

You've Got Skills

Thought regulation Skills

Please identify the Defense mechanisms you use in your relationship. Once you identify your primary defense mechanisms become mindful of how they play out in your life. How do they protect you? How do they disconnect you from others?

- Blaming or Attacking Others** -- *This defense mechanism is used when your ego becomes threatened, you feel vulnerable and hurt, or you don't want to admit your shortcomings or contributions to the problem.*
- Rationalization** -- *This example of a defense mechanism is a subconscious justification, excuse or reasoning given to make a behavior seem logical.*
- Excuses** -- *Instead of taking responsibility for your actions or lack of action, you instead share all the reasons why it could not be done or blames others for your behavior.*
- Deflection** -- *When you change the subject and focus on someone or something else, instead of speaking about yourself.*
- Playing the Victim** -- *To avoid dealing with the problem or feeling responsible for the situation, the victim finds it easier to make the other person the bad guy and believes that everything is happening to them.*
- Displacement** - *This defense reduces anxiety or pressure by transferring feelings toward one person to another.*
- Conversion** - *Mental conflict converted to a physical symptom.*
- Regression** - *Giving up current level of development and going back to a prior level.*
- Reaction Formation** - *Over-compensation for fear of the opposite. When there are two conflicting parts in self: one is strengthened while the other is repressed.*
- Simple Denial** - *Unpleasant facts, emotions, or events are treated as if they are not real or don't exist.*
- Fantasy** - *Retreating into a dream world of times past.*

Vocabulary you use

It is important for you to become consciously aware of the words you use in your internal dialogue or in a dialogue with your partner. A simple word modification can mean the difference between feeling obligated and feeling empowered to choose. Review the list of words below and notice how each word makes you feel emotionally and physiologically. Do I feel constricted or expansive? Highlight the words in Column 1 you tend to use and begin practicing the alternative word and notice how your internal ecosystem and your interpersonal relationship change.

Vocabulary Exchange ¹

Constrictive	Expansive
Must	Prefer
Should	Choose to or Could
Have To	Want
Can't	Choose not to
Always	Often
Can't stand	Don't like
Awful	Highly undesirable
Bad person	Bad behavior
I am a failure	I failed at
Never	Rarely
I have to do well.	I want to do well.
You shouldn't do that.	I prefer you not do that.
You never help me.	You rarely help me.
I can't stand my job.	I don't like my job.
You are a bad boy.	That behavior is undesirable.
I'm a loser.	I failed at this one task.
I am anxious.	Concern comes over me.
I am depressed.	Sadness touches me.
I am angry.	An intense energy of annoyance churns inside of me.
I am guilty.	A sense of remorse or regret flows inside of me.
I am shameful.	An emotion of embarrassment or negative thoughts about myself desire to influence me.
I am hurt.	A sensation of hurt enters into my heart.
Try	Will do

¹ Sarmiento, R. Smart Recovery: Vocabulary Exchange. (2014, June 11) Retrieved from: http://www.smartrecovery.org/resources/library/Tools_and_Homework/Encyclopedia/vocabulary_exchange.htm

Smart Recovery ABC's to changing thought patterns²

A lot of our current beliefs come from our past life experiences or what was modeled to us by our family of origin. The fortunate part is you don't have to stay a victim of your past and can liberate yourself by setting yourself free. The following exercise will start the process so your past does not wreck havoc in your present relationship and new empowering experiences can emerge.

First select a situation in your relationship that is emotionally distressing for you and describe the activating event (using the facts). Next identify the beliefs you have (i.e. "I am unloved," "I am unlovable," "I am not important to him or her.") when that situation occurs. Then list the physical, emotional, interpersonal, behavioral consequences that occur as a result of having those beliefs.

Now you will dispute those beliefs as though you were a lawyer disputing the evidence of a case. You will dispute the beliefs that are not serving you and gather proof and evidence to the contrary (i.e. "he or she made me a sandwich," he or she gave me a hug last week when I was dealing with challenges at work," "he or she encouraged me on Monday by saying he or she was so proud of me."). Then you are going to identify the positive emotional, mental, physical and behavioral consequences when you see the factual evidence.

Activating Situation: _____

_____.

Belief(s): _____

_____.

Consequences: _____

_____.

Dispute the irrational belief: _____

_____.

Effective New Thinking: _____

_____.

² Institute for Rational Emotive Therapy. (2014, June 11). Smart Recovery ABC. Retrieved from http://www.smartrecovery.org/resources/library/Tools_and_Homework/Quick_Reference/abc_crashcourse.htm

List your Top 8 Fears

Take the next 10-15 minutes to identify your top 8 fears and then identify where this fear came from. You will find that this fear comes from outside influences, past experiences that no longer exist in the present moment or worries about the future that have not even occurred yet.

Fear	History
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	

Reflection: Are these fears helping me or hindering me?

Helping Me

Hindering Me

Am I ready to change and transform my fears?

Yes

No

I am ready to change

Next you will do a reflection meditation where you will ask your higher self or inner wisdom for a new truth and a new reality about the situation. For each fear listed above you will repeat the following two phrases and sit in silence for 1-2 minutes. Once you tap into a new insight, perspective, and awe inspiring piece of wisdom you will write down your new truth that arose during your meditation in the section below. If you'd like I encourage you to create Fearless Meditation flashcards of your New Loving Thoughts and reflect on them for the next 30 days so you can start transforming your fears into a new empowering perspective.

Mantra from A Course in Miracles:

“I choose to reinterpret my fears with a more loving perspective.”

“Source take this fear from me and look upon it and judge it for me. Teach me how not to make of it an obstacle to my peace.”

New Loving Thought
1)
2)
3)
4)
5)
6)
7)
8)

