**The HEAL Method Part I of II**

“He that cannot forgive others break the bridge over which he must pass himself, for every man has needs to be forgiven” Lord Herbert.

There have been many books written on the expanding science of “intention”. The HEAL method incorporates positive intention to improve the results of Heart Focus; Challenging Unenforceable Rules; and, PERT. The HEAL method is an advanced practice and should be used only after you have already learned and practiced the above tools. It is not an add-on; it is a powerful way to reinforce and practice forgiveness. It can be used in both a long and a short practice. It is **the strongest technique devised by Dr. Larson (author of “Forgive for Good”) for healing situations where the experience of hurt goes particularly deep.**

Dr. Larson recommend that you practice PERT before moving on to HEAL method. The difference is that the HEAL method is designed to work with a specific hurtful experience, while PERT is for general emotional soothing and refocusing.

When you first practice the HEAL method is beneficial to set aside about 15 minutes. It is also useful to have privacy and some quiet. After practicing on a specific grievance, you can use the HEAL method in the same way you do PERT – – quickly and immediately.

HEAL is an acronym where each letter is an integral part of the process and must be practiced. Each letter will be described separately for teaching purposes but when you practice the HEAL method the steps are to be combined. The letters of the HEAL method stand for *Hope*, *Educate*, *Affirm*, and *Long-Term*. You must practice each element in exactly that order for maximum effect.

The **H** in HEAL stands for *Hope*. The first component of HEAL is to make a strong *Hope* statement. The *Hope* statement represents the specific positive outcome that you desired in the hurtful situation. The *Hope* statement must be worded in positive terms. This is critical to the practice of the HEAL method. The **H** focuses on what you wanted to happen in this situation instead of what you did not want to occur. Many people find this difficult; often they say they wanted bad things not to happen to them. They have a hard time remembering that they once wanted something good. For instance, rather than saying “I wanted my husband not to cheat on me”, make the statement, “I wanted a strong and lasting marriage.” The first response is worded in the negative, the second in the positive. The second condition for successful *Hope* statement is that we make it personal. We are making an **H** statement for us and no one else. To do this we make an assertive statement of our goal not just that something good should happen. We are not just wishing for happiness but that a personal goal will be met. To this end, the *Hope* statement begins with the word “I” and focuses on our personal goal. In this way it is different from your positive intention, your large goal. The final condition for crafting a good *Hope* statement *is to make it specific*. For example, “I hoped Sydney would be an honest and reliable business partner.” Remember, the *Hope* in HEAL is never your desire to change another person’s character. Needing to change someone else is the principal ingredient in an Unenforceable Rule.

The **E in** HEAL stands for***Educate***. The **E** remind you about the way things work: there are limits to your control over people, yourself, or life events. We ***Educate* ourselves about the way the world really operates.** Each specific *Hope* you have exists with the awareness that you may not get what you want. ***Educate*** also means that you are aware that every hope you have had several possible outcomes: it may turn out better, worse, or exactly how you anticipated. Limited control is a reality for each of us and it can be difficult for humans to accept. To educate yourself is to understand, as the Rolling Stones used to say, “you can’t always get what you want.” In the ***Educate*** statement we acknowledge the possibility of not getting what we want and fully accept that reality.

Begin your ***E*** statement like this: “I understand and accept that…” Examples of this part: some friends are disloyal, some relationships and, some parents are bad, some business arrangements do not work. It is common to be disappointed.

To begin the practice of the HEAL method start with 3 to 5 minutes of practicing Heart Focus, then hold your attention in the area around your heart. This area should feel warm and peaceful because during your heart focus practice, you have thought of someone you love or something that leaves you feeling positive. Continue to breathe slowly and deeply into and out of your stomach. Then craft an appropriate *Hope* statement. This statement should be **positive, personal, and specific** . Remember to keep breathing slowly and deeply into and out of your belly and to center your attention in the area around your heart.

Then release the *Hope* statement into the impersonality of the *Educate* statement. The ***E*** acknowledges the uncertainty inherent in wanting anything. Keep breathing slowly and deeply.

Now attach the *E* statement to the end of the ***H***statement. The two statements are best joined with “however, I understand and accept…” Here is an example of ***H*** and ***E***statements. ***H*** statement: “I hoped my business partner Sarah would remain a trusted colleague.” *E* statement: “however, I understand and accept that not all business partnerships work out the way I want.”

Practice the ***H*** and ***E*** parts of this process until you are comfortable with your statements. You should practice them faithfully for one week and may initially take 25 minutes a day to learn at first. But, with practice, you should be able to complete the exercise in 10 minutes. And, you should then be resolved to leave your hurtful past behind and ready to move on.

At this point it is time to advance and learn and practice the ***A*** and ***L*** components of the HEAL method. They will be presented in The HEAL Method Part II (Soothing the Hurt).[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. Adapted from “Forgive for Good, Dr. Fred Luskin [↑](#footnote-ref-1)