

Emotional Wound

First + Aid Kit

A Comprehensive Guide for Rapid Healing

Author: John Schurmann M.S.W., R.S.W.

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Editor: Virginia Gedge M.S.W., POES Educational Services
Email: ebearz@shaw.ca

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Confidentiality is essential to therapeutic practice. All case descriptions in this book, therefore, have been altered to preserve the anonymity of my clients without distorting the essentials of their stories.

The information offered in this book is not intended to be a substitute for the advice and counsel of your personal therapist, life coach or physician.

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Introduction

With the potential to change millions of lives, the *Emotional Wound First-Aid Kit* can truly change your life. I am convinced that it will be read, reread, and recommended as an essential tool. Physicians, therapists, patients, and all those seeking to heal their emotional wounds can benefit greatly from it.

When I first began using the program in my private practice, I had no idea that it would become one of the most successful and effective tools to help heal emotional injuries, emotional wounds and emotional pain. It is now a vital part of my treatment model.

The strategies described in this book can also help you solve relationship problems, depression and anger issues, improve your self-esteem and restore your emotional health. It teaches techniques that have been helpful with emotional injuries such as sexual abuse, violence and psychological trauma. Furthermore, the program can help you learn to love and appreciate yourself again.

Many who have used the methods outlined in this book, have come to view the initial discomfort that led them to the *Emotional Wound First-Aid Kit* as a “blessing in disguise.” Through their pain, they have discovered this step-by-step first aid program based on sound principles to help restore and maintain emotional health. I trust this will be your experience too!

The approach teaches you to apply and practice the skills until they become second nature. Having the knowledge alone is not enough. Each step in the program is based on mastery of the work that precedes it. However painful the steps may be, they are necessary, to begin the path to healing. Do not read through this book quickly. Instead, commit now to applying and mastering each step before moving on to the next one. Give yourself sufficient time to complete each step. Although the steps may look easy at first glance, once you start the work, it can be more complex and difficult than they seem.

Facts about Emotional Wound Care

What does emotional pain feel like or look like? How do you assess the seriousness of an emotional injury, wound or pain? What are the normal responses to emotional trauma? We are usually well informed about the symptoms of, and treatment procedures for physical injury. We expect the injury to hurt and heal.

Regarding emotional injury and bruising, however, we are not sure what to expect. Most people think they know all the facts when it comes to the topic of emotional wound care – *“if someone hurts or bruises my emotions, I’ll just cover them up and I’m ready to go!”* Unfortunately, it is not as simple as that. An emotional wound needs the same special treatment as a physical injury, in order to heal most efficiently and minimize the appearance of scars.

So before you cover up the hurt or injury, you need to know the difference between the facts and the misconceptions on emotional wound care.

Misconception: An emotional wound heals best when left alone. Time will do the trick.

Fact: Leaving an emotional wound alone actually slows down the healing process and can lead to further emotional infection and distasteful scars. Increased emotional discomfort and pain often produce symptoms such as anger, stress, fatigue, sadness, irritability, moodiness, resentment, bitterness, loneliness, jealousy, insecurity, just to mention a few.

Untreated emotional wounds can cause physical, mental, emotional and spiritual problems. They can set off mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and addiction. These wounds can wipe out relationships, add to job failures, obscure life’s purpose or direction, and

ultimately destroy life.

Misconception: It is best to let an emotional wound "*air out*".

Fact: "*Talking out*" or "*journaling*" is the first step in handling an emotional wound. This technique used by itself, without full treatment is, however, as harmful as leaving it alone. Always talking about your pain will not heal the wound. Although you may experience a momentary degree of release, your wound will worsen over time.

Misconception: "*Getting even*" with the other person is the best way to deal with any emotional injury.

Fact: Getting even with the person who caused the injury may, for a while, release a degree of emotional pain. But in the long run, this action will further inflame your wound. A negative reaction or strategy will create further self-injury. This will only further inflict your wound and make matters worse.

Emotional Wound Assessment Tool

Assignment: Circle the numbers of the statements that apply to you.

1. I often suppress my feelings.
2. I feel hurt at times, but cannot understand why.
3. People say that I seldom or never show my emotions.
4. Most people do not understand my emotions.
5. I avoid thoughts, feelings or conversations about a hurtful event in my life.
6. I am unhappy and sad most of the time.
7. I often choose to keep a hurtful event a secret.
8. I find it difficult to show sensitivity toward others.
9. I do not get close to people and/or I feel "on guard".
10. I avoid activities, places, or people who remind me of a hurtful event in my life.
11. I hold anger toward some people.
12. I do not forgive people who have wronged me.
13. I have trouble trusting people.
14. I can hold a grudge for a long time.
15. I am critical of myself and of other people.
16. I sense that my future is short/limited (e.g. *I don't expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal life span*).
17. I am more irritable and have outbursts of anger.
18. I have trouble sleeping and/or I cry a lot.
19. I am afraid to confront people who have hurt me.
20. I feel my range of emotions is restricted.

21. I lost interest in significant activities of my life.
22. I self-medicate with alcohol, drugs, sex or work.
23. I have physical and/or emotional distress when I am exposed to things that remind me of a hurtful event in my life.
24. I have repeated, distressing memories and/or dreams.
25. I have been hurt a month ago or longer and I have not dealt with it.
26. I feel guilty and/or shamed.
27. I let people take advantage of me.
28. I am still grieving a loss after so many years.
29. I have never let go of betrayal, loss or hurt.
30. I have experienced or witnessed a life-threatening event two months ago, and it still causes intense fear, helplessness or horror.

Scoring Key for the Emotional Pain Scale

Total Score	Degree of Pain
0 - 4	minimal or not pain
5 - 10	moderate pain
11 - 20	severe pain
21 - 30	extreme pain

Note: If more than five statements are circled there is reason to suspect that an emotional injury, wound or pain is present in your life. Reading this book will give you the tools to help you heal the wound.

Emotional Wounds: Overview

Healing an emotional injury, wound or pain is much like healing a physical wound. Left untreated, a wound or open sore can cause serious problems.

Emotional wound care consists of **four steps**:

1. **Cleaning the Wound**
2. **Destroying the Contaminants**
3. **Treating the Wound**
4. **Protecting the Wound**

We will examine the reasons for, the importance of, and the ways of successfully completing each of these critical steps. The powerful case studies provide helpful illustrations of the implementation of this process.

Living with an untreated wound can yield feelings of anger, rage, moodiness, hopelessness, irritability, frustration, anxiety, sadness, insecurity, fear, unhappiness, etc. Left untreated, such a wound can contaminate every aspect of your life. Open wounds affect how you view the world, how you relate to others and how you conduct your life in general.

Although a wide range of life factors can bring about an emotional injury, wound and pain, most are caused by someone or an event that emotionally hurt you.

Definition: An emotional wound is the result of an emotional injury (inflicted by **people** or **events**) that has not yet healed.

Emotional Wounds Caused by People

- Saying and doing things to hurt a person
- Saying or doing things to hurt yourself
- Rude, degrading or offensive remarks
- Gestures that seek to intimidate and control
- Discrediting a person by spreading rumours
- Lying, cheating or using the person
- Belittling, disregarding, devaluing, disrespecting
- Preventing a person from expressing himself or herself
- Yelling at a person, threatening, prohibiting someone from speaking to others
- Isolating a person- no longer talking to him or her, denying his/her presence, distancing a person from others
- Destabilizing a person, making fun of his convictions, his tastes and his political and religious choices
- Invalidating, ridiculing, humiliating, shouting abuse
- Self-inflicted offences brought on by you such as drug, alcohol, sexual, gambling and internet addiction
- Inflicting physical, emotional and sexual abuse on a person

Emotional Wounds Caused by Events

- Death of a loved one, friend or colleague
- Ending of an important relationship (boyfriend-girlfriend)
- Marital separation, divorce and extra marital-affair
- Broken family due to divorce, devastating event or war
- Feelings of hurt over a child or friend's moving away (or your moving away)
- Feelings of hurt associated with moving away from school, neighbours, home, country, etc.
- Physical impairment – accident, illness, etc.
- Loss of a pet, property, or material possession
- Recognizing that life dreams will not be realized
- Witnessed or experienced a trauma, a devastating event, violence- an assault, rape, war or persecution
- Witnessed or experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse

A Mixture of Symptoms

An emotional injury, wound or pain releases a **mixture** of emotional and physical symptoms, and a certain **degree** of pain.

Emotional Symptoms

The moment you were mistreated, injured or traumatized, an emotional wound occurred. The blow caused by a person or event resulted an inner wound or open sore that released a mixture of unpleasant emotional symptoms and a certain degree of hurt.

Examples of unpleasant emotions are; hurt, anger, fear, loss, anxiety, sadness, despair, loneliness, humiliation, betrayal, helplessness, shame, guilt, disgust, indifference, etc.

The degree of pain can range from: (1) minimal, to (10) severe on an emotional pain scale.

Depending on the severity of the emotional injury, the intensity of the blow can also cause invisible emotional bleeding and brokenness such as a sudden ending of an important relationship leaving the person broken hearted.

Physical Symptoms

A long-lasting untreated emotional wound can also trigger physical symptoms such as: nerve disorders, allergies, stomach problems, heartaches, insomnia, headaches, stress, physical pains and unexplained physical illnesses, etc.

Degree of Emotional Pain

The **size** and **depth** of your emotional wound and the point in **time** in which it occurred, must also be evaluated. Did the emotional pain and injustice cause a large and deep wound or a small surface injury? When did the injury take place? The period of time between the injury and the disclosure is critical.

For instance, a sexual assault kept hidden for many years will potentially cause greater harm to a person's life than a recent exposed occurrence. Although in both cases the sexual assault produced the same amount of pain, immediate treatment of the injury will have less damaging after effects than an untreated long standing wound.

This process gives us a way of measuring the amount of pain and injustice induced in our life. This evaluation is fairly subjective and therefore rather difficult to measure. To address this difficulty, I have divided the “*degree of pain experienced*” by the injury into two categories: (1) low-impact wound, and (2) high-impact wound.

Example of a Low-Impact Wound - **an insult** may trigger the following unpleasant emotional symptoms:

- **Mixture** of feelings - anger, hurt, fear, or indifference.
- **Degree** of pain – minimal to moderate.
- **Size** of wound – small.
- **Depth** of wound – surface injury.
- **Time** period from the injury to disclosure – 4 hours.
- **Physical Symptoms** – none.

A low-impact wound will generally elicit a minimal to moderate degree of pain and will typically heal in a short time. The interval between the incident and its disclosure is critical in minimizing the risk of further infection and maximizing the healing process. The sooner you talk about any emotional injury with a trusted person, the quicker your wound will heal.

Other examples of low-impact wounds are: an abusive shout, a lie, a rumour, an offensive remark or a humiliating experience. Since treating these wounds is less complex and time consuming than treating high-impact wounds, most people have the appropriate skills to resolve this type of injury.

Example of a High-Impact Wound - sexual abuse may trigger the following unpleasant emotional and physical symptoms:

- **Mixture** of feelings - hurt, anger, fear, confusion, loss, anxiety, sadness, depression, despair, loneliness, humiliation, betrayal, helplessness, shame, guilt, disgust, etc.
- **Size** of wound – multiple large wounds.
- **Depth** of wound – very deep.
- **Time** from the injury to disclosure – 30 years.
- **Degree** of pain – severe to extreme.
- **Physical Symptoms** - nerve disorders, stomach problems, insomnia, headaches, stress, unexplained physical illnesses, and physical pain – such as knee, shoulder, gums, etc.

Sexual abuse, rape, violence, an affair, severe physical and emotional abuse, and severe trauma are additional examples of high impact wounds.

A high-impact wound with deep, complex and long standing emotional sores will typically take a longer period of time, and greater patience and

effort to heal. Furthermore, because of the multiple issues surrounding this type of wound, professional support is required to guide the healing process.

Unfortunately, most people use incorrect and inadequate tools to deal with their high-impact wounds. Instead of treating abuse with talk therapy, a person may try to soothe the bruise with food, alcohol or illegal drugs.

We all want to try to fix our wounds in our own ways. I applaud people who want to help themselves get better. Unfortunately, the laymen's tools are found to be inefficient and often destructive. How often are we coached by well meaning friends to ignore the issues and not to confront an injustice?

We are told: *“Don’t bring it up because things could get even worse,”* or *“If she ever finds out that you talked about this, you’ll get fired”*.

In both personal and work environment, too often people fail to confront injustice, harassment, abuse or control issues. Disregarding ill treatment due to **fear** of reprisal or loss of either an important job or relationship is **wrong!** It is as wrong as ignoring an open wound. Such action will promote further emotional harm and long term, possible life threatening damage.

Take a moment and think about your last physical wound. How long did it take to heal? Did the wound heal? Not until you started attending to the wound by confronting the injustices and establishing resolutions.

Case Studies of High-Impact Wounding

The following stories illustrate the unmistakably, negative impact of high-impact wounding. These are not shameful or unusual stories. Living with open emotional wounds is no small problem!

Story #1: Sexual Abuse

At the age of six Brenda was sexually abused by a friend of the family. Obeying her mother's instructions to keep it a secret, Brenda buried the injury for half a century. At the age 56, she could no longer hide her emotional and physical pain. She had lived with depression, fear, shame, guilt, disgust, betrayal, loneliness, broken relationships and low self-esteem for years. The emotional pain became so severe that she could no longer bear the hurt on her own. For many years she suffered with physical pain in her knees, shoulders and gums that could not be medically explained.

Story #2: Suicide Witness

The suicide episode Jessie witnessed at the mall left her emotionally traumatized for months. She had a strong support system, was proactive with the injury, talked to her family and friends, and used her journal to write her thoughts and feelings about the episode. Her supports helped release a lot of the pain, but she was not able to let go of the "thump" sound caused by the impact of the man hitting the cement floor. For months she suffered with post-traumatic symptoms, reliving the incident in her sleep. The "thump" sound continued to harass her mind for months. In desperate need for relief, she started psychotherapy and was introduced to the emotional cleansing tool.

Story #3: Workplace Harassment

Jack was 52 years of age and the principal of a large public school when he came to my office. Although he was generally liked, Jack had been severely harassed by three staff teachers over a two year period. When he sought support from his superintendent, Jack was told to deal with the issues on his own. He tried, without success, to find a resolution with the teachers, but the harassment continued. Feeling emotionally exhausted and close to a nervous breakdown, Jack sought counselling. He felt hurt, anxious, depressed and in despair. He wanted to resign his job and move on with his life.

Story #4: Severe Stomach Pain

An anxious mother called my office on behalf of her 15 year old son Mike. He had experienced intense stomach pains for nearly a week. Although medical examinations concluded that everything was fine, the throbbing did not stop. He became depressed and very anxious. For days, he had cry spells, and worried that he may fail in school and not do well as an adult. He stated; "I felt very sad and depressed. I had a very intense feeling of nervousness and didn't know what to do." He was fearful about up-coming life events; worried about his future plans and questioning if he would ever get married and have children. Absurd as it may sound- for this young teen, the worries were very real. (He scored 7 on the Scoring Key for the Emotional Pain Scale).

Story #5: Drug Addiction and Depression

Bill struggled with depression and addiction issues. He began drinking alcohol and smoking pot at the age of 13. At 19, he turned to cocaine. Bill grew up in good neighborhood. He had friends but never liked High School. His parents were strict, demanding and emotionally

detached. His mother was authoritative, critical and often angry. Although Bill had a satisfying relationship with his two siblings, he frequently felt neglected by his father. Whenever his mother would wrongly accuse him, his father would side with his mother. Bill would react with rage and threaten to move out.

At the age of 20, his parents kicked him out of the house. He left in a rage, and his relationship with his parents was severed for three years. Feelings of anger, hurt and rejection continued to haunt him. His drug habit escalated causing further problems in his life and relationships. Three years later, tired of battling depression and addiction issues, he came to my office for help.

These examples of intense emotional wounding demonstrate that open wounds can have a serious and negative impact on every aspect of a person's life. They also vividly underscore the fact that just ignoring the hurt will not cure the injuries. Without applying the correct treatment there is little hope for healing and positive change. In my experience, no one desires to live with open sores. People yearn for their wounds to heal, but very few are aware of the proper step-by-step procedures that will make this possible.

Treatment Methods

Different types of emotional wounds may need different treatment, depending upon how they happened and how serious they are.

Low-Impact Wound

A low-impact wound such as an insult will require you to develop a strategic plan to address the injustice with the person. It is essential that such a plan be based on **changing yourself first**. When you choose to *respond* to a challenging situation rather than just *reacting* to it, your chances of being able to influence the situation positively are greatly increased.

You may get help to identify practical strategies which shift your behaviours and responses by consulting with a trusted friend or a counsellor.

Talking about or debriefing the hurtful experience provides a channel to release the **mixture** of unpleasant emotions, thus relieving the negative pressure of the wound. Once this pressure is released, you are able to formulate a plan to address the inappropriate behaviour. Never give up, even if the situation does not immediately improve. We learn by a process of trial and error. If you do not achieve the desired results with your first strategy, go "back to the drawing board" to explore other ways in which you could change yourself or influence the person who insulted you.

For instance, if your partner keeps belittling you, setting a personal boundary by saying that you do not appreciate such remarks and do not

want to hear them any more is appropriate. If the behaviour persists once you have established a clear boundary, involving a third party would be the next step. A trusted friend, manager or counsellor could act as a mediator.

Journaling your hurtful feelings is another effective approach to relieving pressure from the wound. I encourage my clients to use both talking and journaling as "de-pressurizing" tools.

As a note of caution, do not try to hold the pressure in. Time alone will not cure the wound. It takes a lot of energy to hold on to hurt such as anger, stress and worry. In the long run, holding the hurt or grudge against someone else can hurt you just as much, and sometimes more than it hurts them.

Applying the **forgiveness** medicine to your open wound is also an important step. It is the most rapid and effective healing product. Forgiveness does not mean accepting an injustice or excusing poor behaviour – it is medicine that helps heal your wound.

High-Impact Wound

A high-impact wound such as long-term workplace harassment, domestic assault, abuse of any type, marital affair, tragic loss or harsh injustice will require a specialized wound care program. Using the traditional "talk, journal and forgive" tools on High-Impact Wounds may be insufficient in accomplishing complete healing.

In my clinical experience, I have found little success with the talk, journal, forgive approach. This approach involves long term therapy and is often very slow and painstaking - for both client and therapist. Because healing results are slow to attain, clients often lose motivation and terminate therapy prematurely. Also, it is an expensive vehicle that most people cannot afford.

Importance of Rapid Wound Care and Healing

The object of proper emotional wound care is to minimize the possibility of infection such as bitterness, resentment, revenge, hatred, hopelessness, rage, depression, fear, addiction, violence, abuse, etc. Emotional infections cause the greatest obstructions to healing.

Therefore, it is imperative that an emotional wound receive the same treatment as a physical injury, in order to heal most efficiently and minimize the appearance of scars. Furthermore, an efficient healing program will rapidly reduce personal, relational and social problems.

A Personal Experience with a Cleansing Tool

The following letter is written by a single mother, age 50, who suffered from post-traumatic symptoms related to a break-and-enter. One night, she was awakened by her daughter's ex-boyfriend breaking into her house. Horrified by the intrusion, she suffered with severe depression, anxiety and post-traumatic disorder for nearly 14 months.

“When it was suggested to me that I write a ‘cleansing’ letter and forgive the person who had terrified me and brought me to the brink of self destruction, I was absolutely flabbergasted, angry, confused and offended.

Why did I have to forgive this person? Why was it up to me to make the effort- the first kind gesture in the whole situation? It just didn't seem right at all. It seemed that I would be caving in....falling prey again to being vulnerable and opening up to a place where I may be attacked again. I'm not sure how I would be attacked, but I had put up defences and writing such a letter seemed to me that I would be cutting off my only way to survive.

Hell, I had just gotten to a place where I was not barricading the doors and windows or walking around with a knife. How could I forget all that had happened in order to “cleanse” myself? It did not make any sense at all to me.

But, because of a wonderful person showing me how to cope with a traumatic, life changing challenge, I was

willing to try. Only because it seemed I could not move any further ahead. I was at a crossroad, but I didn't even know it. The suggestion seemed too bizarre to work, but I trusted enough to figure I had nothing to lose at that point.

I was told to choose someone I trusted to be there in the room or the next room just in case it was too overwhelming for me to relive. I chose a friend whom I knew would let me work this out, let me cry or scream, even be afraid again, and would just help me feel safe enough to go back to that morning.

I was told to write and just keep writing. Spelling, grammar, nothing else was important... just write out what had happened, how I felt, what that person had done, every little detail as well as how it had impacted me and my family, at the time, immediately afterwards and up to the point of writing the letter.

The first sentence was the hardest. After that, I ended up writing 8 pages. Eight pages of how I truly felt towards this person. I wrote, telling him of everything that had now changed because of his actions. But mainly, I wrote how I would not let him continue hovering in my life, always in the background, causing with fear, anxiety and anger.

Writing this letter gave me the courage to become a better person, a braver person, to know I could forgive him in order to cleanse the dirt he had brought into my life. I had no choice as to what he had done, but now I had a choice as to how I would remove the aftermath of the chaos that had been created. Having a choice gave me a power over my own life, over my own feelings and truly released me from the bondage that was surrounding me.

I took the letter to the scene of the crime and burned it. Right there and then, I swept the ashes out the door. With the ashes, I swept away the final bitterness that was in my heart and that was replaced with a calm that had been lacking for quite some time. This does not mean that I'm cured. At times I still experience some of those feelings. But now, I can take them out, examine them, and put them back with the knowledge I have learned.

Writing the cleansing letter gave me the safest way to feel freedom. It was not easy, but I would do it again in an instant for any other circumstances that require forgiveness of someone who harmed me in any way.

Where would I be today if I had not written that letter?

Well, I would not be able to face life on life's terms. I would still have fear and anger in my heart.

I think the worst part would be that I would still be a victim. Now, instead, I am an advocate of living life, instead of cowering behind vicious people and their own demons. I would not be able to be an example to my children of how to overcome hate, much of which was my own.

I would not have been able to show people that it's okay to reach out when I felt so alone. To not only rely on friends and family, but sometimes to realize that professionals can become the rock to lean upon and learn from, so that I may be able to pass along the wisdom I receive.

To write such a letter, at least for me, took more courage than

anything I have ever done before, because I had to face my own fears. First, to identify them, then really face them and to give them a name, so that I could learn to deal with them.

I have learned more about myself... that is where I really am from writing this letter”.

STEP 1:

Cleansing the Wound

“Writing is Cleansing – Cleansing is Healing”

Now it's time to learn to clean your emotional wound. Let me give you a word picture to help explain the process.

Have you ever hand-washed a stubborn grass stain from your favourite pair of jeans? How did you remove the stain? What was your trick?

You properly washed the stain with water, soap and a brush. As you brushed the stain, the dirt was slowly released itself from the jeans and disappeared down the drain. A stubborn stain may have required soaking for a period of time before washing. Most importantly, you were determined to scrub the grass stain until it was completely gone.

Likewise, you will clean the injury by “*washing out*” or “*writing out*” the toxins from your wound. As you write your story the emotional toxins are released and transferred to the written page. Thus, your emotional wound begins the healing process.

A note of caution: You may experience increased moodiness and irritability during this time. If this is the case, go easy on yourself and with the people in your life. Let them know that you may become cranky for periods of time and not to take your feelings/behaviours personal.

Using the Cleansing Tool

1. A Place to Write

Find a place that is comfortable, private and non-intrusive. You may decide on your favourite room in the house, a quiet spot at the library or a secluded place in your much-loved natural environment.

2. List the People and Events

Assignment: List the people and events that have caused you emotional pain; pain which you still feel today...emotional pain that has not gone away, that you have been holding for too long. Do not forget to include your name. You will write the final letter to your adult self. I will explain this at a later point. For now, complete the list including your name at the end of it.

Names of People Caused Pain	Events that Caused Pain
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
(Your Name)	_____

3. What is a Cleansing Letter?

The CLEANSING LETTER is NOT a formal letter. It is not a friendship letter, business letter or a love letter. It is not a journal. Do not write an outline, worry about spelling mistakes, grammar or any other

rules you have learned. Simply download (transcribe) “word for word” what you have always wanted to say to the person or event that injured you.

The cleansing letter is a tool that will guide the emotional cleansing process. It is a conversation between you and the person(s) or event(s) that injured you. Finally, you have a change to tell your entire story.

YES! Everything you have held back and tried to forget. Everything you have always wanted to share, but were afraid to disclose. Everything, yes, even the most hurtful and shameful thoughts you have carried for so long. Nobody will criticize you, reject you, blame you or think that you are making up a story.

You may be thinking: *“Wow, that’s great! Finally I get my chance to tell the truth, to say it all. But what about all the angry thoughts that I still have toward this person? I’ll feel guilty for saying what I truly feel about him/her”*. Whatever you are thinking and feeling toward this person is normal. No matter how negative your thoughts are, nobody, not even God will discredit you or think any less of you.

It is very important that you disclose every thought and feeling. Do not hold anything back. Make sure that you clean every part of the wound. The entire bruise must be cleansed. Do not leave any part of the bruise unwashed. Unclean spots will re-infect the rest of the wound and prevent further healing.

4. Begin Writing the Cleansing Letter

Assignment: From your list of people and events, decide which person or event that you want to address first. Write a separate letter to each person or event.

Begin the letter by addressing the person, such as; “*Dear Dad*” or “*Dear Mom.*” If you do not know or remember the person’s name, “*Hello*”

or “*Dear Person*” or just “*Hi*” would be appropriate.

It is important that you stay focused. It’s as if the person is with you in the room and you are telling him/her your story.

Now that you have addressed the person, begin writing your story. Most people start their story at the place where the emotional injury took place. Others start writing from the present time, moving backward to the incident. Start wherever you feel most comfortable. Remember, the most important thing is to tell it all.

Are you having trouble getting going? If you started writing and the words are coming to you, skip the next step: *Getting Unstuck and Moving On* and go to: *Checking In*. The following step is only for the person who is feeling stuck and is struggling to get started on the letter.

5. Getting Unstuck and Moving On

Most people find this part of the assignment most difficult. It is as if your brain and emotions are paralyzed or frozen - unable to think and feel. Finally you get your chance to tell your side of the story and you cannot talk or feel. This part can be very frustrating. But, I don't want you to worry. What you are experiencing is uncomfortable, yet very normal.

Before you continue, stop and give yourself a minute to de-stress. I want you to relax, slow down your thoughts, calm your emotions and take a deep breath. Yes, right now! Take a deep breath and slowly INHALE and EXHALE. Repeat this step until you feel more relaxed.

Are you relaxed? Great! If not, do more breathing exercises. If you still find yourself overly anxious, frustrated or numb, give yourself a break and come back at a later time.

Now that you are relaxed, you may be thinking: *“I don’t know where to start?”* or *“What do I say, I haven’t seen or talked to the person in years.”*

No problem! Keep reading.

I want you to focus and listen to what you are thinking right this moment as you are staring at the person’s name or the event. Listen to the voice or conversation you are having in your mind. What comes to your mind when you think about the person or event? What are you hearing yourself say right now?

You may be thinking: *“I don’t want to say to you! You hurt me!! I hate what you did to my life!”* Or, *“I still don’t know what to tell you. Actually, what I want to say, I’m too ashamed to write.”* Or, *“I love you, and feel too guilty to share my negative thoughts with you. I don’t want to hurt your feelings.”*

Are you hearing your thoughts? If yes - **Great!** Your mind is alive and active. You are having conversation. Start writing your thoughts, right now – word for word. Keep going. What is your next thought? Whatever it is, write it down. What do you want to say to the person? What do you want him/her to know about you?

Keep going. By now, you may be blurting it all out. It may sound like emotional diarrhoea. Don't worry, you are doing great. Just keep going. Don't stop until everything is out.

I caution you not to overwhelm yourself. This is very hard work and may take some time. As with any large project, make sure to take lots of breaks. There is no need to rush this one.

Again, remember: *“It is very important that you disclose every thought and feeling. Do not keep anything back.”*

Checking In

Now that you are writing, make sure that you gradually go back to the time and place where the injury occurred.

Unlocking the doors and washing the filth from the room is tough work. Keep going. It is only a matter of time until all your rooms are clean. And once cleansed, you will furnish the rooms with refreshing and revitalizing activities that will brighten your life.

As you continue with your story, release all the toxins, including feelings of pain, hurt, shame, guilt, anger, fear, anxiety, worry and lost memories.

For Brenda, Jessie, Jack, Mike and Bill, the process of writing unlocked the doors to their hidden rooms that were packed with anguish, hurt, fear and obscurity. Through writing, the emotional toxins and negative energy was released from their wounded rooms.

Story #1: Sexual Abuse

Brenda wrote two letters, one to the family friend and one to her mother. She told him how his inappropriate sexual acts nearly destroyed her emotional life. Life was precious to her and she was not going to give in to suicide. She expressed how she had lived in constant fear and that her trust in people had been obliterated. She was a fighter, a cold and defensive person. There was no room in her heart to love another person. This room was restricted and forbidden to the outside world. She talked about her sufferings - how her emotional pain travelled throughout her body trying to find a way of escape. Unable to find release, the pressure of the pain intensified, causing Brenda to live with chronic symptoms for nearly 45 years. After she completed the letters, her most painful weight was finally released.

Story #2: Suicide Witness

In her conversation, Jessie went back to the mall and "confronted" the man who committed suicide. She wrote to him telling him how she felt about what he had done. She hated him for traumatizing her. She let him know that he was selfish in not thinking about his consequences. How his actions hurt her, haunted her and made her life extremely difficult. That she had to take time off from work because she was not able to cope and accomplish the simple things of life. Jessie found some release from writing the letter, but the final relief occurred when she discarded the letter at the mall.

Story #3: Workplace Harassment

Jack was sceptical about the whole cleansing program. He did not believe that the process of a written letter would help him with his emotional pain and work problems. Despite his scepticism, he wrote three letters – one to his superintendent, and one to each teacher. In the letters, he spoke directly to each person and expressed every concern and issue that had troubled him for two years regarding his/her actions and bullying tactics. He talked about his disappointments and the emotional toll it took on his personal and professional life. He also explained the elements needed not only to prevent workplace harassment, but also to promote the values and respectful conduct necessary in today's diverse workforce.

During the follow up session, Jack explained that the writing process was both painful and empowering. It was painful in that he had to address the issues one more time; yet empowering, because it provided him the path to release the pain. There were no barriers to sabotage the conversations. He did not have to worry about saying it right, pleasing the bully or fearing further harassment. He was able to talk about his case, issues, hurts, and needs.

By speaking out, he was able to release every hurt and emotional distress. Finally, the long-standing emotional filth or baggage was removed. The toxins were no longer part of his life. The open wounds were now clean and ready to heal.

Story #4: Severe Stomach Pain

Mike could not wait to go home and write his letters. He had very personal and sensitive issues to discuss with people and himself. Some of the issues were too difficult and shameful to share with either his parents and his counsellor. It was these issues that distressed him the most and sent frantic emotional shock-waves through his body. Once released, his emotions stabilized.

Emotional shock-waves or panic attacks are similar to earth tremors. Whenever our emotional body surpasses its maximum pressure threshold, the pressure valve releases sending shock-waves or panic attack symptoms throughout our body. Once Mike released the issues that caused such enormous stress to his body, his emotions stabilized. He stated; "After the letter, I felt that it helped me a lot. I felt less of the anxieties."

Story #5: Drug Addiction and Depression

Bill could not wait to release the anger, pain and guilt that he had carried for nearly 10 years. He addressed the first letter to his father. Because they shared a close relationship, Bill was able to disclose his guilt for walking out on him. Bill wrote about how he missed spending time with his father and felt sorry for him. Bill told his father that he needed him to be assertive and a positive role model. Bill apologized for his harsh and negative attitude; for hurting and disrespecting his father and for troubling him with his addiction issues and

innapropriate behaviour.

Bill wrote the second letter to his mother. This letter was challenging and painful. He had a lot of hurt stored in his emotional bank account that needed release. He expressed his love for her and how hard it had been for him to share this with her. He had tried on numerous occasions, but her critical spirit would sabotage his efforts.

He felt rejected, unworthy and a failure in her presence. She seemed so much stronger and impossible to please.

As Bill's anger subsided, he was encouraged by his new feelings. He had not felt this relaxed and happy for a long time. Once he had forgiven his mother and apologized for his behaviors, he felt a need to visit her to make amends.

In a follow up session, he happily shared how things had changed between his mother and him. I was surprised to hear that they are working on becoming good friends and the painful struggles of the past are no longer an issue.

6. Writing a Letter to Self

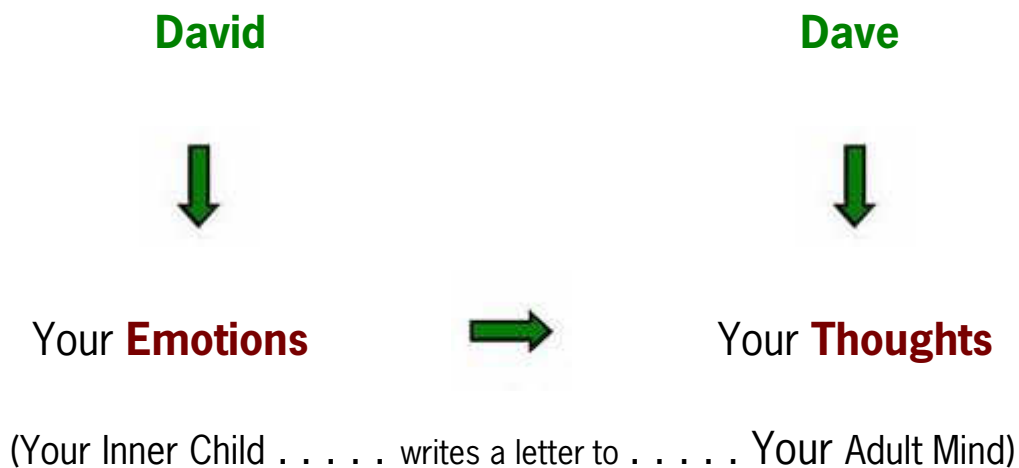
You might be wondering: “*Writing a letter to self, how does that work? You must be kidding!*” As a matter of fact, NO, I am not kidding. This part of the writing assignment will become your most rewarding life experience and a healing gift.

In this letter, you will have your first heart-to-heart conversation between your inner child (emotions) and your adult parent (mind). The child will get a chance to share his/her feelings, concerns, and happy experiences in regard to living with his/her parent.

To make this relationship concept more realistic, give your inner child a name. Lets say your name is Dave or Katherine. Name your inner child; “little Dave” or “little Katherine” or your favourite name. Little Katherine (your inner child) represents your emotional life – she feels everything you feel. Adult Katherine represents your adult mind – she thinks everything you think.

Assignment: Name your inner child (emotions): _____ .

In the following illustration I named the inner child: (David) and the adult mind: (Dave). David (his inner child) wrote a letter to Dave (his adult mind).



In the letter to Dave, the conversation mainly focused on David's feelings. David (child) shared about what it had been like living with Dave (adult). He told him about the love or lack of love he felt from Dave. Also, he shared his disappointments, failures, hurtful experiences, successes and happy memories.

Dave used the following questions to help David open up:

- Do you feel unconditionally loved by me? Why not?
- Do you feel completely accept by me? Why not?
- Am I you very best friend? Why not?
- Are you truly happy with me? Why not?
- Do I truly believe, value, and respect you? Why not?
- Do you feel safe and protected? Why not?
- Do I help you meet all your needs? Why not?

Sample Letter to Dave

Hi Dave,

I feel strange writing to you. I have lived with you for so long and we have never had a one-on-one, heart-to-heart conversation. I have tried hundreds of times to talk to you, I begged you to listen to me, but you ignored me, told me to wait, criticized me or told me to shut up. Don't get me wrong, I'm not complaining. I just need to tell you what has been going on in my life with you. I like you, I mean I want to love you so much, but it has been hard. So, please listen to what I tell you. All I need from you is to listen. You can ask questions, if you don't understand something or to help me when I'm stuck. OK?

As I have said, I like you a lot, but I have been hurting, sad, lonely, put down

Letter to Self

Assignment: Start writing your own letter. Now that you have named your inner child, let your child talk to your adult (you). Your job is to listen to your child and support him/her. Your child may need your help throughout the conversation. Always wait for the child to ask you for help, before you offer your guidance. It is important that you create a safe environment for the child, by giving him/her permission to be truly honest and transparent with you.

"Stories of hurt must be heard and must be told so that processes of truth-telling, forgiveness, and reconciliation may become possible".

Phil Classen, Ph.D.

Know when Your Emotional Wound is Clean

You may be wondering and asking yourself:

How will I know when my emotional toxins are gone?

When is my cleansing letter completed?

Because you are dealing with an invisible wound, you will not be able to see the final results as you would with a physical wound. “*Then how will I know?*” When you have said everything you wanted and needed to say to the person. When it is all said and done. When you come to a point where there is nothing else to say. You are done when you have run out of words.

Once your pen stops writing and you have nothing else to say, double check your feelings to see if you are done by reading the letter. Re-read the letter and use your emotional eyes to feel the wound one more time. What are you feeling? If you find yourself overwhelmed with a certain part of the letter, you want to write (talk) more about your feelings. What else may you need to tell the person about what you are feeling?

If you find there is nothing else to say and no other feelings are provoked after re-reading the letter, you are done.

Congratulations!!

You just completed the hardest step of the emotional cleansing process. Great Job! I want you to be proud of yourself. The emotional toxins are no longer hurting you or hiding in a secret room. Just think - how long you have kept them inside the rooms.

Take a moment to pause and reflect on your great achievement. Your emotions are CLEAN. You removed all the toxins and poisons from within you.

Before you start rebuilding the parts of your life that have been wounded, you will have to destroy the cleansing letter.

STEP 2:

Destroying the Contaminants

Yes, you get to destroy your cleansing letter!

For most people, step two is the most exhilarating part of the cleansing process. Here, you will get to put an end to all the misery and emotional viruses that have held you prisoner for too long. You will get to destroy them once and for all.

Since emotional viruses are active and alive, I found that the best method to destroy the toxins is by burning them. Fire is still one of the best disinfectant and cleanser. If this method is too frightening or strange for you, not to worry, there are other ways to get rid of the emotional viruses.

Lets see how our stories were concluded.

Story #1: Sexual Abuse

Brenda decided to go back to the house where she was raised. While standing at the sidewalk and facing the front of the house, she noticed a girl standing behind the bedroom window, waiving at her. The girl was smiling and looked cheerful. Brenda quickly recognized that the girl at the window was her little inner child. Observing her smile, she knew that everything was going to be ok from now on. Yet, at the

same moment, she was shocked when she realized that all this time, her little girl lived in the house where the sexual abuse originally took place.

Nearly 45 years being away from each other, Brenda found her lost little girl smiling with joy. That evening, the two re-connected with an enormous embrace and burned the letters on the front lawn of the house. Because it was winter, she was able to burn the letters in a safe place in the snow. It was here she experienced her biggest release, where she put an end to the old life and a beginning to the new.

In her final counselling session, Brenda explained that her long-standing depression and anxiety symptoms vanished. She was excited about her future. She talked about building trust and honesty in her intimate relationships, starting with her inner child, her partner, her family members, her friends and her Heavenly Father.

Story #2: Suicide Witness

Jessie faced her trauma head on by going back to the place where the suicide occurred - with letter in hand. She threw the letter into a garbage can that just happened to be located at the exact place where the man fell. Here, she destroyed every negative emotion associated to the trauma and reclaimed her harmony with the specific spot in the mall.

Story #3: Workplace Harassment

Still somewhat sceptical, Jack burned the letters in the fireplace of his house. He explained how difficult it was to get the paper to burn. It was as difficult as lighting damp paper. Once the paper burned to ashes, he experienced another big emotional release. Standing by the fireplace, he realized that the toxins were not only released from his body, but were also destroyed in the fire. This is when Jack knew that

he was going to be fine, that he had released it all and that it was gone. It was no longer going to hurt him.

Story #4: Severe Stomach Pain

Mike shred the letters during one of his counselling sessions. Mike saw the act of shredding as a way to destroy the toxins and the poisonous plant in his life. Also, he needed support with the prayer of forgiveness. He did not want to do this step on his own and behind closed doors. Because the emotional trauma occurred in undisclosed locations, he felt that he needed to destroy the terrible incidents in the presence of his therapist. Step two helped Mike sanitize a wounded chapter in his life. It washed his wounds and destroyed the venom that caused terrifying pain in his stomach and anxiety for nearly two weeks. (He scored 2 on the Scoring Key for the Emotional Pain Scale).

Story #5: Drug Addiction and Depression

Bill found such emotional release through writing that he was thrilled to burn the letters to put an end to the painful past. He felt clean, refreshed and ready to live his new, restored life. Quitting the drug habit and rebuilding his severed relationships was no longer an impossible goal.

At the end of treatment, Bill had been drug free for two months, was rebuilding his relationships and feeling happy. All symptoms of depression had disappeared.

Burning, Shredding or Discarding

Give yourself time to think about the different options that are available to you in destroying your letter(s). Most people prefer to burn the letter. Your letter represents an unkind, difficult and, for some of you, brutal chapter in your life.

Ask yourself: “*How would I want to destroy the letter?*” Whatever method you will decide to use, allow this step to be special and meaningful. Do not rush this part of the process. You are getting ready to flush and destroy the hurt and the injustice.

Decision Making Techniques:

- Listen to your heart and let your heart decide for you.
- Follow your gut feelings. What is your gut telling you?
- Talk it over with your counsellor or best friend.
- Write out your options and evaluate with listing pros/cons.
- Pray and seek guidance from your Heavenly Father.

Assignment: Write down your option: _____.

Burning the Cleansing Letter

1. Locate a safe place to burn your cleansing letter such as: a fire place, your backyard, at the cottage, near a lake or in a fire pit.
2. Light the paper.
3. Watch the flames burn the cleansing letter.
4. Watch the toxins get destroyed by the flames.
5. Watch the cleaning letter and toxins turn to ashes.
6. Discard the ashes.

Shredding the Cleansing Letter

1. Locate a paper shredder.
2. Shred the cleansing letter.
3. Watch the toxins get shredded.
4. Discard the shredding.

Discarding the Cleansing Letter

1. Rip-up the letter.
2. Discard the letter into the garbage or
3. Flush the letter down the toilet.

At this stage, you have washed your emotional wounds and destroyed the toxins. In the following step, you will apply the disinfectant ointment or the forgiveness medicine to your open wound. This must be done immediately after you have destroyed the cleansing letter.

STEP 3:

Treating the Wound

Now that you have destroyed the cleansing letter(s), you are ready to apply the disinfectant ointment. You will apply the ointment with a prayer of forgiveness. This must be done immediately after you have destroyed the cleansing letter as the emotional body will quickly form a seal over the wound. Once the wound is sealed, the antiseptic ointment will not be able to penetrate and further disinfect the wound.

Open wounds stay contaminated to some extent and are potential sites for further emotional infection. The best way to prevent infection is to disinfect the wounds and discourage further growth of emotional bacteria such as a grudge, bitterness, resentment and anger.

Forgiveness is the only and final disinfectant or antiseptic ointment that can completely wash/heal emotional wrongdoings and open wounds. You will apply the medicine to your emotional wound. This ointment is for your own use and when permitted can be applied on other people.

“All this sounds good,” you may be telling yourself, *“But how can I ever forget what the person did to me? You do not forget!”* I agree with you, you will never forget. You will probably always remember the particular injustice done to you. However, forgiveness is not the same as forgetting. When you apply the forgiveness medicine to your wound, the intense emotions associated with the event begin to fade.

Forgiveness is not a feeling. It is a decision.

Forgiveness is not a feeling. It is a decision you make when you are ready to apply forgiveness - the disinfectant ointment to the open wound. Once you decide to apply the ointment, the medicine will carry out what it is designed to do. Even if it is not easy to apply and you feel more short term throbbing, you make the determination that the alternative is even harder. No matter how justified you feel about your point of view regarding the situation, an unhealed emotional wound will further infect your life.

Making a Promise to Yourself

So promise yourself that no matter what the reason:

- You will not go another day and bare the pain
- You will no longer ignore the infection: the grudge, the bitterness, the resentment and the anger
- You will apply the medicine – forgiveness
- You will protect the clean wound
- You will not re-injure your wound
- You will not allow others to re-injure your wound

As the ointment begins to work itself through the wound, you will start to feel better. Initially, forgiveness is not a feeling, but a decision.

Once applied, you begin to experience more pleasant feelings.

You will feel:

- A new sense of relief
- A greater degree of emotional release
- A better sense of inner peace
- More relaxed, calmer and loving
- An improved level of mood and energy
- A weight come off your shoulder – lightened
- A disconnection and detachment to the injustice
- A greater sense of freedom
- An improved self-esteem and confidence

I promise you that the benefits of applying the forgiveness medicine to your wound go far beyond anything you can imagine at this moment. Your emotional wound will heal and you will have the liberty to continue to develop into the person of your dream. Make peace and let your emotional body heal.

Assignment: When you are ready, apply the forgiveness ointment directly to the emotional wound by following the prayer. *If you feel uncomfortable using this prayer, feel free to create your own version or words of forgiveness.*

The most important component of the healing process is that you verbalize the:

“I forgive _____ (name the person) for all the hurt you have caused in my life and I am letting it go now, closing this door”.

Forgiveness and Letting Go

Assignment: Apply the Prayer of Forgiveness:

*“God, forgive _____
[name the person]*

*for _____ and
[name the injustice, the abuse, the injury]*

*for what _____ is not aware of
doing. [name the person]*

*Forgive me for hurting myself in holding on to the
infections and not looking after my wounds. Thank
You for the Gift of Forgiveness - for cleansing and
healing my wounds. Amen.”*

Congratulations!!

You have completed the cleansing steps. I want you to be very proud of yourself for completing these brave and difficult steps. Now you are forgiven and have forgiven the person who injured you. Your emotional wound is finally CLEAN – cleaner than fresh white snow. All the emotional toxins are gone and are no longer a part of your life.

Assignment: How do you feel right now? Name the feelings:

“I feel: _____”

(some relief, better, calmer, an inner peace, more relaxed, happier, clean, hopeful, excited, etc).” At this same moment, you may also feel a certain amount of fear, vulnerability, uncertainty or insecurity.

Some of you may feel that your emotions are unprotected and exposed to further hurt and injury. The old protective devices are stripped and you have no other tools to protect your emotions. If you feel this way, your feelings are very normal.

The good news is that you do not need to worry. Step three will cover the essential tools to help you protect your emotional wounds and guard your emotional body from future hazards and threats of injustice.

Now that the wound is thoroughly cleaned with the antiseptic wash and treated with the antibiotic ointment, the final step will present six tools to help care and protect the wound until it is fully healed.

STEP 4:

Protecting the Wound

Now that your wound is clean, we do not want to leave it open and unprotected. At this point of the process, your wound is fully exposed to all of life's elements- both healthy and unhealthy.

Assignment: Become an expert in caring and protecting your emotional wound and in keeping your emotional health in tip-top shape.

Steps to Care For and Protect the Wound

- 1. Set a Thought Boundary and Fence in Your Mind**
between the past injustice and your present life. A thought boundary or fence is used to protect, immobilize, compress, or support your emotional wound and injury. Its purpose is equal to a bandage or a piece of material used to dress a physical wound or to wrap an injured limb. It provides a boundary and barrier to protect the wound.

Do not think or talk about the injury for the next four months.
Set this rule with yourself and promise that;

“I will not think or talk about the injustice, until
the wound is fully healed”

This rule will act as the thought boundary and fence to help the injury or wound. Similar to a cast that protects a broken arm, the thought boundary will act as a barrier to guard, protect and rest your open wound.

Set the same rule with your family members, circle of friends or anyone who is aware of the injustice. Tell everyone that you will no longer think or talk about the injustice, until you are fully healed.

Give your wound a good rest. Put the injustice in a box and "put it into storage". Protect and nurse the wound and it will heal itself in the same way as a broken arm mends. Be patient and wait until it is fully healed, and then you can talk about it as much as you like.

- 2. Keep Your Thoughts Focused on the “Here and Now.”** Stay focused on the present. Fill your mind with thoughts and conversation related to “today and this week.” Keep all your conversations in the present and future.

- 3. Resist the Temptation to Think about or Pick at Your Wound** as it is healing, particularly when your mind and emotions are recovering and adjusting to living in the present. As your wound continues to heal and the emotional skin reforms, it is natural to experience emotional itching and irritation. It is vital that you allow the injury to heal of its own accord. Picking at it even at this later stage can still introduce infection or even lead to permanent scarring.

Keeping Your Emotional Health in Tip-Top Shape

- 4. Apply PETs - Positive Energizing Thoughts to Your Wound.** Manufacture positive inner thoughts and conversation and keep your conversation positive with other people. Your positive thoughts produce the essential food and medicine to keep you healthy and strong.

Which official language do you speak more often?

(A) Negative Language or (B) Positive Language

Negative language is determined by negative thoughts and words. Whenever you entertain negative thoughts and speak negative words, you are using the negative language. Likewise, when you entertain positive thoughts and speak positive words, you are using the positive language. Do you use both languages simultaneously? Do you feel more comfortable speaking Negative than Positive? Are you less fluent in Positive language?

Learning PSL - Positive as a Second Language

People entertain ANTs (automatic negative thoughts)* and PETs (positive energizing thoughts) on a daily basis. Is your mind (house) invested with ants or filled with your favourite pets? Thinking positive is hard work for most people.

The following three assignments will guide your PSL - positive language training program. Manufacture positive energizing thoughts and spoken words.

* Amen, D. G. 2006. *ADD in Intimate Relationships: A Comprehensive Guide For Couples*, Newport Beach: MindWorks Press.

a) Record ANTs and Spoken Word Statements

For the next 7 days keep an inventory of all your ANTs and spoken statements. Twice a day, (noon and evening) spend 15 minutes recording every negative thought and statement you entertained. Record the ANTs and spoken word statements in the left column.

ANTs and PETs Log

Assignment: Keep a log similar to the following example:

ANTs – Automatic Negative Thoughts and Spoken Words	PETs - Positive Energizing Thoughts and Spoken Words
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

b) Translate the ANTs and Spoken Statements

Begin translating the ANTs and spoken word statements to positive energizing thought and spoken statements. Translate each statement on your list. Make sure that the PETs and spoken statements are truly positive.

If you have trouble with the translation and are not completely sure that the PETs and spoken statements are truly positive, ask for help from a family member, friend, spouse, partner or colleague with the

translation. Then ask a person to proof read the PETs and spoken statements to verify authenticity.

Example:

ANT: *"I'm not as good as other people."*

PET: *"I'm a good person with many great qualities."*

c) Memorize the PETs and Spoken Word Statements

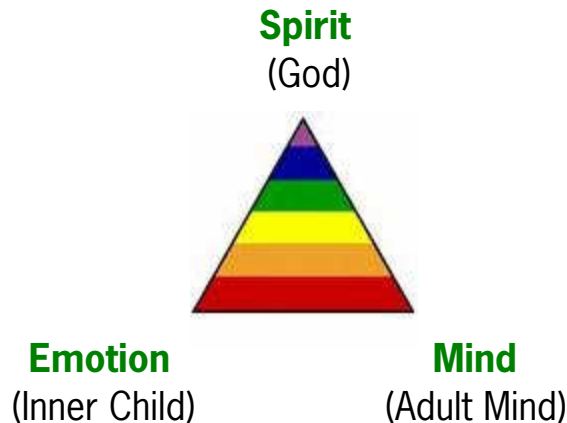
For the next 21 days re-read and practice every PETs and spoken statement. Twice a day, (noon and evening) spend 10 minutes memorizing the list of positive statements, and practice your positive language all day long. As you become more fluent with the language, the positive statements will develop into automatic PETs. Continue to practice the positive language until it becomes second nature.

5. Love and Nurture Your Relationships. Learn to love your inner child – your emotions. Your first and most important relationship is shared between your adult (mind), your inner child (emotions) and your God (spirit). Learn to love your adult self, your inner child and your father God. Let this friendship mature into the greatest award that life can offer – your best friend.

Love yourself (adult, child and spirit) in the same way as you would like to be loved by others. Be supportive, encouraging, forgiving, kind and patient with your adult self, your inner child and your spirit. Do not be rude, self-seeking, easily angered, envious, proud or delighting in wrongs.

Note: *You may call God by a different name. Keep addressing Him with the name that you are accustomed to using.*

Love Triangle



Love accepts all of you - unconditionally. Unconditional love expressed between the three of you and shared with others – is the “real stuff” that we are all looking for and want to enjoy on a daily basis.

Love also protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres. Protect and trust each other – your adult self, your inner child and your spirit. Give each other hope and never stop growing, loving, and having fun.

Love others as you would like to be loved. Continue to love your family, friends, community and your world. Share your personal friendship with the outer world.

The degree of love I am able share with others depends solely on the degree of love I share between my adult self, my inner child and my Father God.

6. Building Your Ultimate Friendship. The following exercise is designed to "jump start" your relationship between your adult (mind), your inner child (emotions) and your God (spirit).

How do three members of one body become best of friends?

With the same techniques you have used to build all your other friendships. Start by getting to know each other. Spend time together- talking and listening, sharing ideas, thoughts and interests. Do things that interest all three members, such as working, building outside friendships and relationships, playing, travelling, etc.

How do I talk or listen to my other members?

I have found that the best and quickest way to get the three members together to converse - is to have a written conversation. It is very difficult to achieve a relaxed and clear dialogue between the three members in your mind, without the facilitation of a written conversation.

Good communication can only take place when full attention is given to one conversation at a time. Do not try to accomplish this exercise solely in your mind or you will not be able to gain the full benefit of this exercise.

Written Conversation Exercise

First, schedule a time and location to meet. Second, record the dialogue. Third, relax and let your thoughts, emotions, and spirit flow freely during your conversation. Some people may become tongue-tied during the first meeting.

Once you have written several conversations, the dialogues become more natural and begin to merge with your daily activities and

routines. Your dialogue will begin to feel more comforting, pleasing, exciting, enriching and enlightening.

To help you get started, I have included a sample of a written conversation between Dave, David and God.

Sample of a Written Conversation

Dave: *How's my David doing? Did you have a nice day?*

David: *I had a great day. I'm starting to feel better about our friendship. I like the way you talk with me. You're no longer angry with me and others. And I like how we are becoming better friends with our Heavenly Father.*

God: *"Love is patient, love is kind....It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs." 1 Corinthians 13:4a-5.*

David: *God is so right. Keep it up Dad. How was your day?*

Dave: *I had a great day. I got a lot done at work. And I am proud of you. The way you stayed patient and didn't complain about the extra assignment I had to finish at work. Thanks for understanding. I'll make up for lost time with you. You're a great son. I want to love you more and more.*

David: *I love*

As your best friendship continues to mature, your life rewards keep on increasing, giving you the psycho-spiritual wealth and relational health you are designed to experience.

**Become a multi-millionaire on the inside
and share your rewards with others!**

Final Thoughts

I have elaborated four steps on Healing Your Emotional Wounds. For every person, the profile of the emotional wounding will be different. The process of healing will be the same.

Untreated emotional wounds will cause physical, mental, emotional and spiritual impairment. They can set off mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety and addiction. They can wipe out relationships, add to job failures, obscure life purpose or direction, and ultimately destroy life. Airing out the emotional wound, along with letting the injustice go, forgiving the person and acquiring proper emotional self-defence skills will minimize the risk of further infection and maximize the healing process.

I invite you to continue to be a team player in your life's growth process, so you can heal your past, build your present and shape your future. Give yourself full permission to love yourself, to be yourself, to trust yourself, to be honest with yourself, to forgive yourself, to be your best friend, to love others and honour your God.

Living with scars does not mean you are disadvantaged or incomplete. As a matter of fact, healed wounds help craft character, self-confidence, emotional intelligence, spiritual maturity, honest relationships, contentment and “the real stuff” we all long to experience. Your healing has unlocked large reservoirs of fuel (new knowledge and wisdom) that will supply a wealth of new strength for you to continue your work in becoming your very best.

I encourage you to **share** your cleansing, healing and empowering experience. Let others see how your hard work radically changed your life. Share this cleansing recipe with others, so that they too, will be able to experience the same level of emotional freedom and happiness you are beginning to enjoy.

Healing emotional wounds means healing families, marriages, relationships, communities and countries. Proper and early intervention can go a long way to decrease many of the problems I have shared in this kit.

If required, I also encourage you seek counselling or life coaching to help you complete the entire cleansing program. And lastly, I would love to hear your story, your cleansing experience and about your life as a healed person.

Author's Bio

John Schurmann is the founder of Schurmann Counselling & Life Coaching. (www.coachme.ca)

He is a registered clinical social worker, individual, couple and family psychotherapist, and life coach. He has worked closely with individuals, couples, families, groups and organizations for the past twenty years.

John holds three degrees including a masters degree in clinical social work from Wilfrid Laurier University. He has extensive training in specialized areas of counselling; marital and family therapy, mental health issues, child and adult ADHD, psychiatry, spirituality, sexuality, family violence and alcohol/drug abuse.

Since his college years, John's focus has been on turning individuals, relationships and families around -- equipping them with the skills and ability to make their lives healthier. It is often said about John Schurmann; *"You are outstanding in helping me, making me feel calm, giving me new skills to handle my situation, giving me new hope, a new outlook and a sense of adventure. John got me back on track, helped me improve- my life, marriage, relationship, work situation and believed in me in resolving my life issues."*

John is married to Rita and enjoys spending time with his family - Matthew and Daniel. He loves to learn, travel, ski, spend time with his extended family and friends, and loves his relationship with his God.

John Schurmann is a registered Social Worker with the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Services Workers. He is a member of the Ontario Association of Social Workers and an associate member with the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy.