

APPENDIX

Several lists referred to earlier, as well as fuller contexts for some of the citations in this study, are included here for further study. Since it was discovered that some articles cited have disappeared from the Internet for various reasons, such as expired class assignments, pertinent copies are provided here.

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What is Distorted Thinking?

By Reneau Peurifoy

From <http://www.rpeurifoy.com/anger/distthnk.htm>, accessed 20 November 2006.

One of the marvels of the mind is that once we learn to do complex tasks, they can become automatic and unconscious. For example, when you first learn to drive a car, learning to steer, brake, and judge various driving situations requires all of your attention. Eventually, however, driving becomes so automatic that you need pay little conscious attention to the many tasks involved. Even though you are making decisions every minute, you are unaware of most of them. Instead, you listen to the radio or talk to the passengers, giving driving only a casual thought.

Similarly, while growing up, we need to learn which activities are safe and dangerous, what our role is in society, how to achieve the things we want, and how to interact with others. By the time we are adults, most of this learning has become unconscious habit patterns. As we saw in Chapter 3, most of our emotions are triggered by our interpretations of events. The thinking processes that produce these interpretations—as well as the actions we take—are mostly automatic and unconscious, like those involved in driving.

Since these automatic thinking patterns are developed in childhood, some of the reasoning behind them is faulty. But because they become automatic we are mostly unaware of them as we enter adulthood. Thus, everyone uses some faulty reasoning from time to time. Whenever you use a faulty pattern, you misinterpret and, hence, distort the events you are experiencing. Distorted thinking, then, can be defined as any reasoning process that distorts reality. Distorted thinking is also a common source of inappropriate anger. Learning to reduce the amount of distorted thinking you use is therefore a good way to reduce the amount of inappropriate anger you experience.

The first step in reducing your distorted thinking is to become aware of when you are using it. Most of our conscious thoughts take the form of silent conversations in the mind called self-talk. Thus, you can identify the various forms of distorted thinking you use by noticing specific words or phrases are present in your thoughts or speech.

While different types of distorted thinking sometimes overlap, memorizing specific labels for each form is very useful. The reason this approach is effective is due to what I call the “new car” principle: When you first buy a new car, you suddenly notice cars of the same make as yours wherever you go. It’s as if suddenly hundreds of them are everywhere, when prior to your purchase there were none. Actually they were always there—you simply didn’t notice them before. But because you put so much time, thought and effort into selecting this particular car, your mind now tends to notice this type of car wherever you go. A similar phenomenon happens when you identify different forms of distorted thinking. Taking time to memorize their labels and definitions helps you become aware of when you are using them, which in turn allows you to challenge them and replace them with more rational and realistic thoughts. As you become skilled at doing this, you will find it a powerful tool for reducing this common source of inappropriate anger.

Common Forms of Distorted Thinking

Should/Must Thinking: The transformation of personal choices, wants, or preferences into universal absolutes. This is usually done by thinking in words and phrases such as “should,” “must,” “ought,” and “have to.”

Examples: “I have to get an A”; “People should be fair”; “I have to be on time.” Should/must thinking also can be expressed indirectly through:

Circular questioning: The repeated asking of questions that are irrelevant or have an answer you already know but are unwilling to accept.

Common examples include “Why am I like this?” “Why can’t I change?” “How could he/she do that?” and “How could that happen?”

Circular questions are the result of hidden should/must rules: “Why am I like this?” = “I shouldn’t be like this”; “Why can’t I change?” = “I should change”; “How could he/she do that?” = “He/she shouldn’t do that”; “How could that happen?” = “That shouldn’t happen.”

Can’t thinking: The use of the word “can’t” to describe a need, want, decision, or choice.

Examples: “I can’t give presentations” = “I don’t like to give presentations”; “I can’t control myself” = “I don’t want to control myself.”

All-Or-Nothing Thinking: The tendency to evaluate personal qualities and events in extreme, black-and-white categories. This is often expressed with the words “right,” “wrong,” “good,” and “bad.”

Examples: A child breaks something and a parent says “Why are you so bad?” A friend disagrees with you and you think, “It’s not right to think that way.”

Overgeneralization: The transformation of a single negative event into a never-ending pattern of defeat or misfortune. Often this is done by using words like “never,” “always,” and “every.”

Examples: “Why does this always happen to me?”; “I’m never going to get it right”; “I always seem to screw-up.”

Common variation:

Labeling: The use of simplistic and usually negative labels to define yourself or your behavior that exaggerates the importance of shortcomings or mistakes. “I’m so stupid”; “I’m such a loser”; “What a geek.”

Magnification/Minimization: Magnification includes two types of exaggerations: catastrophizing, the exaggeration of personal flaws, small negative experiences, and mistakes; and the exaggeration of the abilities of others.

Examples: “How awful”; “Jim is so much better than I am at this” (when this is not true); “I can’t stand it.”

Minimization, sometimes called discounting, also comes in two forms: the depreciation of personal strengths, abilities, or achievements; and the depreciation of mistakes and imperfections in others.

Personalization: The act of assuming responsibility for a negative event when there is no basis for doing so.

Examples: “I should have known that would have happened”; “If only I would have done things differently (when something you have no control over happens).”

Mind Reading: Assuming what other people are thinking or feeling with little or no evidence to support the assumption and no attempt to confirm or deny the assumption.

Examples: “John must think I’m stupid”; “They’re all thinking I’m making a fool of myself”; “Everyone thinks I’m a jerk.”

Fortune Telling: Making a prediction and then convincing yourself it is an already established fact.

Examples: “I know I’ll blow this interview” (when a person is prepared but nervous); “This relationship will never last” (when there is no evidence of this).

Accepting Questionable Sources as Authoritative: Accepting as reliable an opinion or advice colored by vested interest, ignorance, lack of experience, or prejudice.

Example: “I guess Sara is right” (when Sara knows nothing about this issue).

Emotional Reasoning: The use of emotions as the primary or only means for evaluating a situation, event, or beliefs.

Examples: “I feel so out of place. I guess I really don’t belong”; “I feel so crazy. I must be insane”; “I feel like such a fool. I guess I’m a real nobody.”

Journal Examples Illustrating How to Challenge Distorted Thinking

Example 1

Incident

My girls were playing in the front room on a rainy Saturday afternoon. I walked in and saw one balancing on one foot on a chair trying to reach something high on a bookshelf.

Thoughts

Look at what she's doing, she's going to pull all the books off the shelf, spill them on the floor, and ruin them. Then she's going to fall down and break her neck. These children don't have any sense at all. I've got to watch them day and night.

Rational Challenge

Look at what she's doing, she's going to pull all the books off the shelf, spill them on the floor, and ruin them. Then she's going to fall down and break her neck. — This is catastrophizing. While she may damage something and hurt herself, she's got more ability than I often give her credit for. What really triggered my exaggerated reaction was my fear because there was a small but real danger in what she was doing.

These children don't have any sense at all. — This is negative labeling and minimizing. Actually, both girls are very smart. However, they're just children and don't know all of the things I sometimes expect them to know. Times like these are an opportunity to teach them how to do things more safely.

I've got to watch them day and night. — This is another magnification based on my fears. I don't have to watch them every minute. In fact, I've left them on their own lots of times and they do well. While the way in which she was trying to get the book was dangerous, the truth is that she probably would have been fine. I probably wouldn't have even known what she did if I hadn't walked in at that moment.

Plan

I'm going to talk with my girls about how to get things and what is and is not safe.

Example 2

Incident

I was at my parent's house with my brothers helping with yard-work and doing some minor repairs. I made a mistake and my brothers made fun of me.

Thoughts

I can't stand it when they do this. Why don't they leave me alone? Everyone's always picking on me. They just wait for me to fall on my face so they can stand there and laugh at me. It just isn't fair.

Rational Challenge

I can't stand it when they do this. — This is magnification. I can stand it when this happens. In fact I "stood it" very well. I just didn't like it. What was happening was I was embarrassed.

Why won't they leave me alone? — This is one of those disguised "should/Must" rules = They should leave me alone and not embarrass me. While it would be nice if everyone treated everyone else with kindness and respect, that does not always happen in the real world.

Everyone's always picking on me. They just wait for me to fall on my face so they can stand there and laugh at me. — First of all, this is a magnification. "Everyone" isn't always picking on me. This is a pattern that is primarily between me and my brothers. While it is true that we do a lot of kidding that can sometimes be pretty mean, we wouldn't want anything bad to happen to any one of us. In fact, we'd be the first to help and defend each other. They're really on my side. This is just a negative pattern from when we were kids.

It isn't fair. — This is a true statement. Life isn't fair. My statement in this case was simply a wishing for things to be different.

Plan

I need to remind myself that my brothers will probably kid me like we did when we were kids before I see them. I can also remind myself to focus on what I'm going to do rather than focusing on how unfair something is. If I don't like what they're saying, I can change the subject and remind myself of the things I've written above.

One of Mr. Peurifoy's special talents is his ability to reduce complex ideas into simple, easy-to-understand terms and apply them to daily life. This is why major self-help groups and clinics addressing anxiety-related problems have selected his books from among a host of others on the market as the basis for their programs. The Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA), the nation's primary organization for anxiety-related problems, has invited Mr. Peurifoy to speak at every national conference since 1988. Mr. Peurifoy also has a wide range of experience in front of groups as well as extensive experience with radio and T.V. His warmth and comfortable manner generate a strong rapport with audiences. Because he believes so strongly in the material he has developed over his years as a therapist, his excitement over sharing it is genuinely contagious.

Truth: Awareness of Faulty Thinking

Author unknown

From <http://www.happyotter.com/hotools/truth.htm>, accessed 20 November 2006.

On the quest for truth, be aware of the following 50+ logical errors/fallacies. If you lack awareness, it is easy to be confused and misled into reaching false conclusions.

Abusive Personal Attack: shifting attention away from facts by personally attacking the individual presenting the argument (IR-h1)

Ambiguity/Unclear Meaning: structuring the wording of a claim to create two or more possible meanings (UR-d1)

Analogy, Faulty: a comparison which is alike in some respects doesn't mean it is similar in other or all important respects (UR-e7)

Authority (Questionable/Irrelevant): using the opinion of an authority who may be unqualified in current field or biased (IP-a4)

Before Therefore Cause/ Post Hoc: assuming that if one event comes before another it is the cause of the second (IG-f6)

Black & White/Either-Or/False Dilemma: overlooking other answers by restricting choices (contraries as contradictions) (UR-e6)

Change Meaning of Word (Equivocation): shifting the meaning of a key word in an argument resulting in deception (UR-d4)

Circular Argument/True By Definition: using the conclusion as one of the premises (reassert conclusion without evidence) (UR-c1)

Cliché/Aphorism: covering for lack of evidence with cute phrase, parable, or story (IG-g4)

Composition (Parts to Whole): if each part has a quality the whole must have the same property (good players = good team) (UR-e1)

Compromise/Moderation/Golden Mean: assuming a moderate view is best because it is the middle or least offensive view (UR-e4)

Confusing Necessary & Sufficient Condition: meeting a necessary condition but not meeting all sufficient ones (IG-f2)

Distinction without Difference: attempting to distinguish from a similar losing argument with clever wording (UR-d3)

Diversion (Whole to Parts): if a whole has a property or quality then each part must also have it (good team = good player) (UR-e3)

Domino Effect/Slippery Slope: arguing against by linking a first decision with possible unproved negative future outcomes (IG-f3)

Double Standard/ Special Pleading: rule applies to you but it doesn't apply to me because of a poorly supported exception (IG-g7)

Evidence, Denying: refusing to seriously consider or acknowledge evidence which is opposition to claim (IR-i1)

Evidence, Ignoring / (1 Sided Assessment): ignoring negative evidence or omitting it as though it was not relevant (IR-i2)

Evidence, Omission: failing to include critical positive evidence which supports the claim being made (IG-g6)

Fake Precision/Unknowable Statistic: presenting mathematical precision or essentially unknowable statistics as fact (IG-g3)

False Hypothesis/Predict "if": stating as fact hypothetical claims about what would happen under different conditions (IG-g2)

False Opposites /Illicit Contrast (not P -> not Q): assuming an unstated related contrasting claim (UR-e10)

Flattery/Excessive Praise: providing praise or flattery instead of evidence (IP-b7)

Force/Threat/Intimidation: using intimidation or threat instead of presenting evidence or proper argument (IP-b1)

Gambler's Fallacy/False Probability: thinking past independent chance events effect the odds or probability of future events (IG-f4)

Generalization (Sweeping)/General Principle Misuse: assume no exceptions to general rule or use exception to disprove rule (UR-e9)

Guilt By Association: using a negative view of the company kept by an opponent instead of presenting evidence (IP-b5)

Humor/Ridicule: avoiding appropriate arguments by distracting with humor or attacking with ridicule (IR-j3)

Ignorance, Arguing From: stating a conclusion as true because it hasn't been proven false (or false because not proven true) (IG-g1)

Innuendo/Suggestion without Evidence: implicitly suggesting a claim without actually stating it (to discredit an argument) (UR-d2)

Is-Ought/Status Quo/Inertia: if it is done now, then it should continue or the reverse (if not done then don't start) (UR-e8)

Label, Inference from: using a label attached to a person or thing as a though it were a sufficient reason to reach a conclusion (IG-g5)

Leading Question: phrasing a question unfairly or in a biased manner to force desired answer (UR-c2)

Loaded-Complex Question: presenting assumptions/premises in a question which force acceptance regardless of the answer (UR-c3)

Neglect Multiple Cause /Common Cause: thinking one event causes another when both are actually effects of a separate cause (IG-f5)

Novelty/New Is Good: it is good just because it is different from the past (UR-e5)

Out Of Context/Improper Accent: shifting tone of voice to alter meaning of a quote or presenting it out of context (UR-d5)

Oversimplification: using insufficient factors to account for an event (IG-f1)

Past context Applied Now/Genetic: using evaluation from past context and applying it to present changed context (IP-a3)

Pity/Mercy: appealing for special treatment based on sympathy as a distraction from relevant evidence (IP-b3)

Poisoning The Well/Damning Source: attacking motives to discredit possible future points (suggesting lying/hidden agenda) (IR-h2)

Popular Opinion/Bandwagon/Polls/Everyone Does It: urging acceptance or rejection of an argument because many others do (IP-a1)

Rationalize/Believe Then Prove: (IP-a5)
... hiding real reasons for a position with better sounding false/weak ones

Red Herring/Side Issue: attempting to divert attention from a weakness by presenting a distracting side issue (IR-j2)

Sample, Insufficient: reaching a conclusion about the whole population based on a sample that is too small (IG-g8)

Sample, Unrepresentative: using biased, exceptional, or an unrepresentative sample of a population to represent the whole (IG-g9)

Self Interest/Personal Circumstance: appealing to an opponent's personal interest or circumstance instead of a valid argument (IP-b2)

Small Difference Irrelevant/Continuum: thinking a small change in a sequence doesn't matter so there is no true cut off point (UR-e2)

Straw Man: distorting or misrepresenting an opponent's argument in order to make it easier to refute or attack (IR-j1)

Strong Feelings/Mob-Crowd Appeal: appealing to mass enthusiasm or popular opinion with no supporting evidence (IP-b6)

Tradition/Past is Best: appealing to reverence or respect for tradition to avoid presenting evidence (IP-b4)

Trivial Objection/Minor Point: attacking a minor point as though it was a major one (believing this defeats whole argument) (IR-j4)

Vague Expression: assigning a very specific meaning to an opponent's vague term and then attacking the interpretation (UR-d6)

Wrong Conclusion/Non-Sequitur: presenting evidence for one conclusion and then stating another (IP-a2)

You Do It Too/Two Wrongs Make A Right: suggesting a position is reasonable because your opponent acts in a similar way (IR-h3)

 The above list was compiled by a Paladin on a quest to act as a positive force by sharing knowledge, empowering others, advocating kindness, and providing encouragement today. Carpe Diem! (ver 9512)

4 CATEGORIES OF LOGICAL FALLACIES (10 GROUPS)

1. IRRELEVANT PREMISE [IP]

-(a) Irrelevance/Unrelatedness
-(b) Emotional Appeal

2. UNACCEPTABLE REASON [UR]

-(c) Begging the Question
-(d) Linguistic Confusion
-(e) Unwarranted Assumption

3. INSUFFICIENT GROUNDS [IG]

-(f) Causal
-(g) Missing Evidence

4. INEFFECTIVE REBUTTAL [IR]

-(h) Attacking the Person
-(i) Counter Evidence
-(j) Diversion

(Etc. ...)

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Beyond Feelings-Guide to Critical Thinking = Vincent Ruggiero (1-55934-357-5)
de Bono's Thinking Course = Edward de Bono (0-8160-3178-9)
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Informal Logic -Handbook for Critical Argu = Douglas Walton (0-521-37925-3)
Logic And Contemporary Rhetoric = Howard Kahane (0-534-16896-5)
Reason & Argumentation = Richard Feldman (0-13-767229-2)
The Elements of Reasoning = David Conway (0-534-51672-6)

Other Web Pages Dealing With Faulty Logic:

Brian Yoder (friendly)	Luke Setzer (37_ex_good_layout)
Stephen Downes (Complete)	Univ. Nevada (42_ex_brief)
San Jose St U (flashy_good)	Nizkor/Labossiere (42_ex_very_good)
James Stanger (9 ex long)	Diana Wash U (80_ex_brief)
	Ohio State (1_slide_ea)
Jon Shemitz (11_ex)	Just Thinking (overview_no_ex)
Cederblom Paulsen (12_ex_good)	Aaron Delwiche (ex_propoganda)
Brigham Young U (13_ex_short)	IL State U (prim_layout)
Matt Miller (14_ex)	Fergus Duniho (prim_but_detailed)
Perry Greene (15_ex_short)	
Longview CC (17_ex_long)	Peter Suber (many_links)
Thinking Page (18_ex+_overview)	U Miami (other_links)

Checklist of Habitual Thinking Distortions (or automatic thoughts)

(Adapted from David Burns, *Ten Days to Self-Esteem*)

From <http://www.accessmasterminds.com/distortions.htm>, accessed 20 November 2002.

(No longer on Internet)

As you are listening to your client, you should be alert to:

1. All or nothing thinking: The client looks at things in absolute, black and white categories.
2. Overgeneralization: Your client views a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. Mental filter: Client dwells on the negatives and ignores the positives.
4. Discounting the positives: Client insists that his accomplishments or positive qualities don't count.
5. Jumping to conclusions: (A) Mind-reading – assumes that people are reacting negatively to them when there is no definite evidence, or (B) Fortune telling – they arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.
6. Magnification or minimization: Client blows things way out of proportion, or shrinks their importance inappropriately.
7. Emotional Reasoning: Client reasons how they feel. "I feel like an idiot, so I really must be one." Or "I don't feel like doing this, so I'll put it off."
8. "Should" statements: Clients criticize themselves or other people with "shoulds" or "shouldn't's." "Musts," "oughts," and "have-to's" are similar offenders.
9. Labeling. Clients identify with their shortcomings. Instead of saying "I made a mistake," they say "I'm a jerk," or "a fool" or "a loser."
10. Personalization and blame: They blame themselves for something they weren't entirely responsible for, or they blame other people and overlook ways that their own attitudes and behavior might contribute to the problem.

(This list contributed by Lou Lazerson, who can be emailed at lynnlaz@aol.com, or check Lou's Web site.)

Coaching tools to change Client thinking patterns

Step 1. Identify and note Client's Automatic Thoughts (AT)

Step 2. Identify the exact distortion in each AT

Step 3. Ask client to create a rational response, more realistic and positive ideas. "What would be an alternate way to respond to this challenge?"

Cognitive Coaching focuses on identifying, evaluating, and changing a person's chronic negative thoughts. Cognitive therapy is based upon 4 assumptions:

1. ALL PEOPLE ACTIVELY CONSTRUCT THEIR OWN REALITY. All of us actively construct personal meanings out of our life experiences.

2. **YOU FEEL THE WAY YOU THINK.** Your feelings are created by your thoughts and not the actual situation. All of your experiences are interpreted by your brain and given a conscious meaning before you have a feeling response.

3. **MOST NEGATIVE FEELINGS COME FROM DISTORTED THOUGHTS.** Negative feelings such as depression, anxiety, guilt, shame, hopelessness are directly related to specific and distorted thought patterns.

4. **YOU CAN CHANGE THE WAY YOU FEEL.** You can learn to be aware of your distorted thinking patterns and learn to change them to be more realistic and positive thoughts. As you make these thought modifications, you will be able to change your negative mood to a more positive one.

Changing Automatic Distorted Thinking and Protective Dysfunctional Behaviors
Adapted from two articles by Robert W. Westermeyer:

In “The Structural Model of Cognition,” Westermeyer defines *metacognition* as the ability to think about thinking. ... It is believed that the more effort put into changing automatic distorted and protective dysfunctional behaviors, the more automatic healthy thinking will become.

Cognitive therapy focuses on change at all levels; automatic thoughts, behaviors, protective rules, core beliefs.¹

In “Pin-Pointing Nasty Cognitions” he explains:

In cognitive therapy, people learn how to pay attention to automatic thoughts and recognize those which are distorted. There are a number of techniques which can be easily implemented when distorted thoughts are identified so that more balanced, realistic interpretations can be discovered.

1. **AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS.** Each time a distorted automatic thought goes unchecked, it strengthens dysfunctional core beliefs and conditional rules by adding yet another memory to the schema. Each time a dysfunctional automatic thought is altered via thought record disputation, you have added a “conflicting memory” to the system and actually changed the core structure. Keep in mind, automatic thoughts occur all day long, and if only one out of a hundred distorted automatic thoughts is altered, it will have a minimal effect on the core belief. So, the more the better when it comes to thought records!
2. **CONDITIONAL BELIEFS (RULES).** In cognitive therapy, an attempt is made to help you identify conditional rules and find more flexible healthy alternatives, then test them out via cognitive disputation and actual behavioral experiments. [Don’t forget to base these on the Bible!]
3. **PROTECTIVE BEHAVIORS.** Exposing oneself to behaviors which counter dysfunctional protective ones is a powerful part of cognitive therapy. This sometimes requires practice in group (as is often the case with assertiveness). We recommend that individuals change protective behaviors gradually, so that it is not overwhelming. If change efforts are too overwhelming, they are likely to be abandoned.
4. **CORE BELIEFS.** Core beliefs are, in essence, our realities. Therefore, they are not as readily alterable as automatic thoughts (which are the products of core beliefs). Longer-term cognitive therapy will focus a great deal on core beliefs.²

¹Robert W. Westermeyer, “The Structural Model of Cognition” [article on-line]; available from <http://www.habitsmart.com/struct.html>; Internet; accessed 20 November 2006.

²Westermeyer, “Pin-Pointing Nasty Cognitions” [article on-line]; available from <http://www.habitsmart.com/pin.html>; Internet; accessed 20 November 2006.

In cognitive therapy, the following techniques are used to help a person identify and begin to change his or her core beliefs:

THOUGHT MONITORING AND DISPUTING. Thought monitoring can be a good way to begin to understand core belief themes (by virtue of their frequency). As stated, altering automatic thoughts adds conflicting memories to the schema system which can alter core beliefs gradually in time.

PRESCRIPTION OF HEALTHIER, MORE FLEXIBLE CORE BELIEFS. In cognitive therapy, attempts are made to help you move away from behaviors and thinking which support dysfunctional core beliefs³ and toward healthier more balanced ones.⁴ Clients are encouraged to review evidence which supports healthier core beliefs frequently, and to also review evidence which supports dysfunctional core beliefs, disputing exaggerated or distorted “support.”

EXPERIMENTING HEALTHIER CORE BELIEFS. After a healthy substitute for a dysfunctional core belief is prescribed, it is important to plan “experiments” for ourselves, in which we enter situations “as if” (a term used by Judith Beck, Ph.D.) the prescribed belief were true. These experiments can lead to outcomes that support the new belief. Thus adding REAL conflicting memories to the system.

REPROCESSING OF OLD MEMORIES. Cognitive therapy is not only useful in helping you dispute distortions in your every day life, but re-thinking old memories which have lead to dysfunctional core beliefs. We recommend that this “core belief work” is done in therapy⁵, as it can be a painful experience, especially when you are not particularly versed in cognitive therapy techniques. Guidance from a professional is deemed appropriate.⁶

³Those which do not honor God.

⁴Core beliefs which honor God.

⁵By a qualified Christian counselor, or if funds are not available with a qualified pastor or mature group of friends who will be your support group.

⁶Westermeyer, “The Structural Model of Cognition.”

Cognitive Restructuring (or How to STOP “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”)

By Gary Flegal

From http://www.garyflegal.com/cognitive_restructuring.htm, accessed 20 November 2006.

Everyone experiences “self talk.” This is merely the conversation you hold with yourself inside your head all throughout the day. It is normal. However, for most of us, nearly 80% of the automatic thinking that goes on in our head is negative, and not necessarily based in reality. This includes thoughts like, “He should have done ...!” and “I must do ...!” and “I always get in the slow line!” and “I never get asked to ...!” and so on ...

The goal in cognitive restructuring is to learn increased cognitive flexibility. This is accomplished by realizing that emotional arousal distorts our ability to view the world accurately—we tend to view events through our emotions. The stressful automatic thoughts that result from these distorted appraisals must be viewed as hypotheses, not facts. You can learn to challenge these hypotheses and base your thoughts on evidence.

Most of us do not usually challenge our stressful automatic thoughts simply because they are automatic and often unconscious—in much the same way we habitually respond to stress. Cognitive restructuring teaches us to stop, reflect, and appraise situations more accurately. In doing so, stressful automatic thoughts and further emotional arousal are prevented or reduced.

Questions to ask yourself about your stressful automatic thoughts:

1. Is this really true?
2. Am I jumping to conclusions?
3. What is the evidence?
4. Am I exaggerating or over-emphasizing a negative aspect of the situation?
5. Am I catastrophizing? (Am I making it seem worse than it really is?)
6. How do I know it will happen? (Am I a mind reader?)
7. So what if it happens? (Will the world end?)
8. Is it really as bad as it seems?
9. Is it to my advantage to maintain this appraisal? (Do I benefit from continuing to think the way I am thinking?)
10. Is there another way to look at the situation?

The Deadly M.O.A.N.S.

Use the acronym “M.O.A.N.S.” to help identify stressful automatic thoughts. Think of these thoughts as “The Deadly Moans.” While this will not cure all of your “stinkin’ thinkin’,” it will help you recognize as much as 50% of it because you’ll often find the following words in stressful automatic thoughts:

M ust O ught to A lways N ever S hould

(Got to, Have to, etc.)

When you hear yourself thinking or saying, “I should do ...” whatever it is, rephrase the thought as, “It would be nice if I did ...” whatever it is.

Or, when you hear yourself using phrases like, “They must do what I want them to!” ask yourself questions from the list above, such as:

“Is it really true that they must?”

Or at the grocery store, you think to yourself, “I always get in the slow line!”

“Is it true?”

“Am I catastrophizing?”

“Is it really as bad as it seems?”

“Is this an opportunity for me to practice slow, deep breathing?”

With practice, you’ll start getting the idea.

By the way ... don’t assume that you will get perfect at hearing all of the cognitive distortions in your self talk. The goal is improvement—not perfection ... the idea that perfection is possible is a cognitive distortion, and trying to attain it causes stress.

Dr. Gary Flegal, Professional Stress Management Seminars and Services

The Power of Attitudes

By Steve Duncan

MSU Extension Family and Human Development Specialist

Formerly from <http://www.montana.edu/wwwpb/home/0223fam.html>; ; accessed 6 August 2002
(No longer on Internet)

BOZEMAN—Sportswriters still describe the 10,000-meter run at Tokyo in 1964 as one of the greatest upsets in Olympic history. Dramatically overtaking the two front-runners in the final yards, Billy Mills, a 26-year-old Marine lieutenant who grew up on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, set an Olympic record of 28 min. 24.04 sec. During the final lap he was bumped and almost lost his balance. But he kept on. He became the only American to ever win the event after overcoming great personal disadvantages.

What does it take to accomplish well, despite seemingly insurmountable odds? Part of the answer is in our attitude.

Renowned psychologist William James said, “The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.” Author James Allen wrote: “Of all the beautiful truths pertaining to the soul . . . none is more gladdening or fruitful . . . than this—that [humankind] is the master of thought, the molder of character, and maker and shaper of condition, environment, and destiny.” Another anonymous author said it differently: “Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character. Sow a character, reap a destiny.”

If we accept the idea that thoughts are the seed bed of our eventual station in life, it’s clear that we need to be careful about the thoughts we choose to hold, that they are consistent with what we desire our outcomes to be. Here are some ideas that can help.

First, catch a personal vision. Having a personal vision and sense of mission is a powerful, motivating force in our lives. It is the “mountain top view” of people who have a long-term view of where they want to go and how to get there. Like a strong magnet, a sense of mission and personal vision has a way of drawing us to our envisioned outcomes, if we are committed and work to realize them.

Spend some time envisioning your life mission. Write your diary in advance. One approach to doing this is to imagine a roast held in your honor, where friends, work associates, family members and others gather to sing your praises. Each has an opportunity to approach the microphone for comment. What would you like each one to say about you? About the kind of person you are? About your character traits? About your accomplishments and contributions? Be specific in what you write.

Second, rid yourself of thoughts that present impediments to the accomplishment of your mission and vision. Your thoughts produce electrochemical responses within your body that can influence, for better or worse, your physical and psychological well being. It’s important to think realistic, positive thoughts and have faith in those positive viewpoints and expectations.

Positive thoughts and attitudes aren't ways of covering up feelings or avoiding the harsh realities of life. Rather they are a constructive way of looking at life that can help us make the best of circumstances, positive or negative. There are several exercises that can help us do this.

Positive self-talk. Sometimes our self-conversation is quite negative. Instead, select a coin or large seed and a color that is common in your environment. Put the coin or seed in your shoe where you can feel it. Then select a positive self-message, such as "I am a wonderful, worthwhile person" or some other positive statement of your choice. Each time you see the color or feel the seed or coin, give yourself that positive message. It's like speaking sweet nothings to yourself!

Renowned psychiatrist David Burns, in his book, *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy*, popularized another technique for combating distorted, twisted thinking. He states we sometimes have seemingly automatic negative thoughts or distortions. We need to uncover them when they occur and talk back to them using a "rational response." For example, we may have the automatic thought of "I never do anything right." Burns calls this distorted thought "overgeneralization," where we see "a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat." A rational response to this thought might be: "Nonsense! I do a lot of things right."

A third way to promote positive thinking is reframing people and situations from negative to positive. For instance, a person we might categorize as "stubborn" or "stingy" might also be seen as "determined" or "thrifty." A situation viewed as a problem can be seen instead as an opportunity or a challenge.

A fourth approach to positive thinking is to simply ponder the positive, suggested by my Kentucky Extension colleague Sam Quick. During moments of leisure, mentally say to yourself things like, "I'm very fortunate to have good health, caring family members, and friends, and the freedom to do what I think is best." In more trying times you might think, "In a way I actually appreciate those people in my life who so effectively challenge my patience, kindness, and self-control. Without them, how would I ever learn to grow in understanding, humility, and endurance?" The idea is to begin to see all of life, even the difficult times, as a challenge, an opportunity, and a blessing.

Please send questions or comments (plus your name, location and the subject of the story you read) to:

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False Assumptions: 12 “Christian” Beliefs That Can Drive You Crazy

The following are the chapter titles from the above book by Henry Cloud and John Townsend:

1. It's selfish to have my needs met.
2. If I'm spiritual enough, I will have no pain or sinfulness.
3. If I change my behavior, I will grow spiritually and emotionally.
4. I just need to give it to the Lord.
5. One day, I'll be finished with recovery.
6. Leave the past behind.
7. If I have God, I don't need people.
8. "Shoulds" are good.
9. Guilt and shame are good for me.
10. If I make right choices, I will grow spiritually.
11. Just doing the right thing is more important than why I do it.
12. If I know the truth, I will grow.

Ten Reasonable Desires based on God's Economy for Intimate Companionship

From Douglas Rosenau, *A Celebration of Sex: A Guide to Enjoying God's Gift of Sexual Intimacy* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2002), xi-xix.

1. Each of us will become a partner and soul mate offering unconditional love, understanding, and support. We will be best friends.
2. Neither of us will expect the other to meet all of our needs or take sole responsibility for our personal happiness. We will give each other space to breathe and have a life.
3. We will leave our fathers and mothers and create a new, independent, special family unit.
4. We will have one healthy fight or disagreement a week. Confrontation concerning our unmet personal needs will be believed and not dismissed.
5. We will take regular vacations and "honeymoons" throughout our marriage as we mend and enhance our intimacy.
6. We will use credit carefully as we become wise stewards of our finances.
7. My mate will be faithful and committed to me.
8. Either of us will be able to initiate marriage counseling, and the other will be willing to go. Our marriage will be constantly growing with individual and relational changes and improvements.
9. We will have regular satisfying sexual interaction.
10. We will enjoy a growing spiritual life together with prayer and Bible study.

How to Overcome Temptation

(Adapted from Sam Storm, *Pleasures Evermore*, Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2000.)

Satan's favorite strategies are to exploit our distorted thinking. Be aware of them.

The title "Devil" (*diabolos*) ... literally means "slanderer" or "accuser" (p. 263).

The strength of temptation ... comes from a tendency to push virtues to such an extent that they become vices. For example:

joy of sex	immorality
joy of eating	gluttony
blessing of rest	sloth
peace of quietness	non-communication
self-care	selfishness
self-respect	conceit
wise caution	cynicism and unbelief
righteousness anger	unrighteous rage
liberty	licentiousness
industriousness	greed
conscientiousness	perfectionism (p. 251-2)

We are prone to succumb to temptation when ...

Our faith is fresh (1 Tim. 3:6-7)

Our faith feels strongest (1 Cor. 10:12)

Our faith is being tested in the fires of affliction [like]

Tired, burn-out, persecuted, feeling excluded, ignored.

We are in an alien environment [no one knows us—no accountability].

We [feel] God isn't fair, that he is ... unjust ... doesn't love ...

[We experience] both spiritual highs and spiritual lows. (p. 253-4, 262)

Four Tactics for Resisting Temptation

1. Embrace and pursue ... [Jesus, i.e., know God]
2. Know yourself ... identify your weaknesses, your vulnerable spots, areas where you've failed before, and take extraordinary steps to protect yourself in the future.
3. Radically deal with sin. [Matt. 5:29 implies that we should respond to temptation as if we were blind, or deaf or lame, etc., or as dead to it (Rom. 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:24)]
4. Confront and conquer temptation at the beginning not at the end. [Where and when possible diffuse the power of temptation by fleeing or making sure the temptation is out of your reach or environment.] (p. 263-269)

Remember: Temptation is not a sin, but our reaction to it may be if we ignore or rebel against God's perspective of reality. (p. 251)

We sin because we enjoy the [passing] pleasures it brings ... but [instead we could be] relishing the permanent pleasures of God. (p. 26, 28)

To increase your pleasure in God, meditate on the following: Ps. 16:11; 20:4; 37:4.

Developing Your Business Thinking

Adapted From "Veech Journal" of John Veitch, 1996

From <http://www.ate.co.nz/journal/thinking.html>; Internet; 20 Aug 2002

(no longer at this site)

The ability to recall written records over long periods of time, allows you to see past errors in your own thinking, and to see old data in the light of new facts. The juxtaposition of the old and new often allows you to see what you were unable to see before. If this exposes a weakness or error in your own belief system. The effect of that on your life may be highly significant.

We all know that our knowledge base is too small, but even if the chief purpose of your journal is to collect data, you will never have enough data to resolve your questions. No matter how much information you collect, the accumulation of data never solves a problem any more than a pile of stones builds a wall. You can remember most of the important events of your life, but unless you can turn those events into a story about your life, the events remain as a useless pile of rocks. To build something useful you need to make each of those rocks relate to each other rock. You need to put the parts of your life together to build walls and a strong vaulted roof. You must take your collected data and do some creative acts with it. First to understand it, second to make it useful in your own life and third to make it useful in the world.

I try to review my journals, to collect the principal ideas, to recognize themes in my work, and that has been useful to me. However for years I was really dealing with ideas and plans at a distance. I needed to become intimately involved with these themes, and not deal so much with what should be, but deal more with what I intend to do. There was no easy route to this integration except by my own effort using the tools I chose. The hand and the mind together develop the world. It's nice to build a vault for your ideas, but you need to work with those ideas in real situations to make them useful and that will expose the hiding hand of work still not completed.

My review of my journal is not systematic, but because the material is so useful I frequently find myself using my index and sitting with several of my books open on the floor, trying to gain a clear understanding of some topic or to discover a principle that is useful in a wider context. When I do this I'm gathering in my current journal many threads that I may have written over ten or more years, making new sense of them, using these diverse sources to shed light on the topic. This is relatively easy, because to some extent all this material has already been processed, I thought it was important, I tried to understand it, I made a record. Recovering that record for use is much easier than trying to integrate new material collected from the library. What is already in "my journal" is already "my data" I have a familiarity with it, even though it may have been written many years before. This makes the material both accessible and useable.

Purging Your False Ideas

Great new ideas are wonderful, but they are seldom the key to success. The KEY is usually getting rid of an old idea that everyone accepts as valid; that is in fact WRONG. It may be wrong in some point of detail that by force of habit everyone overlooks. It's that old problem that we all have in editing our own writing. We miss the mistakes because we read what we meant to write and not what we wrote. So in our lives, the process of goal setting causes us to focus on seeing

the result we expect. We may entirely fail to see something very significant but unexpected even though it's happening our lives.

We are involved in a cultural web giving us traditions of philosophy, a history of ideas, and tools of language, mathematics and art. We learn to see and understand in culturally defined ways. We learn the cultural rules so that we see what everyone else sees. So the "sun rises", sometimes there is "no moon", the purpose of business is "to maximize profits", the freedom of the individual is "paramount". When we accept this common word use as valid we become blind to what the world is teaching us, unable even to see the obvious. (See "Images of Wide Scope" The Mirror.)

Sir Francis Crick, the Nobel Prize winner tells of years of work following a scientific trail that bore no fruit, when in fact they had found the answer (messenger RNA) years before, but they didn't identify the fact because that wasn't what they were looking for. Crick said, "It's getting rid of false ideas that's most important....That's why collaboration is essential....People often miss the obvious because they are searching for something else". I'm arguing that keeping a journal allows you to collaborate with yourself, and it doesn't prevent you from collaborating with other people.

The benefit of journal writing is in the assembly of your own data and the discovery of your own truth. The most difficult task any of us face is to extract from the dogma of our own family traditions and education your own faulty ideas. We all carry a heavy baggage of half truth and untruth which confuses the little real knowledge we have. With the help of your journal you can break through the conditioned blindness that prevents us all from seeing a better reality. The most valuable function of your journal is to demonstrate to you that your own thinking can be wrong. Other people are reluctant for social reasons and because of their own self doubt to point out your faulty thinking to you. Would you be likely to take any notice anyway? When you discover it for yourself you are empowered to act in new ways.

.African or Western: What's the Difference?

From Wilbur O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa*
(Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Publishing, 2000), 21.

Basic differences between African and European cultural values

African culture

1. Strong community values (group participation, group decisions).
2. Community identity.
3. Community living style.
4. Extended family emphasis.
5. Holistic approach to life.
6. Importance of the event.
7. People-oriented priorities.
8. Real-life (situational) thinking.
9. Preference for real-life learning.
10. Spiritual world-view.
11. Emphasis on spoken communication.
12. Emphasis on spoken agreements based on relationships between people.
13. Respect for the elderly.
14. Traditional inherited leadership.
15. Death is a passing into the spirit world (survivors must perform rituals).
16. Resolve conflicts through a mediator.
17. Practical (ritual) response to spirit realities.
18. Practical (ritual) approach to religion.
19. Vulnerability seen as a weakness.
20. Much interest in the spirit world.

Western culture

1. Strong individualistic values (individual initiative, individual decisions).
2. Individual identity.
3. Private living style.
4. Immediate family emphasis.
5. Categorical approach to life.
6. Importance of schedules and clock time.
7. Task- and goal-oriented priorities.
8. Abstract and academic thinking.
9. Preference for academic learning.
10. Scientific world-view.
11. Emphasis on written communication.
12. Emphasis on written agreements based on policies created by committees.
13. Respect for the educated.
14. Elected (democratic) leadership.
15. Death is a practical problem (survivors need counseling and support).
16. Resolve conflicts face-Co-face.
17. Intellectual response to spirit realities.
18. Intellectual approach to religion.
19. Vulnerability seen as a strength.
20. Little interest in the spirit world.

Profile of a Culture

Chapter #2:

Dr. Mark H. Johnston's ACE Class: 7 April 2002

“Modern man’s worldview for the last 250 years has been shaped by an illusion.”

Outline of book:

1. What issues are raised by the cross-cultural communication of the gospel?
2. Examine the essential features of our Western culture, including the present signs of its disintegration.
3. Face the crucial question of how biblical authority can be a reality for those were shaped by modern Western culture.
4. Ask what would be involved in the encounter of the gospel with our culture with respect to the intellectual for of our culture, which is science.
5. What would be involved in encounter of the gospel with our culture with respect to the politics of our culture?
6. How can be church bring about this encounter.

“If you want a definition of water, don’t ask a fish.” Chinese proverb

Assumption: the gospel provides the stance from which all culture is to be evaluated.

Problem: How can we move from the place where we explain the gospel in terms of our own scientific world-view to the place where we explain our modern scientific world-view from the point of view of the gospel?

Answer, in part: Listen to the witness from Christians from other cultures.

Answer in part: understand the genesis of our own culture.

The Enlightenment

The world, collectively by its thinkers, was now seen as intelligible, understandable, and capable of being understood through observation.

Arabic translated into Latin, the writings of Aristotle, Universities sprang up, and a new view of reality was developing.

- Greek physics was understood through understanding purpose
- Medieval thought saw divine purpose manifest everywhere in the world of nature.

The condition for entry into the world of scholarship was acceptance of this framework of thinking, the “purpose” worldview.

Great strides in the field of science: Newton, Galileo, etc.

The **Enlightenment**→The new worldview: The real world disclosed by the work of science was one governed not by purpose but by natural laws of cause and effect. How the planets interact, gravity, the laws of nature.

To discover the cause of something was equivalent to explaining it. Purpose and design were no longer needed as an explanation for understanding nature or the world.

No longer any place for miracles or divine intervention.

Nature is the sum total of what exists. The scientist is the priest who has mastery over this knowledge.

Science, as understood in this paradigm, works not by deduction from *revelation* or *first principles*. It works by observation of phenomena and induction from the results of the observation.

“Dare to know.” – Immanuel Kant.

The emergence of the concept of human rights.

This led to the concept of the right to exercise one’s reason, the right to know or pursue knowledge of reality through reason. → right to property → right to life → right to liberty and right to property.

In medieval times this concept of human rights was foreign. The fabric of society held together by the relationships of rights and duties.

Ultimate rights articulated as the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

What is true happiness?

Ultimately this can only be understood with *purpose* in mind. But, with this paradigm shift in thinking purpose left the equation. There is now no definition. Therefore, happiness and many of the ultimate questions are now left up to the individual to define.

What is required in society for the pursuit of happiness? Tremendous order

Medieval times: reciprocal relationships of duty and responsibility → finite

Development of nation-state → maintenance of societal order and justice → pursuit of happiness → infinite. The demands placed upon the state become limitless.

Nature has replaced God as the ultimate reality.

Nation-state has taken the place of God as the ultimate source of to which we look for happiness, health and welfare.

Another element of the conversion experience that ushered in the modern western world:

The doctrine of progress

Medieval view: the second coming of Christ, final judgment, the new Jerusalem, peace and righteousness, and perfection.

No longer will this be the gift of God but the final triumph of science. Man will usher in this utopia through science, through perpetual progress as knowledge advances.

The nation state now has the duty to look to the future of those not yet born. The shift can be to discard the elderly. The young become symbols of hope and the elderly a burden.

Key elements:

The development of the nation-state

The concept of education of the young falling into the realm of the state

The development of the market economy:

1. Labor → biologic process
2. Work → creates something that will endure and transcends the biol. process
3. Action → activity that goes on in mutual interactions of humans.

Post Enlightenment: All human activity becomes absorbed in labor.

- Production for the sake of consumption
- Built in obsolescence
- The world of action, politics, is the management of the balance b/w production and consumption
- Questions of purpose are excluded from the public world

The “science” of economics is born:

- Not concerned with purpose of human life
- Not concerned with justice
- Covetousness is the fundamental law governing its movement

What does not enter the market is ignored:

- Excluded is the work of the housewife
- Excluded is the gardener growing his own food
- Included is the operations of the gambling syndicate
- Included are the sales of an arms dealer
- Included is the work of a drug pusher

Additional consequences:

Work place changes: home → factory

Results in major change for the family and society.

- Creation of a great divide between the public world of work and economic exchange and the private world.
- Men in the public world of work and women in the private world of domestic issues.
- Men the producers, women the consumers
- Feminism born from the distortions that developed.

Growth of huge cities:

- Urbanization → breakup of traditional families and community relationships
- Traditional relationships a balance b/w work, leisure, family relationships and religion

Key characteristics of modern culture:

1. mechanization of labor
2. development of the market economy
3. dichotomy of public and private worlds
4. growth of large cities

This complex societal structure mandates the development of bureaucracy
 The attempt to understand human behavior in terms of models derived from natural sciences eventually destroys human responsibility.

Abandonment of teleology → root cause for this major societal change

Consequent fissure

Understanding the world in new terms:

- “purpose” versus “cause and effect”
- Values versus “facts”
- Private world versus Public world

Resulting problem: No basis for morality

How do you move from “this is so” (“fact”) to “this ought to be done”?

Our scientific worldview excludes statements of purpose from statements of fact. For example:
 This watch has lost only five seconds in two years. It can be said that this is a good watch.
 Because it is understood that it is the watches purpose to tell accurate time.

The fissure can not be closed if purpose is not permitted to by part of the world of facts.

Expressed in public education: taught “facts.” Yet, purpose of life left not addressed.

Example physics classroom: taught the facts as truth, yet in the religious classroom one is to choose what he likes to believe.

Eastern religions do not understand the world in terms of purpose.

Christianity is unique in understanding the world relative to divine purpose.

Modern man’s worldview for the last 250 years has been shaped by an illusion.

Next step:

→ Look at the Bible and understand its authority.

→ Explain our culture in terms of the gospel instead of in terms of modern science.

What Can We Know? The Dialogue with Science

Chapter #4:

Dr. Mark H. Johnston's ACE Class: 28 April 2002

Outline of book:

1. What issues are raised by the cross-cultural communication of the gospel?
2. Examine the essential features of our Western culture, including the present signs of its disintegration.
3. Face the crucial question of how biblical authority can be a reality for those who were shaped by modern Western culture.
4. Ask what would be involved in the encounter of the gospel with our culture with respect to the intellectual for of our culture, which is science.
5. What would be involved in encounter of the gospel with our culture with respect to the politics of our culture? How can the church bring about this encounter?
6. How can the church bring about this encounter?

Review: Face the crucial question of how biblical authority can be a reality for those who were shaped by modern Western culture

Three positive conclusions can be made from looking at the Bible as authoritative in our culture:

1. *From the plausibility structure of the Bible, it is perfectly possible to acknowledge and cherish the insights of our culture.*
2. *There is an asymmetry in this relationship, as between the paradigms of science, but not a total discontinuity.*

From one side (Science) the other looks quite irrational, but from the other side (biblical worldview) there is a rationality that embraces both.

The primary distinguishing characteristic of our culture today relative to those preceding it is- in its public philosophy it is atheist.

The reply of Laplace when asked why he had omitted God from his system of understanding: "I had no need of that hypothesis."

This Laplacian illusion still predominates.

Primary **assumption** of our culture: the *real world* is that which can be "scientifically" explained by laws of cause and effect that can be expressed in mathematical terms.

The **delusion**: when we have discovered the smallest units of which a thing is composed and the forces by which they are moved, we have understood the thing.

Religion retreated from the central issue: Purpose.

Key issue: Is it or is it not the case that every human being exists for the joy of eternal fellowship with God and must face the possibility of missing that mark, forfeiting that prize?

The question of which is the real world simply cannot be permanently evaded.

For the average person the “real world” is not the world of the Bible but the world that can be explained.

Two elements in the history of thought since the rise of modern science:

1. Both science and theology have been reluctant in recent decades to enter into the discussion of cosmology (a branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of the universe).
2. Studies in the origin and development of modern science have led historians to ask why the brilliant intellectual powers of the ancient Chinese, Indians, Egyptians and Greeks, in spite of their achievements in both observation and in pure speculation, never brought forth the dynamic, self-developing science of the modern era.
 - a. Answer: Biblical worldview:
 - i. Rational
 - ii. Contingent
 - b. If the world is not rational science is not possible
 - i. There is an underlying faith that things must make sense, problems can be solved.
 - c. If the world is not contingent science is not necessary.
 - i. The universe is not a necessary being but is contingent.
 - ii. In Hinduism the universe is the necessary emanation of Brahma. In Christianity the universe exists not necessarily but contingent upon God creating it.
 - d. Contemporary physics recognizes that the universe is finite and therefore contingent.

Reductionist Thinking: i.e., explain all biology in terms of chemistry and physics.

Example of DNA: reductionist thinking tells us that once DNA is understood, is broken down to its most basic parts we know what there is to know. However, it is without biologic function until it is translated.

Analogy: we may understand a machine and all its parts down to every nut and bolt; but until we understand its purpose we do not know the machine.

Aristotelian belief: things are to be understood in terms of their end or purpose.

Lord Bacon (modern belief): things are to be understood in terms of their causes. This is value-free relative to purpose. This is the world of “facts.”

Personal beliefs and values do not enter into this picture. In “science” one does not write, “I believe,” but simply these are the facts whether one believes them or not. Thus, “science” relieves one of the responsibilities of deciding whether or not to commit him to the truth of its statements.

We cannot settle for a peaceful coexistence between science and religion on the basis of an allocation of their spheres of influence to the public and the private sectors respectively. We cannot live in two different worlds. What is the real truth about the world?

Understanding requires the recognition of both **detail** and of overall **pattern**.

The Language of testimony:

1. As we ascend from the realms of physics, chemistry, mechanics, and biology to the human person the concept of **purpose** becomes more and more necessary.
2. No analysis of nature, from the lowest proton to the highest form of human life, could enable us to have direct knowledge of any **purpose** apart from our own. (The limits of reductionist thinking).
3. We do not infer the existence of another person from an analysis and classification of the audiovisual sensations we receive, but rather we attend directly to the person as a living center of meaning and purpose.
4. Therefore, we cannot come to the knowledge of a supernatural personal reality by induction and or analysis of the data and experience we have.
5. There is need for the language of testimony-this is one of the roles of the Christian church.

Final Five Propositions:

1. While the methodological elimination of final causes from the study of nature has been immensely fruitful, the attempt to explain all that exists solely in terms of efficient cause leads to conceptual absurdity and to social tyranny.
2. To recognize the place of final causes in the understanding of the world must lead to these questions: Is anyone there? Is there a word? This is because purpose is a personal reality and can be known only if the person whose purpose it is chooses to communicate it.
3. The church exists to testify that there is someone, that he has spoken, and that we can begin to know his purpose and to direct our personal and public lives by it.
4. The church must boldly use the language of testimony regarding these truths.
5. When the ultimate explanation of things is found in the creating, sustaining, judging, and redeeming work of a personal God, then science can be the servant of humanity, not its master.

No Fatal Errors: Covering Your Missteps, Rebounding from Setbacks

By M. Blaine Smith

From <http://www.gospelcom.net/nehemiah/impro.htm>, accessed 20 November 2006.

“There are no bad notes, only bad resolutions.”

If there is a liberating concept in music, this is it—the cardinal principal of improvisation. The musician who improvises plays a spontaneous sequence of notes that fits well with a given song, even though it may bear little relation to the melody. The most thrilling part of improvising is discovering that any note you play, no matter how unintentionally sour, can still work fine in your solo, if you resolve it right. This usually involves no more than moving up or down in the scale to a note that sounds pleasing against the chord being played. An effective resolution leaves the listener assuming the discordant note was part of a transition you intended.

Blunders, when handled properly, can add an imaginative edge to an improvised solo—even improve it. While there are other principles to master in effective improvising, this one is at the heart of it—that any mistake can be redeemed.

It is at the heart of effective living as well. There is no role we assume, no responsibility we take on, no relationship we enjoy, no dream we pursue, where we don't make numerous missteps. To say we have feet of clay is putting it mildly. Mistakes are the stuff of life—so much so that for some of us, embarrassment is our constant companion.

As much as anything else, the degree to which we believe our blunders can be corrected determines our success in all of these areas. Without a healthy assumption that the “bad notes” we play in life can be resolved, we'll cave in to discouragement at many points, and miss the ingenious ways God makes it possible for us to improvise.

Many of us are quick to think our mistakes are irreversible. To fail at one point in an undertaking means failure in the whole of it. “Fatal error” flashes in our mind when we blunder, as blatantly as it does on our computer screen when Windows crashes (thank you, Microsoft, for giving us a fresh term to feed our negative self-talk about life itself). The tragedy with fatal-error thinking is that it shuts down our creative process. Convinced there are no solutions, we don't look for any, then we act in such a way that our expectation of failure becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

It's hard enough when we don't regard a setback as our own fault. Discouragement, and fears that God and life have turned against us, can make us want to give up. Yet when we believe we are to blame for what's happened, the challenge of rebounding is greater still. The conviction that we've blown it dampens our confidence that we have the ability to turn things around. It can leave us thinking we deserve to fail, and that God isn't interested in helping us. The result can be—inertia, where failure occurs by default.

Fatal-error thinking may lead us to conclude unnecessarily that:

A thoughtless remark we uttered has forever doomed a good relationship

A foul-up in a project at work has sunk our prospects for promotion

A failed midterm has destroyed our chance to pass the course

A bad investment has fated us to an impoverished retirement.

The assumption that such missteps are catastrophic can discourage us so greatly that we make no effort to fix the problem we've created. Yet mistakes like these often can be rectified with gratifying results: An apology strengthens the relationship; learning from our mistake and staying focused on the project impresses our boss and wins the promotion; analyzing why we failed the midterm gives us the insight to trump the final—and the teacher discounts the earlier grade; dumping the bad stock clears our mind to see new options for investing, which in time yield a strong return.

Of course, life doesn't always serve up such supremely happy endings. Yet we'll never know unless we try. And when it's our custom to earnestly try to correct our mistakes, we always position ourselves for many welcome surprises over time.

The Real-Life Challenge

Last week a music teacher friend of mine returned from a coffee break to her classroom, expecting to find it empty. Instead, it was filled with first-graders, who had arrived several minutes early for music class. Annoyed, Janine bluntly remarked to the students, "There are two clocks in this room. Why did you come in here before 11:00 a.m.?"

Later that day Millie, the first-grade teacher, e-mailed Janine. "How could you criticize these students for arriving early, when they were sitting quietly and politely?" Millie began her missive, which she copied to the principal and vice principal. "You should have complimented them for their good behavior. I'm hurt by your insensitivity."

Janine now faced a predicament so common in our fast-paced modern workplace: fallout with a co-worker that could easily harden into a permanent rift. Janine knew Millie had her point. The students had been behaving well. Janine had overreacted to their early arrival, and at least should have commended them for their quietness and patience.

At the same time, Janine felt Millie was inconsiderate to address such a sensitive matter by e-mail, let alone include the principals. Millie should have spoken with her first—and alone—then informed the principals only if Janine's response wasn't satisfactory. Besides, the students did come early, catching Janine off-guard and robbing her of precious minutes she needed to prepare. Janine's irritation was justified, even if she hadn't expressed it appropriately.

Janine now had three options: (1) to admit her mistake to Millie and apologize; (2) to defend her position, and criticize Millie for embarrassing her by including the principals in her e-mail; (3) to make no response to Millie at all—just stonewall and let bad feelings simmer.

So many in Janine's position would have chosen option 2 or defaulted to option 3. Janine chose the high road. She e-mailed Millie an apology, with copies to the principal and vice principal. Janine made no effort to defend herself. She admitted she should have praised, not reprimanded the students, and expressed regret that she spoke to them impulsively.

Then, the following day, Janine sent flowers to Millie's home with another note of apology. That evening Millie phoned Janine at home. She was stunned, she said, with Janine's gestures of apology, and Millie was sorry now for how she had personally handled things. The next day

Millie approached Janine at school, talked with her further and hugged her. Their friendship is stronger now, and their working relationship will clearly benefit as well.

Janine's response to Millie demonstrates the alternative to fatal-error thinking. She turned a potentially costly mistake at work into a success through the thoughtful steps she took to correct the problem. Hers is a good example of how our mistakes can sometimes be resolved so effectively that the quality of our life is improved in the process.

Swallowing Our Pride

Janine redeemed herself in a delicate situation and won back the friendship of an offended co-worker, because of the conciliatory way she handled Millie's complaint. What enabled her to make such an appropriate response, more than anything, was an impressive ability to quickly swallow her pride. Within a few minutes of receiving Millie's e-mail, she determined to admit her own fault and to approach the problem as hers and not Millie's. Once she had reached this point, the rest was easy.

Swallowing our pride is usually the greatest obstacle we face in rebounding from a personal failure, and this is where we typically get stuck. Contrition is most difficult when it requires admitting we were wrong—which is seldom fun to do, and never as enjoyable as reveling in being right. Sometimes, facing up to our own fault is excruciating.

Nothing helps us more to get over this hurdle than believing we will benefit by admitting our mistake and taking steps to correct it. The improvising metaphor is encouraging to keep in mind, for it inspires us to believe that humbly addressing our failure will bring positive results. Determining what these benefits are likely to be, and then focusing on them, can give us the heart to be contrite. We can eat humble pie without getting indigestion.*

It helps us too to be aware of different points at which swallowing our pride may be necessary. While some of them are obvious, others are less so. They may include:

1. When we've hurt or offended someone or betrayed their trust, and need to apologize. Most of us face this situation more often than we would like. Intentionally or not, we've wounded someone by something we've said or done, and then begin to wake up to the consequences. Swallowing our pride can be especially difficult in this case, for it means admitting not only to ourselves but to someone else—maybe to a group of people—that we were wrong.

Scripture gives us strong inspiration to take this step in the parable Jesus told of the son who wasted his inheritance (Luke 15:11-23). After living irresponsibly for some time, and squandering the money his father had entrusted to him, he finally "came to his senses." In a profound paradigm shift, he determined, "I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.'" The young man followed through. Returning home and humbly apologizing to his father brought results far beyond his expectations—joyful reconciliation with his father, a family celebration and a vast improvement in his lifestyle. It is one of the Bible's most moving examples of the improvising principle put to life, and a serious personal failure's being beautifully resolved.

2. When we've acted irresponsibly, but still have opportunity to make amends. In other cases, we've failed to fulfill a commitment to others or ourselves, but still have a reasonable chance to turn things around. We may have slacked off in a project at work, with responsibilities at home, or assignments as a student. We face the challenge then of admitting to ourselves, and possibly others, that we've failed. We may owe some apologies as well, or need to seek forgiveness from God. Often, though, the hardest part is finding the heart to put our hand back to the plow. It can be easier to cave in to futility, thinking, "I've already blown it so badly, what chance do I now have to repair things?" Swallowing our pride may involve saying no to futility, and believing God will reward our rededication of effort.

What we so often discover, when we re-commit ourselves to an abandoned priority, is that others rally to encourage us and support our campaign to get our life back on track. We usually find the effort is much more than worth it. And we're often surprised at how successfully we're able to resume the neglected responsibility.

3. When we've shown an error in judgment and need to own up to it. At other times, we've made a bad decision or judgment, even though we may have acted responsibly and from good intentions. Swallowing our pride means acknowledging our own fallibility, or our capacity to misinterpret God's will.

David passionately wanted to build a temple for God, and he made serious plans. Yet God informed him, through the prophet Nathan, that while his intentions were noble, the project didn't fit his temperament. He should allow his son Solomon to carry it out during his reign instead. David fortunately had the humility to put the brakes on his ambition. But the fact that he had embraced this goal so strongly proved greatly beneficial in the years ahead, for David took many steps to prepare and inspire Solomon for the task. David's shifting so naturally from director of this mammoth undertaking to motivator is one of Scripture's rich examples of effective improvising in life. It's also a profound reminder of the benefits that can come from humbly accepting a change in direction that God wants us to make.

4. When we need to abandon a losing situation. In other cases, we need to leave a situation or relationship that, perhaps in spite of our best efforts, just isn't working for us.

The challenge we face in these situations is that a loss of any kind, even if we know it's necessary, can be a blow to our pride. We instinctively attach greater value to our losses than to our successes; the pain we feel at losing \$1,000 is greater than the joy we experience at winning that same amount, for instance. This all-too-human tendency is termed "loss aversion" in the financial world. It's shown by the investor who holds onto a losing stock way beyond a sensible point instead of selling it.

We can be hampered by loss aversion in any area of life. It may seem easier to stay in a bad relationship than to break it off, for example. The antidote to loss aversion—in investing or any area—is learning to appreciate the benefit of "cutting our losses." This concept is a redemptive one, for it implies that we can limit the damage in a losing situation by making a clean break with it—and that doing so will free us to see a positive new direction to take.

Jesus stressed the importance of cutting losses to his disciples, when he instructed them to kick the dust off their feet and depart any town that wouldn't accept them. He knew the tug of pride

they would experience in such cases—that they would be inclined to stay and try too hard to win over unsupportive people. Kicking off the dust gave them an effective way to swallow their pride and vent their hurt feelings. And because it symbolized leaving all vestiges of the town behind them (even the dust), it helped inspire the courage to leave determinedly, go elsewhere, and make a fresh start.

5. When we need to turn away from self-pity in order to make a new beginning. There's another angle to swallowing our pride that we can easily overlook. When we've made a mistake, or suffered a setback or loss, we may take too much pleasure wallowing in self-pity. There may be obvious steps we can take to improve things, yet we hold back, not wanting to leave the "comfort zone" of our unhappiness. We may take pride, too, in announcing to others that our situation is beyond hope, and not wish to rob ourselves of the basis for this assessment.

We may feel angry with others or with God for our predicament as well. We want others to feel guilty for our misfortune, so staying as we are is our way of punishing them or of getting back at God. An excessive desire to own our own life may also keep us stuck in a discouraging situation, if we believe that breaking out of it would gratify others who are rooting for things to get better for us.

Each of these is a point where we may have to swallow our pride, if we're to let go of self-pity enough to make a successful new beginning. Failing to break the bounds of pride in these cases, ironically, may keep us from doing what underneath we most want to do.

The lame man by the pool of Bethesda is a classic case of someone who had grown entrenched in the inertia of self-pity (John 5:2-9). He took pleasure in blaming others for his predicament. "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." Jesus asked him bluntly, "Do you want to get well?" He poses that question to us more often than we realize, hoping to jog us out of defeatist thinking. Grasping Christ's greater vision for our life, and desiring its benefits, can give us the heart to accept his solutions, even if we must let go of certain benefits of staying hurt.

6. When we need to ask for help from others. Life presents us constantly with the need to seek others' help, yet many factors hold us back. We may fear imposing on them, or dread the possibility they'll say no. Yet simple pride often deters us as well; we don't like admitting we are incapable of solving a problem on our own and need other's assistance.

In fact, others are typically more willing and available to help us than we assume, and many are pleased to have the chance to be useful—especially when we're appreciative.

Others' assistance is usually indispensable in reaching our important goals, and it's often the critical factor in resolving our mistakes effectively. Making it our practice to ask for others' help when we need it greatly expands our options in every area of life, and reduces the burden of every challenge.

7. When we need to ask for help from Christ. The same reservations that make us hesitant to ask for others' help can also discourage us from asking for God's. Which brings us to yet another point where swallowing our pride is essential. Here, Scripture warns us graphically, "You have not because you ask not" (James 4:2). Christ so often waits until we ask for his help before

providing it—in order to strengthen our dependence upon him, and to deepen our appreciation of the importance of prayer.

The corollary is that he is abundantly more willing to meet our deepest needs and help us resolve our most thorny problems than we can remotely imagine. Asking his help can make all the difference in resolving our “fatal errors” successfully. He can be trusted to show us a way out—even when we’re clearly to blame for the problem we face.

Even when we’ve blown it severely, and our world is falling apart.

Even when we’re certain we’ve made the mistake of our life.

Or, to say it more positively: on those occasions filled with promise, when we’ve stumbled and it’s time to improvise.

* * * * *

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Example of Approaches and Beliefs of Helpful Christian Counselors

There is a variety of viewpoints or worldviews different counselors base their advice upon, but there is often at least some truth in most of them, otherwise who would bother to seek their help?

Many Christian counselors have used several of the approaches below because of their belief in their effectiveness from their experience. It may be helpful to know a counselor's approach to better understand their advice and how best to apply it if it actually is helpful. The following was taken from one Web site as an example of the counseling process and of the beliefs and approaches used by many Christian counselors:

Connections Christian Counselling

From <http://www.christian.connections-c.com/page8.html>, accessed 20 November 2006.

Approaches and Beliefs

Who

We are happy to have exploratory meetings with anyone who has a need. We are willing to counsel clients who are both Christian, and non-Christian. However, we are Christian Counselors. We believe that people are happiest when their thinking and behaviour are in line with the Maker's instructions.

How

We are committed to letting the client set the agenda and pace for Counseling. We want to help people reach understanding and conclusions for themselves, rather than simply tell them what we think and what to do. This doesn't mean that we never discuss direction, but it does mean that we want the clients to feel in control of the areas being discussed at all times. If we felt that clients were exploring dead ends or avoiding key issues, we would seek to renegotiate the direction. If we were unable to do so, we would terminate the counseling.

We counsel by listening, by asking questions, by challenging assumptions, by helping people towards an understanding of the key issues and potential solutions, and by helping plan and evaluate change. Sometimes we ask clients to write feelings or observations down in preparation for the next session. Sometimes we ask them to keep a log of changes that have taken place. Sometimes we ask them to read and reflect on passages from the Bible.

We are committed to regularly reviewing progress. If we were unable to help, or if clients were unable to accept our help, we see little point in wasting time by pretending otherwise.

We are eclectic in our approach. We are happy to use any technique which is compatible with our beliefs, and which produces genuine insight.

Beliefs

We believe that:

People are made in the image of God and therefore have tremendous potential for good and creativity.

People are also marred by the effects of failing to love God, and by being part of a fallen world.

People are ultimately responsible for their own thinking and actions.

People are happiest when their thinking and behaviour are in line with the Maker's instructions.

The only thing in all eternity that people actually need (as opposed to want) is a relationship with Jesus Christ.

As Christian Counselors, we also believe that the Holy Spirit is the best Counselor. We depend on what God has revealed in the Bible and hope to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's promptings.

Helpful Frameworks Used at Connections Christian Counseling:

L. J. Crabb

Behaviour is influenced by what people feel and by what they believe. Feelings are influenced by what people do and by what they believe. This means that we are never content to look just at problem behaviour. Skill training in handling conflict may form a necessary part of counseling a couple with relationship difficulties. However, we would want to go beyond the surface skills to address the underlying feelings and thinking patterns. With problem feelings, we would want to look at accompanying behaviour and thinking patterns.

People constantly struggle to find solutions to their deep needs for significance and security. This is related to the above and means that often problem behaviour and feelings can be traced to a mistaken belief about significance and security. Extreme despair about the inability to control a teenager may be linked to a wrong belief that perfect control is necessary for the client to feel significant.

Emotions are not good or bad in themselves. They have to be judged against how they are affecting the client's relationship with God and with others. So called "problem" emotions may be a natural and healthy response to an unjust situation.

J. E. Adams

The aim of counseling is to bring about change. Problem behaviour needs to be lovingly exposed. Change needs to be planned. Although we are interested in reasons for problem behaviour, that doesn't mean that we are not concerned about helping clients plan and monitor appropriate change in their behaviour. There are times when problem behaviour will need to be lovingly confronted as well as understood.

D. A. Seamands

God can bring healing for painful memories and damaged emotions. We pray for our clients, and with their permission, pray with them.

E. Kübler-Ross

There are well-documented emotions that people experience after losing someone or something significant. The final stage of dealing with loss is to let go. We may help people identify the stages they are at in facing up to a loss, and help them see how their natural emotions may be complicating other relationships. We may want to help people identify faulty thinking that stops them from reaching the stage of being able to let go.

Albert Ellis

Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) – A key to counseling is to get people to identify their faulty beliefs which lead to dysfunctional emotions. These beliefs can be replaced with

more accurate and realistic ones. Christian counselors can help people examine their faulty thinking (about their self-image, for example) in the light of the Bible. New, Biblical thought patterns can replace non-Christian lies as the mind is renewed. These new beliefs will help remove dysfunctional emotions and behaviour.

W. Glasser

Reality Therapy – Whether we are aware of it or not, we are all the time acting to meet basic human needs (power, love, freedom, fun, survival). Where these actions cause problems, we help clients plan more appropriate ways to get their needs met.

Gestalt Therapy Awareness of present feelings (the here-and-now), expression of feelings, responsibility for feelings, choices for appropriate actions. We may want clients to identify their feelings as part of the process of exploring faulty thinking and behaving. We would help them plan new choices.

Transactional Analysis – TA provides at least three useful concepts that we sometimes use in our analysis of problems and solutions. First, people need recognition, and when they don't get it, will often try to get it in devious ways. Secondly, people have at least three choices about the way they interact with someone else. Thirdly, people follow scripts which they believe to be true, but which sometimes are harmful to them. We encourage people to identify their patterns of getting and giving recognition strokes and to change any inappropriate patterns. We also encourage people to be aware of the roles they adopt in interpersonal communication, and with this self-knowledge, be able to change any inappropriate patterns of behaviour.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming – NLP provides several concepts and techniques that we occasionally find useful in relation to changing perspectives, and in planning changes. Sometimes clients feel they have no alternatives. NLP has a range of techniques for encouraging people to come at a problem from a different angle. It also has techniques to help people reassess meaning and assumptions, and to bring about desired change from inside out. We would, of course, consider any change from a Christian perspective.

Over 80 titles, including books by Jay Adams, Lawrence Crabb, David Seamands, Gary Collins, James Dobson, Selwyn Hughes, and Roger Hurding are available in our Christian Counselling Bookshop online.

Helpful Resources on Marriage and Family

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- Wright, H. Norman. *The Marriage Checkup*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2002.
- _____. *What Men Want: Why men think, feel, & act the way they do*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1996.
- [Name Withheld]. "The War Within: An Anatomy of Lust." *Leadership*, Fall Quarter, 1982.

Helpful Christian Web Sites for Overcoming Distorted Thinking

<http://www.barnabus.com>

Barnabus Christian Counseling – on-line counseling.

<http://www.estheronline.org>

Esther Ministries – for spouses of sex addicts

<http://www.pcsearle.com>

Psychological Counseling Services

<http://www.purelifeministries.org>

Pure Life Ministries – live-in treatment programs

<http://www.christianrecovery.com>

National Association for Christian Recovery – counseling referrals

<http://www.pureintimacy.org>

Pure Intimacy – referrals for Web porn addicts and spouses

<http://www.victimsofpornography.org>

Victims of Pornography – resource lists and information

<http://www.covenanteyes.com> or www.filterreview.com

Covenant Eyes – software to keep people accountable to others

<http://www.getwise.org>

GetNetWise – product reviews and details

<http://www.sexaddicthelp.com>

Counseling to people struggling with sexual addiction