

# Emotion-Focused Workbook

---

*A Guide to  
Compassionate Self-Reflection*

---



By Bridget Quebodeaux, GCFP, LMFT  
[www.Emotion-Focused.com](http://www.Emotion-Focused.com)

Illustrated by Jackson Hammill, Cover Art by Roman Hammill

## **Introduction** (a note from the author)

I am a therapist. Every day I have the privilege of accompanying my clients into their emotional world. What we encounter together is often painful, scary, shameful, unfamiliar or otherwise challenging for them to navigate--yet they persist. Hour after hour, I find myself witness to what I can only describe as an awesome and relentless will to heal. I know my clients' courageous work continues in the days between our therapy sessions. They have told me they want resources (videos, exercises, worksheets...) to help them on their path, and I have wanted to provide that for them. That's how this workbook was born.

While my clients are my inspiration, the exercises and recommended resources in this workbook will be beneficial to anyone working towards greater emotional flexibility and improved relationships—whether you are currently in therapy or not.

In Section I (*Why Emotion Focused*) you will be introduced to the purpose and power of your emotions. You will also learn about forces and factors beyond your control that may have shaped your current relationship to your emotions and contributed to various forms of suffering (anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties...). This kind of understanding makes both compassion for self and new ways of relating to yourself and others possible.

In Section II (*Emotion Focused Journaling*), you will be guided in exploring your internal experience while reflecting on a difficult event. My clients often tell me that reflecting on upsetting events between sessions can trigger

shame/judgment, rumination (re-playing the event over and over), shutting down or impulsively acting on feelings in ways that increase pain and suffering. The aim of Section II is to provide guidance and an alternative: reflection on challenging circumstances becomes an opportunity for self-soothing, non-judgmental self exploration, and movement towards your immediate goals and long-term values.

This workbook is greatly informed by my therapeutic orientation, Dynamic Emotion Focused Therapy. DEFT was developed by Susan Warren Warshow. Throughout Section I, you will find metaphors taken from Susan's teaching and her upcoming book (to be released 2019). I am deeply grateful for her permission to include them here. I believe they will enhance your learning experience, and it gives me joy to see them on these pages.

### **Acknowledgments**

I want to thank my clients for being my inspiration. I thank Susan Warshow for her guidance and for being the teacher, therapist and person she is. There is no greater influence than to lead by example. I thank my kids, Roman and Jackson, for the art on the cover and throughout this book (and for being kind, loving people). I thank my partner, Dana, for her tireless tolerance and encouragement of my endless passions and projects. Your humility and steadfastness do not mask your greatness. I'd be adrift without you.

## I. Why Emotion Focused?

### Maybe you can relate:

*I'm stuck (in work, in relationships, in destructive patterns...)*

*I struggle with making decisions.*

*My life looks great from the outside, but something is missing.*

*I often feel overwhelmed.*

*Things don't generally go my way.*

*People often take advantage of me/hurt me.*

*I can't seem to make relationships work.*

*I don't feel confident/I have low self-esteem.*

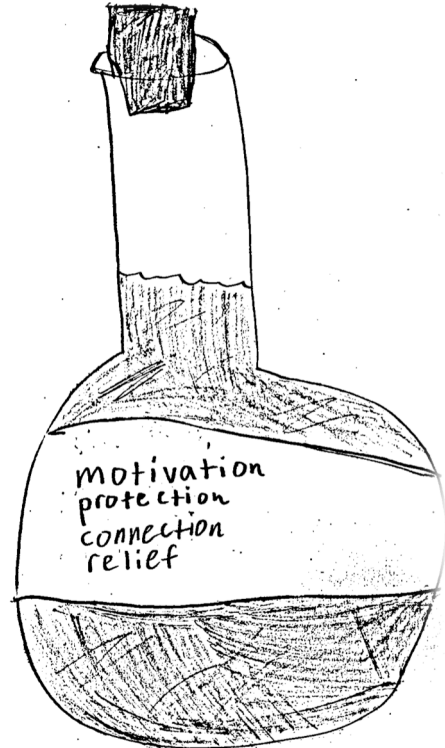
*I'm angry (or sad or scared) much of the time.*

*I can't get my needs met.*

*No one gets me.*

**While there is no magic potion to cure all that creates pain in life, there is one thing that has the power to move people beyond all these difficult places: their emotions.**

- ✓ Emotions motivate you.
- ✓ Emotions help you make decisions.
- ✓ Emotions help you protect yourself.
- ✓ Emotions give you clarity.



- ✓ Emotions help you assert yourself.
- ✓ Emotions move you toward healthy relationship/connection.
- ✓ Fully experiencing an emotion brings resolution and relief.

*But I thought my emotions were the PROBLEM not the SOLUTION!*

It's really common for people to believe that their emotions (at least some of them) are bad or that they are suffering because they feel "too much." It is also common to mistake mood (i.e. depression) or behavior (i.e. acting out or shutting down) for emotion.

"Most of us believe we are experiencing our feelings, but if emotional suffering persists, it is safe to assume that we are not. It is common to think we are experiencing our feelings when we are actually internalizing/repressing them or acting them out. Overeating or withdrawing when we are hurt or angry would be signs that internalization is occurring; externalization might be some form of verbal discharge, such as hurtful accusations. Or we may be experiencing shame or anxiety related to devaluing ourselves that is commingled with and possibly drowning out other feelings. Difficulty directly experiencing our core feelings is usually a result of childhood relationship patterns and is destructive to self and others."

---Susan Warren Warshow

*So what are emotions exactly?*

- Emotions are a subjective response to a person, thing, or situation (Merriam-Webster).
- Emotions are accompanied by physiological (body) shifts.
- Emotions are brief in duration (unlike moods and states of mind).

Antonio Demasio, Professor of Neuroscience, speaks about emotions as “mechanisms of life regulation.” Emotion researcher Jaak Pankseep defines them as “intrinsic values that inform animals how they are faring in the quest to survive.” Psychologist and author, Susan David says, “Our emotions are data. Our emotions contain flashing lights to things we care about.”

**Your emotions (all of them) are powerful  
“internal resources” (Kristin Osborn) and  
helpful “friends and guides”  
(Susan Warren Warshow).**



***E-motion, your friend and guide***

Emotions are internal forces that are trying to tell you something about your state of well being with relationship to the outside world. (Are you safe? What do you want? Do you like what that person just did/said to you?...) Emotions give you information in the form of physiological (body) shifts that together with your thinking mind help you to decide what you want to do (run, fight, ask for something, set a boundary, hug, cry etc.). How you

relate to these forces inside you has an enormous impact on the quality of your internal experience and your relationships. You cannot reject, ignore, dismiss, be ashamed of, devalue or fear your emotions and accept and be guided by them at the same time.

You may be wondering, “why anyone would fear, reject, be ashamed of (etc.) their emotions?”

**Much of what you do and how you do it is completely unconscious and habitual.**

**That’s actually a good thing. Imagine if you had to learn how to tie your shoes every morning.**



The majority of your daily activities are run by automatic mental and physical “programs” that were learned in childhood. These programs influence how you move and behave, what you pay attention to, how you evaluate and respond to stimuli in the environment and how you anticipate others will respond to you. Some programs can go unchecked throughout life, and this can be fine and good. An example would be the particular way in which you tie your shoes. Do you do a loop-de-loop? Maybe you’re a “bunny goes around the tree” kind of guy. Any method of shoe tying can be perfectly effective. Why fix something if it isn’t broken? Other programs might be outdated and destructive.

Examples include:

- Avoiding an emotion because it was forbidden/deemed unacceptable or criticized in childhood (*Nice children don't get angry.*)
- Hiding emotions that caused distress in caregivers and other important figures (*My teacher gets frustrated when I ask for help.*)
- Acting out emotions because this is what was modeled (*My older siblings screamed and threw things when they were angry.*)

Little people need big people to survive. Emotions that are rejected, judged or punished and those that create distress or distancing behaviors in caregivers will trigger a child's danger alarm system. *Primary caregivers are not the only influence on a child's relationship to their emotions, however.* The same goes for feelings that are considered unacceptable in one's culture or early social environment. These emotions become associated with a threat to important relationships. The result is an automatic pairing of emotion and survival responses (hide, flee, fight, submit...). When unconsciously enacted, these survival directives from the past make it difficult to accurately and effectively respond to emotions in the present. For example:

Instead of registering the pain of hurting someone (feeling guilt) and moving towards that person to make a repair (responding to your guilt), you may lash out or avoid the injured person instead (alternative to registering and responding to emotion in an effective way).



Instead of registering a need (feeling) and making a request (responding to your need), you may ignore yourself and shut down and/or become resentful of others for not considering you.

Instead of registering anger when someone crosses a boundary or treats you poorly (feeling mad) and clarifying how you wish to be treated or stating and honoring your limits (responding to your anger) you may remain in situations that are unhealthy or dangerous.

Just in case you're getting worried--no matter how deeply engrained current programs are, there is hope! Humans are life-long learners. If you learned ways of responding to your emotions that are no longer effective, those patterns can be "updated" in the context of new relationships that value and support healthy emotional acceptance and expression (like your relationship with your therapist).

This means you can learn to treat your feelings like friends. You can be guided, relieved, protected and inspired by your emotions. But this will require developing awareness of and giving compassionate attention to:

1. Emotional information as it is experienced in your body
2. The learned patterns that act as barriers to accessing these important friends and guides (i.e. learned defensive behaviors and toxic forms of shame, fear/anxiety and guilt).

I get it. Sometimes it's as if my emotions set off an alarm inside of me. This makes it difficult for me to identify them and be guided by them.

**Exactly!!**

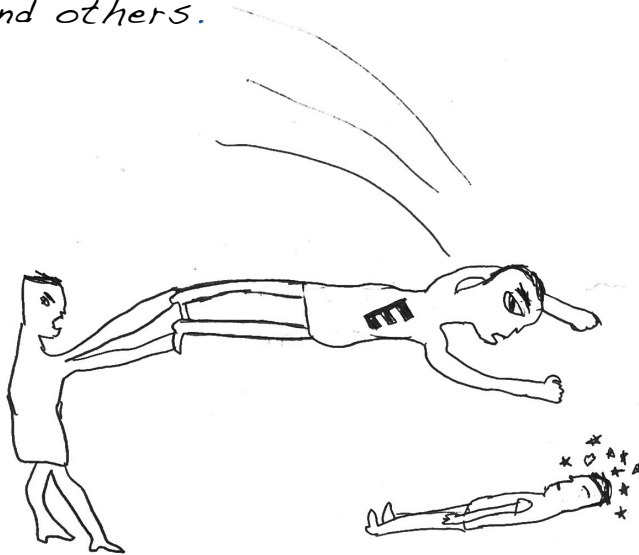
I may experience my emotions as a THREAT to my current relationships.

Therefore, they cause me anxiety. Or I may think of my emotions as WRONG or BAD, and I will feel toxic shame or guilt just for feeling them.

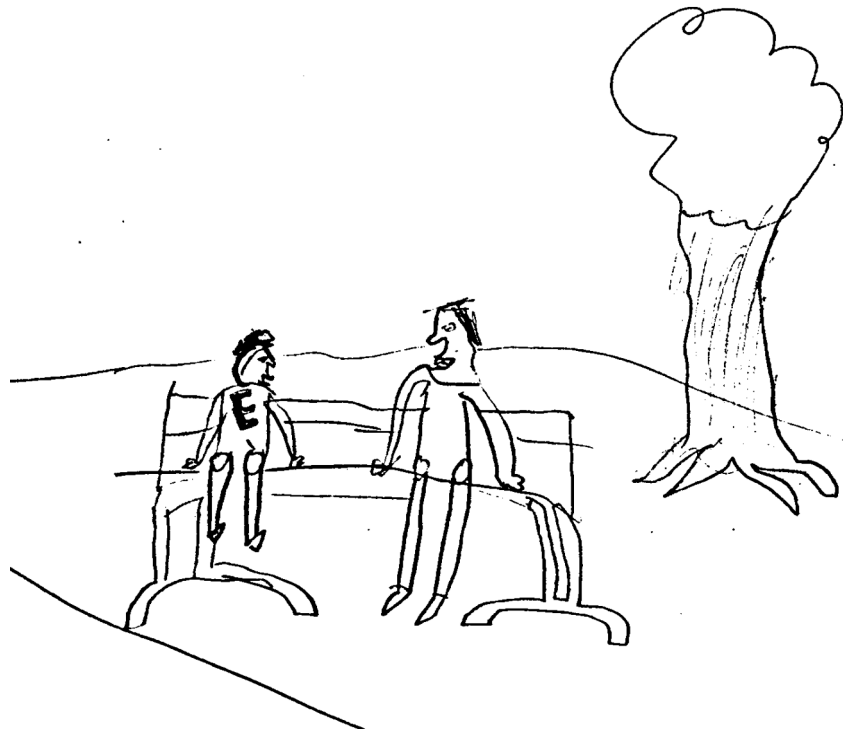


For that reason I may deny or reject my emotions. I may shove my emotions down and treat them like they are unimportant.

*Or I might act my emotions out in ways that hurt myself and others.*



*HOWEVER, if it is my will, I can nurture the kind of relationship with my emotions that will allow them to be the resources, friends and guides nature intended them to be.*



**Yep. You're really getting this.**

In the *values and objectives* section of this workbook, you will be introduced to resources that can help you identify and consider what really matters to you now (including how you want to treat yourself and the people in your life today). In the *journaling* section, you will be asked to bring to mind a difficult or distressing event. You will be guided to identify the emotions associated with this event. You will also be guided in developing awareness of internal forces (like shame, anxiety, guilt and defensive behaviors) that make it difficult to accurately register and respond to your emotions in a way that is aligned with your current values and objectives.

*But what if the cause of my suffering is external?  
(I lost my job, my girlfriend left me for someone  
else...) How do my emotions solve those problems?*

Sometimes you will be able to impact other people and external situations, and sometimes you won't. If you can't change everything on the outside, is there still value in changing patterns that create suffering on the inside?

Consider 3 scenarios in which a child skins her knee:

1. A child falls and skins her knee. It's bleeding, and it hurts. She cries. The child's caregiver looks at her with annoyance and says, "Don't be a baby. It's just a scratch. You are so clumsy."

2. A child falls and skins her knee. It's bleeding, and it hurts. She cries. The child's caregiver barely notices or minimally acknowledges the child's

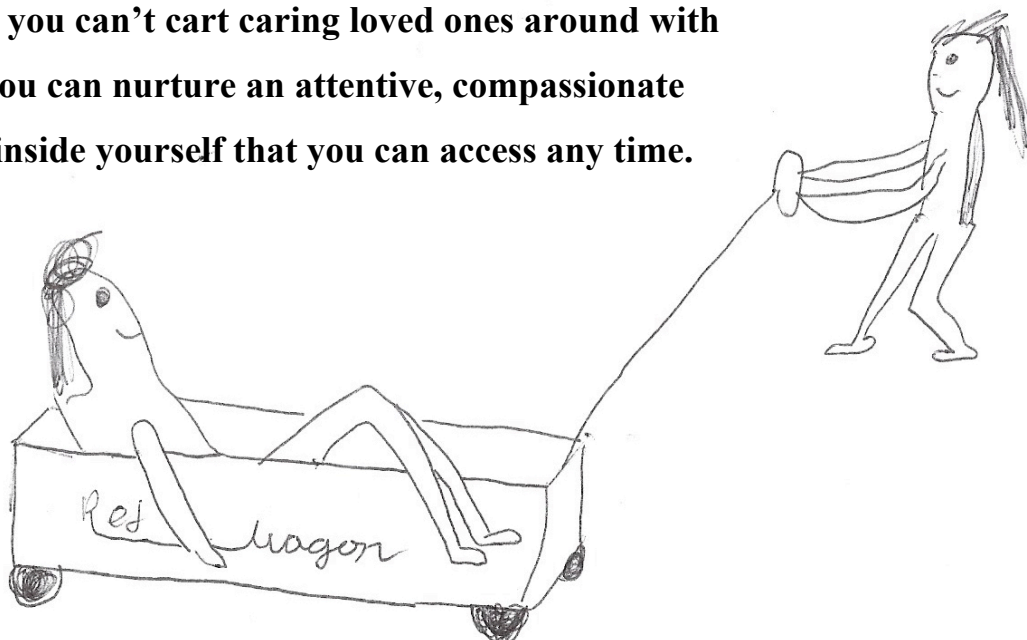
distress.

3. A child falls and skins her knee. It's bleeding, and it hurts. She cries. The child's caregiver looks at her with compassion and says, "I'm sorry you fell. I know it hurts. I remember falling on my knees when I was little. It's so painful."

In none of the above scenarios did the caregiver's response "undo" the fall or make the child's bleeding stop. The external events stayed the same. So-- did the caregiver's response matter *even if it didn't change those things*? In which scenario do you imagine the child felt more shame? In which do you imagine the child felt more relief? Do you think one response made the child's knee feel better?

Several studies have found that the presence of a partner reduces the subjective experience of pain for people in good relationships.

**While you can't cart caring loved ones around with you, you can nurture an attentive, compassionate force inside yourself that you can access any time.**



In other words, you can create a different “internal working model” for how you respond to yourself when you skin your knee (literally and figuratively). If your current “internal caregiver” is not serving you well, he/she can be upgraded. (Introducing: Internal Caregiver 2.0.) Do you want to tell yourself to stop being a baby, do you want to push past/ignore your distress or do you want to remind yourself that everyone falls and acknowledge the hurt? What prompts you to choose one option over the other?

*OK. I'm in. How do I get started?*

Emotions happen in the *body* not just in the *mind*, therefore, a desire to fully connect with an emotion will be best served by attention to what is occurring both mentally and physically in the moment.

**A fully experienced emotion has 3 components:**

- Cognitive Recognition: *I feel angry.*
- Physiological Response: (How do you experience this feeling in your body? What sensations do you notice?) *I notice heat and energy in my arms and hands.*
- Motor Impulse: (What does the feeling want to do? How does this feeling want to be expressed through your body?) *I want to punch.*

Making the best use of the information emotions offer will involve attention to your internal experience. The part of the self that is able to track internal experience (thoughts, feelings and sensations) is referred to as “**The**

**Observer.**” If being attentive to your internal world is difficult or unfamiliar at present, fear not. A strong, compassionate Observer can be developed. The first step will be for you to practice focusing your attention. Think of having a conversation with a friend who has something important to share with you. Now imagine the two of you are someplace where there is a lot going on around you making it hard to hear him/her. You’d have to be intentional in how you focus your attention in order to really hear your friend.

### **EXERCISE TO STRENGTHEN YOUR OBSERVER #1**

Identify an object near you. Describe what you notice (size, weight, color, patterns, marks, cracks, dents...).

Should thoughts about your object (or this exercise) arise as you are describing your object, don’t follow those thoughts. In other words, don’t let your thoughts pull you away from what you are intending to focus on.

Keep your mind focused on your object, describing what you notice for one minute.

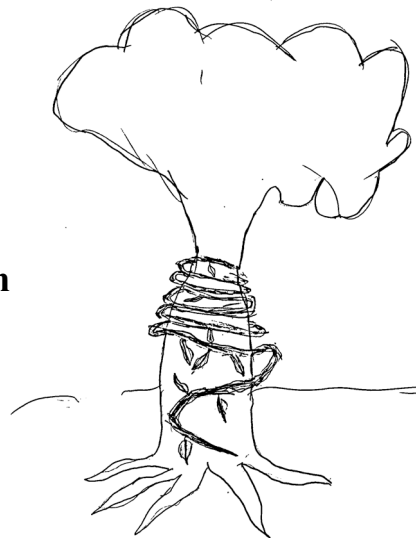
*If you can pay attention to (and describe) the object you were focusing on during this exercise, you can pay attention to (and describe) your internal experience (including your emotions). But this may not be so easy at first.*

Did you get bored or distracted? Did your mind wander? Did you have judgments about what you noticed or the exercise? This will happen. Remind yourself this is normal and be kind to yourself when it does.

*This exercise only takes a minute (literally). Practicing it throughout the day will help you practice focusing your attention.*

The next step is to move from focusing on an object to focusing on your internal experience. No problem. Except...maybe you were taught that paying this kind of attention to yourself is selfish or indulgent. Maybe you were told that you were demanding or “needy.” Maybe you were teased for being sensitive or made to feel ashamed or guilty for setting boundaries or expressing a hurt. When you look inside yourself, you may find that it’s really noisy in there! When you focus your attention inward, you may notice thoughts and judgments about doing so and/or you may notice bodily responses like a racing heart or sudden fatigue. Your internal alarm system may get triggered and your brain and body may start gearing up to protect you: *run away, fall asleep, deem this whole thing a joke, but whatever you do, do not pay attention to your feelings.*

**Susan Warren Warshow refers to these automatic alarms and directives as “parasitic vines wrapped around an otherwise healthy tree.”**





No doubt there was a time and place when this alarm and those directives protected you or helped you get your needs met. But if you are reading this, chances are you have found there are times when they no longer serve you well.

This image generally speaks to people immediately and profoundly and is often met with some variation of, “How do I get free of those darn vines??” Counterintuitive as it may be, liberating the tree (the healthy “core self”) begins with moving *towards* the vines and getting to know them better. You will learn about common signals of strangling forces: anxiety, shame, guilt and defense in this workbook. You will also be introduced to exercises that help you identify your emotions. The vines begin to loosen as the difference between the two (*strangling forces* and *healthy emotion*) becomes clear.

## **EXERCISE TO STRENGTHEN YOUR OBSERVER #2**

Because focusing internally can be difficult at first, it is a good idea to practice shifting your attention from something external to your internal experience and back again. If focusing inside ever feels like too much, you will have developed the skill of changing your focus and placing it on something outside yourself until you feel comfortable shifting inward again.

Bring your attention to the sensations in your body. What do you notice? Describe what you notice. Are you describing sensations or thoughts about sensations? Don’t try to stop yourself from having thoughts, but don’t grab on to them. Don’t let your thoughts pull your focus.

Now direct your attention to an object in the room. Describe the object to yourself for a moment.

Bring your attention back to sensations in your body. Choose one sensation to focus on. Describe this sensation to yourself for a moment.

Direct your attention to another object in the room, and describe this object. Shift your attention back to sensations in your body. Choose one, and describe it to yourself.

Go back and forth between an external object and an internal sensation for 3-4 minutes. Once you can do this with ease, move on to exercise #3.

### **EXERCISE TO STRENGTHEN YOUR OBSERVER #3**

Without looking at them, bring your attention to your feet. What do you notice? How are they positioned? Do you notice any impulses to move them? What do you feel against your skin (cool air, socks, the ground...)? What other sensations are you aware of?

Bring your attention to your knees. What do you notice? Are they bent or straight? Is there any pain or discomfort in the knees? What do you feel against the skin of the knees?

Bring your attention back to your feet. What do you notice?

Bring your attention back to your knees. What do you notice?

Bring your attention to your feet. Bring your attention to your knees.

*Practice this exercise daily to continue to strengthen the part of your mind that enables you to move your attention from one internal point of focus to another.*

*Just one thing...if I focus on my feelings, I'm pretty sure they will last forever. I want to feel better not WORSE!*



In his book, *Living Like you Mean It*, Dr. Ron Frederick says that emotions are like waves...

Many people have that concern. However, when the experience of emotion is not interrupted, there is a natural rise, peak and dissipation. Studies show that prolonged experience of an emotion can actually be the result of trying to suppress that emotion rather than allowing it to rise and fall naturally (as counterintuitive as that may be).

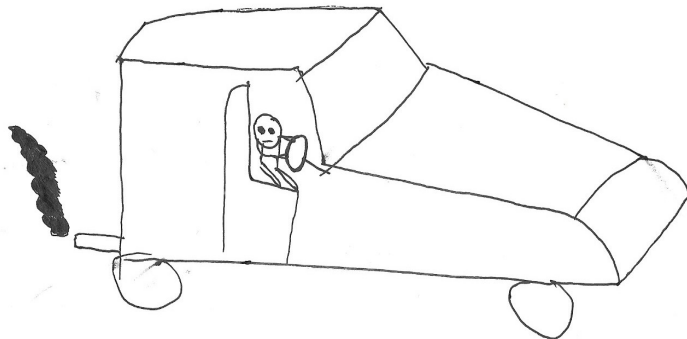
## **THE TREE: ADAPTIVE EMOTION**

Being able to accurately identify your emotions is an essential part of efficient and effective emotional processing. Labeling your emotions (*I feel*

*angry, I feel sad*) requires activation of both your “feeling mind” and your “thinking mind”. In the YouTube Video, *Name it to Tame it*, Dr. Dan Siegel puts research that supports the regulatory benefit of naming emotions into simple language. Dr. Siegel uses the construct of an “upstairs brain” (cortex) and “downstairs brain” (subcortical areas). He explains that when you are feeling a strong emotion, your right “downstairs brain” gets very active. When use your left “upstairs brain” to name that emotion, soothing neurotransmitters (brain chemicals) are sent to the activated downstairs brain to calm it down.

**“Emotions are like children. You don't want to let them drive the car, but you don't want to lock them in the trunk either.”**

(From the movie, *Thanks for Sharing*)



When someone says they “feel too much” or when a person acts out aggressively, the thinking mind may be underactive (the kid is driving the car). Alternatively, when someone says they don’t feel anything, the thinking mind may be overactive (the kid is locked in the trunk).

Have there been times when you have acted on emotional information without considering the impact and regretted it?

Have there been times when you have *not* acted on your emotional information and later regretted it?

Everyone answers yes to these questions. The following exploration can help you to identify thoughts and beliefs that may be interfering with a free and easy “whole mind” dialogue between you and your emotions. Getting to know yourself and your emotional patterns will give you more choice about how you wish to respond to what you feel.

### **WHAT WERE YOU TAUGHT ABOUT YOUR EMOTIONS?**

Do you view some emotions as “negative or bad”? If so, which one(s)?

Do you view some emotions as “positive or good”? If so, which one(s)?

How did your caregivers respond to the following emotions when you were a child: anger, sadness, fear, joy, needs/longings?

How did your caregivers behave when they felt anger, sadness, fear, joy, needs/longings?

What other influences did you have on the way you view and behave in response to your feelings?

How did these influences impact you and your relationship with your emotions?

## **FOCUSING THE OBSERVER ON EMOTIONS**

Bring your attention to the sensations you notice in your body right now. Maybe you notice tension in your muscles or the movement of your breath in your body. Maybe you feel the pressure of the surface you are sitting on or the temperature of the air against your skin. Maybe you notice something else. Keep your attention focused on your sensations for one minute.

Bring your attention to the thoughts you are having. Take a minute or two just to notice what thoughts arise.

Now notice what feelings are you aware of in this moment? Feelings are always present. Which one or ones are you experiencing right now? Your bodily sensations will give you information about what you feel. Do you notice heat, heaviness, energy, a desire to move? Take a minute or two to track these sensations and listen to what they are telling you about what you feel.

Turn your attention to your thoughts again. Are you are having any thoughts about what you are feeling? Track the thoughts you are having about your feelings. Try to just watch your thoughts in the way you would watch people walk by on the street or the way you might watch clouds move in the sky. Maybe they go by quickly or maybe they drift away slowly. If you don't try to hold on to them, they will make their way out of sight (and out of mind).

Come back to your feelings---not the thoughts you are having about your feelings but the actual sensations in your body that tell you what you feel. Take a minute to notice all the feelings you are aware.

Slowly begin to direct your attention externally, taking in the room around you.

For 1-2 minutes practice staying present to your external environment while briefly tapping back into your thoughts and then tapping into your bodily sensations (including the sensations that tell you about your feelings).

### **WHAT ARE YOU FEELING? ASK YOUR BODY.**

In this exercise you will be asked to imagine or remember situations that stir up specific emotions. Don't pick memories or imagined scenarios that involve significant losses or ones that might trigger a great degree of fear. Recalling something you saw in a movie is a good way to begin if this is new to you and you'd like to ease in to it.

Imagine or remember a time when you felt at peace. What do you feel in your body as you imagine or remember? Is there a color to the peaceful feeling? Where do you feel it most?

Imagine or remember something that made you sad. What changes do you notice in your body as you imagine or remember this? Does the sad feeling have a color or weight? Where do you feel the sadness in your body?

Imagine or remember something that made you angry. What changes do you notice? Are you aware of energy in your body? Where is the energy? Does the energy move or want to move? Do you notice a shift in body temperature? What color is the anger? What other shifts do you notice?

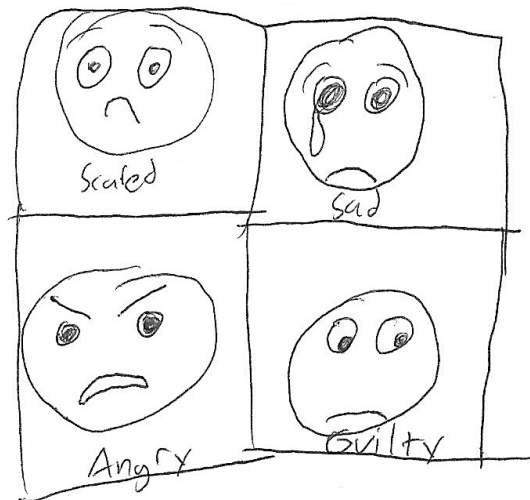
Imagine or remember a time when you did something you regret/wish you hadn't done. What do you notice in your body as you think of something you regret?

Return to your image or memory of feeling at peace. What do you notice?

### **DAILY PRACTICE: LABELING YOUR EMOTIONS**

Remember, emotions give you information. Emotions tell you what you *want* to do, not what you *have* to do. You will have to evaluate that information and decide how to best use it based on your own values and objectives. But first—*what* are you feeling? Make a practice of labeling the emotions you feel throughout the day. Keep it simple for now. Pause often and just notice if you are satisfied, sad, afraid, angry, guilty, ashamed or longing for something.

**Some people find it helpful to keep a “feelings chart” on their desk to remind them to check in with their emotions. You can print a feelings chart from *Google Images* or make your own.**





*So just how many emotions are there? Where can I get a comprehensive list?*

Ask 10 people (even 10 therapists) how many emotions there are, and you may get 10 different answers. You can find videos on emotion and facial expression on the Paul Ekman Group channel on YouTube. Ekman's work suggests universal expression of emotion. Other researchers have reported similar findings. A Finnish team had subjects elicit emotions just as you did in the exercise, *Focusing the Observer on Emotions*. They found that people across different cultures reported similar experiences of emotion in their body. You can read about this study in the 2013 article, *Mapping Emotions On The Body: Love Makes Us Warm All Over* at [npr.org](http://npr.org). There are contradicting perspectives on whether emotions are universal, however. Adding to this complexity: a person can experience more than one emotion at a time, and emotions can be commingled with other states like hunger. *Haven't you ever been "hangry"?*

Try not to approach this as an exact science and instead embrace the spirit of this practice: treating emotions as if they are precious and deeply deserving of your great interest and care. *Because they are.*

In the "Toolbox" tab of Hilary Jacobs Hendel's website ([hilaryjacobshendel.com](http://hilaryjacobshendel.com)) you will find two charts for *Putting Words on Emotions and Sensations*. Resources like Hilary's charts can help you more accurately identify what you feel more of the time.

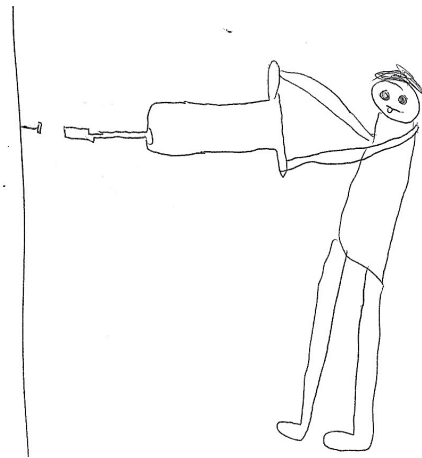
*What if I only want to feel positive emotions like love?*

Emotions themselves are not positive or negative (good or bad). Consider these two books: *The Confidence Gap: A Guide to Overcoming Fear and Self-Doubt* (Harris & Hayes, 2011). And *The Gift of Fear: Survival Signals That Protect Us from Violence* (Becker, 1998). One book teaches you how to overcome fear and the other calls it a gift! How can that be? Sometimes an emotion is adaptive (appropriate in a particular situation) and sometimes it isn't. And sometimes emotion-informed actions are consistent with your values and objectives and sometimes they are not.

## **ADAPTIVE VS NOT ADAPTIVE**

While emotions are not good or bad, the same emotion can be *useful* in one situation and not in another. Just like a tool is not good or bad, but jackhammers aren't great for driving nails into walls (jackhammers tend to break walls better than they drive nails into them).

Feeling fear about setting an important boundary or asserting yourself (assuming you are not also in physical danger) or feeling ashamed about having needs, are examples of times when the emotions of fear and shame are not adaptive. They won't help you to function well or achieve your goals (set the boundary or get your needs met).



*But if I let myself feel negative emotions like anger, I'm afraid of what I'll do.*

You don't want to engage in actions that hurt you or anyone else. That's admirable. Remember, emotions are information, not actions. Emotions can't injure you or anyone else.

On *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, Fred Rogers empowered children to feel their emotions while maintaining their choice about how to act on them through this song:

### **What Do You Do with the Mad That You Feel?**

*I can stop when I want to.*

*Can stop when I wish.*

*I can stop, stop, stop any time.*

*And what a good feeling to feel like this.*

*And know that the feeling is really mine.*

(From the 1968 record, "Let's Be Together Today")

### **VALUES AND OBJECTIVES**

**“When we internalize the difference between how I feel in all my wisdom and what I do in a values-aligned action, we generate the pathway to our best selves via our emotions.”** (From the Ted Talk: The Gift and Power of Emotional Courage with Dr. Susan David)

Ideally, the actions you choose in any given situation will depend upon both what you feel and what your objectives and values are.

**Values** are your cherished beliefs, your highest priorities, that which is most important to you or your personal guidelines for living a meaningful life (meaningful according to *you*). While values are influenced by multiple factors, no one can tell you what your values are. A great resource for clarifying your values can be found on the website [mindtools.com](http://mindtools.com): the article, *What Are Your Values? Deciding What's Most Important in Life*.

**Objectives** are less foundational than values. Objectives are goals, “What outcome do you desire in this situation?” Objectives can be aligned with your values or not. And only you can decide whether you’re ok with that or not.

Feeling angry when the person at the copy center is moving slowly as she pulls together the “rush order” that was supposed to be ready an hour ago (for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time this month) is adaptive. Feeling angry is important. This information will inform your decision about where you want to get your printing needs met in the future. Without anger you may find yourself in this same situation again and again forever.

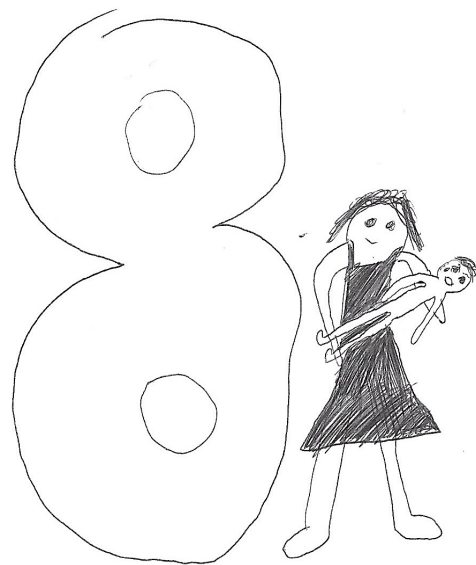
When your **feeling** is angry and your **objective** is to get your copies and make it to your presentation on time, what **action** do you choose? Do you let the copy center employee know you are in a hurry and that you would appreciate anything she can do to expedite the process? Do you make a suggestion--maybe another employee could assist? Do you ask to speak to a

manager? Do you wait patiently and fill out a comment card or send an email about your experience later? Do you tell the employee how unsatisfied you are as she is working on your order? Do you sigh and roll your eyes? Do you raise your voice? What else might you do? What **values** inform this action?

Maybe everyone in your home screamed when they were angry. Maybe you learned that anger means screaming. Maybe this woman moves even more slowly when people scream at her. Maybe she'll turn into a sloth the moment you raise your voice, and you'll have no chance of making it to your presentation on time. Maybe treating people with kindness is one of your values, and you end up feeling terrible about yourself every time you lash out. This is why it is important to make distinctions between feelings and actions and to strive to keep your actions aligned with your values and objectives.

### **THE VINES: TOXIC FORMS OF ANXIETY, SHAME, GUILT AND DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES**

A five-year-old boy with autism becomes terrified when anyone mentions the number eight. As the boy and his mom are leaving his therapist's office one day, the receptionist calls out, "Remember, your next appointment is Tuesday at 8." The boy shakes and sobs. His mom scoops



him up and says softly, “The number 8 isn’t the problem, love. The problem is that it makes you worried. I’m here to help you not be worried.”

Some feelings are painful (grief, for example), *but feelings do not create suffering any more than the number eight creates suffering.*

When feelings unconsciously trigger anxiety, shame, guilt or defensive strategies, however, the resulting disempowerment, isolation and overwhelm can create a world of suffering.

## **SHAME**

Shame signals help you get back on track when your behavior veers from your values or potential. Shame also helps you function well in society by making it painful to behave in ways that disrespect or alienate yourself or others.



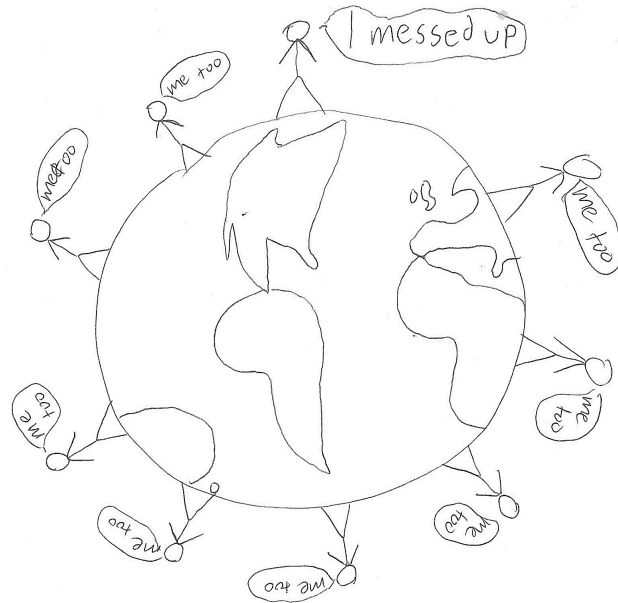
Chronic or toxic shame, however, can involve an experience of the self as being “less than,” not worthy, broken, wrong, unacceptable, too much or not enough. This conscious or unconscious experience of the self likely developed in the context of familial and societal influences that reinforced this self-image.

Susan Warshow identifies self-compassion as the antidote to shame. She sees awareness of shame as the first step in working with this state, which then allows us to determine whether it is helpful or devaluing. If it is the latter, she encourages developing self-compassion to act as a catalyst to activate the will to release punishing shame states. In the journaling section of this workbook, you will be able to practice identifying shame in your body and mind, and you will be invited to extend compassion (to yourself and others) in the face of human flaws and limitations. From there, you can direct your will or intention to release hurtful shame states, which often involves the support of others.

Susan's interview on the topic of shame appears on Dr. Kim Taylor's Youtube channel: *What is Shame and Why is it so Hard to Talk About*. Susan also addresses shame at the Center for Healthy Sex. Her video, *Shame and Sexual Desire*, can be accessed on the Center's YouTube channel. In this lecture, she sheds light on defensive processes that can cover shame like grandiosity, envy and acting out.

Shame often involves feeling unseen and alone. According to Dr. Kristin Neff, getting in touch with "common humanity" can bring relief, "...we remember that feelings of inadequacy and disappointment are universal. This is what distinguishes self-compassion from self-pity. While self-pity says "poor me," self-compassion recognizes suffering is part of the shared human experience."

In other words, chronic or toxic shame denies the reality that you are not alone. The world consists of flawed beings who fall short of their ideals. Linked to this vital truth: irrational, self-negating thoughts and impossible standards (for the self and others) will fuel the experience of shame.



Both shame and the compassion required to heal toxic states of shame are relational experiences. A child who is criticized, abused or neglected will experience himself as wrong, broken or unlovable. Therapy can provide new and transformational experiences of the self as seen, accepted, valued and cared for (warts and all) by another. The resources in this section are intended to assist you on the path to identifying and transcending toxic shame.

## RECOGNIZING SHAME

Shame researcher Dr. Brene Brown writes, “The first element of shame resilience is recognizing shame and understanding our triggers” (2007). But shame can be difficult to identify. After all, the directive of shame is “to hide”! Below are some common body sensations that can accompany shame.



## IDENTIFYING SHAME IN THE BODY

(Body language and sensations that may accompany a shame reaction)

Lowered head

Downward gaze

Slumped shoulders

Hands covering the face

Impulse to hide/disappear

Blushing

Nausea

Tucking the sacrum (tailbone)

## IDENTIFYING SHAMING THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

You can download the worksheet, “Understanding and Coping with Guilt and Shame” from the website [www.takingtheescalator.com](http://www.takingtheescalator.com). This worksheet will guide you in identifying shaming thoughts and beliefs and exploring alternatives.

## **ANXIETY**

When you are anxious, consider that your body is enacting a “threat response” in the absence of potential physical danger. It can be helpful to label the physiological shifts you feel as an “alarm” (see list of anxiety symptoms below). The job of any alarm is to get your attention. Your “anxiety alarm” is letting you know something inside of you needs tending to. For example, unconscious anger begins to rise towards a co-worker who

is devaluing you in a staff meeting. You notice that your stomach gets queasy (anxiety) and you start to tell yourself that what he/she did was no big deal (defense mechanism). In this scenario, the emotion anger triggered an alarm (perhaps fueled by messages from long ago that you are “too sensitive.”) In order to shut off the alarm (return to status quo) you used the strategy of minimization (told yourself that what happened to you was no big deal).

### **Signs of Anxiety**

Anxiety may be felt in different places in your body and mind. Examples include (but are not limited to):

1. Striated muscles (muscles under conscious control)---you may experience:

Tension in your jaw

Tightness in neck/shoulders/arms/chest

Clenched fists

Sighing respiration

Dry mouth

Tension headache Tightness in belly, legs, feet

2. Smooth muscles (muscles of organs and blood vessels)---you may experience:

Constipation

Diarrhea

Bladder urgency

Jelly legs/generalized weakness Migraine

Hypertension

Asthma

3. Cognitive or perceptual distortions---you may experience: Poor memory

Confusion

Dissociation

Fainting

Foggy feeling

Dizziness

Ringling of the ears

Visual distortions

Difficulty thinking or paying attention

Anoxia headache

Blurry vision

Inability to comprehend what another is saying or verbalize thoughts

Spatial distortion

Inability to sequence/plan

### **Anxiety regulating activities**

Anxiety can add considerable suffering to the experiencing of painful emotions thereby creating and sustaining unnecessary distress. When you are anxious:

- Label your anxiety as an indication of feeling (as opposed to real danger or external threat).

- Carefully attend to how you are experiencing this anxiety in your body and mind.
- Remind yourself that it makes perfect sense that your feelings would trigger an alarm given that \_\_\_\_\_.
- Ask the frightened part of you what he/she would need from you in order to feel comforted in this moment.
- If your anxiety persists, try one of the anxiety-regulating activities below.

### *Scanning For Support*

Sit with your feet on the floor and your hands resting comfortably on your legs. Feel the contact your feet make with the ground. Direct your attention up the long bones of your legs feeling the back of your thighs against the chair beneath you. Notice your sitting bones and the contact they make with the chair. Feel the contact your back makes with the back of the chair. Are some parts of your back in greater contact with the chair than others? Just notice. Notice how your hands rest on your legs. Take in once more your contact with all the surfaces that are supporting you---your feet on the floor, your legs and sitting bones on the seat of the chair, your back against the back of the chair and your hands on your legs. What effect does focusing on all that supports you have on your body (heart rate, breathing, muscle tension) and state of mind?

### *Self-Directed Muscle Relaxation*

This exercise can be done in any position. Bring your attention to your neck and shoulders and invite the muscles there to relax. If you like, use the image of melting wax---the muscles of your neck and shoulders get warm and soften. Allow this sensation to travel down your arms. The muscles of your upper arms and then lower arms soften as you attend to them. Now relax the muscles of your hands. Bring your attention to the muscles in your upper back and chest allowing them to release and then to the muscles of your lower back and abdomen---relax those muscles as well. Send warmth and an invitation to soften to the muscles of your butt and then your upper legs. Relax the muscles of your lower legs and feet. Feel these sensations of warmth and soft relaxation throughout your whole body.

### *Four-Seven-Eight Breathing*

This exercise can be done in any position. Bring your attention to your breath. You will be breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Keep the tip of your tongue in light contact with the top of your mouth (just behind your top teeth). Inhale for a count of 4. Hold your breath for a count of 7. Exhale slowly and smoothly for a count of 8. Pause briefly and begin another round. Repeat for 10-12 rounds: Inhale 4, hold 7, Exhale 8, pause and repeat.

### *5-Sense Sensing of the Present Moment*

In this exercise you will spend a few minutes focused only on what you take in through your 5 senses. Beginning with what you see---notice the colors, shapes, light and movement of people and things around you. You may close your eyes if you wish and attend to the blackness behind your eyelids. Even with your eyes closed you may notice movement and light and varying shades of darkness. Shift your focus now to attend to what you hear---the sounds in your immediate surroundings and any sounds you notice coming from a distance. What do you smell? Spend a moment paying attention only to what you smell. What is the taste in your mouth? What are you touching? Feel the contact your skin makes with your clothing. Notice the temperature of the air against your skin, and notice the contact you make with the surface you are sitting, standing or lying on. Take another moment to focus on the present moment---taking in the now: what you see, hear, smell, taste and touch.

### *Repeat a Calming Phrase*

In this exercise you will repeat a calming phrase or bring to mind a peaceful image. You may have to experiment with different phrases or images to find one that has a calming effect. As you repeat this phrase or hold this image in mind, notice the effect it has on you internally. What effect does this phrase or this image have on your breathing and your heart rate? Do you notice any sensations of warmth and/or relaxation? Spend a few moments repeating your phrase or holding your image in mind and noticing the effect.

## TOXIC GUILT

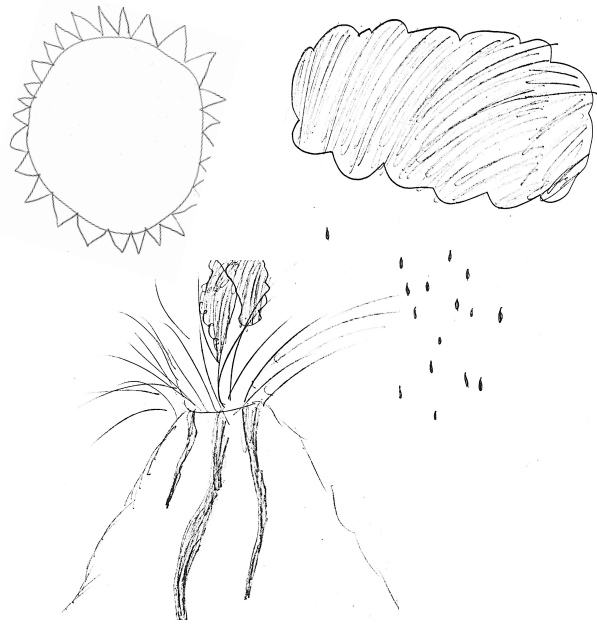
If you are in close relationship with another person, you will hurt them from time to time. You will show up late or make an insensitive comment or forget an important occasion etc. This is unavoidable. The emotion that motivates you to reach out and repair relationship injuries is guilt (healthy remorse).

Sometimes, however, you may have noticed that guilt shows up when you haven't actually done anything that calls for repair. This kind of guilt is toxic as it poisons the self and relationships. An example would be having guilt over a feeling (*I shouldn't feel my anger towards Jan for hurting me because she is so nice. I shouldn't want a better position for myself because I am already better off than most people*). While it's important that one is mindful of the impact *actions* have on others, it's a shame that anyone should feel guilt over *emotions*. Emotions are a necessary, natural, helpful and unavoidable part of being human.

When you feel guilty, ask yourself if you have truly done anything for which you should feel remorse. If so, what is preventing you from making a repair with the person you have hurt and forgiving yourself? Reflecting on your behavior when you feel guilty may reveal either a pattern of avoiding healthy guilt and the relief that comes from repair or a pattern of experiencing "toxic guilt" when you haven't done anything wrong.

“Your feelings are like forces of nature: torrential rain, hurricanes or brilliant sunshine. You have no choice about their existence, only whether to acknowledge and accept them and let them guide you.”

---Susan Warren Warshow



When people feel guilt over their emotions, they are often focused on treating others well. There's nothing wrong with that! But being good to others does not have to come at the expense of being good to yourself. In fact research shows that those who have higher levels of SELF-compassion tend to be more loving and giving to others. If you become aware of feeling guilt or shame over your emotions, imagine what you might say to someone you care about if they were experiencing the same. Try the self-compassion meditations and exercises on the website [www.self-compassion.org](http://www.self-compassion.org). This website offers exercises and other resources aimed at helping people treat themselves as well as they strive to treat others.

*How do I know if what I'm feeling is healthy  
remorse or toxic guilt?*



- ❖ Healthy remorse requires attention to the offending action (*What did you do? Who did you hurt?*) not attention to yourself as a person (*I'm just a bad person*).
- ❖ Healthy remorse, like all core feelings, will be felt in the body and is temporary. (*Did you feel the pain of the harm you caused, and have you allowed it to inform your actions? Are you stewing in your thoughts about what you did (holding on to the feeling) but avoiding reparative action? Are you avoiding the pain of your guilt by rationalizing your actions and therefore denying the need to repair?*)
- ❖ Healthy remorse will lead to some sort of repair. (*What will you do differently next time? Have you changed the behaviors that lead to the offense?*)
- ❖ Healthy remorse sees the whole picture:

Perhaps the responsibility of your offending action was not yours alone. (*Was your action the result of an accident or some factor beyond your control? Could it have been avoided? Did others share the blame?*)

Maybe in addition to doing this thing that was “wrong,” you also did a few things that were “right.”

This isn't your first mistake, and it won't be your last. It's important to feel pain when you hurt others. It's important to repair ruptures in

relationships. *And* it's essential to remember that you are human, and everyone messes up.

### **Healthy remorse or toxic guilt?**

1. I said something mean to my sister. It's excruciating to see her cry. I can't bear it. I'm going to avoid her until she forgets about the whole thing.
2. I said something mean to my sister. I should be a nicer person. I completely ruined her entire visit by saying what I said. She will probably never visit me again.
3. I said something mean to my sister. This made me realize that I have feelings about the way she teases me and dismisses my ideas, yet I have never spoken to her about this. We had a nice conversation about how we can treat each other better. I'm looking forward to seeing her again.

Dr. Diana Shulman, author of *ABCs for Love: Learn How Couples Rekindle Desire and Get Happy Again*, has written a wonderful blog post on the topic of apologies, *Why Apologies Fail* (<http://abcsoflove.com>).

### **DEFENSES**

Everyone uses defensive strategies (commonly called defense mechanisms). The conscious, voluntary use of a defense strategy here and there makes it

possible for people to live together and move toward their goals. When defenses are employed habitually or involuntarily (compulsively avoiding confrontation because of the feelings it evokes, for example) their use becomes problematic.

*So how do you know whether using a defense in a certain situation was a healthy choice/served your greater good or if the defense was part of an unconscious pattern that deprives, negates or otherwise harms you?*

That's one of the things the journal section is designed to help you figure out. And that's why you'll be asked to examine---Were you anxious? Were you judging yourself or others? Did you experience toxic shame or toxic guilt? Did you feel you had a choice? Could you have behaved differently if you wanted to/would you want to behave differently next time?

Being able to recognize defensive behaviors is the first step in examining how they function in a given situation.

**Identify the behaviors below as healthy or self-restricting defenses.**

Was this behavior a mature choice that served a greater good? Or was this an automatic behavior guided by an outdated program that likely maintained physical and psychic safety in another time and place?

1. I had a biopsy today and won't hear anything from my doctor until tomorrow. I've decided to go to the movies with friends and distract myself from thinking about the results (healthy distraction).

2. I just found out that my business partner has been cheating me. I'm not going to say anything because I don't want to make a big deal out of it and the amount he stole isn't significant anyway (self-harming minimization).
3. Right before our son arrived for dinner with his new girlfriend, my husband told me he forgot to pay an important bill. I decided to set my anger aside until our son and his girlfriend left, at which time I shared my feelings with him (conscious, temporary suppression).
4. My wife criticized me ruthlessly in front of our children. I'm trying not to let it bother me because I know she isn't very self-aware and doesn't really mean it (self-harming rationalization).

**Below is a list of common defenses (this list is by no means exhaustive):**

Intellectualization (to block feeling with reasoning)

Rationalization (to make excuses)

Minimization (to not take seriously)

Displacement (to direct feared feelings unto unthreatening object)

Reaction Formation (to feel/ behave in direct opposition to your truth)

Projection (to transfer one's own feelings to the outside world)

Denial (to abnegate an unpleasant truth)

Dissociation (to disrupt integrated functioning)

Acting out (to perform rather than bear experiencing of)

Somatization (to turn mental pain into physical pain)

Sarcasm

Argumentativeness or Being contradictory

Rumination (worrying/brooding)

Vagueness/Evasiveness

Deflection (changing the subject)

Diversification (jumping from one topic to another)

Obsessional indecisiveness

Helplessness

Passive compliance

Talking over your feelings

Avoiding eye contact

Defensive body language (crossed arms and legs...)

Smiling or laughing over feelings

Weepiness

Temper tantrums

If you notice yourself using a defense as a means of avoiding a more self-caring/adaptive action (i.e. shutting down or having a tantrum rather than setting a healthy boundary), try examining your feelings and actions in this way...

What feeling are you avoiding? (feeling)

How are you avoiding that feeling? (defense)

Why are you avoiding that feeling? (anxiety, shame, guilt...)

What would be a more self-caring response? (adaptive action)

*Like this?*

I screamed at my wife (defense) for asking me to pick up her dry cleaning. I had already told her I was overwhelmed by the amount of things I had to do today. I can see that I was angry (feeling) with her for not considering me, and I told myself that I was selfish for not wanting to do something for her (shame). In retrospect, I could have said, “Honey, I have told you how much I have to do today, and it just won’t be possible for me to do one more thing. If it can wait until tomorrow, I will gladly help you with it then (self-caring/adaptive action).”

I’m overwhelmed at the thought of my best friend moving to another state (anxiety). She wants to see me and say goodbye, but I keep making excuses for why I can’t meet (defense).

A woman feels terrible (toxic guilt) for asking her husband not to mock her in front of their friends. She is momentarily aware of anger (feeling), but says he doesn’t really mean it and is just doing what guys do when they get together (defense). If she did not explain away her justified and self-protective anger, she could set a healthy boundary with her husband (adaptive action).

## **JUDGMENTS AND THOUGHT DISTORTIONS**

Reflecting on your life (past and present) can be painful at times. Notice as you reflect---is it your “observing mind” or your “analyzing mind” that takes

charge of this process? Both minds are important, but when you find you are being critical of yourself invite your observing mind to step forward. With this mind you can see yourself as you are without imposing a judgment about how you should be or should have been (see the facts without evaluating or judging).

No one escapes being disappointed. Everyone is at times disappointed in themselves or those around them. If you find yourself disappointed often, ask yourself if you get caught up in “shoulds.” Simply substituting “prefer” can go a long way toward giving yourself and those around you a big break.

What happens if you trade in the idea that your husband “should” buy you flowers on your anniversary with, “I would prefer if he remembered me with a gift on special occasions?”

So you’d prefer him to do one thing, but is he worthless because he isn’t exactly as you’d like him to be? Could you find a way to ask for what you need without devaluing him/making him all wrong? Maybe you would prefer to be someplace at this point in your life, and you are not there yet. Maybe you would prefer to have skills you have not yet developed or gifts you just don’t have. How might seeing each of these as preferences, rather than something you *should* have, (or some way in which you or someone else should be) change how you feel about and respond to yourself and others?

Judgment thoughts can function as a defense (devaluation of another). They can also be an indication of shame.

If it is your will not to avoid your feelings by devaluing others or yourself, it can be helpful to begin to notice how often “judgment thoughts” come to mind throughout your day.



In the book, *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*, Deepak Chopra suggests the following daily practice of non-judgment: “I will begin my day with the statement, ‘Today, I shall judge nothing that occurs,’ and throughout the day I will remind myself not to judge.”

### **Meditation and Your Observing Mind**

Mindfulness meditation practices are a great way to continue to strengthen your observing mind. In this type of meditation, one practices observing the present moment without judgment and without clinging to any element of experience. Mindfulness meditation practices are not one size fits all. Some people at times find “inwardly focused” meditation (focusing on your breath or internal sensations) to be destabilizing. If this is true for you right now, practice one of the meditations listed below.



### **Alternative meditation practices:**

- Walking Meditation: [www.wildmind.org](http://www.wildmind.org)
- Eating Meditation: [www.metatronics.net/eat/](http://www.metatronics.net/eat/)
- Listening Meditation: [www.radicalhappiness.com](http://www.radicalhappiness.com)
- Nature Meditation: [www.meditationoasis.com](http://www.meditationoasis.com)



### **Identifying Unhelpful Thought Patterns and Thought Distortions**

Do you often see things as black or white? Good or evil? Terrible or wonderful?

Notice if you jump to conclusions or personalize things that actually have nothing to do with you.

Are you victim to “Scarcity Mentality” (fear of not having enough)?

Do you believe you are being punished when things don’t go your way?

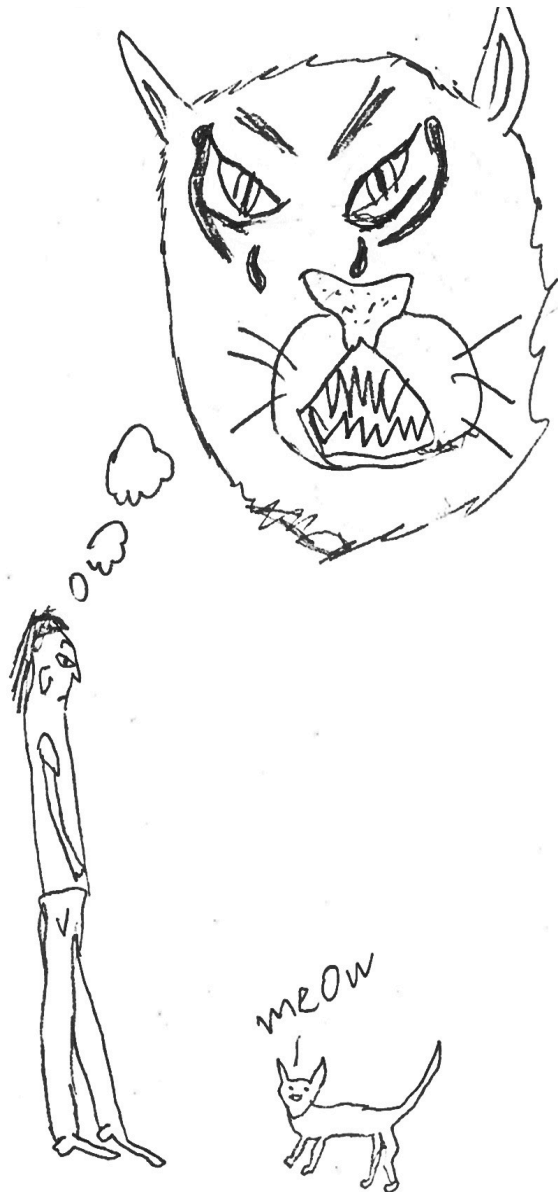
Do you often think others have something against you/are out to get you?

Do you think everyone else has it easier/is better off than you?

## Thought Distortions

A thought like, “My husband didn’t make it to dinner on time because I’m not that important to him” may or may not be true. It is helpful to consider actual experiences that support a perspective such as this.

Reflection on experiences to support our perceptions is an act of compassion as thoughts like these, when not rooted in reality, create unnecessary suffering. In the journal section of this workbook, you will be asked to consider actual experiences that support your thoughts.



## **II. Emotion-Focused Journaling**

### **A Guide to Compassionate Self-Reflection**

Upsetting events happen, and you may not always respond in ways that are consistent with how you'd like to treat ourselves or others. Use the following questions to guide you in examining an incident that triggered a behavior that was not congruous with how you'd like treat yourself and/or those around you. **Either copy these pages or use another sheet of paper to record your responses.**

1. What happened? Visualize and describe the event. Include where you were/are, who was/is there and anything you recall thinking and feeling. (Use the back of this page if you need additional space.)

2. As this event was happening or as you remember and visualize what happened in detail, were you/are you aware of being anxious? Anxiety often happens outside our awareness. (Review pp. 33-34 of this workbook to remind yourself of common signs of anxiety).

3. Rate your anxiety on a scale of 1-10 (“1” being completely relaxed, “10” being extremely anxious).

4. How do you experience this anxiety in your body right now? What shifts do you notice, what symptoms are you aware of in your body and/or mind? Take the time to carefully track and record whatever you notice. (Use the back of this page if necessary.)

5. If you are feeling anxious, your body is responding “as if” you are in danger. Are you in any real danger right now?

6. If you are in danger, get help! If not, then pick an anxiety regulating activity (pp. 34-37). Follow the instructions to perform the activity.

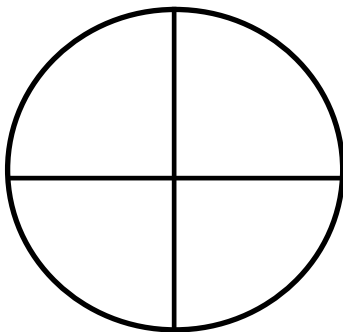
Which activity did you choose?

7. After performing the activity, where is your anxiety on a scale of 1-10? Describe in detail what has shifted in your body/and or mind?

8. How do you imagine someone close to you might react if you told him/her about this event?

9. Pause and consider based solely on your previous experiences with this person: How much of what you imagine (positive or negative) truly reflects your actual experiences with this person?

Shade in your answer—if 0%, leave the circle as is.



25% or less based on reality

50% or less based on reality

75% or less based on reality

100% based on reality

Explain (What specific experiences prompt you to draw these conclusions?):

10. Are you surprised by how much or how little your assumptions about this person's potential reaction have to do with reality?

11. As this event was happening or as you remember and visualize what happened in detail, are you aware of making any judgments about the situation, yourself or others who were involved? If so, list one or more of the judgments about the situation, yourself or others involved in the situation, and include any negative self-talk.

12. What happens if you let go of any judgments you have about the situation, yourself or others who were involved and just focus on the facts? Does this change how you see the event, yourself and/or others? How?

13. Was anyone hurt by your actions? Who was hurt and how?



14. It's important to feel guilt if we hurt someone and to make a repair. Healthy shame is a sign that we are not acting in accordance with how we want to be in the world. If shame and/or guilt were/are present, describe (as best as you can) how they are functioning in this situation? (For example: initiating a repair, shutting me down, prompting me to act out/devalue another...)

15. If guilt is present, are you experiencing healthy remorse or toxic guilt? (Review pp. 40-41).

16. If you feel/felt guilt or shame, ask yourself the following: “If this guilt or shame had words, what would it say?” Write down the words of your guilt or shame. Use the back of this page or another sheet of paper if you need more space.

17. Read the words of your shame and/or guilt aloud, and ask yourself if you’d say these things to someone you care about.

18. What would you say to someone you care about if this event happened to him or her?

19. If there is cause for you to feel healthy remorse for hurting another or healthy shame for acting in a way that is not representative of how you want to be in the world, how might you make a repair (with yourself or this person)?

20. Were/are you aware of using any defenses? If yes, which one(s)? (See p. 43-44 for a list of common defenses.)

21. Was this defense a conscious, healthy choice or an automatic response/part of pattern that kept you safe in another time and place? How do you know?

22. If this/these defense(s) did not serve your greater good, what is the cost of continuing to use this/these defense(s) in this way? What happens to you? How does continuing the automatic/involuntary use of this defense affect your goals/progress?

23. Even if it no longer serves you, can you understand (based on early experiences/influences) why you may have developed a pattern of using this/these defense(s)? What do you understand about why you might do this?

24. What emotions were/are you aware of as this event was happening or as you remember and visualize what happened in detail?

If you are aware of feeling more than one emotion, which emotion feels strongest at the moment? Does this make sense given the situation? Why or why not?

25. What is the intensity of the feeling on a scale of 1-10 (“1” being barely there and “10” being extremely strong)?

26. Stay with the feeling. If you attend to and reduce your anxiety, if you choose not to use a defense, if you set aside any judgments and address toxic shame and guilt---how do you experience this emotion in your body? Take some time to notice what sensations arise when you make feeling this emotion a priority. Use words to describe and/or draw what you sense on the image below. (Include color, intensity, direction of energy...) Continue to address anxiety, toxic shame, toxic guilt or defense if they arise as you sit with the feeling.

Draw and/or describe:

27. This exploration you have done inside yourself may have violated many old rules and taken you away from what you've been taught about how to attend to yourself and how you normally perceive others. Allow yourself the opportunity to reflect on and process any remaining anxiety, judgments, thoughts, and feelings using the process above. Notice and make note of any defenses. Record what you experience here and use the back of this page if you need additional space.



28. Based on what you noticed about your anxiety, judgments, thoughts and feelings can you imagine and describe in detail another way in which you might behave (treat yourself or others differently) should this or a similar situation occur in the future?

\*I would like to thank Dr. Josette ten Have-de Labije for permission to use her “Camera Exercise” as model for the journaling section of this workbook. Dr. ten Have-de Labije’s exercise can be found on Dr. Robin Kay’s website: [DrRobinKay.com](http://DrRobinKay.com)

## REFERENCES

### EMOTIONS

- [TED]. (2018, February 20). *The gift and power of emotional courage*, Susan David [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDQ1Mi5I4rg>
- Demasio, A. (1994). *Descartes' error: emotion, reason, and the human brain*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- Paul Ekman Group. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/user/thepaulekmangroup>
- Frederick, R. (2009). *Living like you mean it: use the wisdom and power of your emotions to get the life You really want*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Hilary Jacobs Hendel, Author, Psychotherapist, The Change Triangle. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.hilaryjacobshendel.com>
- Nummenmaa, L., Glerean, E., Hari, R., & Hietanen, J. K. (2013). Bodily maps of emotions. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *111*(2), 646-651. doi:10.1073/pnas.1321664111
- Panksepp, J. (2005). *Affective neuroscience: The foundations of human and animal emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education]. (2014, December 8). *Name it to tame it, Dan Siegel* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZcDLzppD4Jc>

## **SHAME**

[Dr. Kimberley Taylor]. (2015, August 15). *What is shame and why is it so hard to talk about?* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pmbC9D11PBM>

[Center For Healthy Sex]. (2017, March 27). *Shame and sexual desire with Susan Warren Warshow* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSqhmQO1OK0>

(2018) Understanding and Coping with Guilt and Shame Retrieved from: <http://www.takingtheescalator.com>

## **ANXIETY/FEAR**

Harris & Hayes (2011). *The confidence gap: a guide to overcoming fear and self-doubt*. Boston, MA: Trumpton Books.

Becker (1998). *The gift of fear: survival signals that protect us from violence*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing.

## **GUILT**

Shulman, D. (2018). Why Apologies Fail. Retrieved from <http://abcsoflove.com/partners-apologies/>

## **VALUES**

“Mind Tools: Online Management, Leadership and Career Training.” *From MindTools.com, Mind Tools, www.mindtools.com/.*

## **SELF-COMPASSION**

Neff, Kristin. “Self-Compassion.” Self-Compassion, [self-compassion.org/](http://self-compassion.org/).

## **RELATIONSHIPS**

Shulman, D. (2017). *The ABCs of love: learn how couples rekindle desire and get happy again*. Burbank CA: Sharper House Press, LLC.

Shulman, D. (2018). Why apologies fail [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://abcsoflove.com/partners-apologies/>

Younger J., Aron A., Parke S., Chatterjee N., Mackey S. (2010). Viewing pictures of a romantic partner reduces experimental pain: involvement of neural reward systems. *PLoS ONE*, 5(10): e13309. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0013309>

**Bridget Quebodeaux, MFA, MA, GCFP, LMFT**

Bridget is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with a private practice in West Los Angeles. Before returning to graduate school and earning a degree in psychology, Bridget received a MFA in Acting from California Institute of the Arts. She has been a certified practitioner of the *Feldenkrais Method*® of



somatic education for over 20 years and has created 2 *Awareness Through Movement*® audio programs: *Posture with a Purpose* and *Anatomy of Attunement*. She contributed to the *Feldenkrais Method* chapter in Z. Altug's book *Integrative Healing*.

Bridget has completed core training in Dynamic Emotion Focused Therapy (DEFT). She is on the faculty of the DEFT institute and is the DEFT Training Program Coordinator. She has completed Core Skills Training in EFT (Emotionally Focused Therapy for Couples), training in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy for the treatment of trauma with Pat Ogden and Level II training in Psychobiological Approach to Couple Therapy (PACT) with Stan Tatkin.



Illustrations by Jackson Hammill

Cover art by Roman Hammill