

LESSON 12

Changing Behavior

By reading the lessons and doing the exercises, you have strategies to change the thoughts and feelings which resulted from holding onto the pain of the past.

The last area to be aware of is your own behavior. Repetitive actions become a habit. Habits are actions which occur without thought. Recovery from the past requires that you apply thought to your actions and behaviors.

KNOW THE DEFINITION OF INSANITY

If you want to buy a vegetarian meal but always go to the steak house which puts bacon into its vegetables, you're never going to get a vegetarian meal. Every time you go to that restaurant wanting vegetarian, you'll be disappointed. That's an example of insanity.

Insanity is repeatedly doing the same thing expecting different results.

If you continue to go to the same park you and your ex always went to, and you leave that park feeling down or angry each time, you're the living example of insanity. True, you may feel like you're going insane with all the pain you're carrying, but there's no reason to make it worse.

To recover from the painful wound you've experienced, it's time to embrace the challenge of finding new things to do, new places to go, and new ways of doing things.

FROM INSANITY TO VICTIMIZATION

Many people are examples of the definition of insanity. They also begin to feel like a victim because nothing is working out for them. You may have felt like a victim when the relationship ended. **You don't need to remain a victim.**

What happens after everything pertaining to the relationship is over, is that you are left with a major challenge. That challenge is to pull yourself out of feeling like a victim and get back in touch with the amazing, powerful you that is hiding beneath all that pain.

You are the one who can pull yourself out of repetitive and non-productive behaviors and become the wonderful you.

BEHAVIORS CAN TRIGGER THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS

Your actions can assist in your goal to release the past or they can hold the past firmly in place. It's crucial to be aware of what behaviors trigger the emotional pain. **Once you know your triggers, stay away from them.** That's more difficult than you think, but you can do it.

FIND NEW THINGS TO TALK ABOUT

Avoid talking about the painful event with almost everyone. Talking about what happened brings up the feelings. Confine your discussion about "the event" and the person involved to your therapist, coach, spiritual leader, or support group.

Best friends, family, and those who enjoy hearing gossip won't help you. Your friends and family want to give advice and support, but it may keep the pain going.

Someone objective assists in moving past the pain.

They'll point out where you're continuing to hurt yourself and how to stop.

If you still have the need to "talk," use the releasing exercise where you work on the same letter three times and then burn it. Repeat that process as often as needed.

GO NEW PLACES

If you always went to Joe's Pizza, it's time to get acquainted with Penelope's Pizza. If you always ordered pepperoni and pineapple pizza, it's time to order a different kind. Better yet, go to a cooking class and learn to make something new and different.

If you always went to a particular movie theater or at a particular time, go to another theater, unless you only went to the theater for them. Then don't go to the theater at all.

You may wonder why you need to change the places you go. You don't need to change anything as long as they don't resurrect the pain of the past. If being there continues to hurt you, **quit doing what hurts.**

MUSIC IS A POWERFUL MEMORY TRIGGER

As much as you loved that song you shared, it's time to let it go. The memories associated with it can resurrect the experience of loss quickly. This is true for any music. Find new songs about your new life.

QUIT ATTEMPTING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT WENT WRONG UNLESS YOU'RE WITH A THERAPIST

It's natural to want to know what you could have done differently. To discover what went wrong, you often need a therapist or relationship coach.

Just remember that you can't change the past, but you can apply your new knowledge to change your future.

SUMMARY

Congratulations on almost finishing this course.

You've learned what happens in your brain when you're hurt emotionally. You've also learned why forgiveness, or letting go, is important.

You now have powerful tools and tips to change your thoughts and emotions so you can release the pain as quickly as possible. Then, you learned in this lesson the importance of changing certain behaviors, so those thoughts and emotions aren't triggered.

Before you celebrate the completion of this course, take a few minutes to answer the reflection questions so you can anchor in what you've learned.

REFLECTION

Please write out your answers to the following questions.

1. What activities result in painful memories?
2. What can you do instead?

3. What are the qualities of the wonderful you that you're ready to find again? List as many as you can.