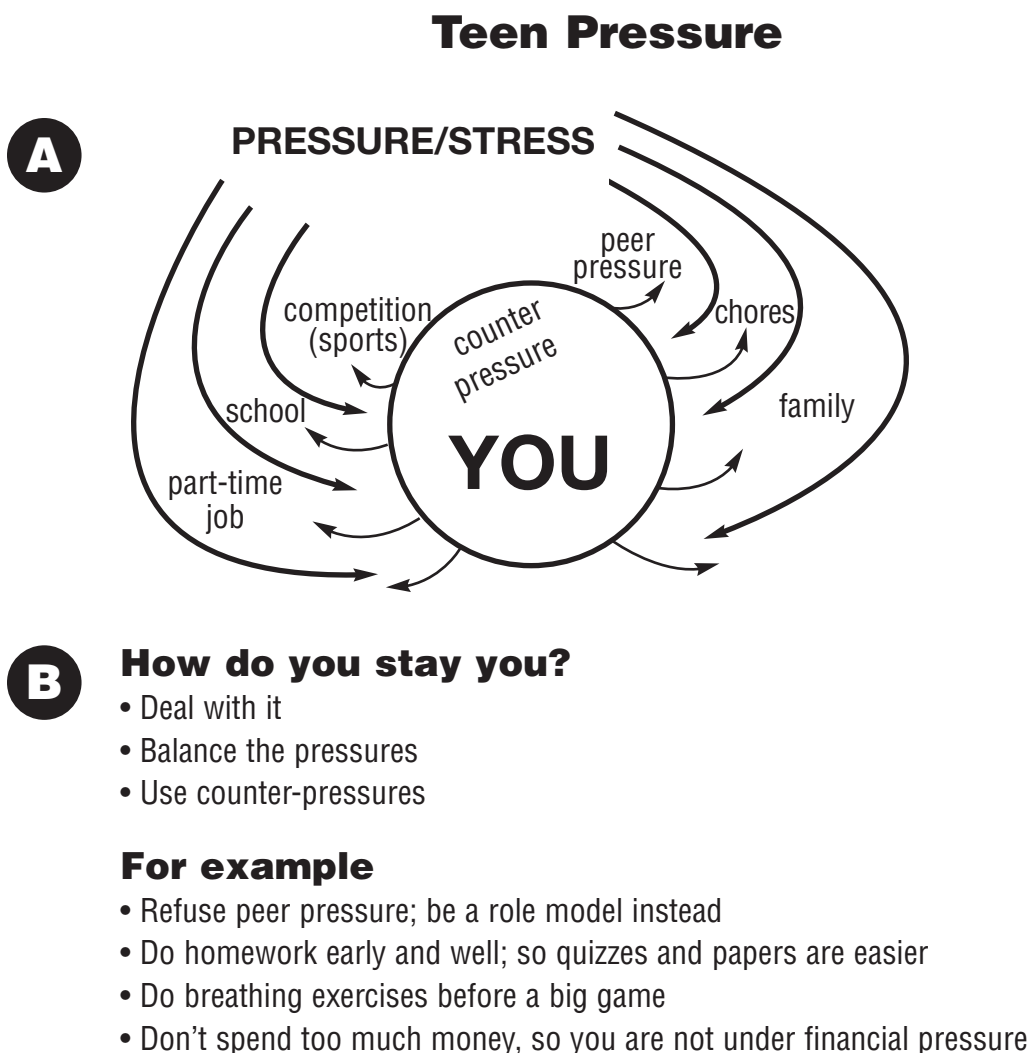


Figure 25-3 looks at the kinds of pressures and stresses confronting adolescents. Peer pressure can be quite overpowering, especially concerning drugs and social behavior. There is constant school pressure and work pressure to perform well, and the complexities of social relationships in the family can have their own pressures. It is important for adolescents to maintain a sense of balance and to use appropriate counter-pressures in order to balance the stresses. For example, on average, they will not succumb to peer pressure

.....
*Adolescence is a way station
 to adulthood—like in,
 “Help them find their way.”*

Figure 25-3

Teenagers are exposed to multiple peer pressures. They need to know how to refuse the worst of them and balance the rest. The more teenagers can control peer pressure, and even offer counter-pressure, thereby serving as good role models, the less effective is negative peer pressure in influencing their choices.



.....
*Peer pressure should be
when we help our teens
learn to pressure their peers
in order to keep their good
values.*
.....

.....
*Fill the generation gap—
with your parents.*
.....

.....
*Keep your teens away from
the 4 D's—Drugs, Drunk
Driving, Delinquency, and
the need to say,
"Do what I say not what I
do."
.....*

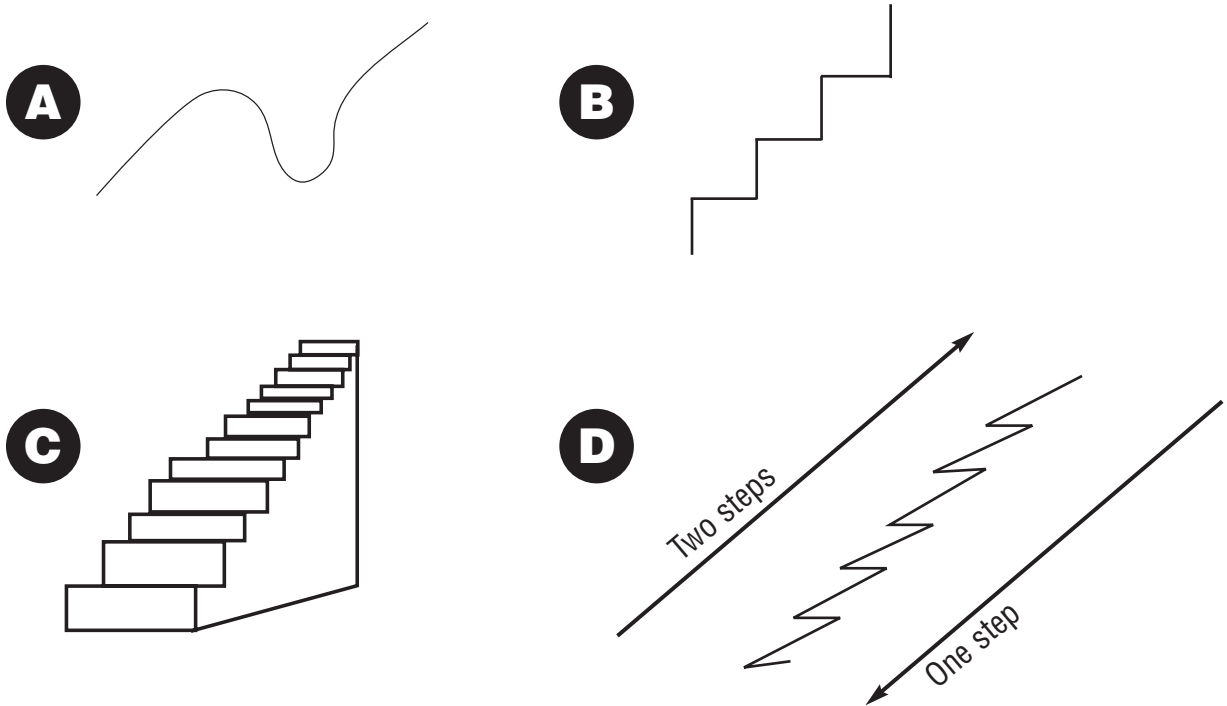
when appropriate parental warmth and limits are put in place. In most cases, adolescents may imitate their peers with respect to hairstyle and clothes, but they choose their parents' values. **Adolescents mostly understand that peers are for fun and parents are for real.**

Figure 25-9 analyzes possible developmental pathways through which adolescents pass. The first model indicates that much of development is a slow, gradual, smooth increase in skills, knowledge, and maturity but, also, that there are bumps on the road. The second model suggests that development occurs in a few major stages or substages and, with each step, the adolescent suddenly arrives at a new, more advanced way of thinking, acting, or feeling. The third model is a variation on the second, to show that each adolescent reacts differently to a new stage or substage. Perhaps, all adolescents finally do get to each stage or substage (e.g., the search for identity), but each adolescent deals with each one differently. The fourth model indicates that, often, there are crises in the lives of adolescents. They make progress, but have setbacks. Their environment can be difficult and push them back. However, adolescents have extra energy and desire, and can react in motivated ways to their setbacks and non-supportive environments. All these models contribute to helping us understand adolescents. But no one adolescent follows any of the models in a classic way. There are too many individual differences in their personal growth and identity to allow that to happen. All adolescents try to find their unique identity but, keep in mind, that they all wear the same style of jeans and T-shirts, too. **More important, all adolescents carve out a self-image that fits themselves. As adults, we have to respect that they are in transition, they may be overly zealous or rebellious, and so on. We need to keep in mind that, on the average, sooner or later, they will be open to good advice.**

Figure 25-9

Model A of development depicts it as a straight pathway, with ups and downs. Model B presents a stage model that would be the same for everybody. Model C presents an irregular staircase, which indicates that there may be the same stages for all, but that each person traverses them differently. Model D suggests that ups and downs are the norm, but that we grow more than we lose with each down. On the average, development is up. Any way you look at it, development should be upward toward the better.

Developmental Pathways



Children Can Learn To Tell Fear To Go Play So They Can Play.

Slow to warm up: Sometimes we need time to be just fine.

Fears take a backseat to people who confront it.

Children fear a loss of support far more than a fear itself.

By being a steady presence when our children are afraid, their fear becomes unsteady.

To stop getting distracted by a child's fear, teach the child to distract.

To put fear aside, put yourself front and center.

When we step forth, fear backs down.

Fear does not like to listen—when we talk up our courage.

To talk fear down, talk down to it.

When fear heats up, breathe it down.

Instead of jamming up our minds with fearful traffic jams, we can fill it with fear control techniques.

When you "roar," fear "meows."

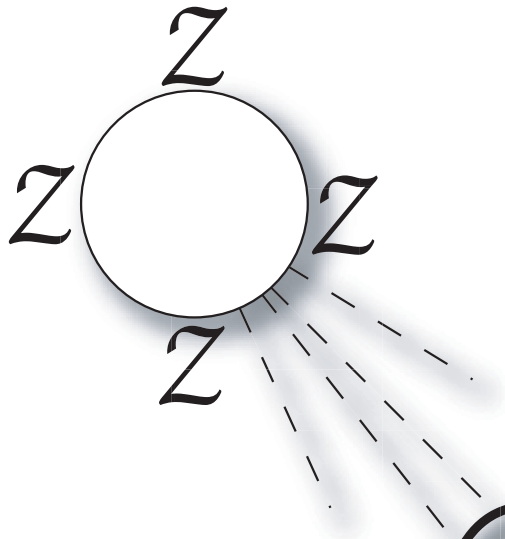
Children can learn through words, through art, through play, and through and through.

There is little room for fear—when the child's room is filled with activities.



Chapter 26

Children's Fears



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"Z" is for Zest when
life feels in the zone.*

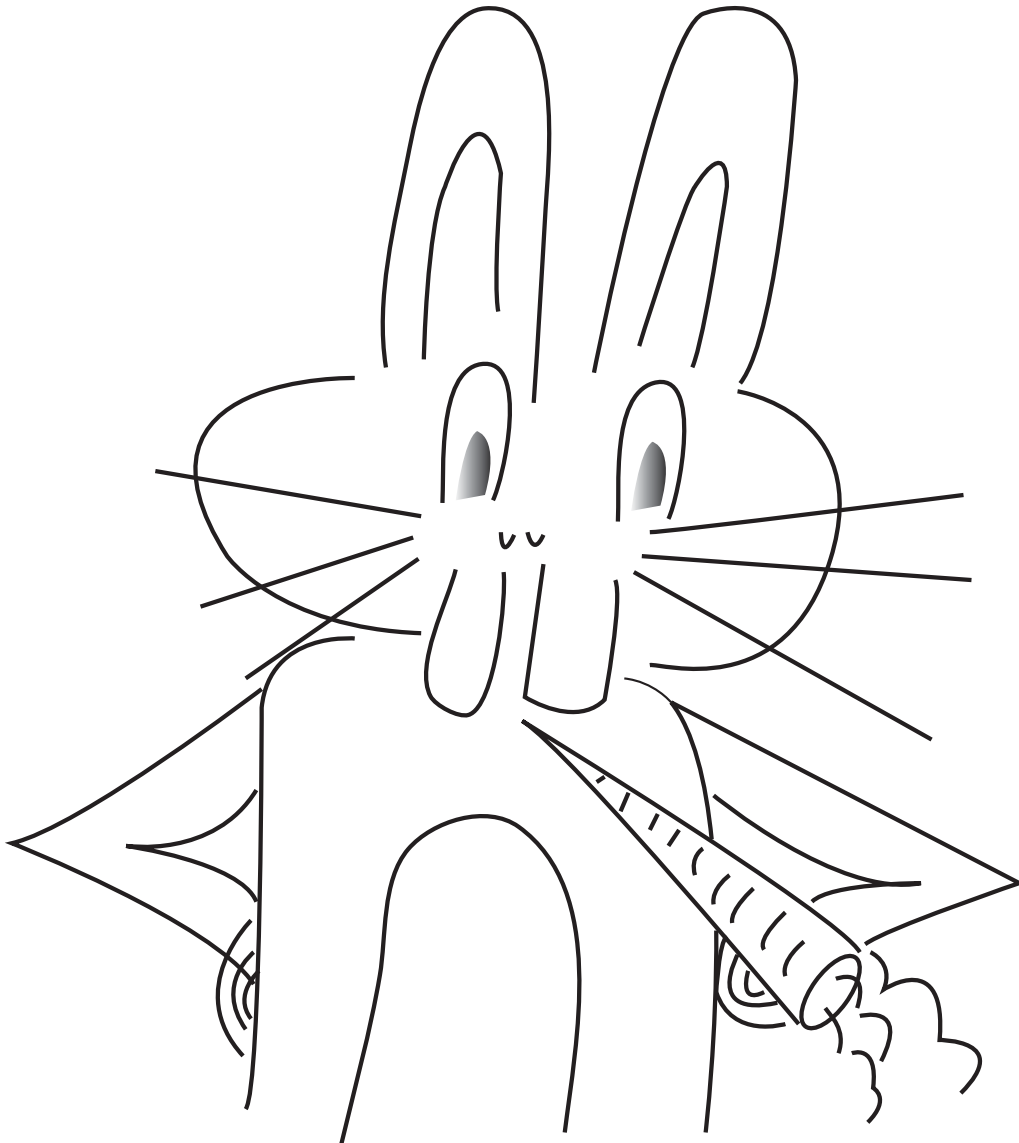
.....
*Nothing like a happy ending
in a children's story.
Help them live one.*
.....

Figure 26-7 shows what happens when children conquer their fears. Instead of being frightened rabbits, they can become happy ones. I may tell a child, "When fear frightens you, would you rather be a Scared Hare or a Funny Bunny?" Children respond to techniques that invite them to build options in behavior.

Figure 26-7

In dealing with their difficulties, children need indirect approaches as well as direct approaches. By engaging their positive side, the terrain is set for having them learn positives.

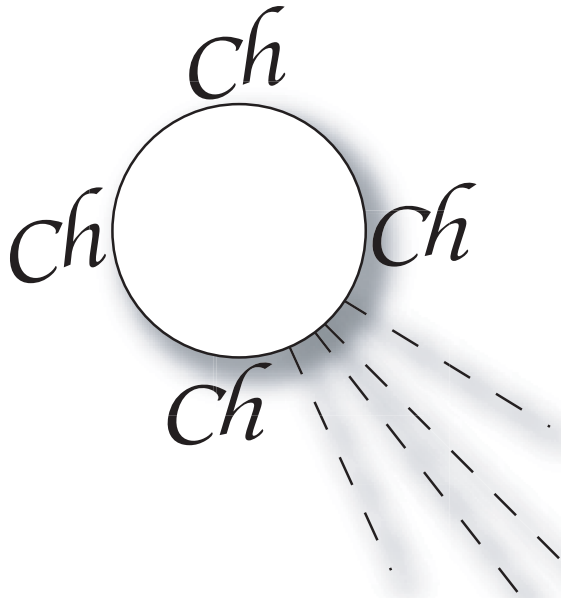
Funny Bunny



Funny Bunny sees everything as sunny

Chapter 27

Work and Family



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"CH" is for Children
who we should Cherish.*



.....
When quarterly profits are measured in human capital, all types of profit over the years are assured.

.....
When we place priorities first, we avoid last minute stresses.

Figure 27-1 examines how we can go wrong when we do not have an appropriate problem-solving approach. Humans form systems because of their advantages for group and for individual adaptation. Examples of systems include businesses, schools, and families. The most important advantages that system organization offers relate to better problem solving. From understanding that there is a problem, to developing a plan, to working it out step-by-step, problem-solving needs a calm, careful approach, and teamwork helps. As members of a system, in confronting a problem, we need to know when to ask, when to do, and when to let others do. When systems organize teams, even

Figure 27-1

Working effectively requires meeting each new challenge as it arises with an open mind. Sometimes, we do not even realize that there is a problem when one is present. Problem solving involves individual effort and team effort. A company thrives when its employees keep good company.

You Can't Teach an Old Dog New Tricks —Unless He Wants to Learn

New Tricks	Old Tricks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a feeling that something is wrong • Dig to find the problem • Ask for help in figuring out what's wrong • See the problem • Break down the problem into manageable parts • Formulate a workable plan, asking for help where needed • Apply step by step; communal resolving • Monitor, adjust • Solve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep burying the bone and forgetting where • Start digging everywhere in the garden • Call in neighborhood pooches to help • Dig deep holes randomly everywhere • Break down from stress and exhaustion • Dig up flowers hoping that no one will notice the holes • Cry step by step; communal howling • Get another bone; start again

if there is division of labor within a team to accomplish problem solving, more minds are deployed, more knowledge is acquired, and group problem-solving approaches are facilitated. **Two minds are not better than one, unless one mind is formed by the two.**

*Problem solving is like
cooking—good recipes help.*

In **Figure 27-4**, we examine two opposing approaches to work—one is money-oriented and the other is people-oriented. Ironically, the people-oriented approach may lead to more money being earned for companies than the money-oriented approach. When a traditional profit motive governs the functioning of a company, paradoxically, the ability of the company to make money may be undercut, especially in the long term. When money is the overriding concern of a company, decisions may be made from a short-term perspective, such as in cutting corners and downsizing. Workers lose their motivation. Workers feel that they have been sacrificed in favor of financial narrow-mindedness.

*When we do not stress the
people that we supervise,
they thank us from
the bottom of their
healthy heart.*

An alternate approach would be to realize that people make products rather than money. When a company realizes that its people are its most important resource, its workers have a sense of security, and are more likely to be bold in their creativity, motivated in their work, and enthusiastic about serving clients. They produce a growing company, a concerned company, and a company that is profitable, not only in a monetary sense but, also, in a people sense.

Owners and senior managers should take note that a people-first attitude can be the ultimate stress reduction mechanism for them. When key people at various levels within a company think and behave in this manner, workers become less stressed and more motivated and, in turn, middle managers and supervisors become less stressed and more productive. **The more workers are treated like people, the more workers will work hard at making good products and money for their company.** Similarly, in families, the more each family member is respected, the more each member contributes to family responsibilities in a willing manner.

*When critical thinking is in
critical shortage, the stuck
market will not crash.*

Figure 27-4

When people are considered primary in work, more money is earned and the company's stocks rise. When people are devalued at work, the company's net worth devalues. Take stock.

Funny How Work Is Not Stressful

Products Cost Money	People Make Money
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All we have to do is sell • Financial capital • Cutting corners • Bottom line • Downsizing • Sell service • Benefit the company • Get right workers • Management • Vertical organization • Green money investment • People are interchangeable • Bankruptcy for Dummies • Work is not funny 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whatever we do, we do it well • Human capital • Creative turns • Leading edge • Uplifting • Service sells • Personnel benefits • Get workers' rights • Motivation • Vertical growth • Green environment investment • People are changeable • Fortune 500 • Funny how work isn't stressful

when workers are not stressed

.....
*Any complex system works
 by the simplest rules.*

Figure 27-9 looks at explanations of systems that verge on the simple to those that are quite complex. It asks us to be wary of simple explanations. In this regard, I will first discuss the first five figures contained within the figure, that is, Figure 27-9 a), Figure 27-9 b), Figure 27-9 c), Figure 27-9 d), and Figure 27-9 e).

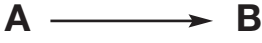



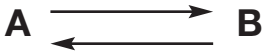
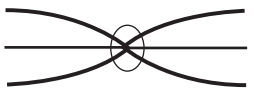
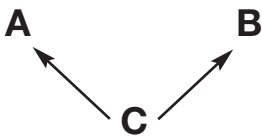
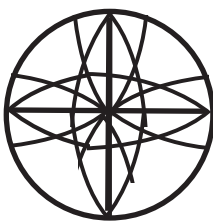
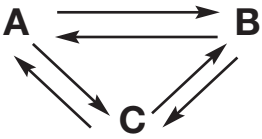
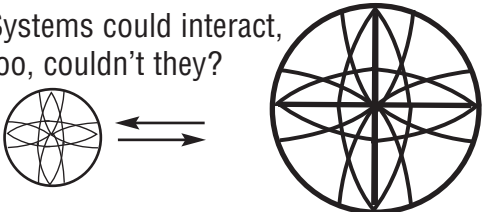
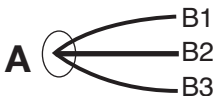
.....
*First, let me say that
 good managers are
 good people first.*

We have a tendency to see things clear-cut, black and white, all or nothing, or in linear ways (see Figure 27-9a). For example, a child seeks attention at home, and is making trouble at school. It looks like a simple matter: The child is expressing behavioral problems at school because the

Figure 27-9

Things are never as simple as they seem, for everything is embedded in complex systems. Cause may appear to go from A to B, but, usually, it involves multiple factors and directions.

Simple Answers Hide Complex Issues

<p>a)  Does one thing always lead to another?</p>	<p>g) Maybe many things all lead to the same thing? </p>
<p>b) </p>	<p>h) Could it be that many things interrelate as they lead to other things? </p>
<p>c) Or is it a two-way street? </p>	<p>i) There are many ways that this could happen. </p>
<p>d) Maybe there is no relationship. Perhaps a third thing leads to the other two things? </p>	<p>j) System of many things could be involved. </p>
<p>e) Could it be that the three things mutually influence each other? </p>	<p>k) Systems could interact, too, couldn't they? </p>
<p>f) Maybe one thing leads to many things? </p>	

.....
*Learning is to school
as school is to work.*
.....

.....
*If you let MuchMusic
babysit your children,
as adults, they will
hip hop to welfare.*
.....

parents are neglecting him at home, or the like. The eliciting situation, A, causes the effect, or outcome, B.

A child may express behavioral problems at home and at school because he has had a traumatic brain injury in an accident, and there are no contributing factors either at home or school.

Or, in another example, a child is experiencing a lot of parental conflict at home that discourages and frustrates him, so he acts out at school. However, perhaps explanations that seem so straightforward, going from one factor to another, do not apply, and it is the other way around (see b). It could be that, for some reason that is not clear, a child is expressing behavioral problems at school and, only as an unwanted consequence, he seeks attention at home. For example, he may be experiencing bullying by classmates, causing behavioral disturbances, and only as a secondary effect, does he seek attention at home.

Of course, both explanations could be partly true (see c), with a child having both a home problem and a school problem. The explanation is not linear one way or the other, because, in this explanation, it is true that a child could partly make trouble at school due to home problems, but it could be also true that he could be partly making trouble at home due to school problems.

A fourth possible explanation of why A and B may seem to relate is that there is an underlying third factor explaining the apparent relationship (see d).

This complex example begins to show the difficulties in thinking linearly for, in such complex cases involving children, usually, there is a circular causality, where all the factors influence each other (see e). The same applies to couples or family disputes. Is it really that one of the adults involved is the source of all the problems, or is it a two-way street or even a busy crossroads? Moreover, are not there always outside issues affecting a conflict, such as family of origin issues or workplace stresses?

The next five figures—Figure 27-9 (f), Figures 27-9 (g), Figure 27-9 (h), Figures 27-9 (i), Figure 27-9 (j), and Figure 27-9 (k)—illustrate further the complexity in understanding systems.

If we look carefully at the simple formula that A causes B, although it may seem to apply in a particular case, we will understand that A never really causes B alone (see 27-9f).

For example, usually, the situation is complex, and cannot be reduced to one factor called "A" and, usually, the outcome is complex and cannot be reduced to one factor called "B." **Both the elicitor A and the outcome B should be considered as multiple, rather than singular.** Many situations may be different but, nevertheless, all may lead to one outcome or, conversely one situation may lead to many outcomes, not just one, as represented in the figure.

For example, one person never really upsets just one family member, because there are secondary effects on everybody. In another example, one individual is not fixed in one developmental path, because she or he can follow several different developmental paths in any one context, depending on relevant factors. Or, two individuals in the same context may not react in the same way or follow the same developmental path, depending on a host of variables and individual differences.

Similarly, there may seem to be one straightforward link between A and B but, often, there are multiple situations, causes, or pathways leading from A to B (see g). For example, the causal situation, A, leading to the effect, B, may be constituted by many factors, so that there are many parts to A. Or, developmentally, several different pathways (to use the current language, several "A"s) may lead to the same outcome, B. Or, one person (A) may appear to be in conflict with another, having a certain effect on her (B) but, usually, there are multiple players (multiple "A"s, as in a family), with one being the focus.

Figure 27-9 (h) and Figure 27-9 (i) further illustrate how these various connections from A to B can be put together graphically in different ways to underscore the complexities involved. Both the A's and B's are never simple in describing the relationship between them in a causal explanation.

Figure 27-9 (j) asks us to see the whole system. When we think we finally get it, we never do until we see all the factors involved and how they interrelate.

Finally, Figure 27-9 (k) illustrates that even when we think we finally understand the whole system, we need to realize that the system is but one level in a more complex system. There are immediate levels of explanation but, also, there are others, with the most abstract or far-reaching being quite removed from the original issue. For example, in trying to understand a family dispute, do we know all of the social

*Home happiness trumps
work stress.*

*Week-ends with family
book-end the week.*

*Bring your work home.
Show your kids how to work
hard in their projects.*

contexts, cultural issues, historical patterns, political pressures, medical conditions, psychological vulnerabilities, and so on?

Let's look at an example. We all have tendencies to explain things simply, to see faults in others, to blame others, to ask for simple solutions, to exclude things that do not fit how we understand things, to focus selectively, and to sacrifice other interpretations at the expense of preserving our own even if it means hurting other people. When we do not see the whole, most anything that we try when we are dealing with a problem is bound to fail. The solutions that we propose are bound to miss something important. The parts of the problem that we do not see, or that we exclude from our attempted solutions, inevitably will complicate our efforts. **When we learn better the interrelated connections of a system, it is easier to work with the system and help it transform for the better, whether the system be at work, at home, or in the wider world.**

Figure 27-10 is probably the most complex in the book. It looks at attachment styles, and points out that the secure attachment style is the optimal type to develop within and between people.

Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby to explain the infant's affectionate relationship to the caregiver. All infants become attached for biological reasons, but the quality of attachment depends on the quality of caregiving received. When caregiving is sensitive, positive mental structures develop, called internal working models (e.g., "I am loved, the world is a place where I get love"), and the attachment is secure. In this case, at the behavioral level, the infant plays with the caregiver, coming and going in joyous exchanges (e.g., when tested in a play room at 12 months of age, the caregiver functions as a secure base). The infant tolerates brief departures by the caregiver and, most revealing, the infant is joyful when the caregiver returns in reunion situations after these brief separations.

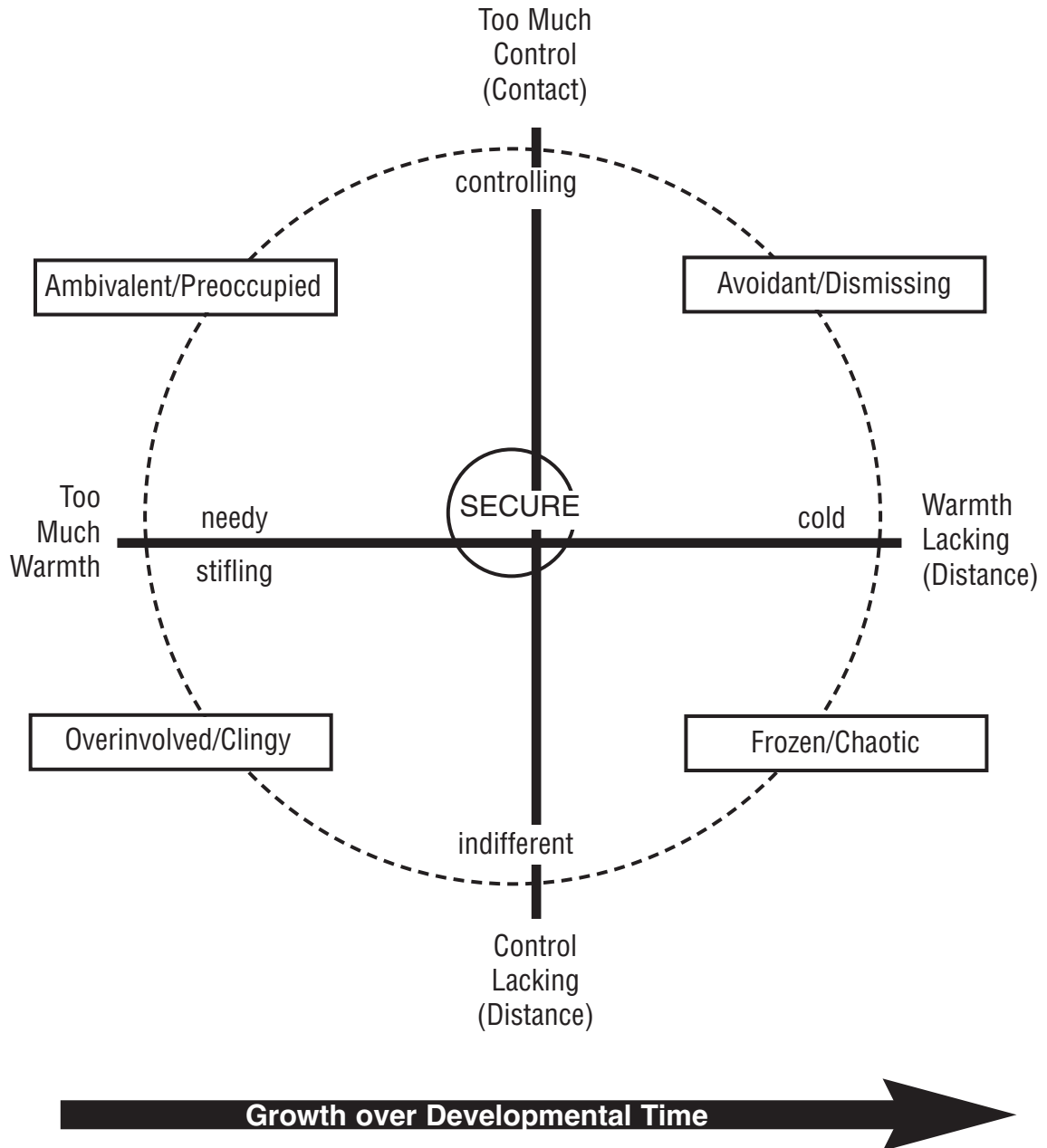
However, infants might not develop secure attachments when conditions are not optimal in caregiving. If the caregiving is not sensitive enough, insecure attachments to the caregiver develop. The infant, on reunion after a brief separation, is either ambivalent or avoidant, reacting with both

*Follow your job—
Go to PTA meetings.*

Figure 27-10

Relationships involve varying degrees of warmth and control. Good balance in both leads to a secure attachment to our partner. When there is too much warmth, such as in being needy and stifling, the attachment is not secure, but is clingy or preoccupied, depending on whether control is too much or lacking. As for when there is not enough warmth, the attachment style becomes avoidant or chaotic, depending on whether control is too much or lacking.

Romantic Recipes



.....
*Bring your kids to all the
best "clubs"—chess club,
science club, drama club,
basketball club,
art club, and so on.*
.....

.....
*Companies that become
green-friendly stay in the
black.*
.....

.....
*By being buffers for
children, families
protect all children.*
.....

approach and avoidance or only with avoidance, respectively. Another insecure type is the disorganized-disoriented-dazed style. Often, this type is found in cases of child abuse. These styles have been found to remain quite stable with age, as long as the caregiving environment continues in the same way.

With adolescence, the possibility of changing an insecure attachment type into a more secure type increases, because the teenager is able to think through and come to terms with the past. Thus, when pregnant women are asked to recall their relationships with their parents, they may have a secure recall even if they had not had a secure attachment history and, in such cases, they do not promote an insecure attachment in their children once the children are born.

Attachment theory has been applied to romantic relationships between adults. When both partners are secure in their feelings about their relationship, their relationship functions better and they are happier. However, three types of insecure adult attachment types have been described—the dismissing (avoidant), pre-occupied (ambivalent), and fearful (what I call “frozen” or chaotic) types.

In Figure 27-10, I plot the positions of these secure and insecure attachment types along the dimensions of control and warmth. These seem to be the fundamental dimensions along which relationships vary. How emotionally close is each partner in a couple? How controlling are they? The figure indicates that when there is too much of these aspects in our behavior, problems can develop in relationships. Warmth should be set at a high level, but it should not become stifling or needy and, certainly, it should not be absent. Similarly, control should be balanced, and the partners should be neither too controlling nor too indifferent. For both dimensions, the best balance among the positive and negative possibilities lies more on the positive side.

Thus, I have placed slightly away from the middle of the figure the center of the concentric circles on the figure. They have been displaced toward the warmth side and toward the control side of the figure, in order to indicate that optimal romance involves more positive warmth and more positive control.

In making this figure, my next task was to place the three insecure attachments types. Which ones are colder? Which ones are more controlling? It appears that the avoidant/dismissing type is more controlling and cold, the preoccu-

pied/ambivalent type is more warm and controlling, and the frozen/chaotic type is more indifferent and cold. After I had performed this analysis, logic dictated that one new insecure attachment type was needed to complete the figure. The figure needed a controlling-needy/stifling type. The label of “over involved-clingy” could be used for this type of insecure attachment.

As you read this, I am sure you are trying to categorize yourself into one of the attachment types. Most of you must be saying to yourself, “Oh no, I hope I’m the secure attachment type. What if I’m this insecure attachment type, or is it that one?” The bad news is each of us probably express all of the insecure attachment types! The good news is each of us probably is most of them only to limited degrees, as the positive, secure type predominates. In my perspective, we are mixtures of different feelings of security and different types of insecurity, and each of us is different this way, but with many of us leaning to the positive, secure kind. We bring these mixtures into our relationships as starting points. But recall that, in the development of attachment, the thinking adolescent becomes capable of reworking the attachment style that had developed with caregivers. Therefore, by the time the person is in a romantic relationship, this thinking and change capacity of pre-existing attachment style should be more evident. **One can always work through insecure attachment styles toward a more positive style.**

We hope to avoid being trapped by the insecure attachment types that may characterize us, and to gradually work together with our partners to bring out increasingly the secure type. Love is the best security-promoting device that one can find. One’s partner may be the key ingredient in changing the attachment type mix in a relationship. Of course, social support is important, too. Finally, when relationships flounder too much for whatever reason, professional help is worth considering.

Managers should realize that these attachment mixtures affect not only romantic relationships but, also, may impact work relationships. Workers may feel very insecure in their work environment, and this may be accentuated if their natural tendency gravitates toward one or more of the insecure attachment styles. **By promoting work security, managers can help establish valuable partnerships with their workers.**

*Families should create
more than children.*

Hugs are a family's give.

*A family that laughs
together lives together.*

To Change What You Say, Change What You Think And Feel.

*Let positive change walk with us,
jog in front, and never fall behind.*

*When we let positive change
guide us, negative change
loses its influence.*

*The opposite of positive change is
not negative change but suffering.*

*Positive changes keep us from
falling by the "no way" side.*

*To increase your mental
economy—save your change.*

*Change might be messy—
but it tidies up us.*

*It is not what the person has that
makes her, but what the person
makes of what she has.*

Transition is fusion, not fission.

*Helping someone to change
for the better, betters
our capacity for
helpful change.*

*Ending negative change starts
endless change.*

*Light your fire—stop giving
pessimism oxygen.*

*There are so many ways to
change—when change
becomes the way.*

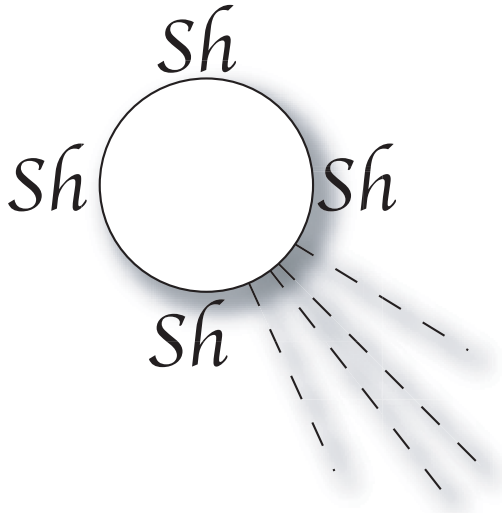
Not changing means not being.

*Change happens to grow
when we happen to want it.*



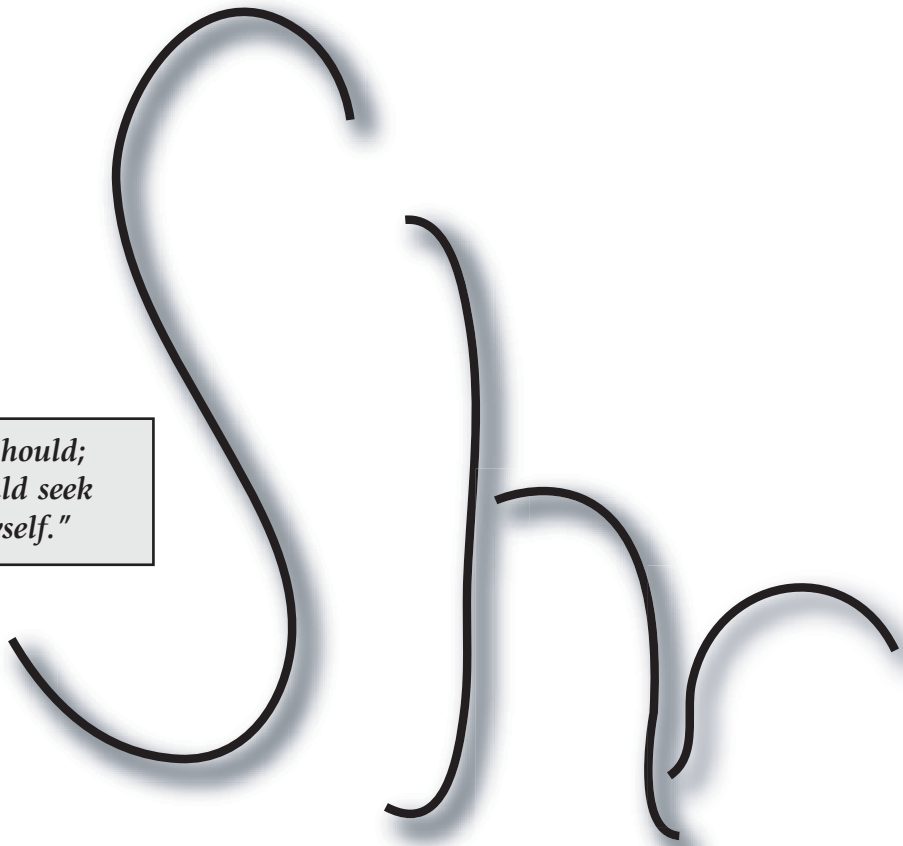
Chapter 28

Change



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"SH" is for Should;
as in, "I should seek
to better myself."*



Lifelong growing is evolution's crowning achievement.

Figure 28-1 asks some difficult questions about change. It lays responsibility for change on the individual or couple desirous of change. It asks that change proceed in small steps toward the establishment of new ways of being. It asks us to be aware of when change takes place and to be aware of what blocks it when it does not. Change should be reciprocal in couples, happening in both for both. When we expect the other to change but deny that we must reciprocate, in effect, we are blaming the other, sabotaging any chance of genuine change. When we block constructive change, we should explore what is blocking progress. **Change is in our hands. It is also in our minds and hearts.**

Figure 28-1

Change in a couple involves change in both partners. Each partner may have a good idea of what the other partner should change in her- or himself, but is each knowledgeable about what the other partner expects of her or him? Couples need to promote two-way, reciprocal exchange as the key change in their evolution.

Do You Have Any Change?

1. If you changed, what would be the first thing that you'd notice?
2. What would be the first small step that you'd have to take to change?
3. That is what you want to change in your partner; what has to be changed in yourself?
4. If you changed, would your partner notice? What does your partner want you to change?
5. How will life be different when you change? Which lifestyle will you prefer, the old one or the new one?
6. What would you say in a letter to your partner about maintaining the changes that you have made?

Growth is passed on from one generation to all that follow.

Figure 28-3 illustrates that old ways or bad habits are passed down from one generation to the next, in an intergenerational process, but that the child is not a direct copy of the parent. The particular client for whom I made this figure had felt little control over her life, but she did show a protective impulse. She had been raised by an alcoholic father and by an over-protective mother. She turned to drinking herself, and became quite passive, to the point of antagonizing her

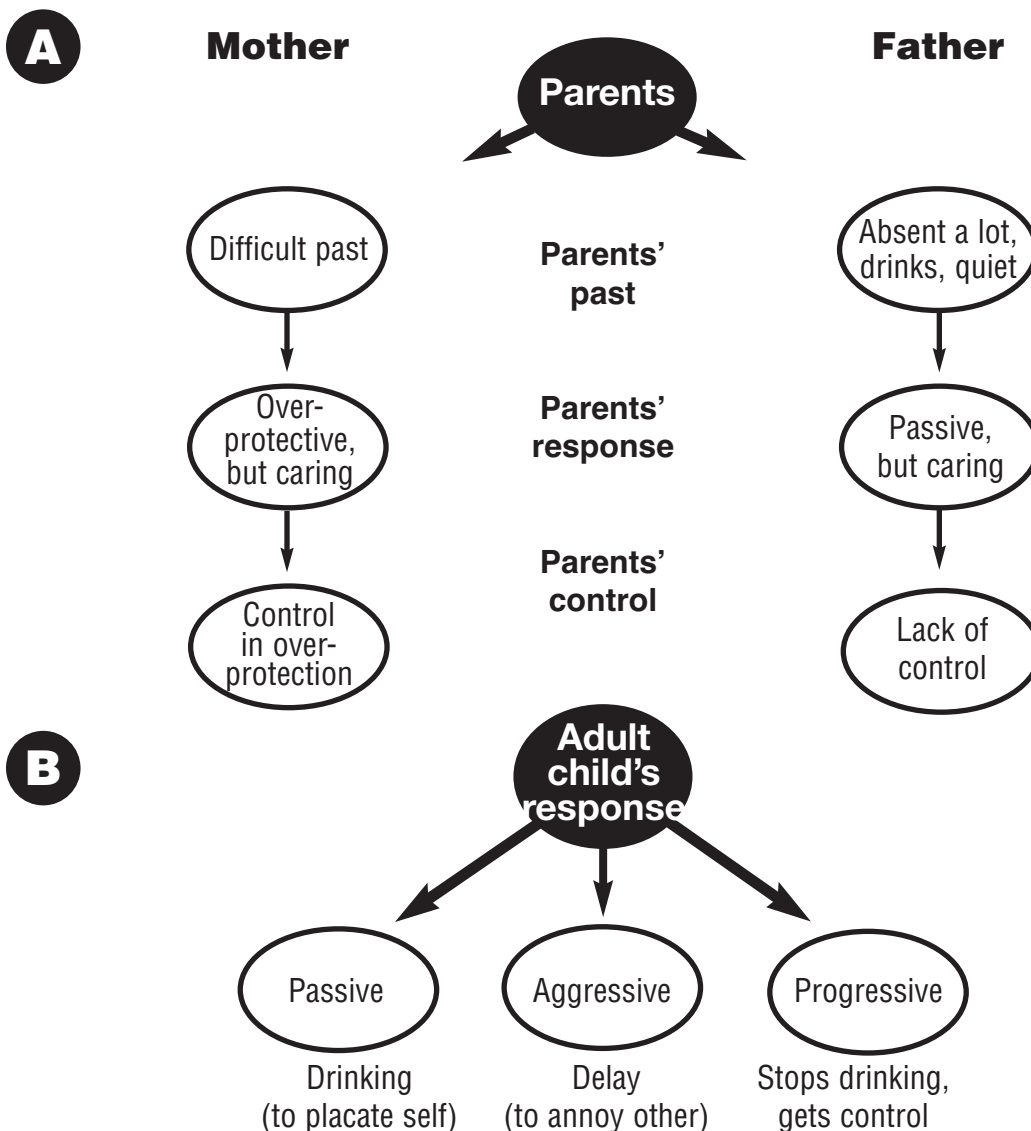
husband by delaying actions. Nevertheless, when she first attended psychotherapy, she informed me that, through her resilience, she was attempting to cut back on her drinking, and she was caring and giving in her own way. Thus, I built up the notion that she was gaining control and becoming her own person. I was facilitating the change journey on which she had already embarked. **People grow toward where they aim.**

When we do not want to change, life determines otherwise.

Figure 28-3

Intergenerational transmission refers to how patterns of parenting in one generation lead to effects in succeeding ones. However, parental patterns do not automatically repeat themselves, especially when there is awareness and desire for improvement. Children can demonstrate resilience and difference from the difficulties they encounter in their parents, and end up not reproducing undesired parental patterns when they become adults.

Change Spans Generations



Stopping to grow is a temporary glitch in the program.

Blocking change guarantees change.

Figure 28-4 illustrates two models of psychological growth — one that allows for change and one that does not. A client began doubting that change was possible. She wondered if she was simply always going to be the same. I used the figure to contrast the two models of growth, or psychological change, over the lifespan. I called the non-change model the fixed-fax model. I asked her whether she really believe that she could not change, whether she really believed that she was simply a reflection of her past. Further, I asked her whether she believed that when someone appears to have changed in her or his psychological life that it was just an illusion. In this fixed-faxed model, there is no hope for change. It is our destiny not to change. In our thinking, feeling, and actions, we simply reflect what we have experienced. In this sense, I

Figure 28-4

Faxes faithfully reproduce the image that is scanned. However, development does not necessarily faithfully reproduce the parental models that are experienced. Life is not necessarily fixed by the past, because the child or teen can become aware of the past and its effects and want better, transforming the future. Growth is constant, and we are constantly in transition.

Models of Growth

Fixed — Faxed	Transformation — Transition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem in past transmitted directly into present and future • Change is an illusion • Little to hope for, we are controlled by destiny; therefore, we risk becoming over- or under-controlled, not happy • We are separate sheets of paper on a fax pile, without control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems in past are challenges to growth in present • Change is constant; deep change can take place (e.g., think of butterflies in metamorphosis) • Everything to hope for. We control our destiny, because destiny lies in our expectations, feelings, and actions. As we learn to respect ourselves and others, direct control becomes much less of an issue • Control and happiness become one, both in each of us and together



asked the client if she really believed that we are separate sheets of paper on a fax pile, transmitting what has been transmitted to us and, thus, fixed and incapable of change.

Then, I asked if it was possible that the other model has more validity. That is, according to this model, people are capable of change, life is in constant transition, and problems in the past are not fixed but are challenges to change. Old ways can be transformed into new ways. Change is a constant process, and deep change can take place. I asked her to think of butterflies being transformed from one of their stages to the next. They grow from larva to beautiful creatures of color, due to the transformative program within themselves. Similarly, the only person who decides our destiny is ourselves, through our expectations and our minds, through our feelings and emotions, and through our actions and behaviors.

The process of change is an uneven process. In a sense, we are composed of many parts, and not all of our parts change simultaneously, while some parts are more difficult to change. The point is that there are always new ways, new languages, and new futures available to us. It is part of our fortune as members of the human species that we can write our destinies and learn to live with the older ways of our past, creating newer ways. Change is a process that continues over the lifespan. In some cases, it may take a full lifetime to realize that parts of us need change. Even then, it is not too late, because **the capacity to undergo psychological change is our birthright and lasts right through our lifespan**. As long as we are moving in that direction, we are being the best that we can hope for.

Figure 28-5 examines vertical change versus horizontal change. By vertical change, I mean change that is progressive, positive, integrative, and improves either our situation or ourselves. By horizontal change, I mean change that is in a lateral or sideways direction, at the same level, and change for change's sake. It does not necessarily mean an improvement in our situation or in ourselves. Even though we may be open to vertical change, learning from our past may undermine our vertical development and sabotage our genuine change. We may have learned to adapt the role of being our own change saboteurs.

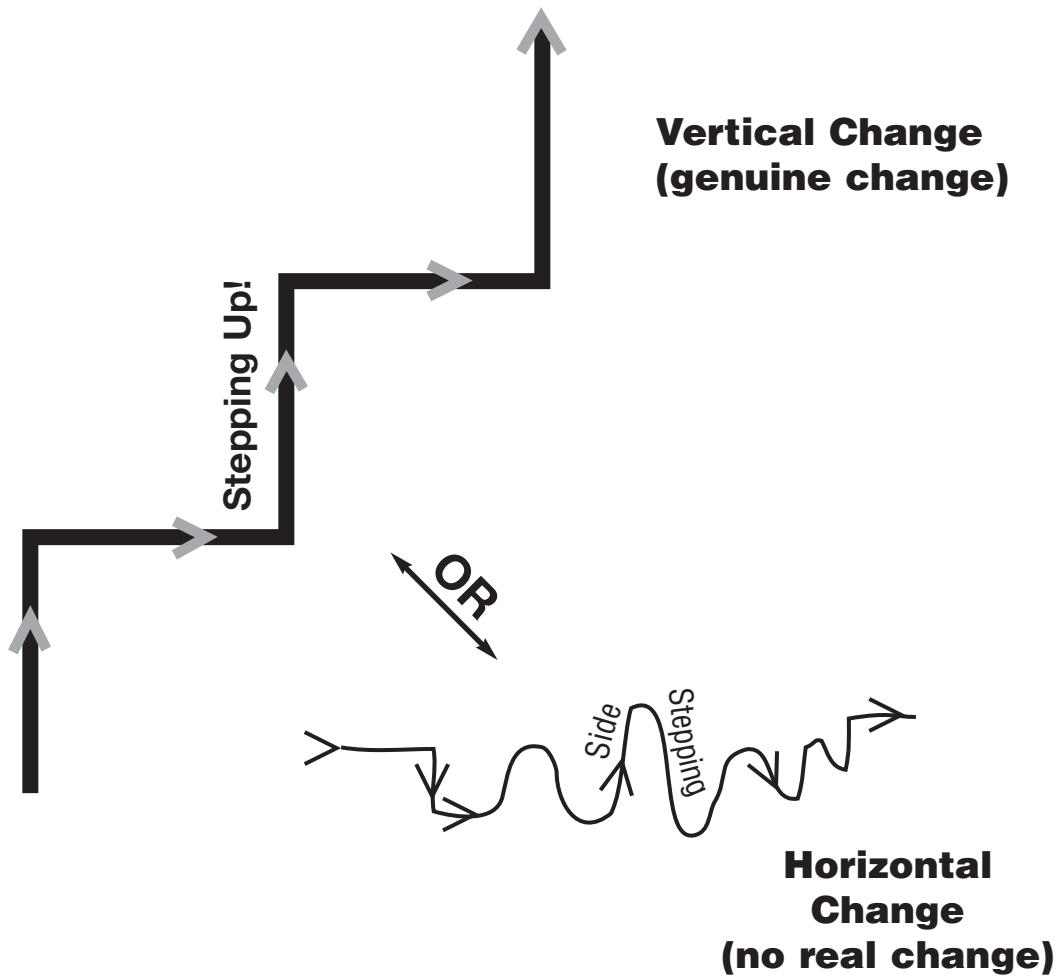
*Superficial change
does not fool growth.*

*Get up for change
that brings you up.*

Figure 28-5

Change can seem to be taking place, but it may only concern changes at the same level rather than moving to a new level. Learning how to step sideways does not help climbing stairs.

Stepping Up or Side Stepping



.....
*Growth is both letting
change happen and
getting the happenings
that change lets.*
.....

At the same time, through psychological growth mechanisms that we all possess, each of us has been launched on a mission. In this mission, our goal is to harmonize, as best we can, our psychological space so that we can be responsible for ourselves and for the others around us. Our choice is either to see everything from our own needs, asking, "What does it mean for me?", or to take responsibility for

ourselves and to decide to see more than our immediate needs. When we decide to go beyond ourselves, the openness created lets in myriad influences on us that facilitate change. We can make the choice to know that the past has had its influence, the future has its pull, and the present has its contexts, but that we can choose to perceive differently. We can see the past as a stepping stone to a deep desire for change in the present toward a future different than our previous understanding of the past had presented. We have to learn to gaze over the horizon. Vertical growth can be dizzying, but it allows us to see around space and time dimensions within which we are locked. In living continual change and growth, we reach the upper end of our human potential.

Change is facilitated by self-exploration, especially of the stresses of the past that have affected our psychological development, the context of the present and our attitude towards it, and the hopes for our future. Instead of hiding problems, or feeling dejected or angry because of them, we should deal with the problems, and feel that, in trying to resolve them, we can equilibrate the troubles of the past, smooth out the problems in the present, and realize a better future. Any difficulty may have quite unpleasant parts, but it unlocks its hold on us when we examine it honestly, work through its effects, and come to terms with it. **Change happens when we work toward it.**

Figure 28-8 tells us that the past has been built, the present is made in an instant, but that the future stretches into possibilities that we can help create. For example, if we realize how we have blamed everything on everybody, we can begin to stop blaming, see clearly, take charge of ourselves, and take charge of life. Freeing the past frees the present and future.

New ways are always calling us; they are always there. The present can be a turning point, a transition to a new future, or it can be a sticking point, a transmission of an old past. We waver on the edge of choice, on the precipice of growth, on the launch pad of change.

By seeking to change, by accepting constant transition, we can never know where we will end up, but we know that it will never end. Life will become created by ourselves and by others living with us, rather than by circumstances, by our

*Organize positive change—
or face negative change.*

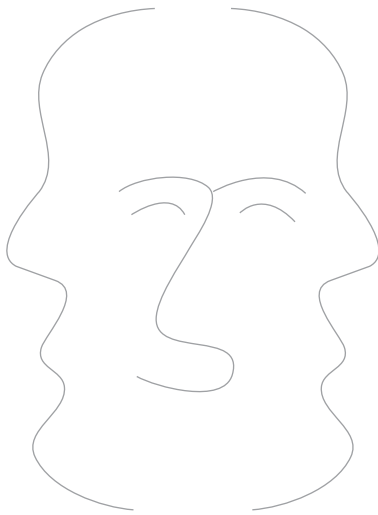
*By facing change,
we encourage stability.*

*Changing is less challenging
than challenging change.*

Figure 28-8

The future is the mirror image of the past in the sense that when we resolve issues stemming from the past, it becomes easier to be free to resolve issues that will arise in the future. When difficulties from the past are negotiated well, it is more likely that so will those in the present, and it is more likely that so will those in the future. The present becomes a place of transition and change when we look simultaneously backward and forward.

Transitioning



- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Yesterday | Understanding the Past |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blame others for everything• No problems; all laid on others• No self, and others notice• Disowned self• No room for new problems or responsibility |
| | Changing in the Present |
| Today | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• See the problem for what it is• Without blaming self or criticizing• Take responsibility• Begin to renew self• Accept the problem |
| | Creating a New Future |
| Tomorrow | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disown problem, solve it• Change responsibility• Find new responsibilities• Own self• New problems accepted |

.....
*Owning the future
is owning growth.*
.....

past, or by anything else. Change may be postponed, but it can never be permanently suppressed. **Change will happen, especially if we let it happen.**

.....
*Change is not a means to
an end but a
means and an end.*
.....

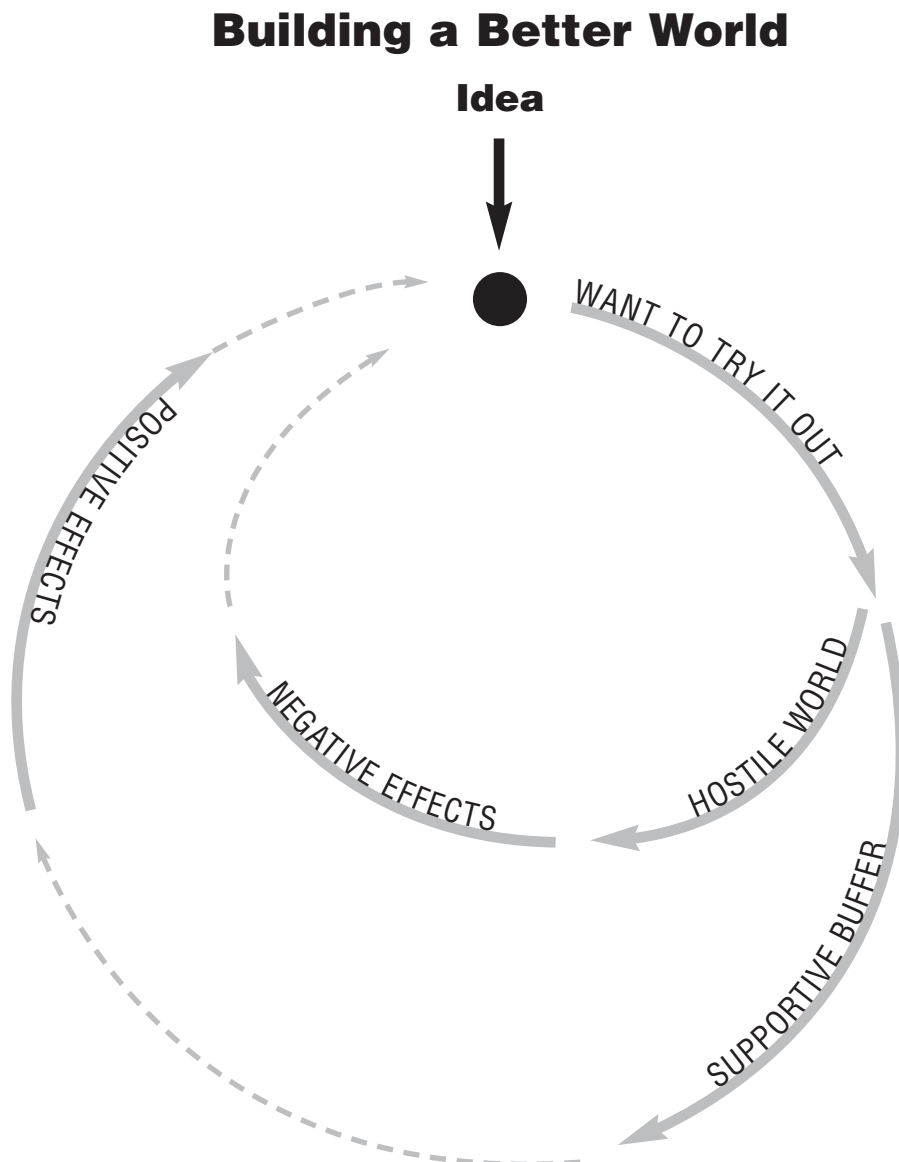
In **Figure 28-9**, we see that change does not take place in isolation, but is a product of participating in life. When we are buffered in a manner that the stresses of life about us are controlled, change frees itself. Buffering begins at conception, and should continue powerfully into childhood and beyond, starting with our parents and school.

The interactive process between the individual and the environment begins with the first moments of life after conception. It continues after birth and lasts throughout life.

The interaction that takes place in our growth is a triple one. We have our biology that contributes. Also, the environment is important and, although it may be bigger than us, we play an active role in the interaction with it. As with any interaction, our interaction with the environment is always reciprocal. We have energy, motivation, and direction in our behavior. From birth, and well before, we push into the

Figure 28-9

Change is facilitated by having people function as social supports to whom we can turn when there are problems. People can help buffer us from stress. This social buffering process begins at birth. When those around us have helped us keep open our minds, we become open to new ideas, novel solutions to problems, and so on.



.....
*Imagining change is a start
to outcomes that we could
not have imagined.*
.....

world with the will to touch, to palpate, and to sense and, then, to vibrate from the world's response. When we get an idea, we want to try it out. We are not born passive receptacles of whatever the environment brings, awaiting our fate. On the contrary, we are constantly exploring our environment and influencing it as it influences us.

Each time we do something, even if we have done it before, it is a new time. Interaction is always new and it always requires our full presence. Because we are constantly involved in interacting with and even influencing the external environment, change and growth are parts of our internal environments. The impulse to change and grow is born in the individual. We act on the world with an innate program that incorporates the fruits of our actions and turns it into new learning, ideas, emotions, and behavior.

However, the environment does not always cooperate in providing the optimal conditions for positive psychological growth, such as in cases of infant abuse. Most families avoid such extremes. But we all experience less than perfect environments, some more than others. **When buffers in our environment foster change, we may grow toward constant change.** When buffers that protect us are not adequate, we can learn from our suffering, get help, and still grow.

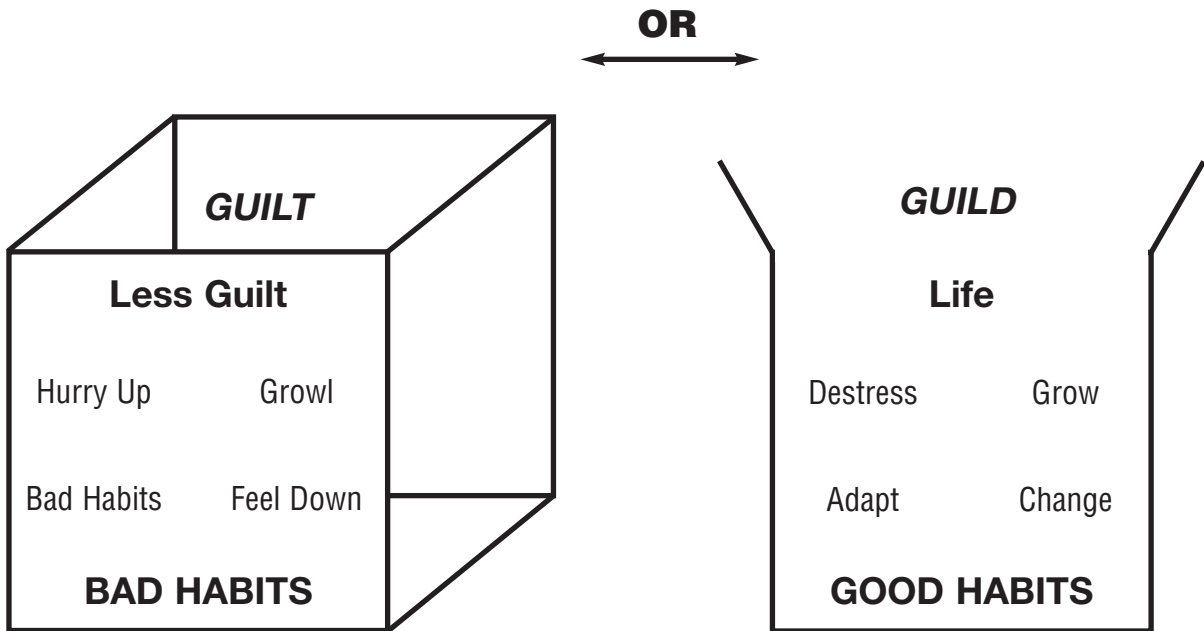
.....
*Don't worry—if you keep
your bad habits, you will
not have to confront success.*
.....

Figure 28-11. We can get captured by negative thoughts, feelings, and actions, which can dominate our lives. When this happens, we have a choice. We can live the negative or we can withdraw because of the negative. However, bad habits are invitations to change. We can avoid being boxed in and open new possibilities in destressing and adapting and, then, in changing and growing. Part of the solution is to realize that there is a problem. Another part of the solution is to want to change it. A third part is to learn how to change. **Opening to life requires the lifting of barriers.**

Figure 28-11

A sense of guilt should be a short term response that brings out a sense of wanting to correct any damages to the self and other that may lay as the source of guilt. To guild the edges of life, guide life to good.

Guilt as a Closed Box, Life as an Open One



*A smile is worth
a thousand flourishes.*

*When change is called
for—yell loud.*

*Turbulence is half way
to change.*

Each Life Can Become An Epic Journey.

Spirituality is solid sky to walk on.

*To clear the mind,
turn on the heart.*

Earth—we are all on it together.

*A high-minded spirit starts
with a high spiritual mind.*

*You can fool some of the people
some of the time, but you can
never fool yourself anytime.*

*Because you have looked out for
me, I will see you through.*

*Get a special take on things—
give from the heart.*

*Goodness comes from being
well bred—not from being
part of a breed.*

*To help someone in distress—
be great on their nerves.*

*Stars are smiles at your
possibilities.*

*The psalms are the great healers
They give solace and hope,
peace and rest*

*Each of us can read them
Each of us can learn
Each of us can write new
psalms in our own way*

*Peace is our potential
Its lack our burden
Its search our way*

Spirituality Lives Good Sayings.

*The highest heights
build from the lowest lows.*

*Humans live in a
universe that vibrates
with their energies.*

*Translate everything that you do
into the language of morality.*

*We create all things good and
some that are beautiful.*

*It is good that we were created in
the universe and that we can help
create good in the universe.*

*Practicing what we have
learned to help ourselves
is the best practice.*

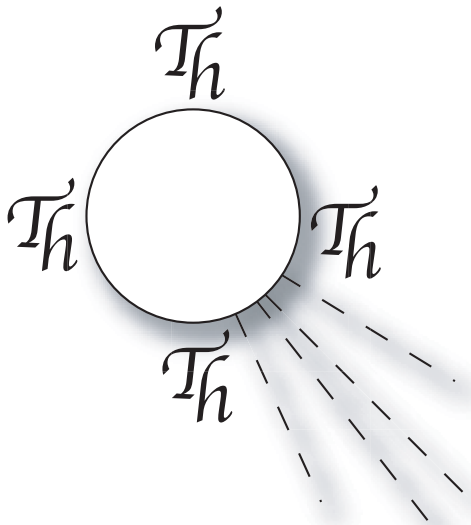
*Holy books that tell us
to hurt are wholly wrong.*

*Getting over it means
getting into it.*

*Being cannot be turned on just like
that—or turned off once it starts.*

Chapter 29

Inspiration



EXCERPTS
Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com

*"TH" is for Thinking,
as in
"Thinking of Others."*

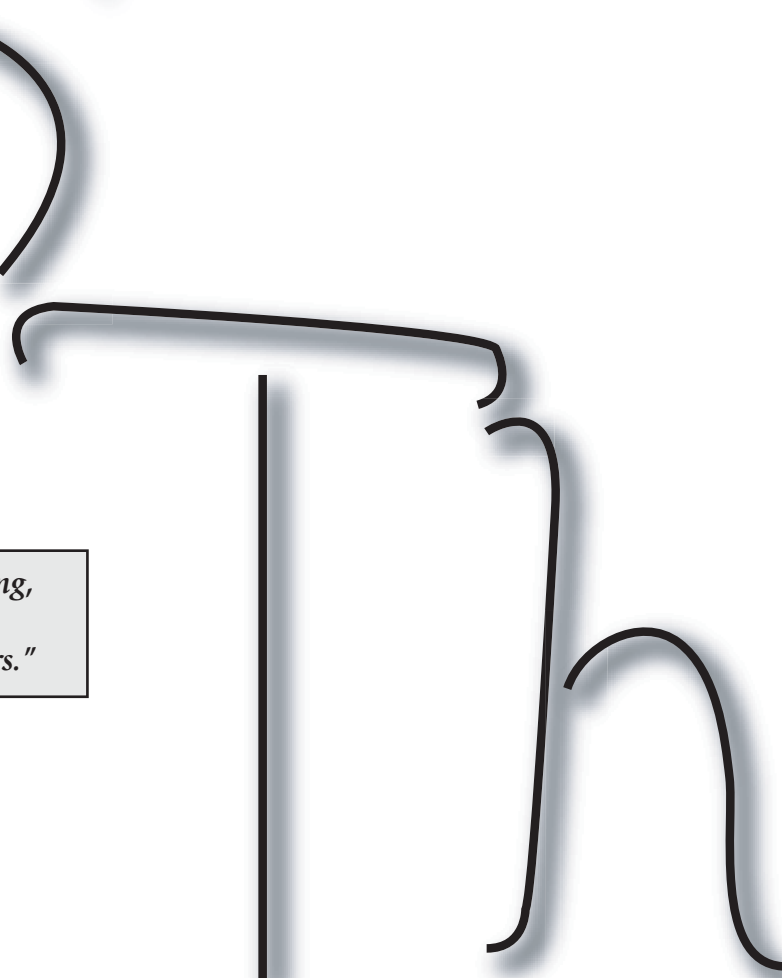


Figure 29-1 shows that by developing higher-order values, such as faith, love, and hope, it becomes easier to marshal the courage and energy needed to deal with stress. When our values include spirituality, we gravitate more readily beyond stress.

Sometimes life seems so bewildering. It moves so quickly in all directions without foundation, without hope. It seems that there is no solution, that there is no help. It seems that there is only chaos and confrontation, confusion and turmoil, and despair and final loss. We grope and search, grasping at every straw that the winds of coincidence blow by us. However, the stresses continue unabated, and are overpowering. In the end, we give up, exhausted, and we are spent, lying motionless, tearing, and torn.

Often, in such moments, we turn to spirituality. We pray and we feel the power of union. Where before we had felt emptiness with no answer, now we find simplicity with a unique answer. We walk through the valleys of all our deaths, both physical and psychological, to find the peaks of all our

Figure 29-1

Spirituality and children are our most important expressions.

Trilogy



lives, both for ourselves and for our loved ones. The soul is soothed. The good grows. Connection happens.

It is hard to keep the moment of high spirituality and the inspiration it offers. However, once we have arrived at this level, we can never stop trying to get there again. **Once the heart feels, the eye sees, the mind means, the hand reaches, and the soul settles, we seek this plateau over and over.**

*Religion builds on
spirituality—spirituality
can build without religion.*



.....
Wisdom is to widen.
.....

Figure 29-7. In the following figure, I offer ten positive ways of leading enriched lives, using a play on words based on the Ten Commandments. Hopefully, we lead our lives from perspectives such as these.

Figure 29-7

The Ten Commandments tell us mostly what not to do. These ten commandments tell us mostly what to be.

The Ten Commandments

1. We shall be sensitive, empathic, communicative, and supportive. We shall feel, sing, celebrate, pray, mourn, and share. We shall love. We shall change and grow.
2. We shall nourish and nurture, cushion and cradle, buttress and buffer, and strengthen and steel.
3. We shall help, give, and sacrifice. We shall accept the same in order to receive the same. We shall find inner peace in making peace.
4. We shall collect heart and mind together, foster caring, cultivate wisdom, sow enthusiasm, generate creativity, cherish simplicity, engender emergence, and facilitate growth in others.
5. We shall see over horizons, reach around barriers, hope beyond the future, and surpass the constraints of time, place, and person. We shall bring optimism and effort into everything that we do.
6. We shall accept the past as a lesson learned, live the present as moral learning, and move into the future in spiritual learning.
7. We shall be honest, fashion liberty, promote dignity, act equally, practice fairness, show respect, engage in fraternity, defend morality, protect security, bring vigil to and educate against hate, pursue justice, and live harmony. We shall tolerate multiplicity in peoples and in truths.
8. We shall be kind to ourselves and others, forgive ourselves and others, and trust ourselves and others.
9. We shall be responsible for all who need responsibility, for all who depend, for all without well being, for all who suffer, for all who are in pain, for all who have no anchor, for all who want hope, for all who feel hopeless, and for all things animate and inanimate. We shall do this over and over, again and again, resting to regain strength in order to restart, in repeated acts of responsibility. This is our re-responsibility to ourselves, to others, to community, and to the planet.
10. We shall commend others who live this lifestyle, and help others to live it. We shall be the best that we can be, help others be the same, and participate fully in life, for reasons beyond our immediate needs, and for reasons that stretch into the universe.

Figure 29-9 expresses basic ideas about children, parenting, and the cycles of life. The ultimate spirituality lies in mutuality. Children are resilient when they are surrounded with support. They grow strong and sensitive, and giving and generative. Conversely, children are vulnerable without support. Children are born into our responsibility. The future has lent us its children to nurture. Children will always appreciate when given their future. The future will always appreciate when given back its children well-nurtured.

Openly guide for
the perplexed.

We need to be good observers of life, to see deeper essences. Systems have patterns across their parts that may be hard to discern. We need to look beyond the surface to hidden messages. For every truth, there is an opening to a wider truth. In this regard, in one way or another, every act is not only for us but, also, for the future generation.

Figure 29-9

We are conceived through parental love acts and keep growing through acts of parental love.

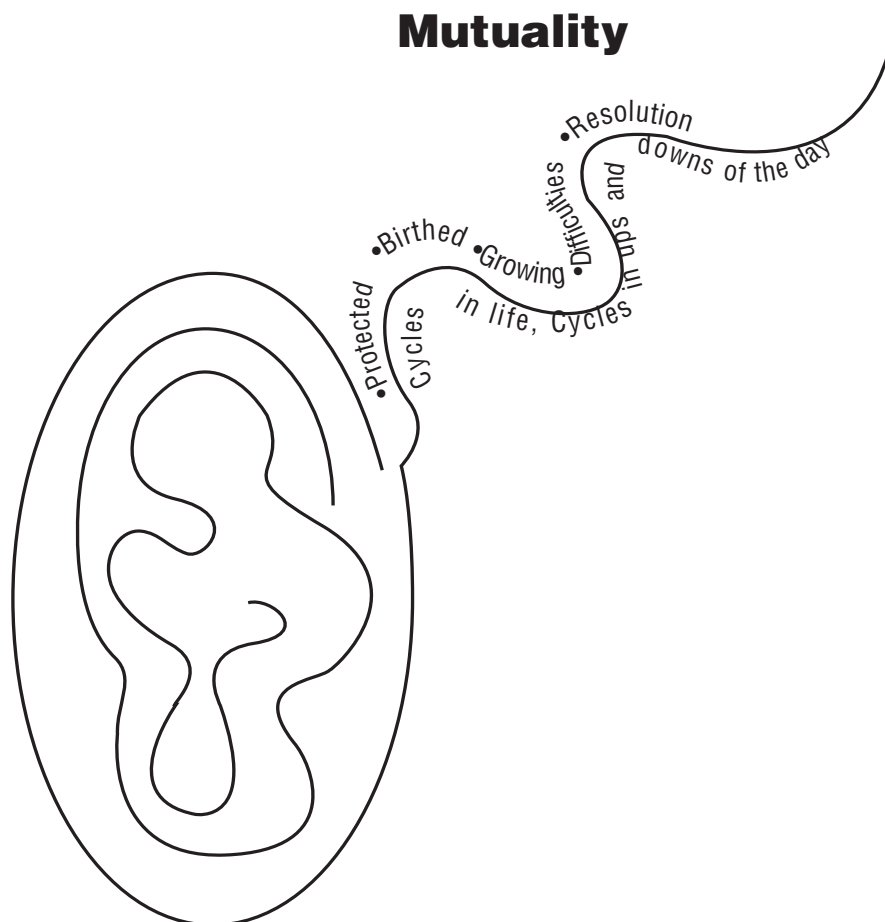


Figure 29-10 captures fundamental human values that seem to impregnate part of many basic philosophies, religions, and moral codes. It is based on Heidegger’s concept of “Dasein,” and indicates that the components of higher human conduct include *a)* being, or absolute presence, *b)* becoming, or continual growth, and *c)* world, or universal concern and giving.

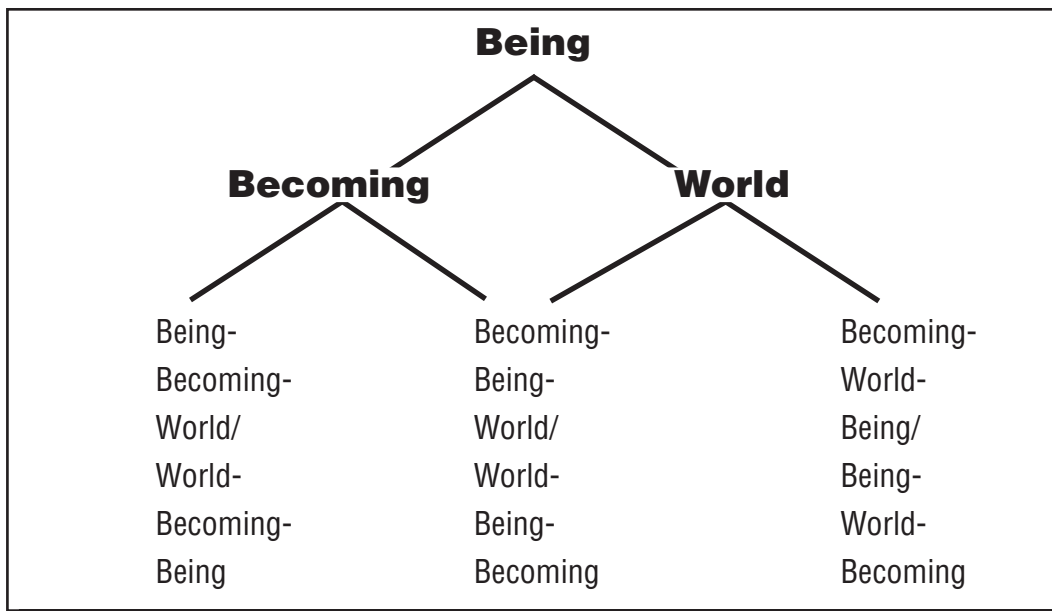
As infants, we start off needy, incapable of giving, except indirectly through the joy that our smiles and play bring to others. We develop as preschoolers to be able to understand the emotions of others and begin to act to help them. As school-age children, we become better at taking the perspective of another and engaging in altruistic acts, helping even if we have to give up something. As teenagers, we become conscious of the extent of individual suffering and the plight of whole peoples and even the planet. Perhaps we act in idealistic ways to help out or to protest. As adults, we take our family under our wings and, when we can, we also give time to the community.

.....
If we take everything that we have learned to feel, we will start a feeling to learn.

Figure 29-10

Philosophers query the meaning of life. They try to capture it in profound concepts and elegant sentences. We query the meaning of life, as well. The words that come to mind for me are “being,” “becoming,” and “world.” By being present in all aspects of the world, we constantly grow and become better, both for ourselves and for the world.

Being Becoming World



Erik Erikson referred to this giving tendency of adults as “generativity.” As we mature, the scope of our helping behavior deepens if we have the psychological space and time. Our sense of spirituality and our concern for universal values take on a more profound, more personal dimension. Throughout the life course, our sense of responsibility and helping expands. **As we grow, we become more “being,” more “becoming,” and more “world.”** If we have less time for giving because of our responsibilities to work or other obligations, as long as we are on the appropriate developmental path, we are never any less being, any less becoming, or any less world. Values, morality, spirituality, responsibility, altruism, and helping know no time frame. They are the noblest of human behaviors and, when their time is right, they will blossom in us like the flowers of spring, lively and beautifully, bursting with passion.

*Having faith in fate
means actively helping
oneself and others.*



Have A Telling Experience—Help A Soul In Need.

*Perseverance stops severence.
Patience starts reverence.*

Helping is good for us—and is us.

*Be fair to your children—
praise them all.*

*We do not know what is out
there—but we do know that we
have to be good in here.*

*Give children their say so—
that they can give to their children.*

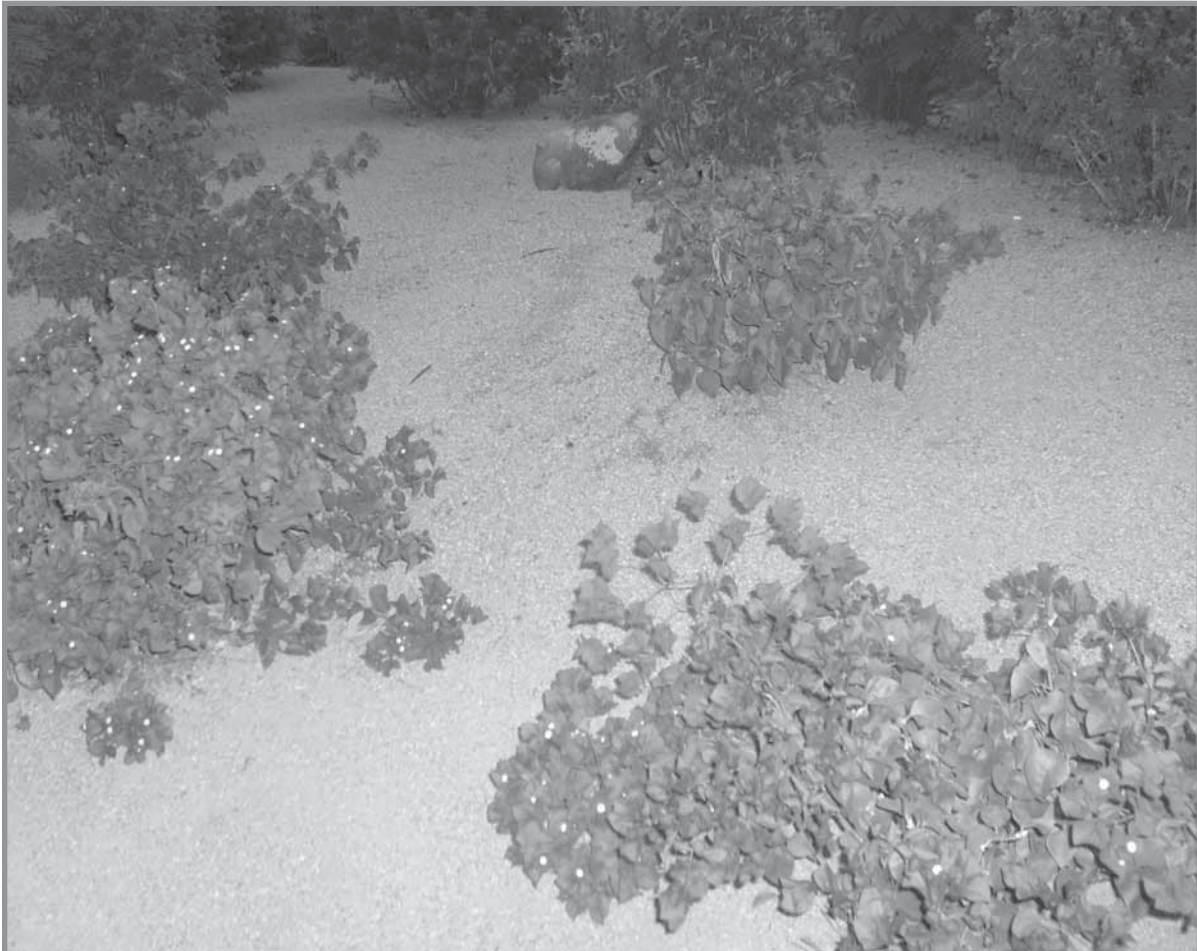
*Children learn what the world
teaches, models, and instructs—
but, also, what the world lets
them learn by stimulating their
curiosity, motivation, and
capacity to learn on their own.*

Enablement is ennobling.

*We do not know what the future
holds, but we do know that we
hold it in our hands.*

*May peace be with you—and
what you do toward peace.*

*They say that the world was
created in seven days. They say
that it can be destroyed in one.*

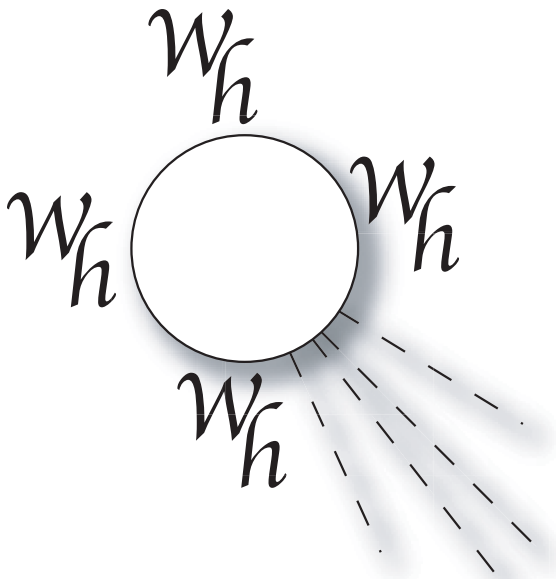


Chapter 30

Working Your Behavior

EXCERPTS

Full chapter available at
rejoiningjoy.com



*'WH' is for
"Why, What, When, Which,
Who, and 'How' did the
'How' get in there."*



.....
*To maximize personal
growth, maximize
community involvement.*
.....

.....
If we do good, we be good.
.....

This book is comprised of exercises for the reader to complete. For each of 30 chapters, I have constructed six exercises. Each exercise asks the reader to list up to five items that respond to the exercise. To complete any one exercise, the reader might find that listing one to a few items of the five that are possible to list is sufficient. Some of the exercises request lists of positive core attributes, others request the listing of stresses or negative psychological characteristics that we might have, and yet others ask for ways of resolving or dealing with them. Many of the exercises ask readers to relate or remind themselves of specific techniques, procedures, or ideas learned in the particular chapter that corresponds to the exercises.

One way of learning and applying the meanings and messages of the book series is by reading attentively its contents and using them in responding to the exercises. Another way is to reflect on the particular wording of the exercises as one prepares to fill in the brief lists related to them. In general, in one way or another, each of the exercises emphasizes our core positive psychological characteristics, attributes, or strengths and how we can build them. By thinking about and putting in writing lists of our core positive psychological characteristics, attributes, or strengths and how we can improve them, it is more likely that we will begin the process of accomplishing this objective. The goal of the exercises in the workbook is to help the reader put into practice and function toward achieving the book series's suggested positive paths and goals. **When life becomes knowing, life becomes growing.**

Each exercise in the workbook includes ample space to list the up to five items requested in each exercise. However, the reader should consider leaving blank the spaces provided for responses to the exercises. By keeping a notebook of responses to the exercises in the workbook and avoiding to write directly in the spaces provided, the reader will always have a clean copy of the exercises for future consideration. In this manner, the reader will be able to chart any changes in time in the responses given to the exercises. Indeed, by using a notebook, one will be able to fill in the responses to the exercises every few years so that a chart of one's self-help progress can be made.

Readers may find the exercise workbook most informative and inspiring, and want to share the book with friends

and family. Therefore, by creating a separate notebook for oneself, the workbook remains available for others to use. It may be interesting for two people to share their responses, such as two partners in a couple, or two good friends. Those who share their notebook responses with other people may find the responses filled in both informative and valuable.

Both the book series and the workbook exercises from which they are derived have been formulated in simple language, and introductory material is provided for each exercise in the workbook. Therefore, after reading and absorbing the introductions to the exercises, or after consulting the full book series on *Rejoining Joy*, the reader may not even want to fill in by writing the responses to the exercises. Contemplation of the exercises may be sufficient to accomplish their goals of facilitating psychological self-help in readers.

Note that some of the workbook exercises seem to overlap in the items requested. However, sometimes the exercises are similar because one set of items in an exercise ask the reader to deal with a particular area in their psychology in a more general way and another set may require more specific responses. Or, one exercise may deal with one aspect of an area and another may deal with another. Or, sometimes my strategy in writing similar exercises was to have the reader contemplate the same or similar issues in different ways. Finally, some overlap helps reinforce the themes behind the exercises.

These workbook exercises constitute the seventh book in the psychological self-help book series on *Rejoining Joy*. The exercises are meant to both summarize the major themes in the book series and have readers integrate into their psychology these major themes through the responses that they offer in response to the exercises.

Each reader will answer these workbook exercises in her or his unique way. There is no correct answer for any one exercise. Each reader will respond differently and each answer will be valued for what it is, that is, as a statement of where one stands in the present and how one expects to change for the positive psychologically in the future.

In terms of my approach to writing the workbook as the final book in the self-help book series, I hoped that it would lead to a dialogue with the reader. Through its dialogue, the workbook is meant to inspire in readers growth pathways and constructive psychological change..

*Children can be only
as great as the
educational system that
we build for them.*

*Frontiers may defy us
or define us.*

Your Good Habits

Part of the way that we improve ourselves is by developing new and better habits or good habits. For example, we may start exercising physically, reading more, or eating healthier foods. Or, we may vow to speak more calmly to our families, our friends, or our co-workers.

In this exercise, you will outline the best of your good habits and indicate how you can make them move integrated in your inner positive psychological core.

List up to five major good habits that you have expressed even if just a bit and only for a while.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

List up to five good habits that you would like to develop, moving them into your inner positive psychological core.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

The Best of Rejoining Joy and Destressing

Excerpts

VOLUME V — Art & Nature, Introduction

The fifth volume in *Rejoining Joy* presents artwork. The first four volumes have dealt with how to deal with stress, how to develop more positive emotions, how to control negative ones, and how to apply the lessons learned to basic life predicaments in our daily lives, such as communication with a partner, being with our children and teenagers, and functioning at work.

You will find the art is generally quite

simple, consisting of line diagrams. Lines take meaning in context, and the simplest of lines can reveal love, hope, spirituality, and future. The artwork is meant to inspire both relaxation and reflection. The themes explored in the art mostly concern nature and people. This is a good combination, because both communication amongst ourselves and communion with nature are the best healers, and as a society we have an obligation to heal nature.

Chapter 31

Nature

The art in chapter 31 is about nature. Nature is the best artist. It has designed life forms, panoramic horizons, and burgeoning energies that are exquisitely beautiful.

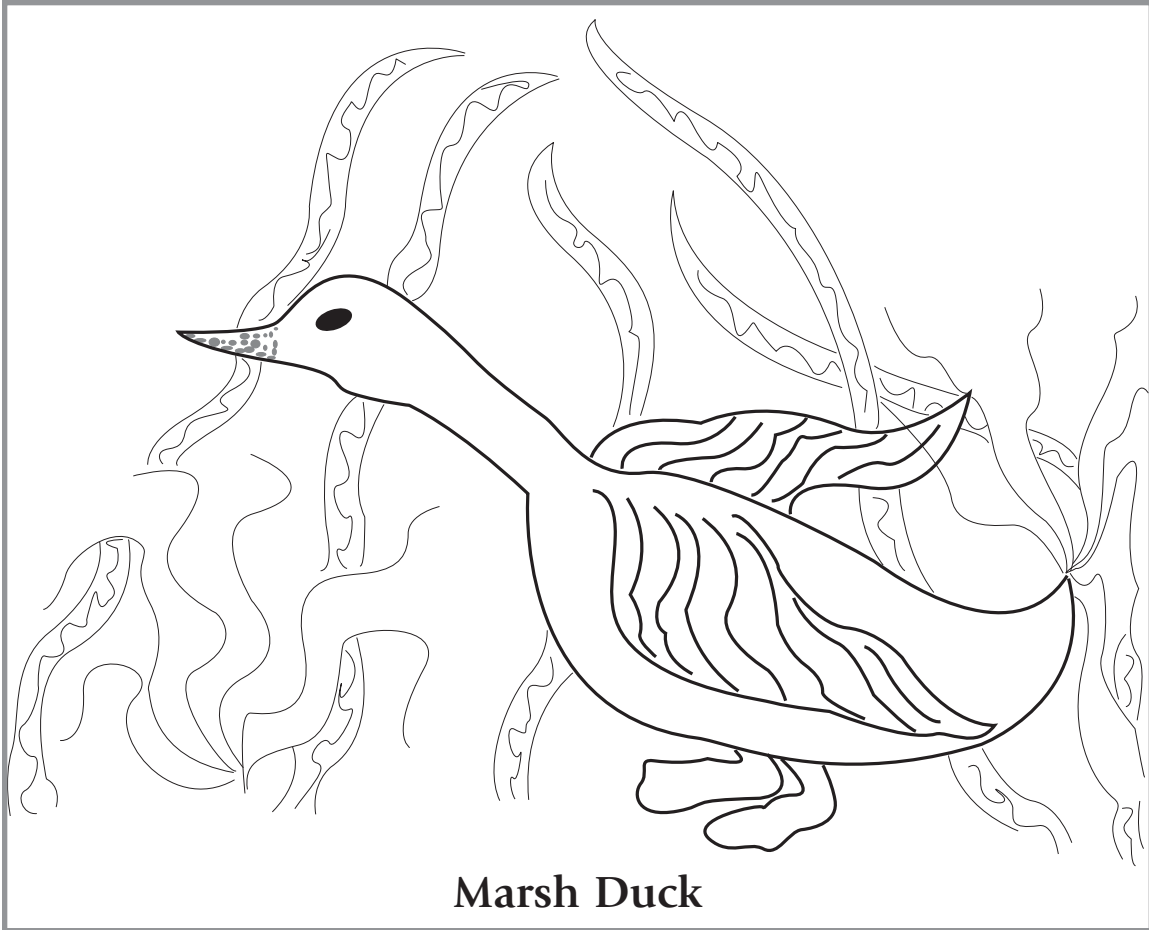


Lines are to drawings as art is to life.



Flamenco Flamingo

.....
Flamingos march in unison, a harmony of individuals married to the security of the group. They gain confidence in the other, swooping over land and lake. They dance in different horizons, to rhythms inherited over generations. We also flow in shared patterns but, in addition, we find our unique song. **There are melodies that each of us can have that are clearly our own.** We can give ourselves a special voice in what we share with ourselves and with others.
.....



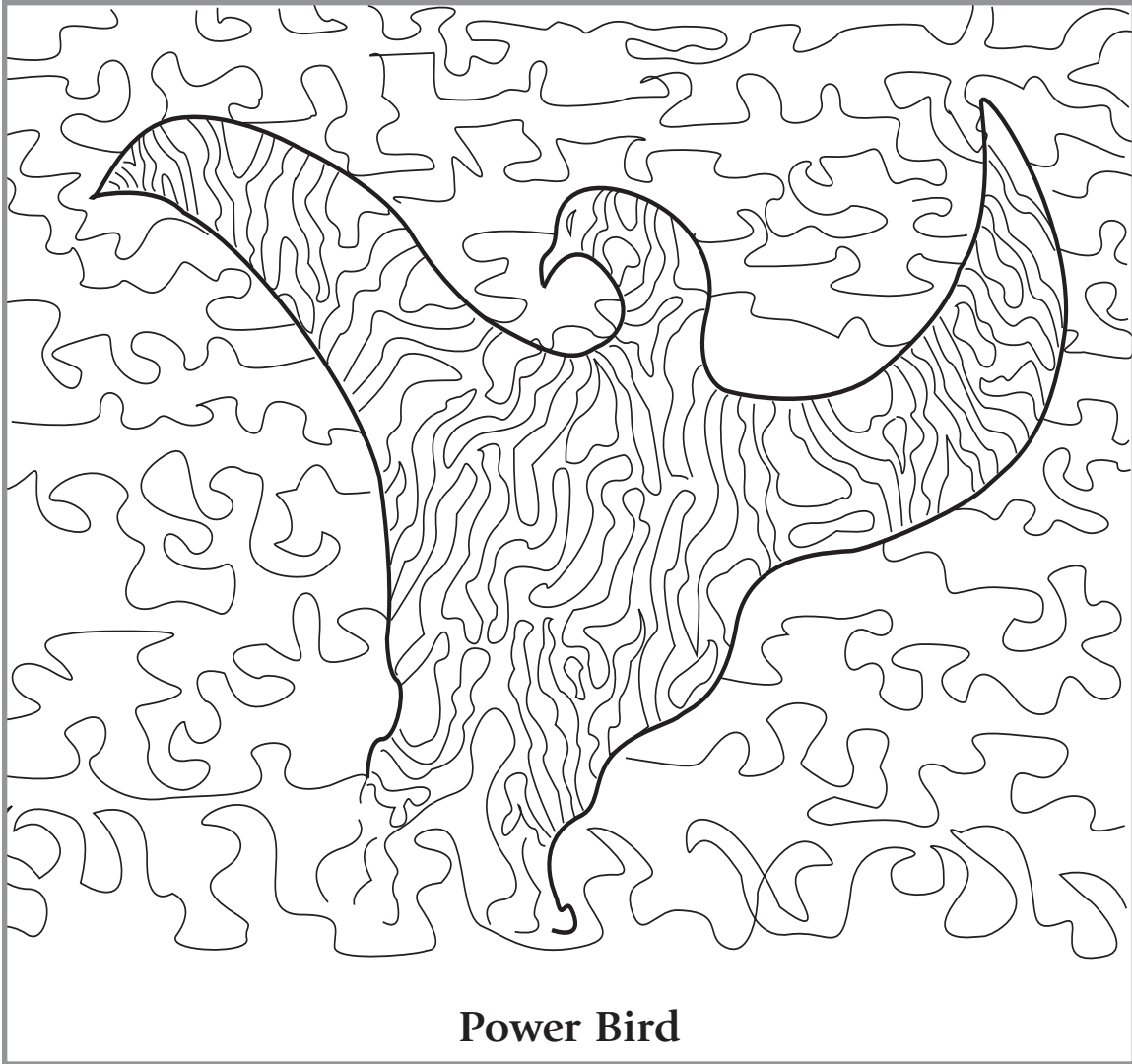
Marsh Duck

.....
The wetlands are not as attractive to us as are sunlit beaches by the ocean or by shimmering grand lakes. However, wetlands teem with life, and are havens for the vulnerable. Ducklings peer from entwined grasses calling for parental warmth. As with ducklings, human babies reach out for nurturing support from caring parents or other adults. Our caregiving responses vary from the loving and sensitive to the too busy or the negligent and abusive. **Our children wait for us to be the wetland havens in which their growth can flourish.**
.....



Mating Phoenix

Birds coddle their young. They follow programmes of caring that their genes prescribe. At the same time, they learn rapidly within the context in which the programmes unfold. Behavior is the product of the constant interaction between effects of genes and effects of the environment. Although development may seem like only the product of nature, it always involves nurture, as well. Moreover, when it appears that development is only the product of nurture, of course, one will always find the influence of nature. This being said, in the end, the organism is the seat of development, with nature and nurture contributing to growth but not dictating it. The chick in the egg does the growing. The chick has its say right from the beginning, screeching the joy of its birth. The chick's activity influences the parents throughout its development. Every second, the chick is reborn as its own "person" (or "bird"). It arises on its own terms from the state it had been. This growth takes place only partly due to the influence of genes and environment. The human developmental process is much the same. **We do the growing—our genes and our environment do the sowing.**

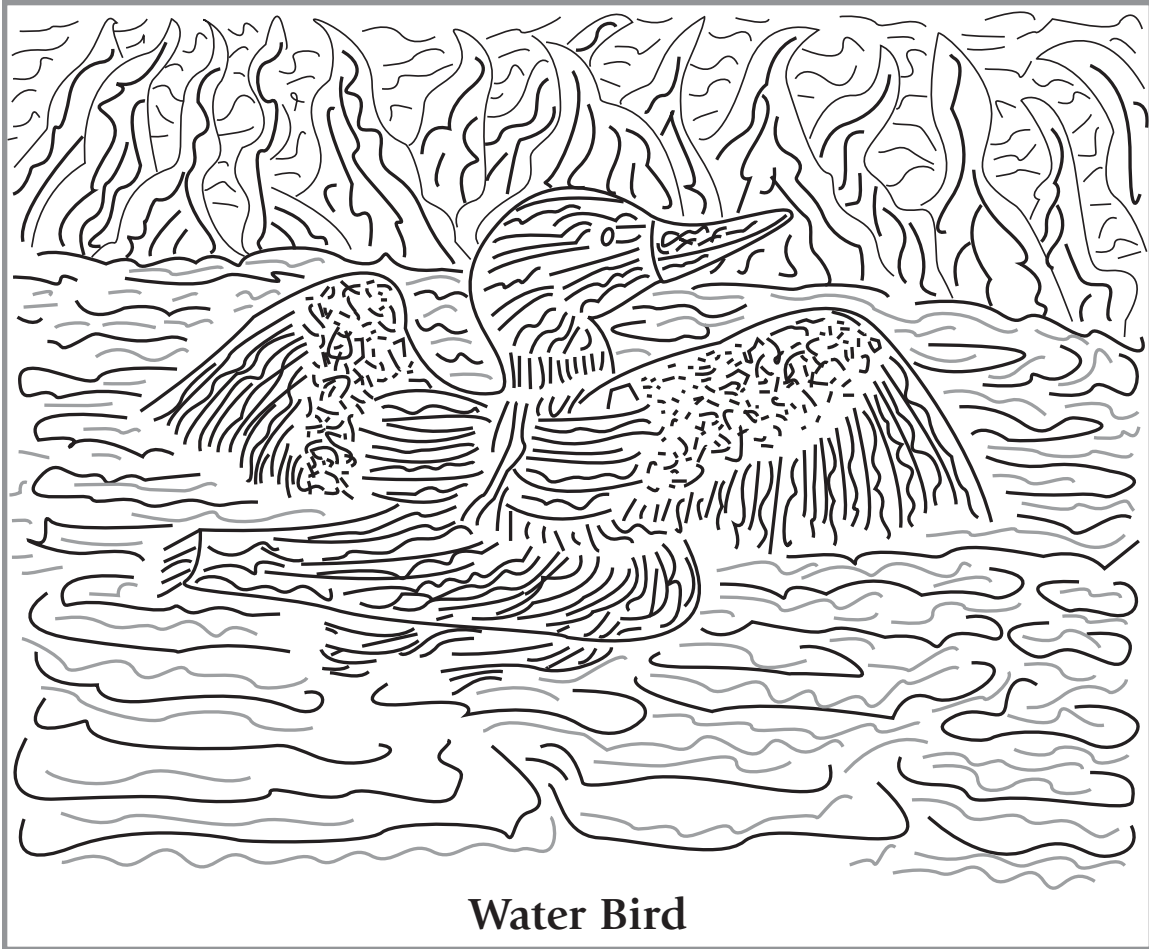


Power Bird

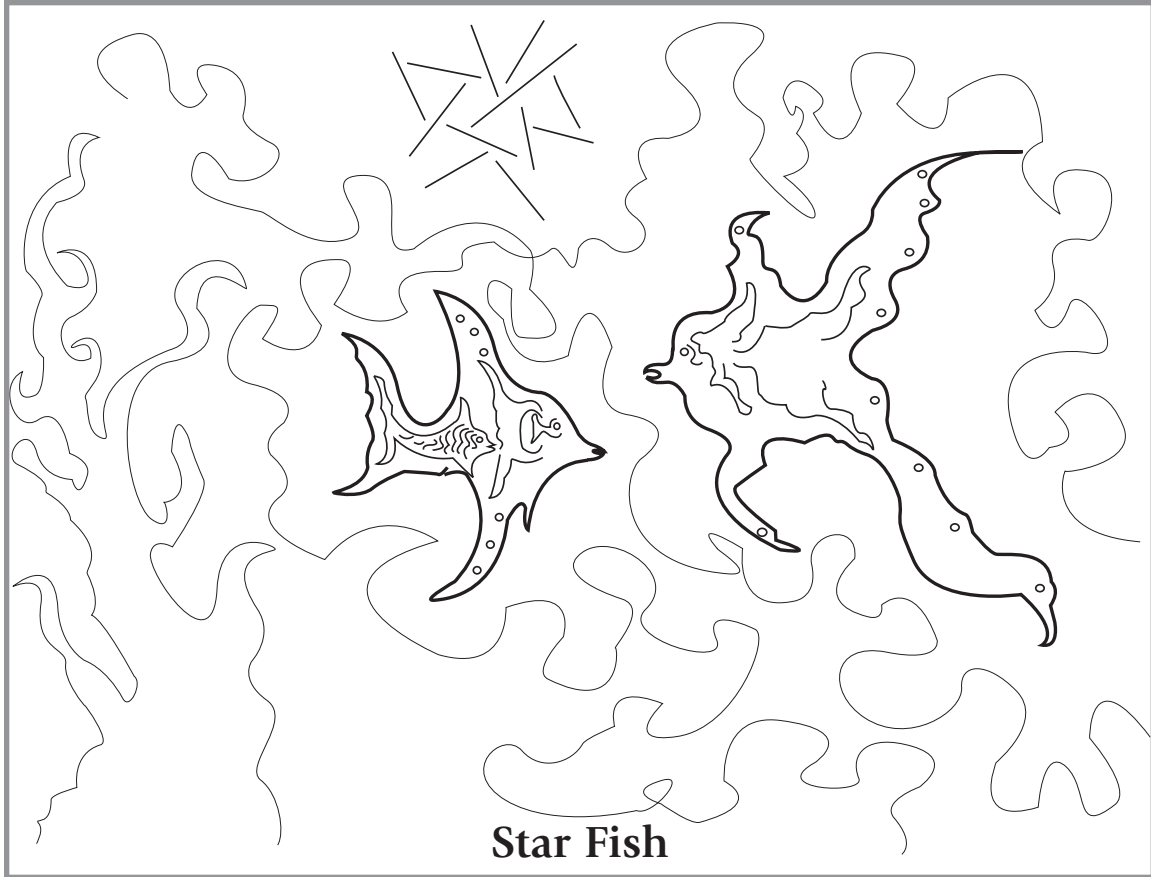
.....

Each of us stands out by our particular strengths and positive characteristics. We may not yet realize what they are, but hidden in our possibilities are potentials not yet imagined. Life is the not yet done. The moment that we decide to confront each day with our best, life becomes being. Power is not what we project in our bearing, but what we accomplish and the way that we accomplish it when duty calls. Keep in mind that, in this regard, duty never stops calling. To deal with our duties well, we should resolve to struggle through their travails, even though we are ebbing in energy and fatigue. In this manner, we will be growing all the while. Growth happens as we engage with commitment in our responsibilities, as we meet life's frustrations with aplomb, and as we lend a steadying hand to those who need it. **Being is true power.**

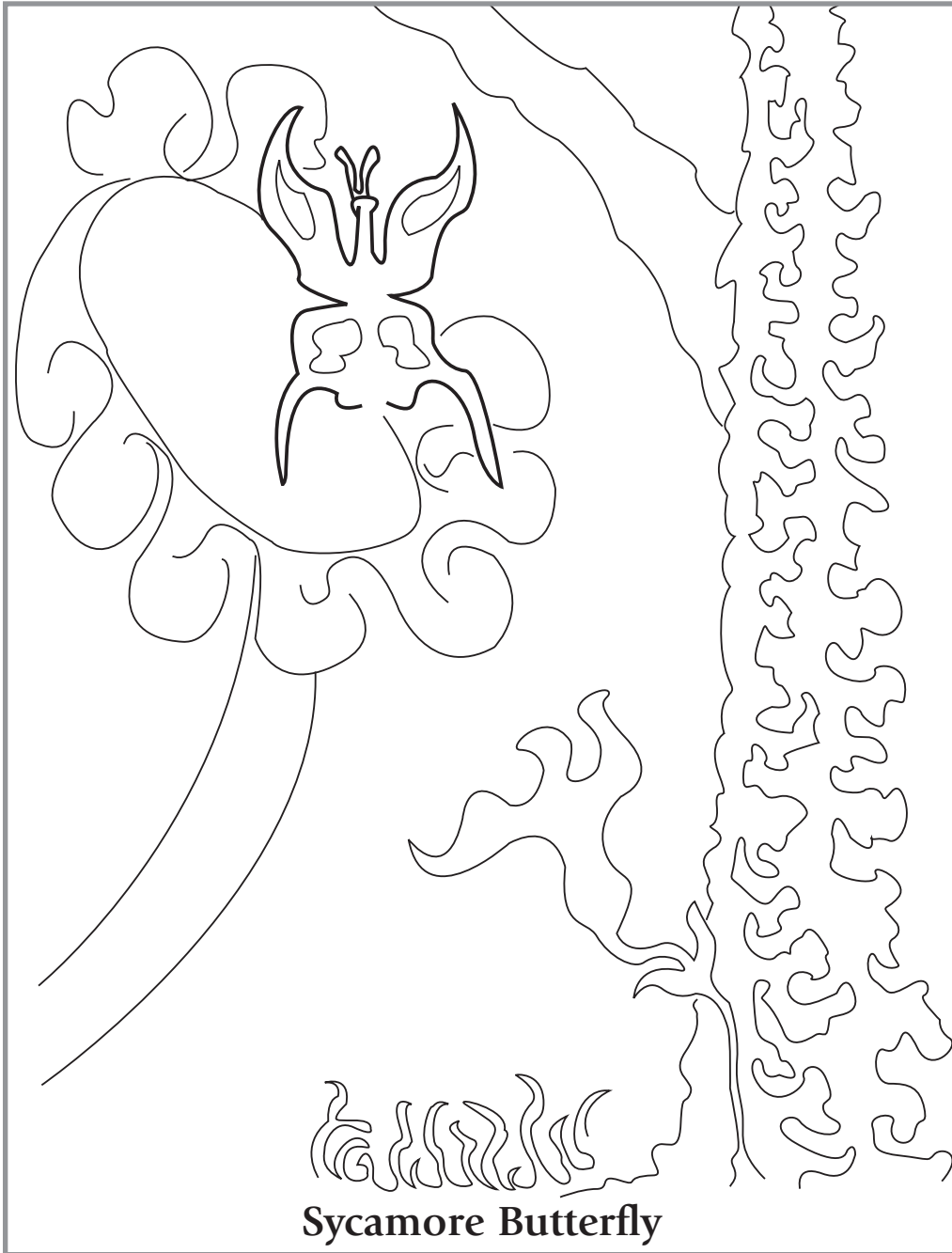
.....



Birds are fascinating because they accomplish their life tasks with so much grace. Who has not been impressed by the majesty of their flight, the enchanting nature of their song, and the beauty of their form? They live in contexts very different than our own, without the benefit of our technology. Relying on what they have been given and their deep will, birds navigate the air, water, and land with equal skill. They remain true to themselves in the worst times, and the worst times bring out their best. For example, they search relentlessly for food, to keep their developing eggs healthy. They shepherd their young through the dangers of the first days. **Birds participate in nature and are enthralled by it. They pass through the stages of their life cycle with nobility in their effort. They succeed within the constraints that nature has given them. Would we do the same.**

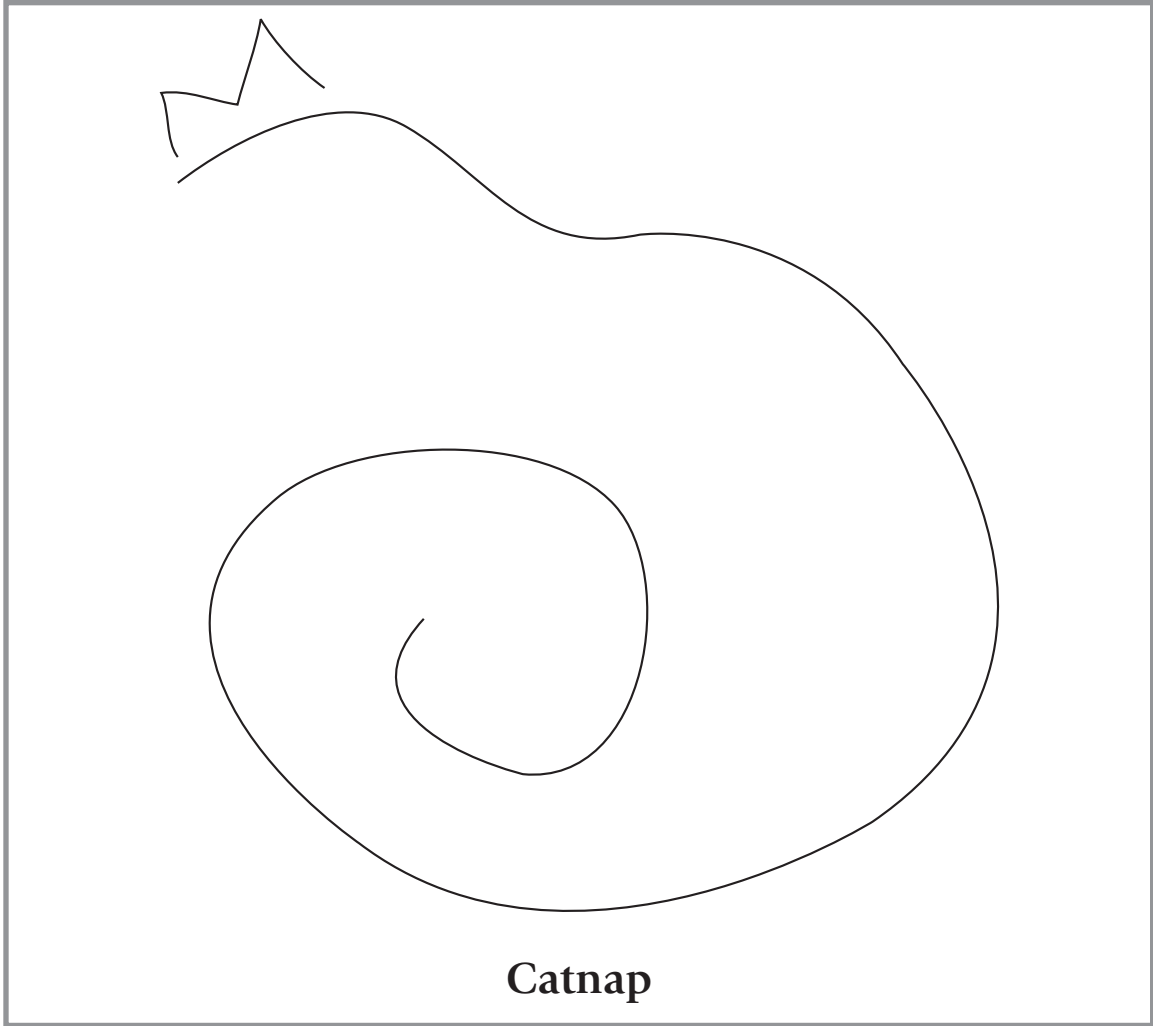


Fish are phantasmagoric. We can sit for hours in front of our aquaria, watching their fitful flitting, graceful flow, or combined synchrony. I see fish everywhere. The stars are full of them. When I search overhead on bright nights, constellations of sea creatures emerge incessantly from the night sky. **We have been given the gifts of imagination, visualization, memory, and mind. The creativity that we make of them makes the person that we become.**

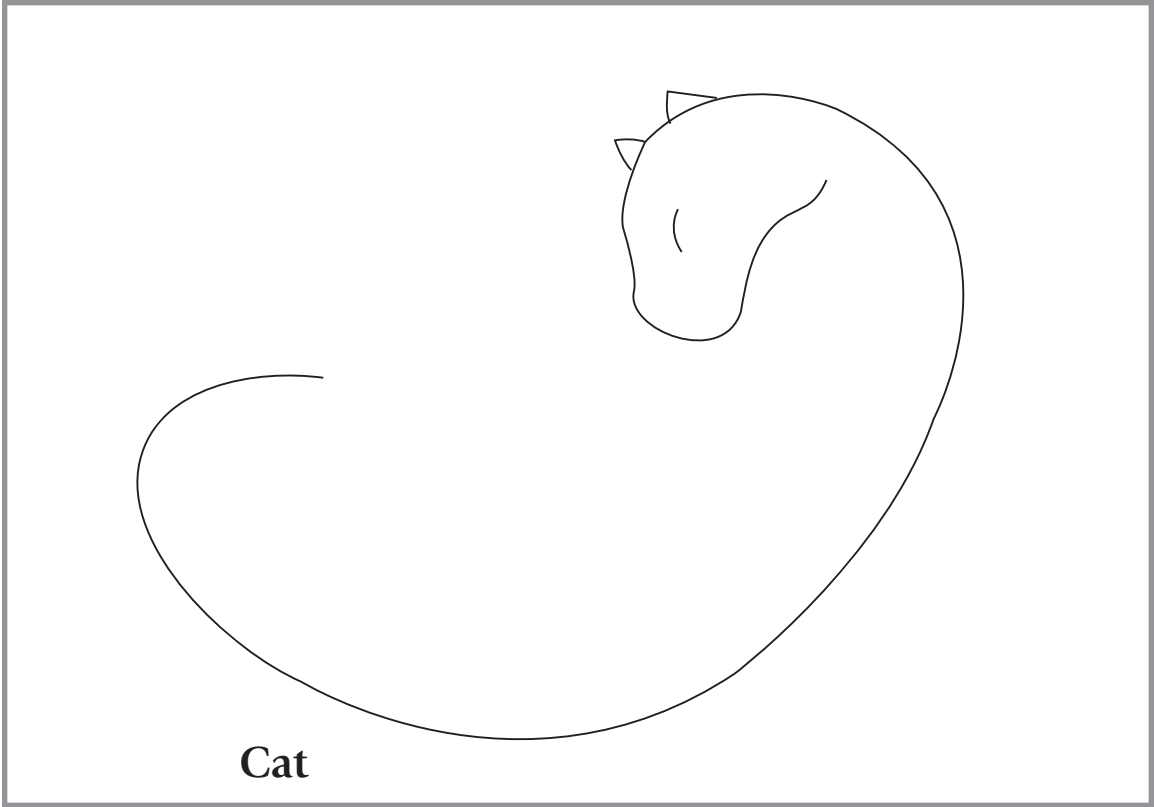


Sycamore Butterfly

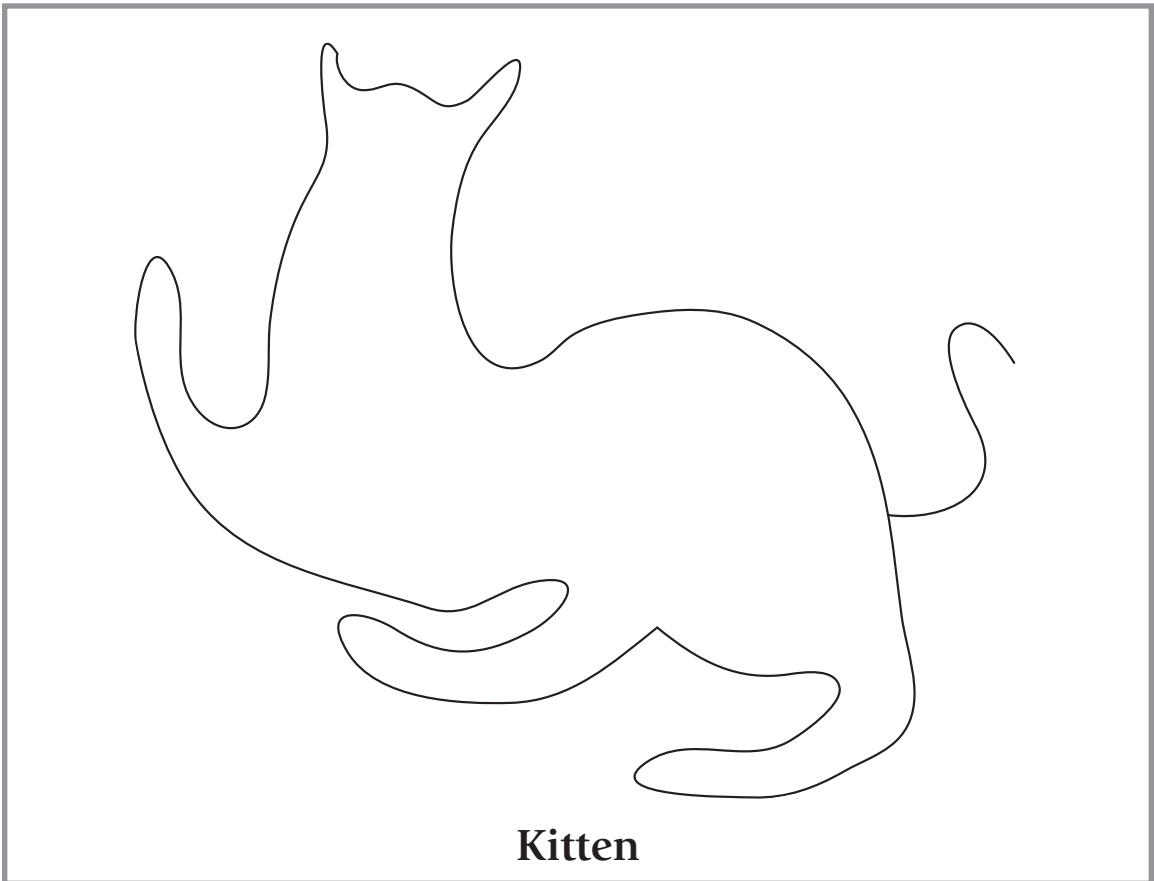
One minute slice in the movement of nature reveals its vibrancy. Interacting in synergy, the butterfly alights on the beckoning flower while others dance. Even the course exterior of the bark of a tree gyrates with the energy of flaking bark. The apparently dead matter on the forest floor teams with regeneration, from stirring mushrooms to burrowing insects. Like nature, we move in vibrant ways, creating actions out of the contexts that life provides. We conform to the constraints of those contexts, yet try to alter them, rendering them more to our liking and needs. However, in doing so, it is best that we respect their vibrancies. **We are part of synergies that require our synchronies.**



.....
Cats sleeping so peacefully are the ultimate images of relaxation. After they slumber, they stretch out in carefree poses. Cats would stay forever rested if they didn't have kittens. **Kittens jump, jive, and jangle with joy.** Their incessant movement is tiring and taxing even for the most calm of parent cats. However, parent cats would have it no other way. There is always time for rest when the jobs of the day are done. Because parent cats live this way, their kittens become good parent cats in their turn. Parent cats make good soul models.
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Cat

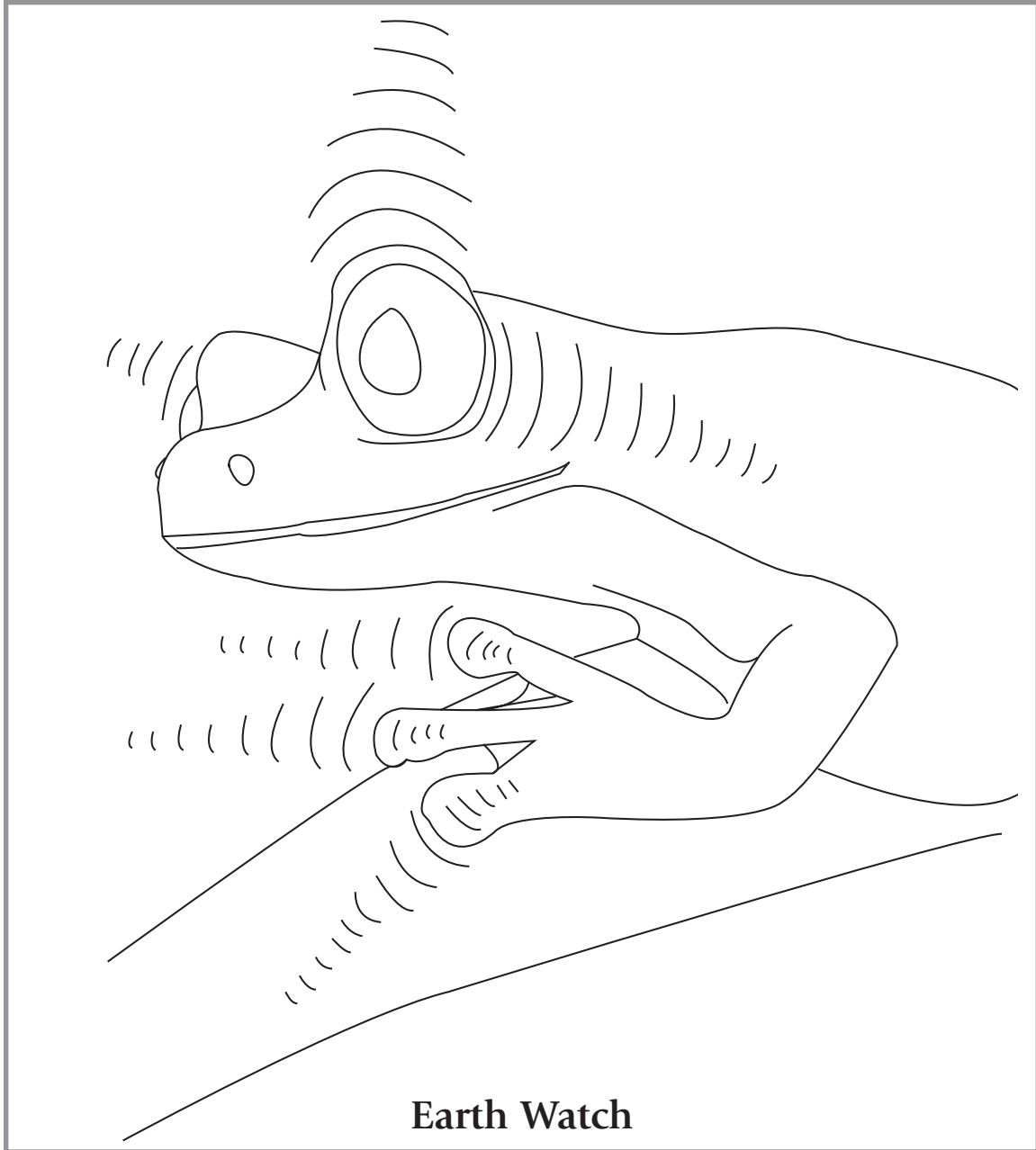


Kitten



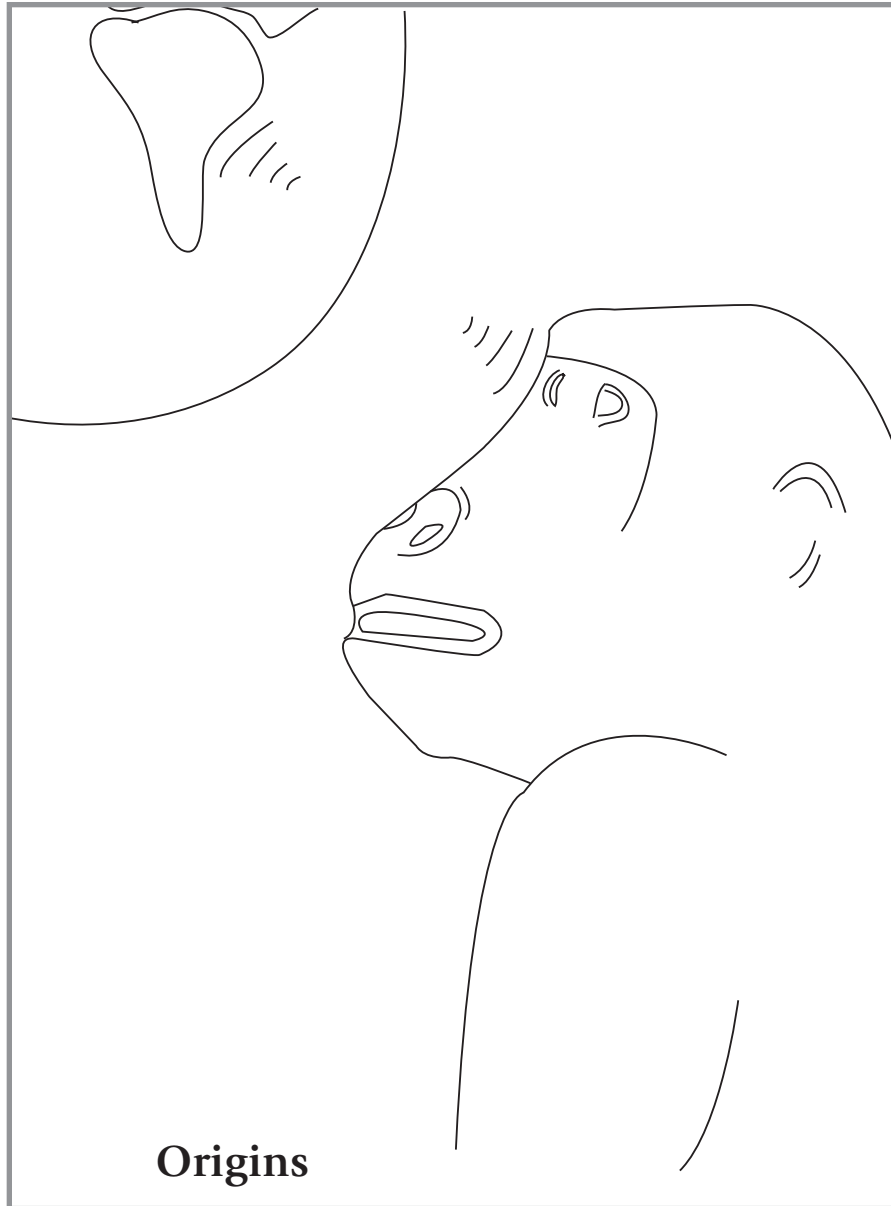
Dog Galaxy

Howling dogs are smarter than we think. They howl at the moon for hours thinking that the moon is listening. We laugh at their ignorance—but the man in the moon laughs at ours [or is it the woman in the moon?] Howling dogs are trying to find the dog galaxy, where there are only planets filled with dogs of all sizes and shapes. Howling dogs have been marooned on our planet. They know that there must be other planets—planets of the canines, and they howl to find them and leave us. If we did not love to play with dogs before, we have another reason—it may be our last opportunity. **We should live our lives like this in all its aspects—giving maximally in a constructive way in each moment as if it were our last chance. If we all would live this way, the howling dogs may decide to stay.**



Earth Watch

Frogs are the sentinels of the earth. Their fragile skin wards off bacterial and other invasions, and it needs to be boosted by a powerful immune system uncontaminated by toxins and human pollutants. Frogs are dying off. They are dying off because of our egregious misconduct, our unnatural ways, our lack of foresight, and our greed. Yet, we continue on in our destructive ways with only minor change, paying lip service to the need for major change. Should we continue along the same path, some frogs will survive our behavior and, as a group of species, they will survive longer than humans. **Frogs are not sentinels warning humans through their die-offs. They are sentinels warning the earth of humans.**



This chapter on art has concentrated on nature and animals. For several reasons, I find this quite appropriate for a self-help book in psychology. First, we can learn much about human behavior by studying its origins in the evolution of our ancestral species and their relationship to their ecological contexts. What are the survival and reproductive value of each of our behaviors in each of our developmental phases, and how did they evolve? Second, the concept of a self-help book is somewhat of a misnomer. Often, the best way of acquiring help for the self is to give help to others, to the most vulnerable, to our children, to the elderly, and so on, but also to other species, to nature, and to the planet as a whole. **There is no more natural high than the one of involving oneself in nature and of helping nature preserve its species and habitats.**