

THRIVERcise: Healing from Toxic / Narcissistic Abuse - Don't Personalize

Introduction: There are many opinions when it comes to healing from abuse whether it be from toxic, narcissistic, and/or downright controlling people. The video(s) offering this FREE THRIVERcise series covers four actions you can take to facilitate healing – This THRIVERcise will be focusing on Not Personalizing the Toxicity.

In a moment, we'll summarize the four techniques or concepts of focus for this series that will accelerate your current healing program and provide a solid basis for those just taking the first steps. In either case, you are DOING THE WORK to heal. Congratulations.

At the end of this **THRIVERcise**, we've outlined the steps to schedule your initial **Free Meet the Matrix Virtual 1:1** and/or join **our eThrivers Email List**. You can skip this section by clicking <u>HERE</u>.

Get Some Distance

TtM Best Practice: FREE THRIVERcise Available at ThrivetheMatrix.com NOW. Before completing, if you haven't done so, view you the YouTube Video by clicking on the tile below:





Validating Your Experience

TtM Best Practice: FREE THRIVERcise Available at ThrivetheMatrix.com NOW. Before completing, if you haven't done so, view you the YouTube Video by clicking on the tile below:



Stop Personalizing

TtM Best Practice: Before completing this THRIVERcise (you're going to do quite a bit of work), if you haven't done so, watch this video available on YouTube first – No need to leave this document, simply click on the YouTube tile below.





Radical Acceptance – Forthcoming

THRIVERcise: Stop Personalizing

In this **THRIVERcise**, you will practice the second of four techniques and work to **'Stop Personalizing'** any toxicity directed to you – This says more about the Controller or Toxic person than it will EVER say about you.

My hope is that your journey continues, and this program gives your start or current recovery efforts a turbo boost.

As mentioned, expect a FREE THRIVERcise you can use to practice after each video in which the four solid steps to healing (not all inclusive) have been posted.

Instructions: In this **THRIVERcise**, you will practice the **third of four techniques**, **Not Personalizing**, including:

Recognizing Guilt vs. Shame so you don't continue to take any shame on-board.

Rejecting Projection by gathering evidence that what you're being told <u>you are</u> or <u>are not</u> makes you nothing more than a mirror.

Realizing the DARVO Effect is going to mean that any attempts to hold a Controller accountable (even if in an informal, friendly way) will result in exaggerated falsehoods about you to shift the focus away from the Controller's own behavior.

Healing from Abuse – Four Steps to Healing:

Don't Personalize – Typically, Controllers are filled with shame, and they need somewhere to put it. And they find plenty of opportunities to do so, including twisting your natural human imperfections (reminder: no one is perfect) to take your mindset from 'doing something bad' (again, even if this is not the case or for minor everyday occurrences) into 'you are something bad.'

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All that said, we've got a lot to do. Let's dive in.

Part 1 - Guilt vs. Shame

Shame researcher Dr. Brene Brown makes a distinction between Guilt & Shame in her book The Power of Vulnerability: Teachings of Authenticity, Connection, and Courage, published by Sounds True, May 2013 (Available on Audible).

Guilt is indicative of the feeling that we 'did something bad.'

Shame is indicative of the feeling that it's not a one-off, our actions 'make us something bad.'

Shame is a very real feeling, but an unproductive one. In the end, all of us have weaknesses, negative patterns, challenges, even crises. As human beings, the best we can do is acknowledge them, help ourselves or seek help, and try to be better tomorrow than we were today. Everyone faces adversity, and that can be because of our mistakes. Still, being ashamed of who you are and who you are not, or what you've done or not done, just compounds over time and eventually we need somewhere to put it.

As Controllers, Toxic People, those with Cluster B disorders, etc. (Remember: we theorize, we never diagnose) are prone to carry more shame, they've often constructed false personas or facades to bury it while 'keeping up appearances.'

Those who aren't controllers feel shame, too. But not in a disordered way. We can be ashamed of ourselves temporarily, but it is not pervasive.

It's sad really, as no one deserves to live their lives running from deep rooted insecurity, thus feeding it, and creating more.

Guilt is a bit different. It's the knowledge that we've done something outside of our moral compass or that there was action or inaction that was inappropriate and requires self-reflection, behavior change, or amends.

We've all heard the term 'Guilt Trip' and they typically come when we've made a choice, and another person attempts to influence us, so we make a different one. In

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thinking about it, it would be more appropriate to call it giving someone a 'Shame Trip' as typically, a 'Guilt Trip' tries to inspire shame and thus, a desired result that one could argue was coerced.

Part 1: Guilt vs. Shame - Exercise: As your TtM coaching did in the companion video for this THRIVERcise, consider the following scenario. Josh certainly fell short, as all of us do, and this could present a controller with an opportunity to offload some excess shame. Which response suggests that someone 'is something bad' rather than having 'done something bad.'

Answer the reflection questions directly following the scenarios.

TtM Best Practice: It can be easier to detect an offloading of Shame, if there is an absence of positive intent or what Brene Brown calls a 'generous interpretation' of events. In other words, we look to see the best in people before immediately launching into anger or frustration. Keep in mind, a lack of positive intent may be grounds to feel ashamed, but not to stay in this state. This is where two paths diverge in the woods. Where one might make amends, another may not admit to the shame and pass it along to someone else – In other words, a lack of accountability.

Scenario 1: Josh decided to forgo the first family reunion since he was a boy in favor of attending a concert with friends. To be honest, Josh was a bit bummed to miss it, although it started at noon and the concert was at 8pm. He spent the afternoon with a friend, and they left for the concert after grabbing some fast food.

The concert was amazing, and Josh wouldn't have chosen differently again if he could. Still, on the way home, he knew his sister would have something to say about it. She always did. Of course, she's never faced with these choices. She's so self-conscious about her looks, she avoids any social situations outside of the family.

The Guilt vs. Shame Game: Upon arriving home, Josh was met with his sister in the kitchen, still cleaning up from the day's events. Before he could even open his mouth...



Response 1: 'You know, Josh, I might be able to relate to your actions today if my favorite band was in town. But they weren't and our extended family was. There were quite a few of the cousins who voiced their disappointment at not seeing you. How do you feel about that? Do you think you might have been a bit inconsiderate in this situation? Was there anything you could have done differently? And, to the extent you need to make things right, how do you suppose going about it?'

Response 2: 'Can you give me a hand with these plates? It's the most you could do, I suppose. It was so inconsiderate of you to be out all day and the better part of the night, missing the reunion. The family was extremely disappointed in you. But I'll bet you didn't give it a second thought. It's all about you, as usual. You are a total embarrassment. You always have been. In fact, it's for the best that you missed it. People haven't seen you in years and you've not gotten any thinner. We saved ourselves some embarrassment today. You're hopeless.'

Reflection Prompts:

- Highlighters out (or red pens, etc.). Take a moment to compare the two responses from Josh's sister. In each, highlight anything you think indicated that Josh did or is something bad, color coding each.
 - For example, anything implying Josh did something bad could be highlighted in YELLOW. Highlight any comments implying here is something bad in another color – In our TtM Summary, we'll be using RED.
- Once you've completed this step, label the scenario that offloaded or sought to induce Shame. In what ways did it differ from the other? If you were Josh, what might you be able to let fly and not personalize?
- Was there any evidence in the scenario itself that supports any shaming of Josh by his sister?
- For either scenario, is it fair to say that Josh is justified in feeling guilty for the way he managed the day?



- Was there evidence in the scenario that Josh's sister may have buried shame and is taking this opportunity to offload it?
- Instead of being ashamed of his actions or continuing to feel guilty, what can he do to make the situation right?

TtM Answer Key: Your TtM Life Coach has considered this scenario as well and completed the same exercises. Compare your work.

The Guilt vs. Shame Game: Upon arriving home, Josh was met with his sister in the kitchen, still cleaning up from the day's events. Before he could even open his mouth...

Response 1: 'You know, Josh, I might be able to relate to your actions today if my favorite band was in town. But they weren't and our extended family was. There were quite a few of the cousins who voiced their disappointment at not seeing you. How do you feel about that? Do you think you might have been a bit inconsiderate in this situation? Was there anything you could have done differently? And, to the extent you need to make things right, how do you suppose going about it?'

Response 2: SHAME RESPONSE 'Can you give me a hand with these plates? It's the most you could do, I suppose. It was so inconsiderate of you to be out all day and the better part of the night, missing the reunion. The family was extremely disappointed in you. But I'll bet you didn't give it a second thought. It's all about you, as usual. You are a total embarrassment. You always have been. In fact, it's for the best that you missed it. People haven't seen you in years and you've not gotten any thinner. We saved ourselves some embarrassment today. You're hopeless.'

Reflection Prompts:



- Highlighters out (or red pens, etc.). Take a moment to compare the two responses from Josh's sister. In each, highlight anything you think indicated that Josh did or is something bad, color coding each.
 - For example, anything implying Josh did something bad could be highlighted in YELLOW. Highlight any comments implying here is something bad in another color – In our TtM Summary, we'll be using RED.
- Once you've completed this step, label the scenarios response that offloaded or sought to induce Shame. In what ways did it differ from the other? Josh's sister sought to induce shame in scenario two. If you were Josh, what might you be able to let fly and not personalize? While it may have been initially embarrassing to have a member of the immediate family not in attendance for a day that was important to others, this does not suggest that Josh is an embarrassment himself, it was the situation and his actions, not his essence.

And, had he attended, he would still weigh the same. Nothing he could have done would have prevented that; it only serves the purpose of furthering a shame response in Josh, one that might be the most difficult not to personalize. Still, Josh can find ways to face himself and how he feels about himself without carrying the shame associated with that remark. He may be happy with his appearance or could examine actions to change it if he so desires, but to carry shame about it is unproductive and inappropriate. Weight is not a leading indicator of character.

- Was there any evidence in the scenarios themselves that supports any shaming of Josh by his sister? It's clear in the scenario that Josh did feel a pang of guilt in not showing up for the reunion, but he is recognizing that he is doing something bad, not 'being' something bad.
- For either scenario, is it fair to say that Josh is justified in feeling guilty for the way he managed the day? He is aware that he didn't do the right thing, especially given the window in between the event start and the concert.



Josh could have decided to attend each. The feeling is justified but can be temporary and resolved.

- Was there evidence in the scenario that Josh's sister may have buried shame and is taking this opportunity to offload it? Josh's insight into his sister's own insecurities hints that she, herself, feels ashamed and had an opportunity to shed some of that. That is further supported by the fact that his weight is immaterial and does not define him as a person or his ability to do the right thing.
- Instead of being ashamed of his actions or continuing to feel guilty, what can he do to make the situation right? TtM Suggestion (among many possibilities): If impractical to contact everyone, Josh could reach out to the cousins who were disappointed in not seeing him, ask how they are doing, apologize for missing the event, and making a commitment to keep in touch and be in attendance (permitting) for the next reunion.

Activity Debrief:

- Was there something you missed or that TtM overlooked?
- o Do you agree with the assessments?
- o Why or why not?
- The next time you're in a situation where you could have done better, do you think you can acknowledge any healthy guilt and resolve it via amends?
- Has recognizing guilt and shame as two separate emotions and being able to recognize each in the scenario and responses been helpful?

Part 2: Rejecting Projection

Sometimes the controllers in your life are omnipotent. They know you better than you do...or at least they sound as if they do. In this module, we'll acknowledge that

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the opposite is true. They are expert in themselves and expert in displacing the shame associated with those aspects that may conflict with the false self they have created as a defense mechanism. Totem's hope is that one day, no one will feel the need to do so, but that may be unrealistic – We'll talk more about that when we get to Radical Acceptance.

Part 2: Rejecting Projection - Inventory / Brainstorm

Instructions: This activity may not be able to be completed today unless you have enough grist for the mill. Consider 5-6 things that you are told you ARE or ARE NOT by the Controller in your life.

- What were the circumstances? What triggered the event or comment?
- If you can remember or note this, does it offer any clues that the messages you are receiving are pure projection?
- Next, document any anecdotal evidence (TtM is not suggesting that you violate privacy or engage in any other covert activity to search for evidence. Instead, take a closer look at the reality around you as the basis) to support in what if any ways, the evidence points to your actual reality and a need for reflection or time for some projection rejection.
- The first row has been completed for you as an example.

TtM Best Practice: As a call back to the **THRIVERcise which included Validating Your Reality**, use your **Trust Panel** as needed if in doubt assessing Reflection or
Projection Rejection. **All tools are meant to be used in tandem for you to get out of the situation if/whenever you can, confirm your truth, repaid negative self-talk, and accept your ability to use the skills you've learned to THRIVE in reality as it is, in recognition that you can only change you.**

Attribute	Circumstance &	Controller	You	Do You
	Clues			Require



'You never spend time with me! You always are with friends.'	It was a quiet evening at home, and your husband/wife was distracted by the TV. Some attempts were made at conversation, but nothing you said seemed to go anywhere. Your husband/wife seemed to want to keep up with what you were saying but seemed impatient. You received a call from a friend and since nothing much was happening at home, you decided to meet a friend for a drink.	Would your partner seem distracted if the desire were to spend quality time? Your partners did try to acknowledge what you were saying but despite your best efforts, you were unable to spark a meaningful conversation.	You'd have rather remained in conversation, but you weren't able to get one off the ground. Your friend is always good for conversation, and you've always enjoyed your time with them. In fact, you initially turned them down only to take them up on their offer later. You are confused. Where did you go wrong?	Reflection or Projection Rejection? VERDICT: Project Rejection While you could have communicat ed why you were leaving to spend time with a friend and that would have resulted in meaningful change, but the cognitive dissonance (actions vs. words) does not support this. At what point did your partner seem genuinely interested in spending the night together?
Attribute	Circumstance & Clues	Controller	You	Do You Require Reflection or

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		Projection Rejection?
		Verdict:

TtM Best Practice: In your assessment, before you decide on Reflection or Projection Rejection, ensure you gave a generous interpretation. Give credit where credit is due but trust the evidence. Assess what you might have done to mitigate the situation. Address the issue if you are able, although meaningful change is limited in this scenario.

In theory, your partner may have good intentions – They should want to spend time with you, but their actions suggest that while they want to be considerate of your feelings, they aren't willing to follow through and those actions are not consistent with the statement. In fact, it suggests the opposite. They should either refrain from making the statement or engage – Both aren't possible.

Part 3: The DARVO Effect – The guided video for this THRIVERcise includes the quote: 'The only way for a guilty person to maintain their innocence is to find someone else guilty of something worse.'

In your research and as review in the guided video, the DARVO method stands for Deflect \rightarrow Attack \rightarrow Reverse \rightarrow Victim \leftarrow Offender and when it comes to accountability, it's the oldest trick in the Controller's manipulation manual.

The goal? Shift blame back, confuse, and slip through your fingers.



The **DARVO Effect** accounts for the veracity, tenacity, and lunacy of their claims and it works.

The **DARVO Effect** abides by the quote - the guilty maintain their innocence by finding the other party guilty of the same but far worse.

For Example:

Tina Text to friend Taylor: 'I can't believe you stood me up on Saturday for the frat party. I found the best little black dress you'd ever see, and Shane was supposed to be there; that was my chance. But he'll keep. They'll be others. Next time, call me, ok, Ms. Double Booked.

(While texts can lack context, it's clear that Tina was tactful when mentioning this to Taylor. She's bringing it to her attention but not questioning her friendship, although DARVO is employed most times for any perceived slight. Tina may have sent the message employing this tone knowing Taylor can be a controller who is reactive to any attempts to hold her accountable).

DARVO & the DARVO Effect – Taylor will deflect, attack, and reverse roles in becoming the victim by including what on its face is a far larger 'crime' than missing the frat party. **The DARVO Effect can be hard not to react to and/or personalize**).

Taylor's Response to Tina: 'So, it's going to be like that, huh. I told myself: she's going to make a big deal of that. I knew it. This came from the girl that left me ride less and shoeless at the Spring Fling. You're famous for exactly what you're accusing me of. Cherish, Mary and the rest all agree. Of course, it's not in what they said, I can just tell when your name comes up. Total lack of self-awareness to try to hang that over my head. Maybe make sure your side of the street is clean. Right now it looks like the street sweeper went on strike. Unbelievable and hypocritical TBH.' 'It's all good, but it should be me that has an issue right now. I'll catch up with you back at the appt. Otherwise, you know it's all love on my end, much!'

Part 3: The DARVO Effect – Taylor Text Analysis:

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Instructions: Answer the following reflection questions and scroll for the suggested TtM Answer Key:

- Review Taylor's response. Add a D, A, R, V, O next to its corresponding place in the text.
- How was the DARVO Effect on display in this text? How did it compare to Tina's attempt?
- How did Taylor 'trump up' her charges to minimize hero own actions and avoid accountability.
- Highlight the ways that Taylor reversed roles to become victim.

Part 3: The DARVO Effect – Taylor Text Analysis (TtM Take)

Taylor's Response to Tina: D) 'So, it's going to be like that, huh. I told myself: she's going to make a big deal of that. I knew it. A)This came from the girl that left me ride-less and shoeless at the Spring Fling. O) You're famous for exactly what you're accusing me of. R / V) Cherish, Mary and the rest all agree. Of course, it's not in what they said, I can just O) tell when your name comes up. O) Total lack of self-awareness to V) try to hang that over my head. O) Maybe make sure your side of the street is clean. Right now it looks like the street sweeper went on strike. O) Unbelievable and hypocritical TBH.' 'It's all good, V) but it should be me that has an issue right now. I'll catch up with you back at the appt. V) Otherwise, you know it's all love on my end, much!'

- Review Taylor's response. Add a D, A, R, V, O next to its corresponding place in the text. See in RED above.
- How was the DARVO Effect on display in this text? How did it compare to Tina's attempt?
- How did Taylor 'trump up' her charges to minimize hero own actions and avoid accountability.
- Highlight the ways that Taylor reversed roles to become victim.

Part 3: The DARVO Effect – Essay Prompt:

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Instructions: Note your thoughts for the essay prompt below. Would you like to review your work with your TtM Coach given your response below? Scroll for instructions for scheduling our FREE Meet the Matrix Virtual 1:1 and joining the Thrive email list.

- If anything, this scenario confirmed that the DARVO Method and the DARVO Effect of making the counter-offense seem worse are used for a reason: they work. What challenges might Tina have in not personalizing Taylor's response? How could tools you have learned and practiced to this point including Grey Rock Responses (Address Facts, Ignore the Abuse), Validating Your Reality (via a Trust Panel), deciding to Reflect or Projection Rejection, etc. be put to work in getting past anything difficult to personalize?
- Does Tina have what she needs to provide herself enough evidence not to take on the shame inherent in this effective DARVO attempt?
- How might Tina conceding to herself that is guilty of the facts presented empower her to feel, process, and resolve temporary guilt rather than internalizing shame for 'being something bad?'
- Without exacerbating a losing situation, how might Tina forego personalizing this DARVO by honoring Taylor's implied wish to forget about the incident while setting boundaries to prevent the use of the DARVO Method and Effect in future scenarios?

The Last Word: In reviewing your work, what strategies can you use to form a plan for not personalizing toxicity and unearned shared and what might that plan look like?

GREAT WORK



Let's Talk About It

Schedule your FREE Meet the Matrix Virtual 1:1 today. There will be grief, and there are ways to HEAL from that, too.

Get an early start on that process with supportive sessions full of sound strategy and THRIVERcises to help you DO THE WORK.

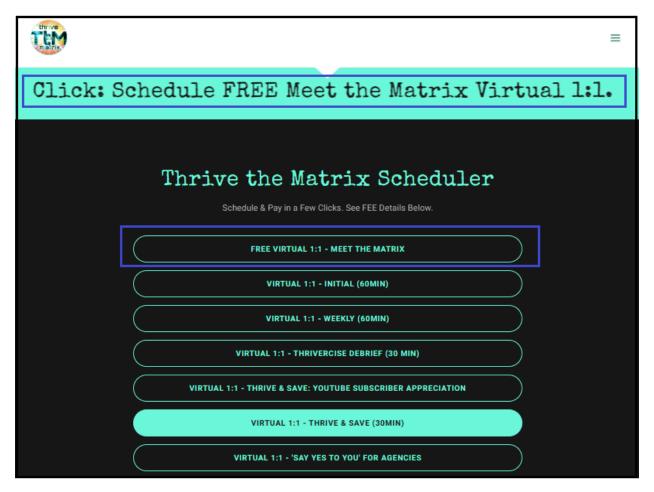
How to Schedule Your FREE Virtual 1:1 with your TtM Coach, Andy Lynch.

1. Click <u>HERE</u> to bypass the TtM website and Scheduler to the Meet the Matrix scheduling option (powered by Calendly).

Or...

2. Visit <u>Thrive the Matrix -Coaching: TtM Scheduler</u> and select the <u>Meet the Matrix Consult</u> option on the website. You can also click the <u>Promotional Banner</u> at the top of the web page as shown below:





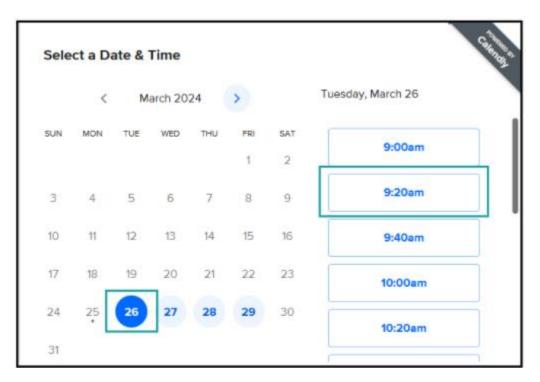
3. When prompted with the calendar, select a Date to view available times.





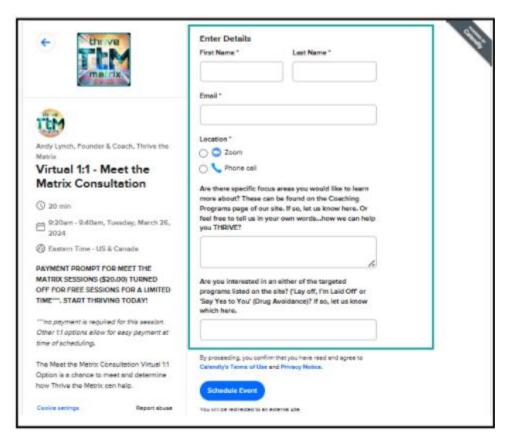
4. Select your preferred time. If a time is not available, it will not appear for selection.





5. You'll be asked to enter your **Name**, **Email Address**, and select either the **Zoom or Phone option**. There is a field for entering anything specific you'd like to focus on.



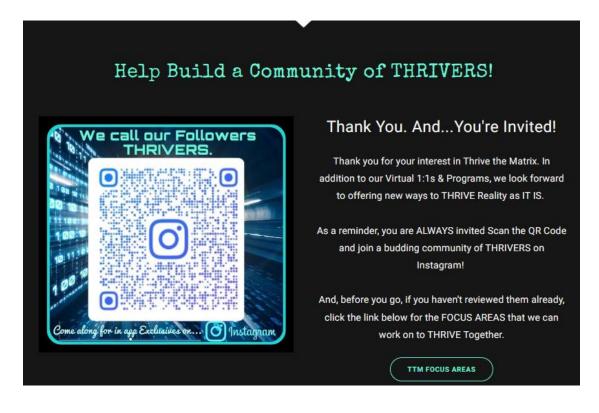


6. That's it! After clicking **Schedule Event**, you'll be redirected to the website with a **QR code** to join the **Community of Thrivers** that I'd like to build with your help on Instagram. Scanning is optional.



Please Note: You will receive a Calendar Invite at the email address entered and a reminder for the session before our designated meeting time.

Scan the QR Code on the Build of Community of Thrivers landing page to follow up on Instagram:



Best Practice: If you found the THRIVERcise(s) and/or our session insightful, then be sure to join the eTHRIVER Email List.

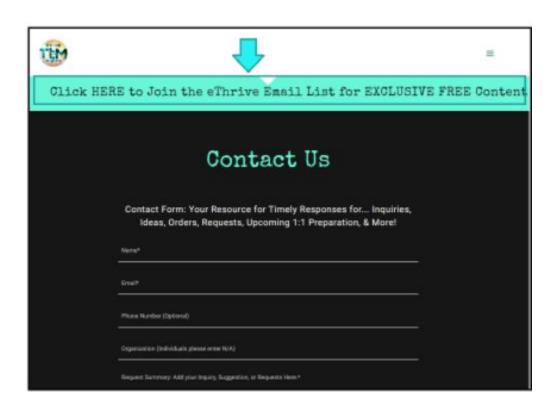
Please Note: Your Email Address will only be used for the purpose of scheduling and doing so will not automatically add you to the eTHRIVER email list. Consider using the Promotional Banner on our Contact PAGE to join - follow the instructions below for joining via the banner or the Contact the Matrix form radio button.

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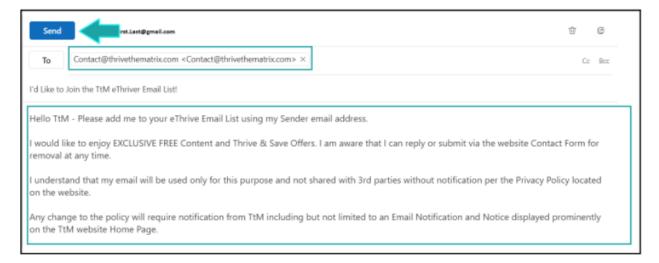


Joining the Thrive Email List:

Clicking the Website Banner – Contact the Matrix: Once clicked, an automated email will populate, only requiring you to hit send. Please review the email for more on how we use your information (we do not share your email address with third parties) and more on our Privacy Policy. Simply click Send. In two clicks, you'll have access to additional FREE CONTENT and THRIVE & SAVE OFFERS as they become available.







If you would like to join as an **eTHRIVER** using the **Contact the Matrix Form** for your Intended purpose, simply click the radio button before submission.

TtM Best Practice: Did you the <u>TtM Contact the Matrix Form</u> allows you to upload attachments? Before using the <u>TtM Scheduler</u> to secure an appointment submit your work for this or THRIVERcises using the form and TtM will review it prior to your session.

Please note: Each THRIVERcise is posted in PDF format*** (see footer for more information), however you collated your answers in a document is acceptable. However, the easier it is to correspond your answers to the action prompts in the activities, the easier it will be to review and be prepared to discuss.

Both the radio button for the **eThriver List** and 'add attachment' feature are shown in the **Contact the Matrix form** shown below. In the Example, the form is filled out as you would if submitting your work on a THRIVERcise for review prior to the session.

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Ideas, Orders, R	equests, Upcoming 1:1 Preparation, & Morel
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