

Self-Help Workbook

11-Week Program

Embrace it ALL:

Acknowledge thoughts, emotions, actions

Learn to cope using healthy coping skills

Let go of fear, pain, false beliefs

Transform wounds into wisdom

&

pain into purpose.

Inspire others to do the same.

"Home is knowing.

Knowing your mind, knowing your heart, knowing your courage.

If we know ourselves, we're always home, anywhere."

Glinda the Good Witch

Telka Arend-Ritter L.M.S.W.

www.TelkaArend-Ritter.com

Introduction

I developed the original version of my eleven-week therapy program in 1989 when solution focused, cognitive-behavioral* (SFCB) therapy was gaining popularity, replacing the more traditional long-term psychoanalytic “problem focused” approach. After traveling the Midwest providing training for other mental health professionals in this brief treatment model, I decided to offer the same life changing information directly to my patients. The idea of *Life Solutions Stress Management Series* was born. My *Change Your Thoughts, Heal Your Life Workbook* soon followed as a written reminder of the topics and tools covered in my eleven-week program.

In 2006, The Michigan Social Workers Continuing Education Collaborative approved the material in this 11-week workbook for 22 credits of continuing education for social workers. My material also benefited other health care professionals, educators, managers, and business leaders. Over the years, I have updated and revised this material to include the most recent advances in mental health treatment.

This 2022 version now titled **Embrace it ALL**, reflects these changes. Once you have mastered this first week, choose from the additional 10 weeks based on your interests. Progress at your own pace, in your own way, focusing on yourself.

This 11-week workbook combines:

Positive Psychology: Scientific study of the strengths and virtues that enable individuals to thrive

ACT: Accept your reactions, be present; Choose a valued direction; Take action

Trauma Informed: Tailored in the context of survivor trauma history, triggers and needs

Cognitive Therapy: Change your thoughts, emotions follow

Behavioral Therapy: Choose the behavior, choose the consequence

Solution Focused Therapy: Law of attraction: What you focus on grows

DBT: Mindfulness, Distress Tolerance, Emotion Regulation, and Interpersonal Effectiveness

Cognitive Dissonance Therapy: Align actions with values to reduce stress.

Neuropsychology: Understand the role of brain chemistry, genetics, and medical diagnosis in effectively treating mood and behavior problems.

I thank you for taking an interest in my work. I also commend you for choosing this first step toward healing your life. Take a deep breath. When you are ready, let the changes begin!

Telka Arend-Ritter, L.M.S.W., A.C.S.W.

A work in progress.....**2022 Revised and updated from 2006 & 2012 versions**
– free for you to use as you wish.

You may have noticed that this workbook is in the revision process for an updated 2022 edition. The original version in 2006, “*Change Your Thoughts, Heal Your Life, An Eleven Week Cognitive-Behavioral Self-Help Workbook*” has been updated to reflect the latest advances in neuroscience and mental health practices. As I revised and updated the material, I also decided to simplify the name. Embracing it ALL sums up the program nicely; **A**cknowledge thoughts and emotions, **L**earn tools to cope, **L**et Go of the fear, pain, the false beliefs of the past.

To improve the ease of emailing or downloading this material electronically, my 2022 version is now presented in 11 separate pdfs, rather than the original 250-page spiral bound workbook. I have not submitted this material to a professional editor or publisher. The workbook’s availability at no cost to the reader is reflective of this decision as are the numerous typographical mistakes that slip through in the process. I appreciate your patience and understanding as you discover editing errors.

Disclaimer: Information contained in this workbook reflects current research as well as personal and professional experiences and opinions. Advice in this workbook and on my website is in generic form, not necessarily applicable to the specific details of any one person’s life. I designed this information to support, not replace, the relationship that exists between the reader and health care professionals. I advise readers to use this material as a guide with their health care team but if at any time, an emergency arises, rather than consulting this manual, call 988 for, mental health emergencies..

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Additional weeks in Telka’s 11 week program

- Week #2 Stressful Relationships
- Week #3 Understanding Moods
- Week #4 Healing Anger
- Week #5 Coping WITHOUT Bad Habits
- Week #6 Healthy Relationships
- Week #7 Healing Worry and Fear
- Week #8 *Living With Stress*
- Week #9 “Why do I think that I am not enough?”
- Week #10 Dealing with Difficult People (*More anger management*)
- Week #11 Letting go...

About the Author

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A graduate of Michigan State University, is a Michigan licensed Masters level clinical social worker specializing in individual, couple and group solution-focused therapy. She has worked as a behavioral health and addictions therapist, educator and public speaker since 1984.

Telka is the author and facilitator of a unique solution-focused, cognitive-behavioral, 11-week therapy program designed to treat stress, mood disorders and relationship problems. She and her psychologist husband met at MSU. They have one daughter, also a spartan alumni.



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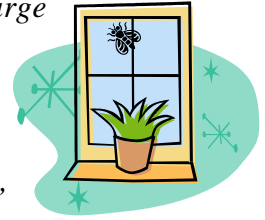
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[Telka-Arend-Ritter LMSW](#)

Foreword

Picture in your mind, a small housefly buzzing around the perimeter of a large glass window. On the other side of that glass is freedom..... so close, just inches away.



In an attempt to connect with the great-out-of-doors, the fly taps its little wings against every inch of that window. Buzz, buzz, bang! Buzz, buzz, bang!

The fly repeats the only strategy it knows—banging the glass. It backs up and dives forward again and again.

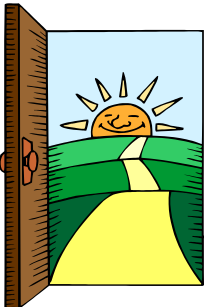
“The Definition of Insanity is repeating the same thing over and over, but each time expecting different results.” *Alcoholics Anonymous*

Try as it might, that little fly cannot break through the solid glass.

Eventually, the buzzing stops.

The little fly’s body rests motionless at the bottom of the windowsill.

Imagine yourself stepping back now, away from the window. Creating this distance provides a larger perspective. From your new vantage point, you can see everything more clearly. You notice something you could not see before. Just a few feet away from the large glass window, you notice a door...



...And you now realize that the door is wide open.

Like the little fly, you too may feel blocked from making necessary life changes or from reaching your personal goals. If you feel tired, trapped or stuck you may also wish to seek a fresh perspective or a new direction.

Maya Angelou once said, “You do what you know and when you know better, you do better.”

As a therapist, I help people solve life’s problems by teaching them coping strategies and to seek healthier choices. This workbook provides the tools necessary to align your everyday thoughts and actions with your highest personal values.

Pain is transformed into purpose.

Wounds are replaced with wisdom.

Emotional healing is possible. There is an open door.

Let’s go through it together.

Telka

Week #1 Overview

Let the Healing Begin Embrace it ALL

This 11-week self-help workbook has two components:

1. Written workbook material.
2. Personal application and discussion of the workbook material.

To succeed with this workbook, you don't just *read* it. You must *live* it. Most readers fail attempts at "self-help" because they use the collection of reading materials as a defense mechanism *against* change. "*Yes I have the book. I have lots of self-help books, what more do you want?*" I want you to commit to completing the assignments and implementing changes, and then teach everything you learn in this workbook to someone else.

"We teach what we need to learn." --Gloria Steinem

Workbook basics

1. **Using the workbook:** This workbook includes tools to enhance your personal growth.
 - You cannot practice new skills if you are too sick, too tired or too stressed to comprehend new ideas. In Week #1, I have included the "*Creating the Best Results*" inventory to ensure maximum results. Refer to this inventory throughout the workbook. Use it as a very basic tool.
2. **Self-rated tests:** This workbook includes several self-rated tests. Complete each test and then retake the tests as often as you like. Note the progress you are making. These tests are not intended to diagnose. Please discuss any concerns with your healthcare provider.
3. **Definition of "emotional health":** The term "emotional health" refers to your ability to identify and then work through your full range of emotions using healthy coping skills.
 - You demonstrate emotional health when your emotions are congruent with your life events. When something you view as positive happens, you feel upbeat; encouraged, reassured, satisfied, or even happy. When something you view as negative happens, you feel "down", disappointed, discouraged, angry, worried or sad.
 - Sometimes emotions are unstable; the highs are too high, the lows are too low, the worry never stops, anger is uncontrolled or guilt and anxiety become overwhelming. As life gets harder, healthy coping skills become more essential. Healthy coping skills allow you to work through emotions by aligning your actions with your values.
 - This workbook differentiates between normal emotional responses to stress (which require improved coping skills) and brain disorders (aka mood disorders) which require improved coping skills plus a medical evaluation and treatment. Alignment of both thought and action are necessary for emotional well-being.
4. **To gain the most from this workbook, you must become "responsible."**
 - Response able: refers to being *able* to *choose* your *response*. (Stephen Covey).
 - Make decisions based on your values, not based on your emotions.

- “Be the change you seek.” *Ghandi*. Only through action is knowledge transformed into wisdom.

5. Own YOUR healing. Focus on *your* inner direction, *your* choices and *your* change. You may notice an urge to blame, criticize or judge others. You may become distracted with an overwhelming urge to give advice to others. You may have thoughts of giving this workbook to someone else before you have demonstrated permanent changes within yourself. *Focusing on another’s actions and choices is a defense against working on yourself.*

"A codependent person is one who has let another person's behavior affect him or her and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior." *M. Beattie, 1987*

Giving advice is easier than living advice.

You may try to escape and avoid your painful emotional work by blaming your parents, your partners or your past. Blame is the opposite of insight. Do not get detoured by blame. Focus only on your well-being.

6. Do not abuse alcohol or drugs while working through this material. *Yup, you read that correctly.* You may take medications as prescribed, but mood-altering with alcohol, marijuana or illegal drugs will stunt your progress. If you are unable to stop abusing mood-altering substances, seek and complete addiction recovery before resuming this workbook.

7. Be open to change. *"A mind is like a parachute, it only functions when it's opened."* James Dewar

8. “Problems were never solved with the same type of thinking that created them.” Albert Einstein.

9. “It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.” Epictetus

10. Breathe in deeply, Exhale out slowly.....Repeat.

Week#1 Tool#1 Understanding Emotions: “Emotional Intelligence”

“Why does dumb stuff seem so smart when you are doing it?” Dennis the Menace



Reptilian Brain—is the *action, or power brain, focusing on survival instinct*. The reptilian brain controls: heart, lungs, and other vital organs. **It enables aggression, mating, and reaction to immediate danger**, often referred to as, the four Fs: Feeding, Fighting, Fleeing, and Reproduction. Notable behavior patterns include defense of self, family, and personal property, physical communication.

Limbic System, Mammalian— The limbic brain emerged in the first mammals and has the **power of feeling**, as opposed to simply reacting. The main structures of the limbic brain are the hippocampus, the amygdala, and the hypothalamus. The limbic system is composed of structures in the brain that deal with emotions (such as anger, happiness and fear) as well as memories, motivation and learning. It can record memories of behaviors that produced agreeable and disagreeable experiences, so it is responsible for what are called emotions in human beings.

The Neocortex: Human brain—The *thinking brain, seat of perception—all mental activity that we associate with being human*. It’s called “neo” because it is a relatively recent invention of mammals. Humans—and only humans—have an enormous cerebral cortex. The neocortex enables the most complex thought: planning, language, logic, will, and awareness as well as human emotions: feelings, relationship/nurturing, images and dreams and play. The thinking brain function is slower than the reptile and mammal brains. **The logic center can be over ridden or shut down when the fight, flight and freeze functions are activated.**

Daniel Goleman’s 13 Signs of High EI and Emotional Self-Regulation:

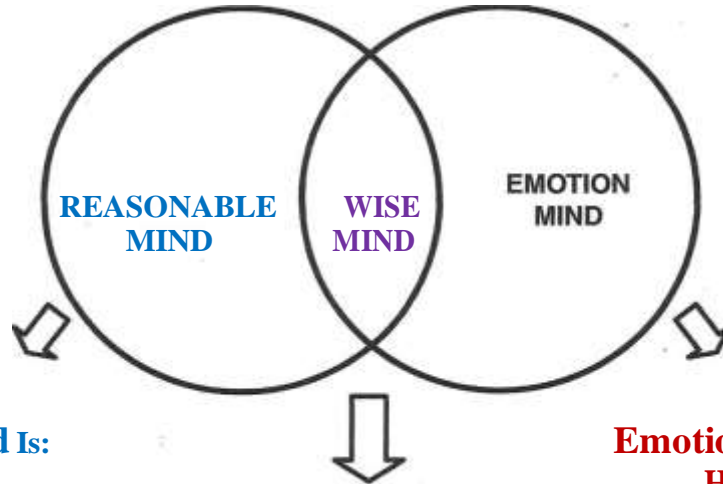
Emotional intelligence (EI)— Awareness of yours and of other’s emotions.

Emotional self-regulation— The ability to calm yourself down and cheer yourself up.

1. **You think about feelings.** Emotional intelligence begins with what is called self- and social awareness, the ability to recognize emotions (and their impact) in both yourself and others.
2. **You pause.** Use your human brain, not reptile brain
3. **You strive to control your thoughts,** allowing yourself to live in a way that's in harmony with your goals and values.
4. **You benefit from criticism.** Keep your emotions in check and ask yourself: How can this make me better?
5. **You show authenticity.** Saying what you mean, meaning what you say, and sticking to your values and principles above all else.
6. **You demonstrate empathy.** Striving to understand--which allows you to build deeper, more connected relationships.
7. **You praise others.**
8. **You give helpful feedback.**
9. **You apologize.**
10. **You forgive and forget.**
11. **You keep your commitments,** develop a strong reputation for reliability and trustworthiness.
12. **You help others.**
13. **You protect yourself from emotional sabotage.**

Tool #2 * Marsha Linehan’s MINDFULNESS DBT TOOL Wise Mind: States of Mind

Telka’s Version Includes Alignment with Values



Reasonable Mind Is:
COOI

Rational

Task-Focused

“When in reasonable mind, you are ruled by facts, reason, logic, and pragmatics. Values and feelings are not important.” Linehan

Wise Mind Is
Warm:

**“The wisdom within each person
Seeing the value of both reason and emotion
Bringing left brain and right brain together
The middle path”**
Linehan

Emotion Mind Is:
HOT

**Mood-Dependent
Emotion-Focused**

“When in emotion mind, you are ruled by your moods, feelings, and urges to do or say things.

Facts, reason, and logic are not important.”
Linehan

Telka’s Revision to Wise Mind States of Mind:
Wise Mind = Reasonable Mind + Emotion Mind + Values
 To determine your values ask yourself:
 What do you wish to role model for loved ones? Coworkers?
 What advice do you give others? Are you living that advice?”
 *Wise Mind asks not only “am I right?”
 but also “what is right?”
 and “do I have the right?”
**Wise Mind aligns your intention with your
 Reasonable Mind + Emotional Mind + Personal Values**

*Telka added her version to this *DBT Skills Training* /-handouts and worksheets, *Second Edition*, by Marsha M. Linehan. Copyright 2015 by Marsha M. Linehan. Permission to photocopy or download and print this handout is granted to purchasers of this book for personal use or for use with clients.

Tool #3 Taking Responsibility (The 4 Choices)

Taking Responsibility For Your Moods

You may not always choose what happens to you (criticism, hardship, betrayal, injustice, crime, violence, accidents/injury/trauma or loss) **And you may not always choose emotions** (fear, anger, guilt, grief, loneliness, inferiority, unworthiness) **but you may *choose your response to emotions & events.**

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” Viktor Emil Frankl, M.D., Ph.D. (1905 –1997) Austrian neurologist, psychiatrist, Holocaust survivor and author of *Man’s Search for Meaning*.

Stimulus

Acknowledge what is happening inside of you and around you.

Stimulus:
Everything inside or outside of your body that triggers your response.

Internal = Everything inside of your body. Your own feelings & thoughts and physical health.

External = Everything outside of your body: other people & events

Examples of internal stimulus:
 Fatigue/ hunger/illness
 Anxiety/worry/fear
 Depression/loss/grief
 Anger/resentment/blame
 Guilt/shame/loneliness
 Inferiority/insecurity/jealousy
 Boredom/stagnation

Examples of external stimulus:
 Change/challenges
 Responsibility/Schedules
 Stress: family/school/work
 Dating/marriage/parenting
 Conflict/arguments
 Injustice/unfairness/betrayal
 Bullying/intimidation
 Accidents /Injury/Illness
 Divorce
 Crime/Violence
 Death

*Choice

**You
have
A
Choice**

**What
is
your
intention?**

**“Responsible”
means:
You are ABLE
to
CHOOSE
Your
Response.**

***Brain damage,
injury and disease
are not choices.**

Choice requires a healthy enough brain with intact executive function. When disease, damage or substance abuse is present, medical evaluation, diagnosis and treatment is necessary before use of CBT Tools.

Response

Breathing calms the mind.
A calm mind is a wise mind

Response

You did not get to choose the stimulus, but you can choose what happens next. ..
You choose your response.
Now what? What is your intention?

- Fight: Stuck in Blame/Anger/Rage**
Remaining stuck in blame, anger, and resentment. “They are the problem!” waiting for the “stimulus” to change.
- Flight: Avoid/Deny/Escape with bad habits and self-defeating behaviors;**
Quick fixes/denial & avoidance
Excessive social media, working, eating, cleaning, spending, clutter, gambling, porn, **unhealthy relationships**— (obsessing about other people) gossip, affairs, domestic violence, addiction.
- Freeze: Wounded/Victim/Martyr**
Remaining stuck, helpless, inferior, worried and afraid. Waiting to be rescued, helped or saved.
- Choose Dignity & Self-Respect:**
Be the best version of yourself by Aligning thoughts & actions with your values— be the role model.
 - Breathe (Fear holds your breath)
 - Reframe (Challenge distorted thoughts)
 - Embrace emotions (Feelings aren’t facts)
 - Accept yourself with compassion
 - Talk to yourself as you would a beloved
 - Heal by coping and problem-solving
 - Every challenge brings opportunities

Stimulus → *Choice → Response

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy teaches you to become aware of and take responsibility for the thoughts, emotions and actions *that are within your control*.

You do not always have control over what happens to you hardship, accidents/injury, injustice, violence, trauma, loss, pandemic... those events are outside of your control, referred to as your **external stimulus**.

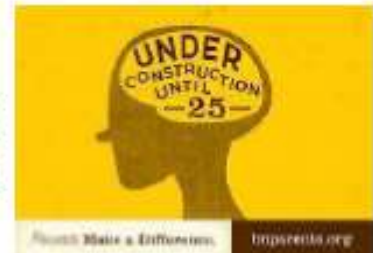
And you do not control your brain's automatic emotions and physical responses inside of your body...fight, flight freeze...referred to as your **internal stimulus**.

but when you take a moment to pause, breathe, calm yourself, then you may choose your response to your life events and to your emotions.

***Choice—** Decisions are made from the logic and reasoning part of your brain. This logic region allows you to gain perspective, problem-solve, and make choices. Making choices requires a healthy, calm mind. You might "*FEEL*" like you do not have control of your choices.. but is that a **FACT?**"

The ability to make a choice requires brain health

1. Brain maturity. The human brain continues to develop and mature into the mid-twenties. Immature brains are more reactive, more impulsive, less analytical. Understanding brain development is crucial in understanding difference in choices over the lifespan.



2. Substances, chemicals, drugs: The brain's ability to remain in reality and to make logical choices is also impaired by alcohol, cannabis, opioids and other mood-altering medications and illegal drugs. Whether the impairment is due to denial or to more severe damage to the brain, use of mood-altering substances may have long lasting effects on the brain's

ability to function normally. Consider the impairment when a brain is under the age of 25 AND using mood altering chemicals!

3. Mental health is brain health: The brain's job is to sort out reality from fantasy, fact from fiction, and rational thought from irrational thought. When the brain is not functioning properly, it is not able to do its job effectively. Psychiatric disorders in the brain such as anxiety, panic, depression, bipolar, obsessive-compulsive, and post-traumatic stress disorders, as well as personality disorders may create distorted, irrational thoughts and block logic. Brain injury, dementia, stroke, cognitive impairments, and other neurological disorders may also impact the brain's ability to function rationally.

If you believe that your ability to make choices is impaired by mental illness or substance abuse, help is available! Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline, [SAMHSA's National Helpline 1-800-662-HELP \(4357\)](https://www.samhsa.gov) is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing mental and/or substance use disorders.

Stimulus → Choice → Response

What does “stimulus/choice/response” actually mean and how does it apply to you?

Let’s take a few moments to process the information on the previous page.

Have you worried about what other people will think?

Ever felt too afraid to address conflict—or regret that you “lost control”?

Do you get stuck in thoughts that you “are not good enough”?

Are you proud of how you cope with feelings of anger, jealousy or betrayal?

Will you trust and love again after a broken heart?

If you feel it, do you think it must be true?

If you have always thought this way, how do you choose differently now?

There is a difference between your *stimulus* (automatic, biological, physical and emotional limbic system responses which are not your choice), and your intentional, or chosen *response* gained through emotional intelligence, executive function, logic and values.

Stimulus: Review the left column depicted on the previous page. **Stimulus refers to everything inside and outside of your body.** The stimulus is what triggers your response. *Internal stimulus* refers to everything happening inside your body *automatically*: thoughts, emotions and physical bodily sensations. **Everything listed in the stimulus column is out of your control.** You don’t get to choose the automatic thoughts, emotions and physical sensations that pop into your awareness—those are controlled by the brain’s limbic system. The limbic system functions without your consent. The hair will stand up on the back of your neck whether you want it to or not. Your pulse rate increases without consulting you. You have no control over the irrational, emotional, biased or judgmental thoughts that spontaneously pop into your head. **Just because a thought pops in, doesn’t mean your thought is true.**

External stimulus refers to everything outside of your body including other people’s thoughts, emotions and actions, and literally everything else. **You have no control over how other people think, act or feel.** When an external stimulus such as a rude person, a challenging task or stressful event triggers your uncomfortable thoughts and emotions, it is easy to believe that those thoughts and feelings are facts. If you *feel* like a failure, then in your mind, it must be true. But the truth is that someone’s rudeness represents his or her social skills, it is not about you. Everyone faces life-challenging events. Just because you “*feel*” inferior, defeated or alone, does not mean that it is true.

Thoughts are not truths. Feelings are not facts.

Now review the “**Response**” depicted in the right column of the previous page. **Becoming aware of your automatic thoughts and emotions creates choices about how to respond next.** A calm brain allows logic and reason to transform emotions into insight with proactive rather than reactive responses. **Without calming first, your brain may get stuck in reactive stress responses such as fight (anger, blame, resentment), flight (avoid, escape and denial) and freeze (learned helplessness, wounded victim).** A healthy coping response to the emotional triggers of stress, also known as *emotional self-regulation*, requires that you pause long enough to calm your brain before you react. **Once you focus on taking responsibility for how to respond to your own emotions and thoughts, you may choose to align your response with your values.** Sound interesting? Change starts with curiosity. Let’s practice on the worksheet!

Tool #3 (continued) Taking Responsibility 4 Choices Worksheet

Understand What You Can And Can't Control

Stimulus: Acknowledge the *external triggers* and notice your *internal thoughts and your feelings*.

Choice: Learn to take responsibility for your response to the situation, for your thoughts and your feelings (aka your *emotional self-regulation*).

Response: Take a moment to breathe deeply, pause, then **intentionally choose for your response**.

You have 4 response choices: Use these steps below as a guide.

“Stimulus” refers to everything inside and outside of your body.
 You have no control over the stimulus:
 You simply become aware of it.

Internal Stimulus = inside of you:
List your emotions, use additional paper to finish your internal inventory.

1. List your emotions: _____

2. List your thoughts: _____

3. List physical symptoms: _____

External Stimulus = outside your body: Other people, places and things: *List your external stimulus here, use additional paper to finish your external inventory:* _____

You
 have
 A
 *choice

Responsible
 means:

You are
ABLE to
CHOOSE
 Your
 Response.

*Brain damage, injury and disease are not choices. Choices require a brain capable of executive function. When damage, disease or substance abuse is present, Medical evaluation, diagnosis and treatment is necessary prior to use of CBT tools.

Response
 You have no choice about the stimulus, but you can choose what happens next.
 ..You choose *your response*.

Check all that apply

Fight: Stuck in Blame/Anger/Rage
 Feeling stuck in blame, resentment & anger, “I should not have to feel this way!” “They are the problem! It’s their fault!—demanding that “they” change.

Flight: Avoid/Deny/Escape with bad habits and self-defeating behaviors;
 Quick fixes/denial & avoidance
Excessive social media, working, eating, cleaning, spending, clutter, gambling, porn, **unhealthy relationships codependence**—(obsessing about changes other people should make) gossip, affairs, tantrums, domestic violence, smoking/drinking/drug abuse.

Freeze: Wounded/Victim/Martyr
 Frozen in fear, guilt, worry, helplessness, inferiority. Waiting to be rescued, helped or saved.

Choose Dignity & Self-Respect:
Aligning thoughts & actions with your values— be the role model.

- **B**reathe (Calm Mind = Wise Mind)
- **R**eframe (Challenge Distorted Thoughts)
- **E**mbrace Emotions Feelings Aren’t Facts
- **A**ccept Yourself with Compassion
- **T**alk to Yourself As You Would a Beloved
- **H**eal by Coping and Problem-Solving,
- **E**very Challenge Brings Opportunities


Use the additional tools and videos on this site to create your own action plan to align your thoughts and actions with your values.

Tool #4 The Map to healing: Boo-Boo Theory

*“No hurt survives for long without our help,”
She said and then she kissed me and sent me out to play again
for the rest of my life.”* Brian Andreas

I use Boo-Boo Theory to compare emotional healing with medical healing. **Boo-Boo Theory teaches how to heal emotionally wounded lives.** More current terminology refers to emotional wounds as trauma. Although terminology evolves over the years and we learn more about neurobiology every day, Boo-Boo Theory continues to offer a helpful analogy between mental and physical healing.

Boo-Boo Theory

Children raised in healthy families are loved, supported, mentored and guided into adulthood.  Children raised in wounded families are neglected, shamed and frightened into adulthood. They report feelings of helplessness, anger, and loss. Survivors of these wounded backgrounds ask, “*What is normal? How should I feel? How do I move past this pain?*” This is where Boo-Boo Theory can help. I use Boo-Boo Theory to describe the stages necessary to heal emotionally wounded lives.

When small children, raised in healthy families, experience their first injury, loving arms sweep them up into safety. “*It is okay honey, I am here. I am so sorry this happened to you. I know this really hurts, yes I know baby. I’m here.*”

As a child’s sobbing subsides, the loving caregiver gently empathizes and explains what is happening. Words are given to the painful experience. “*Look at this, you made a Boo-Boo. Boo-boos hurt. See the red stuff? That is your blood. Your blood is washing out the germs. You are so good. Your body knows just how to heal you. Way to go!*” The child snuffles. “*I know sweetie. Boo-Boos really hurt. It is okay to cry. I cry when I am hurting too. Let all of those tears come out.*” More hugs, a soothing voice and calm embrace and acceptance of emotional pain.

These children are now ready to learn how to heal their pain. “*Let’s hold a cold cloth on your Boo-Boo to help it feel better. There now, does that feel better? Good thing you heal so well. Here, I’ll kiss it all better.*” The magic of a Band-Aid and a loving kiss seal the deal, thus the first lesson in healing Boo-Boos is complete. Every stage is guided with loving, healing energy.

Working through painful emotions and stressful events requires three stages:

Embrace it A.L.L.

- 1. Acknowledge:** Identify problems (**Mind**) and Experience the emotions (**Body**).
- 2. Learn to Choose:** regulate uncomfortable emotions by choosing healthy **coping skills**.
- 3. Let go** and grow!



As children grow older, they become more independent. They learn to apply their own cold cloths and fetch their own Band-Aids. Children practice tolerance and acceptance of painful emotions. Eventually, they learn enough self-compassion and coping skills to heal their own emotional Boo-Boos.

Emotional wounds heal like Boo-Boos.

- Emotional healing occurs when you learn to identify your painful feelings and to trust yourself enough to experience your body's response to each emotion.
- You allow yourself to witness every emotion spontaneously and without judgment.
- You learn that acknowledging pain and shedding tears are often necessary stages of the healing process.
- You develop coping skills that become your "cold cloth" to dull the emotional pain enough so that you are able to learn, grow and move on.
- This new mindfulness allows you to trust your ability as a self-healer.
- Your mindfulness allows you to listen to your own inner voice to guide you through difficult life decisions, significant losses and challenging emotional events.

Intentional practice of emotional healing, also known as emotional self-regulation, is a choice. But not always a simple one.

When you choose to become a self-healer, you choose to face your emotional pain. Facing emotional pain is, well, *painful*. *Your natural human instinct is to avoid pain, seek out pleasure.*

Emotional healing is especially challenging for people without healthy role models or those who experienced traumatic events that altered their brain's ability to regulate emotions. Even when people decide to heal their emotional wounds, without role models or support, they just have no idea *how to heal*. It's no wonder why some people automatically default to self-destructive behaviors of denial, avoidance and escape. Rather than working through emotional pain, they do what their parents did. They do what they have always done.

Maya Angelou once said, "*We do the best we know how, and when we know better, we do better.*"

Question: So Boo Boo theory is nice and all that, choices sound cool, but seriously, how do you actually learn to face painful emotions, I mean, they hurt!"

Aiden

Good question. You shouldn't try this at home until you have tools. Coping tools allow you to experience emotional pain without self-harm or bad habits. Remembering to breathe will always be your most effective way to calm yourself. Take a few deep, cleansing breaths now. Notice how your mind and body feel as you deeply inhale and slowly exhale. Relax and focus. You are now ready to learn exactly how to travel through your own map to emotional health. Start with taking a deep breath, right now, or skip ahead to Tool #10, page 29 for more help.

Tool #4 The Map to healing Map to Emotional Healing continued

Emotional health, also referred to as emotional self-regulation, begins with labeling and experiencing your emotions. You can only work this step by focusing on yourself. If you read these next few pages trying to understand why your spouse gets so mad, your parent has so much anxiety or your child is so impulsive...you will have lost the whole point. **I need you to focus on yourself right now.** Your awareness includes mind (intellectual), and body (physiological experience). The order of your awareness may vary. Sometimes you identify moods first. *“I was sooooo angry, I smashed my cell phone!”* Other times your physical response is your first clue. *“I didn’t even realize I was angry until I saw my cell phone smashed to pieces on the floor.”* Prolonged exposure to stress may cause frequent explosions. It may also have a reverse effect such as feeling “numb” or “detached from emotion.”

You might report awareness of only a few emotions. *“I’m either fine or I’m pissed,”* or *“I ignore things for a long time then I just explode!”*

You might have difficulty labeling your own emotions. *“I never know how I feel but I can always tell you how my partner feels and I certainly know how my parents or my children feel.”*

Using the chart below each emotion you are able to identify and experience.

Emotional Healing 1. ACKNOWLEDGE EMOTIONS
(AKA Your Internal Stimulus)



(Mind) **Identify** your emotions by labeling them.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Happy | <input type="checkbox"/> Sad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calm | <input type="checkbox"/> Anger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Proud | <input type="checkbox"/> Shame |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love | <input type="checkbox"/> Fear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident | <input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful | <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed | <input type="checkbox"/> Worry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trust | <input type="checkbox"/> Mistrust |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accomplished | <input type="checkbox"/> Inferior |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secure | <input type="checkbox"/> Insecure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible | <input type="checkbox"/> Helpless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeful | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeless |



(Body) **Experience** your emotions
Awareness of physical sensations.

- Sleep: Restful Disturbed
 Appetite: Stable ↑ ↓
 Muscles: Relaxed Tense
 Health problems:
 Pain
 Digestion problems
 Bowel problems
 Hypertension
 Fatigue
 Tears. Crying spells
 ↓Memory, focus
 Fight or flight
 Other symptoms

Write how you experience your range of identified emotions: _____

Once you identify and experience your emotions, what is next? Rather than remaining stuck in stressful emotions, Step 2 offers choices to learn, cope and heal.

Emotional Healing 2. "LEARN"
This step offers the opportunity to choose.
You may transform wounds into wisdom and pain into purpose.

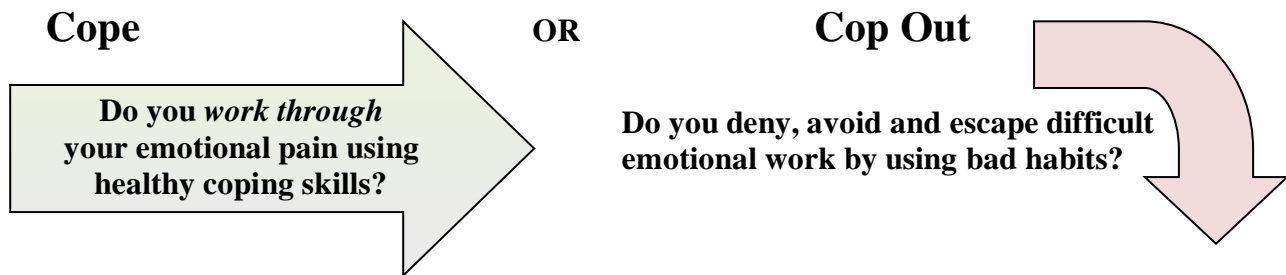
Choice #1: You have the opportunity to work through emotional pain using coping skills. Coping skills are behaviors, thoughts, resources or tools to assist you in the process of working through painful emotions.

Example: "When I feel upset, I remember this is only an emotion. I can witness my emotions like a detached observer, like when I notice goose bumps on my skin. I see changes in my skin without fear or distress because I know what they are. I can remember to take deep, mindful and focused breaths. I can make choices about how I respond to my emotions. I do not have to escalate my emotions, lash out or self-harm. I do not have to lose my dignity or my self-respect. I take a long walk followed by cool shower. I read my motivational materials and journal my thoughts until I feel better. I respect myself for the way I cope with my emotions."

Choice #2: You also have the option of avoiding, denying or escaping your emotional pain by choosing self-defeating behaviors. Self-defeating behaviors are coping skills gone bad. Self-defeating behaviors relieve emotional pain but they also have negative consequences. **Bad habits and addictions are both examples of self-defeating behaviors.**

Example: "When I feel upset I comfort myself with junk food, followed by shopping. I am overweight, have wardrobes in all sizes, huge credit card debt and I feel out of control. Honestly, I don't really feel better after I binge or spend. I am embarrassed. I am not a good role model. I don't really like myself."

Responding to painful emotions with bad habits and addictions creates self-loathing. You decide when to stop your self-defeating cycle. **You always have a choice.**



3. LETTING GO

Question: “*I like the sound of “letting go”. Seems peaceful. Can I just skip over experiencing the emotional pain? I would rather go straight to the “Letting Go” stage? I want to feel better NOW. I want to be OVER this emotional pain.*” Chad

Sorry, but no. The third step of emotional health is last in the sequence for a reason. **Skipping step one and two is not really emotional health, it is more like denial, escape and avoidance.** Now I think you understand why emotional healing is not for cowards. Identifying emotions, expressing feelings and assigning deeper meaning through insight all takes time. For most people, that time is unpaid, underappreciated and easily interrupted by those who view self-care, meditation and introspection as lazy or selfish. Prioritizing time to work through emotions and cope more effectively are essential elements of successful emotional healing.

Step 1 + Step 2 = Step 3 LET GO and GROW

Once a lesson is learned, the emotional pain heals. Transformation occurs.





“Letting go” is the natural result of *working through* your emotional pain.

“Letting go” happens while you are busy making healthier choices.

Example: When tuning into your emotions, you **identify** emotional wounds of sadness, anger, blame, guilt, anxiety and shame. You grieve over what you always wanted, but never received. You rage over what you could not stop and that which you had no control. You didn’t get to choose what happened to you. You didn’t get to choose your pain.

*“They never loved me, all they ever did was hurt me!
What did I do to make them treat me like that!?
Nothing I ever did was good enough!
It wasn’t fair!”*

Your emotional pain is raw and alive. You **experience** all of your wounded feelings. Your body reacts with sleep difficulty, appetite disturbances and stress related illnesses. **You don’t get to choose how your physical body responds, but you do get to choose whether or not to practice self-compassion and self-respect.** You may choose to **cope** or you may *self-destruct*. You may choose to *heal* or you may prolong or repeat your *pain*.

-  Once you release the need to blame, avoid, deny or escape, you begin to value the importance of coping and problem solving.
-  You learn that forgiveness is not about *them*. Forgiveness is a gift you give *yourself*.
-  You learn the coping skills necessary to feel worthy of your self-healing. You learn to treat yourself with compassion. Eventually with time, practice and support you learn to take responsibility for creating the life you desire.
-  As you actively pursue your dreams, you realize that you have **let go** of your emotional pain.

Follow the “map” to mental health on the following page.

**Tool #4 The Map: EMOTIONAL HEALTH = PROCESS OF WORKING THROUGH EMOTION!
Work Through Emotions Using Coping Skills**

1: Acknowledge: Label

External: What is happening around you?

Name your external triggers

Stress: Change, clutter-chaos, time management, education, employment/career, finances, relationships, parenting, childcare, caregiving, separation, divorce, conflict, criticism, betrayal, judgment, bullying, illness, injustice, abuse, dishonesty, legal problems, crime, natural disaster, trauma, pandemic, death.

Internal: Identify (Mind) & Experience (Body)

How do you feel?

(Also referred to as internal emotional awareness)

(Mind) Label Emotions:	Bodily Sensations:
Joy	Sadness
Happiness	Anger
Peace	Worry
Acceptance	Jealousy
Pride	Embarrassment
Serenity	Resentment
Trust	Mistrust
Confidence	Inferiority
Security	Insecurity
	Sleep problem
	Appetite problem
	Muscle tension
	Digestion issues
	Pain
	Fatigue
	Irritability
	Anxiety, agitation
	Memory, focus



When EXPERIENCING Your EMOTIONS becomes too uncomfortable, COPING SKILLS relieve and soothe your pain. Coping skills are behaviors, thoughts, resources or tools that assist you in the process of working through painful emotions. Examples of coping skills: meditation, healthy nutrition, exercise, recreation, positive attitude, cognitive-reframing, problem-solving strategies and medication as prescribed.

2: Learn

Consider emotions as OPPORTUNITIES.

1. **Breathe, calm yourself**
2. **Reality Check**—Cross off the items in column 1 that are not happening, exaggerations, distortions or not true. Cross off anything that is *not* within your control.
3. **Intention**--What do you want to achieve? Goals? Direction? Role-modeling?
4. **Choices-- Logic**--What are the possible options? Brainstorm all possibilities, seek resources & learn how successful people coped with distress. How can you problem solve? (*Google to help research*)
5. **Values:** What advice would you give a beloved who felt this way in a similar situation? Roles reversed, how would you wish to be treated? **What is the right thing to do?**— Use Wise mind: align action with values, maintain dignity and role model what you believe in.
6. **What is the life lesson?** What does this experience teach you? What could you learn?

Stage 3:

Let Go & Grow

Release the need to control That which is out of your control.

*Face Fears

*Coping skills replace avoidance & bad habits.

1. Be curious about how to face fears and make changes in small, attainable steps.
2. What resources and support do you need?
3. What could make your lifestyle changes easier, more interesting, more fun?
4. Is there an app for that?

Self-Defeating Behaviors: Cop Out

A cop out is a bad coping skill. It's a self-destructive quick fix that allows you to avoid deny, stuff, or escape your painful emotions and problems rather than dealing with them with dignity or becoming a role model.



Copping out with bad habits creates self-sabotage.

Your **bad habits and addictions** mess up your life with negative and harmful consequences.

You choose your response. Cope or Cop out?

Are you living your best life?

Bad Habits Addictions

Habitual complaining, blaming, worrying

Excessive working, media, spending, shopping, gambling, eating and obesity.

Dysfunctional relationships: gossip co-dependence: obsessing about other people's behavior and thoughts, affairs, betrayal, excessive porn

Rage addiction: yelling, tantrums, threats, name calling, physical abuse, domestic violence

Substance Addictions: caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, drug abuse,

Sexual addiction

Self-mutilation

Tool #4 Practice Map worksheet

EMOTIONAL HEALTH = PROCESS OF WORKING THROUGH EMOTIONS
Using coping skills

1: Acknowledge your Issues

**Identify problematic stressors,
thoughts & feelings**

(Also referred to as your External & Internal Stimulus)

List your stresses, thoughts & emotions:

2: Learn

**Consider emotions as
OPPORTUNITIES
for understanding.
(Response)**

1. Reality Check—Cross off the items in column 1 that are not happening now, are exaggerated, distorted or not true. Also delete anything *not* within your control.

2. Intention--What do you wish to achieve? Direction? Goals? Role-modeling?

3. Choices-- Logic--
Brainstorm all possibilities, seek resources & learn how successful people coped with this issue. How can you problem solve? (*Google to help research*)

4. Values: align your action with your values. Maintain dignity and role model what you believe.

5. What is the right thing to do?— Roles reversed, how would you wish to be treated? What advice would you give a beloved who felt this way in a similar situation?

6. What is the life lesson?
What does this experience teach you? What must you learn?

3:

**Let Go
and Grow**

Emotional pain
heals when

*Fears are faced
and overcome.

***Coping skills
replace bad habits.**

1. How can you face fears and make changes in small, attainable steps?
2. How can you live the advice you give others?
3. What resources and support do you need?
4. What would make your lifestyle changes easier, more interesting, more fun?
5. Is there an app for that?

Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

1. I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost...I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

2. I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in the same place.
But, it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

3. I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in...it's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

4. I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.



5. I walk down another street.



Portia Nelson 1980

Portia Nelson's poem *Autobiography in Five Short Chapters* © copyright 1993 from her book *There Is A Hole In My Sidewalk*, Beyond Words Publishing, 20827 Norwest Rd. Hillsboro Oregon.

Are you ready to walk down another street?

Ready to Embrace It ALL?

You can only fix what you become aware of. Use the tests and questions on these next pages to take your own personal inventory. Acknowledge your own personal problems, distorted thoughts and flawed coping skills. Do not just read these pages. Let yourself dig deep into this material. Write. Practice tools. Share your struggles and insights with your support network or health care professionals.

Use Tool # 5 on the next page as a guide to make the most out of the time, energy and money you are investing in your self-healing.

Tool # 5. Creating the Best Results

☑Each item below once you have addressed it.

Congratulations! You just took your first big step toward creating your best life. You made the decision to seek help, gain information and access resources. Use the list below as a guide to make the most out of the time and energy that you are investing in your self-healing. **Check off each item below once you have addressed it.**

☐ 1. Begin with the end in mind. Take a few moments to envision your final day in therapy. How will your life be different? What will you have changed in either thought or action? How do you want to feel? What changes will other's notice about you? How will you know that you have met your goals and are ready to graduate from therapy?

☐ 2. Health care is self-care. Start with the basics. *If you have not seen a doctor within the past 12 months, make an appointment now.* Ask for laboratory tests to assess any potential medical problems that could negatively impact your mood, sleep, cognition, appetite or pain level. **Mental health is physical health.**

☐ 3. Brain health. Discuss symptoms of anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), chronic pain, insomnia or addictions with your doctor. Do you need a referral for psychiatric evaluation or a neurological testing?

☐ 4. Prioritize healthy sleep habits. One of the fastest ways to improve your health, mood, energy level and mental clarity is to prioritize sleep. For most adults, mental health requires at least 7 or more hours of sleep. Create a regular bedtime routine, stick to it. Acknowledge your body's need for sleep. **Adequate sleep greatly improves your mood, temper, mental outlook and quality of life.**

☐ 5. Caution with caffeine. Excessive caffeine may trigger mood swings, anxiety and panic. For some people, 250 mg or more (three or more servings) of caffeine may cause caffeine intoxication or caffeine withdrawal. **Monitor your daily caffeine intake for any of these symptoms:** *sleep disturbance, insomnia, restlessness, poor concentration, agitation, irritability, heart palpitations, shakiness, headaches, stomach upset, muscle twitching, flushed face, nervousness, increased urination, rambling speech, rambling thoughts.*

☐ 6. Warning! Getting drunk and or high may limit your success. Alcohol is a depressant. Binge alcohol use causes erratic behavior. Marijuana may trigger anxiety and paranoia. Excessive use of pain medication impairs functioning and cognition. All of these substances negatively affect motivation and interfere with health, healing and insight when used excessively. Have a conversation with your health care professional about mood altering substances if you are concerned about your use.

☐ 7. Improve your nutrition and eating habits. Food allergies and poor nutrition negatively affect your overall health including your mood, energy level, concentration and sleep. Choose healthy food to fuel your body. Recognize hunger signals in your body. Eat only when you feel hunger. Avoid using food for emotional comfort or self-sabotage. Not focusing on perfection here, 80/20 eating plan is fine. If healthy eating in moderation is very difficult for you, discuss your concerns with your health care professional.

☐ 8. Let's get Physical! Sedentary lifestyles are linked to stress, mood disorders, illness and even shortened life span. Physical activity reduces stress and produces "feel good" brain chemistry. Create a plan to become the most physically active version of yourself. Consult your physician as needed.

□ **9. Create a safe house for you and your family.** Decide to stop all name-calling, blaming, shaming yelling and screaming. Choose to stop all spanking, pushing, slapping, and hitting. **Refuse to tolerate or participate in abuse of any kind.** *You will not feel healthy while living with verbal, emotional or physical abuse.*

□ **10. Educate yourself.** Use the Internet or your public library, or get an app for that! Visit www.TED.com, listen to Podcasts, or use the great resources on my website www.TelkaArend-Ritter.com

□ **11. De-clutter, clean and organize your living space.** Your environment strongly influences your mood and energy level. Need help? Check out [10 Amazing Tips from Tidying Up with Marie Kondo on youtube.com.](#)

□ **12. Self-first is not self-ish.** The choices you make reflect the value you place upon yourself. Responsible adults role model healthy habits. A self-first approach fills you up—so you can show-up for others, personally and professionally.

□ **13. Create support, use resources and ask for help.** Reach out to healthy, supportive role models in person or online. The pandemic created an abundance of on-line resources, just Google! *(12-step programs, NAMI and other faith-based and community based resources are just key strokes away).*

□ **14. Practice mindfulness.** Mindfulness refers to self-awareness without judgement. Notice your thoughts and emotions in a calm and accepting manner. Begin journaling, meditating or mindful breathing practices to increase awareness. Use video tools on this website for more assistance.

□ **15. Begin a new hobby or rekindle an old one.** Do something that you have always wanted to do or revive some of those childhood interests you once loved. Explore, play and renew a variety of your personal interests. *(Arts, sports, music, crafts, nature....this isn't about spending money, it is about reconnecting with yourself and exploring your interests.)*

□ **16. Treat yourself like a beloved.** In every thought and action, ask yourself if you are responding to yourself in the same way that you would respond to a loved one. Are you coaching yourself through distress with the same compassion and logic you offer to others? Are you living the advice that you would give your best friend?

□ **17. Make decisions based on your values, not based on your emotions.** Examples of emotional decisions: *"I did it because I was upset, angry, tired, worried, afraid, lonely"* etc. Values based decisions: *"I did it because I believed in it. It was the right thing to do. I am a role model."*

□ **18 Decide to stop codependent focus:** *"A codependent person is one who has let another person's behavior affect him or her, and who is obsessed with that person's behavior"* (Melody Beattie). Replace codependence with coping skills: Ask yourself "Who owns this problem? Do I have the right to get involved in this—is it my business? Am I treating others' the way I wish to be treated? What am I role modeling? What is my intention?"

□ **19. Be the change you seek.** Ghandi

□ **20. Breathe.**



Tool #6 Beginning Healing Changes: Stress Prevention Test.

Score each item below according to how true each statement is for you (within the past 2 weeks).

(1) = Almost always (2) = Usually (3) = Sometimes (4) = Rarely (5) = Never

- ___1. During an average week, my overall intake of food balances out to be healthy and nutritious.
- ___2. BMI: normal = score 1, Overweight= score 2, Obese= 4 and extreme obese= score 5.
(Refer to BMI chart on the next page as a guide).
- ___3. I schedule a regular bedtime and I prioritize and maintain healthy sleep habits.
- ___4. I have at least one person within 50 miles who will help me in an emergency.
- ___5. My lifestyle is active to the point of perspiration at least three times a week.
- ___6. I am smoke free. (Non-smokers score 1, second-hand smokers score 3, smokers score 5).
- ___7. I drink no more than 1 alcoholic drink per day (women). No more than 2 drinks per day (men). Non-drinkers score 1. (See page 3 of this pdf for more information).
- ___8. I drink fewer than 500 mg of caffeine daily. 1 (12 oz) Soda= 54-75, 1 (8 oz) coffee= 80-150 (None) score 1.
- ___9. I give and receive affection regularly. (Pets count!)
- ___10. I gain strength from my beliefs.
- ___11. I regularly attend social, recreational or leisure activities with others.
- ___12. I spend time daily doing something that I enjoy.
- ___13. I speak openly with one or more trusted people at least once a week.
- ___14. I practice good health care by attending regular medical, dental and vision checkups.
- ___15. I pace my day so that I feel accomplished, successful, comfortable and healthy.
- ___16. I set personal goals for myself and spend time achieving them.
- ___17. I do something for fun at least once a week.
- ___18. I consistently put important tasks ahead of unimportant tasks.
- ___19. I manage my expenses. I budget within my income.
- ___20. I practice relaxation, breathing exercises, meditation or prayer once each day.

Any item scored (1) or (2)-great job! You are preventing stress well in those areas. Any item scored (3) (4) or (5) indicates opportunity for improvement. You may choose to begin very easy, small changes to improve, whenever you are ready.

Body Mass Index Chart for Adults

Calculate your body Mass Index

BMI	Height (in)																		
	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76
Wgt. (lbs)	4'10"	4'11"	5'0"	5'1"	5'2"	5'3"	5'4"	5'5"	5'6"	5'7"	5'8"	5'9"	5'10"	5'11"	6'0"	6'1"	6'2"	6'3"	6'4"
100	21	20	20	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	13	12
105	22	21	21	20	19	19	18	18	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13
110	23	22	22	21	20	20	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	15	14	14	13
115	24	23	23	22	21	20	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	14	14
120	25	24	23	23	22	21	21	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	15
125	26	25	24	24	23	22	22	21	20	20	19	18	18	17	17	17	16	16	15
130	27	26	25	25	24	23	22	22	21	20	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16
135	28	27	26	26	25	24	23	23	22	21	21	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16
140	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	23	23	22	21	21	20	20	19	19	18	18	17
145	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	23	23	22	21	21	20	20	19	19	18	18
150	31	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	24	23	22	22	21	20	20	19	19	18
155	32	31	30	29	28	28	27	26	25	24	24	23	22	22	21	20	20	19	19
160	34	32	31	30	29	28	28	27	26	25	24	24	23	22	22	21	21	20	20
165	35	33	32	31	30	29	28	28	27	26	25	24	24	23	22	22	21	21	20
170	36	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	24	23	22	22	21	21
175	37	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	24	23	23	22	21
180	38	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	24	23	23	22
185	39	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	24	23	23
190	40	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	24	23
195	41	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	24
200	42	40	39	38	37	36	34	33	32	31	30	30	29	28	27	26	26	25	24
205	43	41	40	39	38	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	29	28	27	26	26	25
210	44	43	41	40	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	29	28	27	26	26
215	45	44	42	41	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	28	27	26
220	46	45	43	42	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	28	27
225	47	46	44	43	41	40	39	38	36	35	34	33	32	31	31	30	29	28	27
230	48	47	45	44	42	41	40	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	30	29	28
235	49	48	46	44	43	42	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	29
240	50	49	47	45	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29
245	51	50	48	46	45	43	42	41	40	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	32	31	30
250	52	51	49	47	46	44	43	42	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30
255	53	52	50	48	47	45	44	43	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31
260	54	53	51	49	48	46	45	43	42	41	40	38	37	36	35	34	33	33	32
265	56	54	52	50	49	47	46	44	43	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33
270	57	55	53	51	49	48	46	45	44	42	41	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33
275	58	56	54	52	50	49													

BMI Scoring

Normal Weight = 19-24

Obese = 30-39

Overweight = 25-29

Extreme Obesity = 40-54

Note: BMI values rounded to the nearest whole number. BMI categories based on CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) criteria.

Tool #7. Beginning Life Changes Inventory: When is alcohol use a problem?

Definitions: One drink= 5 oz. of wine, 12 oz. of beer, 1.5 oz. liquor (80 proof).

Moderation: According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, “drinking in moderation is defined as having no more than 1 drink per day for women and no more than 2 drinks per day for men. This definition is referring to the amount consumed on any single day and is not intended as an average over several days.”

Binge drinking: The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism defines binge drinking “as the amount of alcohol leading to a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.08, which, for most adults, would be reached by consuming five drinks for men or four for women over a 2-hour period.”

Denial: “A psychological defense mechanism in which confrontation with a personal problem or with reality is avoided by denying the existence of the problem or reality.” *Don’t even know I am lying.*

Use of alcohol may be social, recreational or a self-defeating behavior. Use the criteria below to determine whether your use has become a problem. The information below is based on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V)-the manual that physicians, therapists and insurance companies use to define and diagnose substance abuse and dependence. Please notify your therapist or a physician if you identify a problem.

DSM V- Substance Use Disorder: *Check all that apply in a 12 months period

- Use results in an inability to fulfill a major obligation
- Recurrent legal problems.
- Continuing to use despite the objections of others or evidence that use is causing problems.
- Increased tolerance
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Using greater amounts than intended or using more frequently than intended.
- Unsuccessful efforts to reduce, control or quit use.
- Excessive amounts of time involved in getting, using or recovering from the substance.
- Use causes reduction or impairment in ability to fulfill major social, family, school or job duties.
- Use in potentially dangerous situations: driving under the influence, use near small children, use while operating machines or using sharp objects.

**Two or three symptoms indicate a mild substance use disorder, four or five symptoms indicate a moderate substance use disorder, and six or more symptoms indicate a severe substance use disorder.*

When is Caffeine use a problem?

Caffeine intoxication is defined as consumption of 250 mg or more of caffeine (3 or more servings of caffeine). And 5 or more of the following symptoms: Check all that apply.

- Muscle twitching
- Restlessness
- Flushed face
- Stomach upset
- Nervousness
- Increased urination
- Heart pounding
- Excitement
- Can’t sit still
- Insomnia
- Rambling speech
- Rambling thoughts.

Tool #8 Beginning Life Changes ADHD Inventory

Do distractions, difficulty staying on task or finishing projects interfere with your success?
(Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may be causing the problem.)

According to the National Institute of Health, ADHD affects an estimated 4.4 percent of adults in the United States in a given year. Symptoms include difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty controlling behavior, and very high levels of activity.*

Below is an ADHD checklist from author [Jeffrey Freed's 2007 book, *4 Weeks To An Organized Life with AD/HD*](#). **☑ Each YES answer.**

- 1. Do you procrastinate, regularly putting off tasks that, for you, require a lot of mental energy?
- 2. Do you have difficulty completing tasks or projects?
- 3. Do you often forget or find yourself late for appointments?
- 4. Do you feel restless or full of nervous energy and compelled to do things?
- 5. Do you have trouble organizing yourself to do a complex task?
- 6. Do you fidget or squirm, needing to move some part of your body if you have to sit or keep still?

Consider these as well

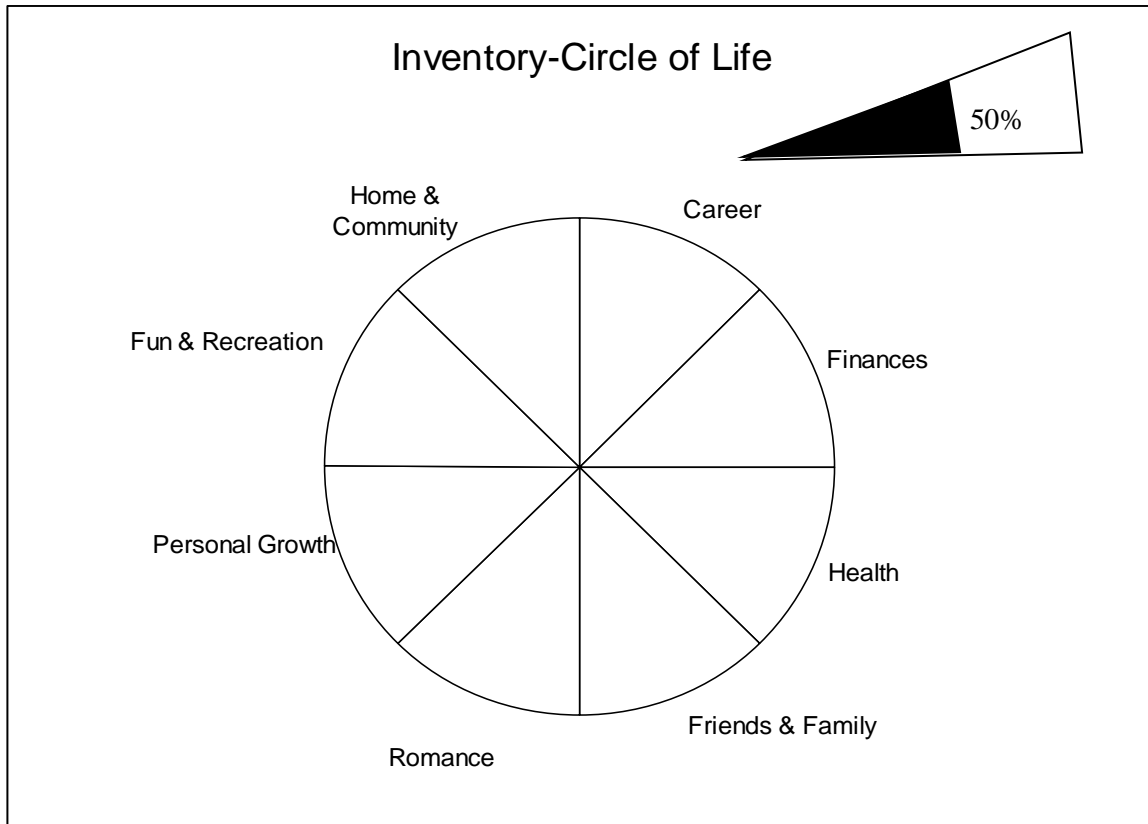
- 1. Do you find yourself lost in your own thoughts, even when someone is talking to you?
- 2. Do you have difficulty throwing things away, even if they have little value or specific usefulness to you?
- 3. Do you react quickly to conflicts?
- 4. Do you sometimes blurt things out then wish that you hadn't spoken?
- 5. Do you take things to heart, finding yourself easily hurt and sensitive?
- 6. Do you find most of these problems disappear when you have something fun or interesting to do?

Scoring: Yes to 6 or more of the 12 symptoms suggests the need for an evaluation from a trained health care professional. Although this inventory does not diagnose ADHD, these symptoms may interfere with your ability to finish the assignments in this workbook or follow-through with practical application of the tools.

Tool #9 Are You Living Your Best Life?

Instructions: The eight pie-shaped sections in the Circle of Life below represent the various areas of your life. Using the center of the circle as zero percentage and the outer edge of each pie shape as 100%, rate your level of satisfaction with each area by shading in percentage of the pie section that indicates your level of satisfaction.

Example: If you are 50% satisfied with your career, draw a line across half of the pie shape. Darken the half nearest the center of the circle.



Is this your best life?

Score: How does your satisfaction rating match your values? Example: “You decide that your 50% satisfaction with career is OK, because you’re in school or focused on parenting.” Or “60% satisfaction with health or romance is OK because you’ve accepted your chronic medical condition.” Be creative in your analysis. You may rate 100% satisfaction with romance or career when you are content with unemployment, retirement or remaining single.

✓ **If you desire a higher satisfaction rating, what improvements will you make?**

✓ **Create an action plan to improve the least satisfactory elements of your life.**

Tool #10: Mindful Breathing Meditation

**Practice mindful breathing regularly as you continue through this workbook.
Take 90 seconds to relax your mind and body.**

Have you tried to meditate, but thought you failed because your mind raced or you got bored? You are not alone. The word ‘meditation’ is intimidating. Let’s make it simple and easy. Meditation is just noticing your thoughts and having awareness of your breath. How hard is that? Ok, so maybe you noticed that most of your “meditation” is filled with worry, anger or frustration... that is not a fail! Thoughts and emotions will race, scatter, fly all over time and space... that’s why this tool for connecting your thoughts to your breathing helps calm both your mind and your body. Focusing on the temperature changes inside of your nose as you inhale cool air then exhale warm air helps you calm down. Physically and mentally. Concentrating on the physical temperature of your nose during inhale and exhale of breath stops your brain from emotionally time traveling into past events or into future made-up stories.



1. **Progressive muscle relaxation.** Sit upright in a chair, positioned comfortably with your feet resting on the ground. Now wiggle your toes. Focus your attention on your wiggling toes just long enough to **take ownership of your mind and body. Become present in this moment.** Relax your toes and move your attention upward, tightening then releasing every muscle in your body from your toes to your shoulders. Once your legs, hips and torso muscles are relaxed, focus attention on your shoulders. Pull your shoulders down, away from your ears. Relax your shoulder muscles. Relax your neck. Relax every muscle in your face. With your whole body now loose and relaxed, you are ready to practice focused nostril breathing.



2. **Take a deep breath through your nose, lips closed.** Inhaled air will feel slightly cooler in your nose. Notice the cooling sensation around your nostrils as you inhale, hold it briefly then as you exhale, feel the warmed air exit your nostrils. Focusing on the temperature change in your nostrils stops your mind from time traveling. Continue to breathe deeply, mindfully, focusing on slight changes in your nostril temperature as you inhale and exhale. **All you need is 90 seconds of mindful breathing to calm your brain.**



Points to remember:

-  **Relaxation and deep breathing may feel awkward and difficult at first.** You are not failing if your mind races and your muscles twitch. It is all part of the process of calming your mind and body down. Refocus on the temperature inside of your nose anytime you notice your mind wander into a worry or a “to-do list”. Another deep breath will calm you back into the rhythm of the “cool air in and warm air out.”
-  **Just 90 seconds of focused breathing are enough to make a BIG difference.** Start practicing your mindful nostril breathing each time you wait at a stop light in traffic or walk from one room to another. Take 90 seconds to breathe mindfully before important conversations, each time you shower or bathe, and as you lay down to rest for the evening.

Week #1 Beginning Life Changes Homework

1. **Review the items in your “Stress Prevention Test”** page 25. Note the items rated “4” or a “5”. Also note your “**Best Life Inventory**” page 29. List the unsatisfactory elements of your life that you are willing to improve. _____

2. **List what you choose to DO DIFFERENTLY** to achieve the results you seek. Small incremental steps work best. Be specific in your action plan including time, date, resources and support.

3. **Watch all of the videos and listen to the podcasts on Telka’s website under the section Mental Help Videos.**

4. **Report your progress each week to your support group, friends, family or therapist.** Sharing your journey with others improves success. Working through the lessons and tools in this workbook will keep you motivated and inspire others to do the same.

5. **Optional resources are listed on Telka’s website under Resources and Trainings.**

6. **Start practicing meditation and relaxation techniques this week.** For additional help, seek community resources offering free meditation or yoga classes. Free guided videos are available on the Internet.

7. **Stuck? Have a question? Use the information on this site with the healthcare provider of your choice.** Or email Telka directly: Therapy@TelkaArend-Ritter