

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Give yourself one point for each “yes” answer. The more “points” you have, the higher your ACE score, and the more likely you are to be continuing to deal with post-traumatic issues.

1. Before your 18th birthday, did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...
swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?
or act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
2. Before your 18th birthday, did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...
push, grab, slap, or throw something at you, or ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
3. Before your 18th birthday, did an adult or person at least five years older than you ever...
touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?
or
attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
4. Before your 18th birthday, did you often or very often feel that...
no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or valued?
or
your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
5. Before your 18th birthday, did you often or very often feel that...
you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or
your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
6. Before your 18th birthday, was a biological parent ever lost to you through divorce, abandonment, or other reason?
7. Before your 18th birthday, was your mother or stepmother:
often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?
or
sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or
ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
8. Before your 18th birthday, did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?
9. Before your 18th birthday, was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
10. Before your 18th birthday, did a household member go to prison?

AEIOU Conflict Management Exercise

By Elise Harboldt, adapted from *Feeling Good Together* by David Burns

This tool, an extended version of The Floor, works best with a sit-down conversation between two or more people with a significant conflict. It works best in one of three situations:

1. The people in conflict are experienced in using this tool.
2. The people in conflict aren't experienced, but have a capable mediator or coach to help structure the conversation.
3. One of the people in conflict has a high level of maturity and is willing to "set the tone" and "take the initiative" in this process.

To remember the five steps, we use the vowels A-E-I-O-U. "Vowel" starts with "v," which just happens to be the peace sign. Flip a coin or do "rock, paper, sizzors, cut" to identify the person who will start. If you win, you get to be the listener. Let the other person be the speaker, and tell their side of the conflict. This should be done as concisely as possible, and in the least-hurtful way possible (Although truth can hurt!). Then the listener summarizes in these steps:

1. Agree. Find the truth in what the speaker is saying. The narratives don't line up totally, but neither are they completely dissimilar. Identify what you can agree with. And agree as much as possible with the speaker's view.
2. Empathize. Put yourself in the other speaker's place. If you experienced things as they did, how would you feel? Remember, you don't need to agree, you simply need to understand, and to convey that understanding in word and tone. The best way to convey empathy is to tell the speaker's view in your own words, and then express your own feelings of empathy in response.
3. Inquire. Ask the speaker if you understand their view correctly, or if they want to add or change anything. Draw them out with more questions, approaching them with curiosity, as opposed to defensiveness. Eventually inquire as to whether they feel understood or not.

The idea is that the first three steps will help the speaker feel understood to the point that they can hear the other person's view.

4. Open Up. Tell the speaker that you'd like to now share your view. With their cooperation (and most of the time they will cooperate), express your view. Begin by affirming the positives, such as your appreciation of the speaker and faith that things will get better. Then cautiously share the negative aspects.
5. Unite. Express appreciation of the person. Affirm the relationship and restate your love and commitment. Lift up the person and relationship in prayer.

Here's how conflict typically goes without radical resolution:

It's Blaire's birthday and Tom promised her they would spend the day together. They meet at a coffee shop and spend some time visiting, but then Tom seems to be absorbed with his phone. Blaire starts to feel hurt and neglected. What Blaire doesn't know is that Tom is texting a group of Blaire's friends about a surprise birthday party they're planning for that evening. Tom tries to stay involved in the conversation, but the texts are urgent. He's trying to finalize the cake plan.

Blaire grows more and more frustrated and hurt until she explodes: "I feel like you're not even paying attention to me! It's really rude. I mean, it's my birthday and you told me we were gonna spend the day together. I don't want to spend the day watching you on your phone!"

Tom responds, "You're really overreacting, Blaire. I'm texting about something really important. How do you know I'm not doing something for you?"

"Something for me?? Why would I assume that when you clearly don't care about me or want to hang out with me?"

"Maybe I'd want to hang out with you more if you didn't attack me like this!"

And so on, down the spiral.

Now let's see how it goes when we use the AEIOU tool:

Blaire says, "I feel like you're not even paying attention to me! It's really rude. I mean, it's my birthday and you told me we were gonna spend the day together. I don't want to spend the day watching you on your phone!"

Tom says, "Oh, well, yeah. I can see where you'd feel that way. I am on my phone a lot. And I did say we'd be hanging out today (Agree). I don't like it either when people stare at their phones rather than talk to me (Empathize). I wonder, does this happen a lot with me? Do you feel like I'm distracted and device-focused? (Inquire)"

Blaire, already calming down, says, "Well, yes. I'm not as tech-savvy as you, and I feel a little lost when we're together and you connect elsewhere." Blaire has just given Tom some good information about her insecurities. Tom continues the inquiry with:

"Do you feel a little more sensitive on your birthday, too? I know I do, even though I hate to admit it. (Inquire)"

Blaire says, "Yeah, I was raised by parents who didn't believe in celebrating birthdays and I always felt left out of 'normal' society." Bingo!! Blaire has just opened up a whole world of pain that Tom unintentionally triggered.

Tom continues to empathize and inquire, and Blaire continues to calm down and feel understood. Finally Tom says, "Hey, do you mind if I share something with you about why I was apparently being rude by being on my phone? (Open Up)" Blaire agrees. Tom says, "I was finalizing plans

for your cake. We're throwing a surprise party for you. We'll be eating out together then going back to my house for cake."

Blaire is reassured and a little embarrassed. Tom says, "It's okay, Blaire. So many people love you—including me!" Right then, a hoard of friends walk in the coffee shop. And they all live happily ever after (Unite).

Not everything will turn out as perfectly as this little vignette, but this tool really does have the power to not only settle a conflict, but to successfully address root issues, and to strengthen the sense of safety in the relationship.

Distorted Thoughts

Instructions: After each entry rate from 0 to 10 your level of participation (10 being the most).
After that, give an example from your own experience.

Catastrophizing- You think that past, present and/or future events will be awful and unbearable. “If I don’t get an A, it will be horrible!”

Dichotomous thinking- You regard situations and people in all-or-nothing, black-and-white terms. “Either we have fun on this campout, or we don’t!”

Discounting positives- You trivialize the positive things you and others do: “Of course I take care of my children. Who wouldn’t?”

Emotional reasoning- You believe that because you feel something, it must be so. “I’m feeling guilty. I must be guilty!”

External locus of control- You believe that life “happens” to you, and minimize the effect your choices have on the outcome. “I can’t be happy unless so-and-so changes. It’s totally in their hands.”

Fallacy of fairness- You believe that everything must be measured on the basis of fairness and equality, and fail to accept the reality that things aren’t always that way. “He cheated, so now I’ll cheat.”

Fortunetelling- You assume the past is entirely predictive of the future, rather than allowing for change. “I failed in that relationship, so I must not have what it takes.”

Judgment focus- You view events, situations or people completely in terms of how they measure against some arbitrary standard, rather than just seeing things for what they are. “He’s too talkative and people don’t like him because of it.”

Labeling- A severe type of overgeneralization, labeling is the practice of labeling a person or other entity after having little exposure. “That day care center is child abuse central.”

Mind reading- Without evidence, you assume that your intuitions never misfire and that you know what people are thinking about you. “I can tell they hated my lecture.”

Negative filtering- You perceive only the worst of past and present events and circumstances. “Everyone I’ve ever known has rejected me.”

Personalizing- You take an undue amount of responsibility upon yourself. “If I looked better, my husband wouldn’t be into pornography.”

Blaming- You project personal responsibility onto other people or circumstances. “If he had been kinder, I wouldn’t have cheated. He made me do it!”

Monsterifying- You exaggerate the wrongs of others, attributing to them a global pattern of evil for which you lack evidence. “She’s wholly given over to evil and can’t be trusted.”

Projecting- You see others through the lens of your own traits, assuming they share them. “Of course he was angry! *I’d* be angry!”

Overgeneralizing- You apply negative traits or actions to the entire person or situation. “My husband can’t do anything right!”

Overidentifying- You see yourself entirely in terms of one trait or event. “My shyness makes me into a complete, antisocial reject.”

Overvaluing- You attribute to others excessive authority or worth in contrast to yourself and/or others. “She always knows what’s best for me. She’s never wrong! I can’t take a step without her.”

Regret orientation- You focus on past mishaps, assuming that they have been ruinous to your life. “If only I hadn’t gotten that surgery!”

Self-inflation- You claim personal assets, achievements and abilities while lacking the courage to test your beliefs. “I’m a great singer. If I tried, I could be famous.”

Self-serving bias- You see all positive events as due to your goodness, and all negative events as outside your control. “People hate me because they’re hateful, but when they love me, it’s because I’m so awesome.”

Singling- You place yourself in position of complete contrast to others. “God’s forgiveness is for everyone, but I’m too evil.”

Shoulds- You see people and events entirely in terms of ideals rather than reality. “People should be friendly and warm.”

Supernaturalizing- You interpret events and circumstances too readily and confidently in terms of direct divine intervention. “People don’t like me, so God must be judging me.”

Unfair comparisons- You view yourself in contrast to unrealistic standards. “If I’m not as smart as he is, I won’t even try.”

-Thanks to Leehy and Holland for some of these concepts.

-Abide Counseling @ [abide.network](https://www.abide.network)

F.A.R. Exercise

This exercise is designed to assist in thought control, which helps stabilize mood and emotions. I've broken this process down into three main steps: Find, Argue and Replace, or "F.A.R."

F=Find-

-First, find or identify the triggering event or circumstance, such as, "My boss ignores me," or "Traffic jam."

-Now, learn to identify your anxious or sad feelings and admit to yourself that you're feeling them. Use the list called "Feeling Words."

-Next, find the thoughts that underlie the feelings. These will be things like: "I will miss this deadline, lose my job, and live in poverty." Or "That person thinks they're better than me. I hate to be put down!" This will take more time and energy, even prayer. Write them down in the space provided.

Congratulations, you've accomplished the first step!

A=Argue- Learn to argue with yourself. Use the Distorted Thoughts document. In doing this, you are breaking up the fallow ground of your own thinking so that the seed of truth can take root. Tell yourself what's wrong with the way you're thinking: "I'm catastrophizing missing the deadline. I'm making it much worse than it is!" Or "Where is the evidence that person thinks they're better than you? You're mindreading. And you're also catastrophizing how bad it is to deal with an arrogant person." In this step, you're not beating yourself up so much as holding yourself accountable for the way you're treating yourself.

R=Replace- Learn to replace misbeliefs with truth. Truth will be much more nuanced, complex and detailed than distorted thinking. If the distorted thought is, "My wife is an idiot and I can't stand it!" then the truth would be something like, "My wife gets distracted sometimes when too much is going on. She loses her concentration. Sometimes she makes mistakes, like locking the keys in the car or leaving the stove on all night. Most of the time, the mistakes aren't catastrophic. A few times they have caused inconvenience. But she's a PhD in Microbiology, so it's not that she lacks intelligence. I get frustrated with her, but her occasional flakiness isn't horrible, it's just irritating." Truth has shades of gray whereas distorted thinking tends to be very black and white, or extreme.

Use this table to write down your answers.

Find	Argue	Replace
Event: Feeling word: Thought:		
Event: Feeling word:		

Feeling word: Thought:		
Event: Feeling word: Thought:		

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Fact, Feeling and Followthrough Worksheet

This is a simple communication technique that helps partners make request of each other. When you have a problem with a loved one, follow these three simple steps.

1. Fact- State the facts clearly and objectively. Make sure you're sticking to concrete reality versus opinion. DO NOT attempt to read motives: "Man looks upon the outward appearance, but God looks upon the heart," 1 Samuel 16:7.

2. Feeling- This step gives an opportunity for you to own your feelings. The purpose of this is not to accuse your loved one, but to take responsibility for your own reaction.

3. Follow-through- In this step you ask your loved one for a specific response. You are requesting something versus demanding it. Be specific, realistic, and fair.

Here are some examples. Some blanks have been left for you to practice. Write out at least one FFF for your spouse.

Fact	Feeling	Follow-through
"We aren't communicating much. Tonight we haven't even talked. . ."	". . . and I'm feeling very lonely and sad."	"Could we please make a plan to spend at least a few minutes chatting each night?"
"You made a joke about me tonight at the dinner table. . ."	". . . and I felt humiliated."	"Could you please say some affirming things about me at dinner and avoid joking about me?"
"I keep finding your wet towels and dirty clothes on the floor. . ."	". . . and I'm feeling pretty frustrated."	"Could you please not leave your things for me to pick up?"
"You yelled at me when you saw the credit card bill. . ."	". . . and I felt intimidated and hurt."	"Could we please discuss the bill quietly each month?"
"We're arguing every day. . ."	". . . and I feel frustrated about it."	"Could we try a couple months of marriage counseling?"
"You told your friend about our conflict . . ."	". . . and I felt exposed and embarrassed."	"Could we please discuss what is private and what can be shared?"
"The children are fighting again, but you're sitting in your chair . . ."	". . . and I feel aggravated and overwhelmed."	"Could you please go talk to them?"

Forgiveness Worksheet

*We must not hold a grudge
We must learn to endure
And as God is your judge
At least your heart will be pure
Forgiveness
Is the mightiest sword
Forgiveness of those you fear
Is the highest reward
When they bruise you with words
When they make you feel small
When it's hardest to take
You must do nothing at all
Forgiveness
Is the simplest vow
Forgiveness of all their crimes
Is your deliverance now*

-from *Jane Eyre*

This worksheet was designed to help those of us who recognize our need to forgive.

Failure to forgive results in bitterness. According to Hebrews 12:15, bitterness has several features; it constitutes a failure to be grace-filled; it is a root, and therefore deep within us; it springs up and causes trouble; it defiles many. Considering its high cost to our well-being and the well-being of others we do well to avoid unforgiveness. Yet forgiveness seems difficult.

In this document I try to approach the issue with biblical integrity and compassion. It is my intention and prayer that these steps will lead you to a decision to forgive, and thus help in the healing process.

Action Step: I encourage you to take a day off while working through this sheet. Go somewhere, preferably surrounded by nature, where you can be alone and quiet. If you're inside, light some candles and put on gentle music. Don't bring your laptop, but bring a Bible, a hymnal, and your personal calendar. You may want to fast or semi-fast on fruit or fruit and bread. The point is to reduce distractions and focus on the task at hand. This is a life and death issue.

Meditation: Jesus taught us to pray like this: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" Matthew 6:12. The word "as" is the Greek *kai*, which can mean "and," "also," or "indeed." Essentially, *Kai* joins two parts: God's forgiveness of our sin and our forgiveness of others' sin. Indeed, the two link together like sunshine and bird song, rain and verdure. Likewise, Jesus taught, "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses" Mark 11:25. Notice the bi-directional grace—receiving from God, giving to others.



Think of forgiveness in terms of water. God pours forgiveness into our vessel, washing away our sin and filling us with grace. We then spill out water on our thirsty, dirty fellow men. We share the forgiveness we receive from God. But if we hold our vessel tight to our chest, refusing to forgive others, God won't be able to fill our vessel. Bestowing forgiveness expands our capacity to receive God's forgiveness. Likewise, receiving forgiveness from God inspires us to forgive others. The giving and receiving of forgiveness exist symbiotically, in mutual sustenance of one another.

But forgiving those who have deeply wronged us presents a serious challenge. Bitter feelings cling like burrs, causing further pain. Forgiveness, in Greek *aphiemi*, means "send away." To send those bitter feelings away sounds like a good option at times, but at other times it feels as if this would leave us vulnerable to more hurt.

Wounded people must get distance from their wrongdoers in order to process the pain. Without this distance, forgiveness is much more difficult. Ideally, victims of domestic violence move out; employees of a sexually harassing boss relocate; adult children of emotionally abusive parents create appropriate boundaries. At times, victims may have difficulty creating physical distance, and emotional distance must suffice.

Action Step: Answer the following question: How can you create appropriate distance from your wrongdoer, if you haven't already?

Meditation: Many, especially abuse victims, have a confused understanding of forgiveness. Some were trained from a young age to excuse or even approve of abuse. Perpetrators know how to find and push "guilt buttons" so that victims feel that imposing any accountability for wrong done is unchristian and unkind. Others have negative feelings or memories and assume that this means they haven't yet forgiven. Distorted ideas of forgiveness prevent true forgiveness. Use this list to rout out false ideas of forgiveness:

Forgiveness \neq Trust- Notice that even the great apostle Paul, who was forgiven by God and the Christians he had persecuted, had to earn the trust of the church (Acts 9). Forgiveness is not trust. Of course, forgiveness is indeed the first step toward the restoration of trust, so trust in some cases grows out of forgiveness.

Forgiveness \neq Excusing- Forgiveness is the opposite of excusing or overlooking sin. Built right into the concept of forgiveness is the fact that wrong was done. Actually, by forgiving you're making a clear statement that what the individual did was wrong. Through the Cross, God made a

forgiveness statement to the world. He simultaneously proved that sin couldn't be excused—else why would He allow His Son to suffer so badly?

Forgiveness ≠ Approval- To forgive a person in no way indicates approval on your part. You may choose to forgive even a person who continues to do wrong, just as Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers who nailed Him to the cross, but by forgiving you're actually showing your *disapproval* of the act.

Forgiveness ≠ Forgetting- While putting people's sins out of our minds is one of the benefits of forgiveness (we don't have to think about it anymore!), it is unrealistic and unreasonable to expect that they will be completely forgotten. We must find a delicate balance of admitting things happened without dwelling upon them.

Forgiveness ≠ Feeling- Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. Often we will wrestle with negative feelings long after we have forgiven. Feelings are not evidence of whether we've forgiven or not. They are just feelings. Feelings are important, but they are not conclusive evidence of reality. Typically if we choose to forgive, then act in accordance with that choice, negative feelings will abate over time. But if appropriate distance hasn't been made between wrongdoer and victim, this emotional healing will be much more difficult.

Action Step: Read the above list of misconceptions carefully and answer the following question: Have I cherished any of these distorted ideas of forgiveness? If so, have they prevented me from forgiving? If so, how?

Meditation: Forgiveness is a learned skill, a science, and an art. It is a conscientious, rational process of releasing the wrongdoer from the consequences of sin. Many metaphors help us understand it, but Jesus' Magna Carta on forgiveness, Matthew chapter 18, uses debt, debt collecting, and debt forgiveness to illustrate.

Jesus first addresses the offender by warning against "stumbling blocks." Stumbling blocks are wrongs done that cause a "little one" to "stumble" (v. 6). Jesus gives very clear and shocking warning against these, saying we should cut off an appendage or pluck out an eye if necessary to prevent them. Jesus leaves no room for excusing sin, particularly sin against the vulnerable, or "little ones."

Action Step: Read Matthew 18:1-11, then answer the following question: Were you a "little one" when wrong was done to you? Describe your situation.

After advocating for the vulnerable ones of the human family, Jesus gives instruction for how to deal with offenses that occur between equals (notice the term is “brother,” indicating horizontality and equality). He counsels that we first approach the brother one on one. If this approach doesn’t resolve the difference, we are to take one or two others. If this doesn’t avail, we are to take it to the church.

Notice that while Jesus commands one-on-one confrontation between equals, He doesn’t require the weak and vulnerable to confront their wrongdoers. In relationships of equality, differences are ideally resolved between the two parties. In contrast, a power imbalance necessitates an advocate, a mediator.

Confrontation is often part of the forgiveness process. In order to confront and forgive wrong, we must have a clear idea of what was done to us. Our feelings of outrage show that we have a sense of justice. True forgiveness builds from this foundation. To forgive intelligently and thoroughly, we must survey the damage.

Action Step: Make sure your grievances aren’t imaginary. Some things we can overlook. Did the wrongdoer cause concrete physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual, financial and relational damage? Use those categories to delineate actual damage. If possible, let a trusted person who knows the situation review the worksheet and tell you if they concur with your conclusions.

Worksheet A- Survey the Damage

Physical	Emotional	Mental	Social	Spiritual	Financial	Relational

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Meditation: Some, particularly victims of a family member, have a hard time admitting that others did wrong. Sometimes we want to justify them. Or sometimes we ping-pong back and forth between excusing them and condemning them. A close relationship with the wrongdoer, and/or had a high degree of trust tends to compromise our perceptions. Yet we're told to "be sober," which includes admitting that people aren't angels. "All have sinned," and "all flesh is grass" (1 Peter 5:8; Romans 3:23; 1 Peter 1:24). Don't be shocked that sinners sin. With the evidence of the above worksheet, admit that you were wronged.

Action Step: Now that you understand what forgiveness entails, and you're fully aware of the damage, create a chart of costs and benefits of both forgiving the person and remaining in unforgiveness. This will help you recognize the nature of forgiveness—that it's a thoughtful decision as opposed to a whim or a feeling. List the effect that forgiving or not forgiving will have upon you, others, and God.

T-Chart of Forgiveness vs. Unforgiveness

Effect	Forgiveness-costs	Forgiveness-benefits	Unforgiveness-costs	Unforgiveness-benefits
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On you				
On others				
On God				

Meditation: Matthew 18:21-35 relates a parable of forgiveness and debt collecting. A great landowner calls one of his staff to account, saying he owes 10 million dollars. The landowner orders him into prison,

Action Step: Read Isaiah 53 out loud. Read with emotion, thinking carefully about each verse. Claim this promise: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Kneel down and confess your sin, then receive God’s forgiveness and cleansing as a free gift, something you can’t merit or earn.

Meditation: We sometimes cherish doubts of our own forgiveness. We may feel unforgiven even though we’ve confessed and forsaken our sin. Or we may have fallen into habitual sin in an attempt to cope with the pain of abuse. Faith comes to the rescue in all such cases. We must believe the promises of God and our own prayers. If we ask for a fish, will our loving father give us a stone? When He died to forgive us, will He then withhold forgiveness when we ask? Likewise, if we ask for victory, will He not give it? To cherish doubt is to tarnish God’s image. We must by faith embrace our forgiven and cleansed state. Expressing gratitude helps accomplish this.

Action Step: Express gratitude. **Sing the hymns “Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart,” or “My Jesus, I Love Thee.”** Expression of your faith deepens impression. Read Psalm 103 aloud, thinking about how God has saved you from destruction.

Note: focusing on God’s forgiveness of your sin does *not* minimize the other person’s sin! It simply moves your focus from them to yourself, from a frustrating situation to a more productive situation. In psychology we call this an “internal locus of control” versus an “external locus of control.”

Meditation: Now that your cup is full of forgiveness and gratitude, you are in a position to share it. You can choose to “send away” the wrong done to you, to forgive the debt. This doesn’t mean that you *forget*

what was done. But you may think of it as boxing it and “sending it away” to a warehouse. Sin is like toxic waste. You’re quarantining it by putting it away from yourself. In some cases, you will be able to tell the individual you’ve forgiven them. In some cases—especially where abuse is concerned—you won’t choose to have any contact with the wrongdoer.

Forgiveness is a choice. You’ve set aside quality time to think carefully through this process. You’ve come to terms with what it means to forgive. You’ve surveyed the damage done to you; you’ve also acknowledged your own sin. You’ve received forgiveness. You’ve thanked God for that forgiveness. Now you’re prepared to make the conscious, intelligent choice to forgive.

Action Step: Kneel down and pray, asking God to give you His Spirit as you choose to forgive. Pray for “them that spitefully use you” (Matthew 5:44). Mark the date on your calendar.

Meditation: You may have to revisit this decision. At times you may feel overwhelmed with anger or other negative feelings. Remember that forgiveness is a choice to release the wrongdoer from a debt, to send away their wrongdoing, to separate yourself from it. Expect to return to your decision and even walk through the steps again. It may take years before your feelings “catch up” to your choice. Don’t get discouraged. Just because you feel hurt, angry or offended doesn’t mean that you choose those things. Remind yourself that you chose to forgive. Ever so slowly those negative feelings will disappear.

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Posttraumatic Growth Inventory

What growth have you experienced as the result of trauma? Rate on a scale of 1-6, 6 being the highest.

1. My priorities about what is important in life
2. I'm more likely to try to change things that need changing
3. An appreciation for the value of my own life
4. A feeling of self-reliance
5. A better understanding of spiritual matters
6. Knowing that I can count on people in times of trouble
7. A sense of closeness with others
8. Knowing I can handle difficulties
9. A willingness to express my emotions
10. Being able to accept the way things work out
11. Appreciating each day
12. Having compassion for others
13. I'm able to do better things with my life
14. New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been
15. Putting effort into my relationships
16. I have stronger religious faith
17. I've discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was
18. I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are
19. I developed new interests
20. I accept needing others
21. I establish a new path for my life

Total the scores. The lowest score is 21, and the highest is 126. Midpoint is 63.

Putting E.A.R. to Practice

Think of an issue you'd like to work through as a couple. Don't choose the most difficult problem for this first attempt. Sit across from each other, preferably touching each other somewhere. Look in each other's eyes. Rock-paper-scissors-cut to decide who goes first. That person, Person #1, will share their view of the situation in one-paragraph segments. Be careful not to go on too long. Make your comments brief, to the point, and a processable portion size. Person #2 can only ask loving questions and reflect back what they heard. Person #1 continues to share in paragraph-length segments with Person #2 asking questions and reflecting back. Person #2 must remember that they don't have to *agree* with Person #1, but rather to *understand* their perspective. When Person #1 feels heard, switch roles.

Resources to Help You Heal

Jesus Meditations

These 10-minute audio files take you on a meditation journey leading to the feet of Jesus. We begin by helping you slow and deepen your breathing, then share a devotional and a prayer. Finally, you'll hear a beautiful scripture song by world-renowned recording artist Neville Peter. We recommend doing each meditation each day twice a day over a 30-day period.

<https://www.jesusmeditations.org/music/>

Abide Network

Abide Network, a group of biblically-based counselors and coaches who do distance work (phone or Skype), is found at abide.network. We would love to serve your mental health needs. Most insurances do not cover distance work, however our fees are lower than industry standard. Costs range from \$25 per 50-minute session for an Abide-trained mental health coach to \$50-120 per 50-minute session for a licensed Abide counselor. As a first step, please go to the website and fill out the intake form and we'll take it from there.

Free Abide Support Groups

Abide offers free telephone support groups, Tuesdays at 7PM ET, Wednesday 7PM ET, Thursday 8PM ET and Sundays at 8AM ET. The groups use the books *13 Weeks to Peace*, *13 Weeks to Love*, and *13 Weeks to Joy*. You don't have to read the books to participate, but if you'll be going regularly, buying the books and following along with the chapters the group is reading will be helpful. You can obtain the books at jenniferjill.org/shop. You can join anytime, and leave any time--they are open groups, a free support service offered with love. Groups honor confidentiality, but if you wish you can also choose not to disclose your full identity

Here are the numbers you'll need: (267)807-9611, ACCESS CODE- 305624#

Healing Books

13 Weeks to Peace addresses mental health- <http://jenniferjill.org/product/13-weeks-to-peace/>

13 Weeks to Love addresses relational health- <http://jenniferjill.org/product/13-weeks-to-love/>

13 Weeks to Joy celebrates both- <http://jenniferjill.org/product/13-weeks-to-joy/>

You can get them as a discount bundle here- <http://jenniferjill.org/product/13-weeks-bundle/>

These books are excellent small group and/or personal healing journey resources.

God in Pain by David Asscherick addresses theodicy, the study of why a loving God allows suffering.

On the Threshold of Hope by Diane Langberg focuses on abuse recovery.

The Wounded Heart by Dan Allender has helped many recover from abuse.

The Hidden Half of the Gospel by Paul Coneff approaches recovery through the Cross.

The Ministry of Healing by Ellen White is a classic on global health.

Anxiety & Depression Relief

This course helps participants find relief from anxiety and depression symptoms, giving detailed explanations of the diagnoses but also oodles of helpful techniques to help manage or even resolve the conditions!

Abide Network offers this live six-session Zoom workshop several times a year for the low price of \$150.

Abuse, Trauma, & Faith

This course helps participants find healing from trauma, sharing helpful grounding techniques and stabilizing habits, as well as best-practice treatments.

Abide Network offers this workshop several times per year for the low price of \$150.

The Floor Technique

Use “the floor” exercise to work through more serious conflict. Make sure you reserve time and can sit, free of distractions, to use this technique.

Flip a coin. Whoever wins goes first. This person gets “the floor” (you can use a piece of rug or a tile, or simply use a book or other object). While this person has the floor, the other must use the E.A.R. active listening technique to draw out from them their view/feelings/thoughts.

Once the person using active listening senses the speaker feels heard and understood, they may ask, “Are you ready to hear from me?” With the speaker’s permission, they can then reverse roles.

Often this simple exercise will lead very directly to the core issues in the relationship.

Sample of what NOT to do:

Fred (who has the floor): I feel lonely at times in our relationship—like you’ve withdrawn from me.

Sarah: I’ve only withdrawn because you’re so pushy and demanding!

Notice that Sarah advanced her own agenda, talked from her own subjective experience, rather than drawing out Fred’s subjective experience.

Sample of what TO do:

Fred: I feel lonely at times in our relationship—like you’ve withdrawn from me.

Sarah: How long have you felt this way? (asking)

Fred: Just since the baby was born. I feel like he took my place in your heart.

Sarah: So you feel kind of displaced by Tommy. (reflecting)

Fred: Yeah. My parents never paid much attention to me growing up, and I feel like it’s happening all over again.

Sarah: Let me see if I understand you—me paying so much attention to Tommy feels similar to being neglected in childhood? (asking/reflecting)

Fred: Yeah.

Sarah: Was there a “Tommy” in your family? Someone who got all the attention?

Fred: Yeah, my little brother, Frank. He was my parents’ favorite. They said so.

Sarah: It must have been really hard to have your parents play favorites.

Fred: I felt so rejected.

Notice how quickly this conversation arrived at the root of the problem—Fred’s fear of abandonment. Sarah’s effective asking and listening got to the root of the problem. Fred felt understood and “heard.” From this point the couple could work out some simple solutions to help Fred feel more loved. And truthfully, simply being heard and understood by his wife probably accomplished this as much as any follow-up steps.

