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Dealing with Stress in

HEALTHY Ways

4C LESSON - Investigating and Controlling Our Self-Talk

ACTIVITIES

This lesson's activities and supplements are designed to enhance your chances for recognizing and reducing inappropriate self-talk. To perform these activities well, you must understand much that has already been taught to you in this program. Investigating your thinking is a very important psychological adventure into the workings of your own mind—revealing either emotionally adequate early training or problematic habits—or perhaps some of both. Traveling to the depth we suggest, will undoubtedly change the way you view yourself and how you relate to others.

Emotional intelligence requires us to measure emotions before reacting to them. Without such attention, the mind can become indifferent about the quality of what we say to ourselves. If we are to govern our thoughts for quality and heed healthy choices, we must remain vigilant to watch our thinking.

If you stopped practicing alertness methods that were taught in Lesson 2C, please spend a couple of weeks refreshing your focus before performing this lesson's activities. You will also find it helpful to review the supplements from Lessons 3B and 3C, as their content notes a number of factors that influence the thinking process. In those lessons, you learned that the mind allows us to either guide ourselves by our conscience and emotional sensibilities, or be driven by more natural or primitive, self-serving inclinations. The following activities will help reveal what is guiding your thinking, and will also assist you in improving.

TIME MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS

This self-awareness activity is a valuable prerequisite for other activities in this Lesson. Using one of the 3"x5" side spiral notebooks purchased for performing Lesson 4B Activities, you will be creating a *Time Management Logbook*.

The main purpose of this logbook is to analyze your time management skills. You will be distinguishing what you may be spending too much or too little time doing. This analysis is much similar to how a Financial Analysis would reveal different ways you spend your money. Without taking time to do a careful time analysis, it is almost impossible for anyone to accurately calculate how s/he is spending time, and thus, miss to recognize disturbing habits.

Another purpose of this activity is to increase pausing, an essential mind exercise. Experts tell us that pausing several times throughout the day helps us to reframe our thoughts and also to better remember daily experiences. Reframing our thoughts allows us to search for important subject matter or actions that, otherwise, may not come to mind. Intentional pausing improves the mind's flexibility and leads to more meaningful prioritizing and healthier mental coordination.

INSTRUCTIONS: Note daily transitions in your *Time Management Logbook* throughout each day for two weeks. You can begin entries in the evening, noting the time, as close as possible, when you begin to sleep and then in the next morning, when you awaken. Continue noting the time you begin and end each activity. In the beginning, it may be helpful to set a 10-15 minute timer, so that you don't forget to pause and consider transitions. At the end of each day and then at week's end, tally the total amount of time you have spent performing each different activity. The sample logbook *Daily Transitions* and *Weekly Tally* below should assist.

DAILY TRANSITIONS



WEEK'S TALLY



JOURNALING QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE EACH DAY

By now, you should realize the value of answering revealing questions each day. As with previous journaling instructions, review the questions below periodically throughout the day and at day's end, replay your memories to clarify and note your answers.

1. What did I recognize about my thinking process today that I see needs improvement?

You cannot change every problematic aspect of your thinking the first time you recognize the need for improving. Yet by noting problems in writing, you can review the written reminders, similar to your review of the Anger Extinguisher, for assisting you in reducing such thinking problems over time.

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2. What mantras did I say to myself today that motivated healthy efforts?

Coaching ourselves with empowering mantras is crucial to our emotional growth. This question helps define your level of self-coaching, based on the number of empowering self-talk mantras you are regularly using, or lack thereof.

16 THINKING PATTERNS TO AVOID

This supplement will assist you in qualifying the merits of your thinking as you prepare to perform the *Weekend Thought Study* below. It lists particular thinking habits that can be very common, yet problematic. Be sure to familiarize yourself with this supplement before you perform the *Weekend Thought Study*.

WEEKEND SELF-TALK THOUGHT STUDY

Please study the other thought supplements in this lesson and spend at least a week with the Time Management Analysis project mentioned on the previous page before proceeding to perform this *Weekend Thought Study*.

Instructions: Using the third 3" x 5" notebook, you will be creating a *Self-talk Evaluation Log* to investigate your internal thought activity. This project involves pausing and replaying what you are thinking and saying to yourself, much as you would rewind a video recording. Accurately evaluating your thoughts also requires enough understanding to recognize and label common problems, such as rambling or daydreaming, impatience, exaggerations, denials, and excuses. Please be aware that you must be very humble to recognize when you are being downright dishonest with yourself.

To perform this activity, select a weekend or a few personal days when you can concentrate on investigating your self-talk. This should be a time when you have a light schedule, rather than tasks at hand that require intense focus. You will be paying attention to, not only what and why you are thinking about particular subject-matter, but also evaluating the quality and value of your thoughts—a very useful kind of multi-tasking. You will be paying close attention to your thoughts as though you were a quality-control investigator.

Pausing to remember what you were just thinking may be much harder than remembering what you just did. With continued practice, however, your ability to remember your thoughts should be strengthened by this thought study.

Throughout the weekend, while going about your daily routines, note any questionable thoughts that come to mind in your small 3" x 5" notebook. At the end of the weekend, review your notes and look through this lesson and supplements for any corresponding patterns or mention of similar thoughts. List each questionable pattern you found and number the thoughts from the least problematic to the most serious. Then review these written reminders, similar to your review of the Anger Extinguisher, to assist in reducing thinking problems over time.

12 EMPOWERING THOUGHT PROCESSING SKILLS

This supplement lists 12 aspects of thought processing that are important to consider applying often for maximizing the power of the mind. Please study with intent to become familiar with these skills.

HOW TO SPEND THOUGHT TIME

This supplement lists helpful and harmful ways we can apply thought time. We suggest that you spend enough time with this supplement to memorize these thought time lists in order to avoid or at least reduce harmful thinking.

HELPFUL WAYS TO REDIRECT YOUR THINKING

This supplement provides several therapeutic mantras designed to help redirect poor thinking patterns toward healthier alternatives and, with study, should assist in reducing problematic thinking habits.

BEHAVIORAL WORD STUDY

RESPECT

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We respect what is held in high regard, such as knowledge, integrity, and courteous behavior. Respect can convey an admiration toward abilities, qualities, and achievements. Respect is a major contributor toward a more civilized world. No matter the culture, people apply a number of courtesies and careful actions that convey respect for others and the environment.

Studying the dynamics of respect helps to build our trust, congeniality, and safety. Thus, a better understanding of respect improves our emotional well-being. Please review and discuss the categories of this word study, and brainstorm factors to add to the blank lines. Think about occasions when you have bestowed or earned respect, and then discuss the results. To test your understanding after studying the dynamics of respect, fill in a Blank Word Study.

4C LESSON - VOCABULARY WORDS

Please reflect upon a different word each day for seven days, while paying close attention to how the word you chose relates to your thoughts and actions that day. Each word includes an underlined value statement. Spend time familiarizing yourself with these words and definitions. Also, for enhancing the impact of these words on your behavior, spend time memorizing the brief definitions. Be sure to focus on how each word relates to your thoughts and actions during the day. Be sure to consider how each word-of-the-day can apply to your thoughts and actions.

1. **adjustability- n.** The quality or state of being flexible or adaptable. *Adjustability is a necessary attribute for building a healthy mind.* Synonyms. changeability, compliance, resilience. Antonym. Rigidity
2. **anticipation- n.** The skilled act of looking ahead with expectation or apprehension. *Anticipation contributes toward preparedness, rather than unprepared disengagement or detachment.* Synonyms. forethought, precognition, circumspection. Antonyms. unreadiness, lack of control, lack of approach.
3. **babble- n.** Talk that is excessive, trivial, irrational, or meaningless. *With reference to talking to ourselves in thought, babbling can reduce quality use of the mind and lead to distorted mind development.* Synonyms. jabber, rant, idle talk. Antonyms. wisdom, sense, silence.
4. **effort- n.** An earnest or strenuous exertion of energy, either physical or mental. *When we apply effort, we are stretching ourselves beyond a casual state with a purpose of accomplishment.* Synonyms. achievement, discipline, attempt, labor. Antonyms. passivity, inactivity, neglect.
5. **intentional- adj.** What is done by mentally determining the action or result. *Mastering control of our thinking require practicing more intentional, rather than arbitrary thought.* Synonyms. purposeful, by design, calculated. Antonyms. Unplanned, unintentional.
6. **interpretation- n.** A translation or perception that provides meaning to a thought, behavior, or concept of work. *Our ability to reason well requires that we attempt very carefully to interpret the quality of our thinking, behavior, and view of the real world correctly.* Synonyms. understanding, analysis, insight, awareness. Antonyms. misconception, ignorance, misunderstanding.
7. **meander- v.** An aimless, wandering movement, either physically or mentally. *Meandering is an action without a meaningful direction and contributes toward shallow mind activity and behavior.* Synonyms. drift, roam, getting sidetracked, be all over the map. Antonyms. go direct, methodical, purposeful.