

BOOK TITLE GOES HERE

ISBN: None.

First edition: 2015

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOTE Do we really need a table of contents?

INTRODUCTION:

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO SELF COACHING TOOLKIT

CHAPTER TWO: PATTERNS

CHAPTER THREE: RESPONDING WELL

CHAPTER FOUR: THRIVING IN THE MIDST OF LOSS

CHAPTER FIVE: OVERCOMING BLOCKS

CHAPTER SIX: THANKFULNESS

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE “O FACTOR”

CHAPTER EIGHT: GROWTH

CHAPTER NINE:

CHAPTER TEN: HELPFUL INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

How this book is put together

This is a “Toolkit”. Toolkits are designed especially for people struggling with mental health difficulties such as depression and anxiety. It is a well-known fact that mental conditions impacting ones thinking, emotions and behaviors also tend to make concentration more difficult.

That’s why it may be hard to listen to a whole sermon or speech for 45 minutes without wandering or being distracted. That’s why reading a full-length book may be cumbersome.

Since cognition is often adversely impacted by depression/anxiety this book is divided up into small segments with ample white space.

People with mental health conditions also may have their learning styles affected. A person that normally likes to digest information through listening, reading or doing something may find he combining all three of these styles to gain new insights from a book.

A left-brain person may regularly prefer logic and data presented in clear and concise manner but in the midst of a mental health difficulty may lean on the right side of his brain – abstraction and ideas.

This book is constructed with a variety of learning activities. You will be asked to read information and copy the questions down on a separate piece of paper, journal and/or 3x5 cards. The reflective questions will help you think meaningfully about how the material applies to your life.

Don’t skip any parts or assigned activities. Everything in this book has been put there for your overall benefit.

My Goal

My goal for you is that you would enjoy a closer relationship with God that would inspire you to the point where your thinking will begin to change. Your cognitions will be more in line with how God thinks about you. His truth is the foundation of the entire book

Of course you are probably reading this book now because you or someone you know has the desire to reduce symptoms of depression/anxiety. The principles and practices in this book are proven to help heal the unpleasant results of mental health difficulties. I have personally used most of these strategies in my recovery to optimize the potential God has blessed me with.

Why Listen To Me ?

Perhaps the greatest qualification I could have is that I am your peer. I have struggled with mental health difficulties as long as I can remember.

As a kid I suffered from various types of adjustment problems. In hindsight it can be determined that these were early symptoms of complicated anxiety and depressive conditions. In my youth I wondered why I was “different” than my friends and heroes (my dad being chief among those I idolized by was incapable of emulating.

I can remember seeking out professional counseling early in college. While I was stricken with milder forms of the disorders that hamper me today I managed to get good grades, become popular at school (elected as President of a 100 man fraternity and Homecoming King Runner-up on my campus of 20,000 students) and enjoy an active and rewarding social life.

God blessed those days with the beginning of a long-term relationship with my wife to be. She was the perfect woman to whom I was married for 22 years. We have been blessed with three wonderful children that remain a very close part of our lives.

In the decade that followed college I manage to not only secure my dream job but rise to the top of the company. By my late 20's I provided leadership to 50 people.

Ironically I overcame intense fear and anxiety around speaking in public. My career required outstanding motivational teaching and sales skills. Despite paralyzing emotional difficulties I was often retained by Fortune 500 companies (over 200 organizations) to help maximize employee potential as training and consulting executive.

By my early thirties I was officially diagnosed with Panic Disorder and Syncope. I was started on psychiatric medication but most did little to help cure my episodes. However despite health difficulties God used me to become a leader in the church, grow a national ministry and lead a consulting firm. Annual career earnings rose to the top 2% of all workers.

Around the age of forty the diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder was given to me. This condition is marked by mood swings – ranging from deep depressive episodes to periods of unrealistic elation often referred to as mania. While this condition caused significant hardships that resulted in missing quite a bit of work I still managed to achieve the following

- ordination into the ministry
- licensed mental health counselor
- graduate school university professor
- published author

The next decade was significantly dotted with psychiatric hospitalizations (12 in a short period of time). I sought help from 20+ counselors and psychiatrists during this time. Moreover, they tried over 100 different medications (not to mention dose adjustments with each). I was deemed “treatment resistant”.

Put simply this means that I didn’t respond as most people to the strategies that were employed. In addition to the traditional practices of the day I also underwent shock treatment and experimental infusions that had significant evidence in favor of their use. Neither helped. In fact ECT made matters much worse.

On top of my mental health diagnosis my doctors also found significant physical health conditions that have been proven to contribute to, cause and/or compound mental illness.. Over the years they found low thyroid, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, syncope (dizziness), ulcers and neurocognitive impairments (memory and executive thinking function). Most of these conditions were inherited but undiagnosed for most of my life.

Perhaps the most difficult symptoms I have continued to fight over the years are tied to the side effects of the medicines they tried. Because of the complexity of the issues I face there is not a great deal of research to date on what type of medicines and at what dosages are used to treat. I have experienced insomnia, GI problems, heavy sedation, and elevated levels of harmful bodily chemicals. I have even been hospitalized for allergic reactions to certain medications that the most experienced doctors could not figure out.

The aforementioned problems contributed to all sorts of challenges in living. I've experienced auto accidents, the loss of jobs, the loss of a marriage, an attempt at ending my own life, and a host of other nightmares I won't delineate here.

But what you need to know is that God has been with me the whole time. I have used much of the material in this book to live a successful life. So can you!

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Depressed/anxious individuals tend to make statements and think about things that may seem accurate on the surface. But actually, research indicates that the depression (medically, spiritually and psychologically) causes people to think about themselves in a skewed manner. This is not only imbalanced but this practice is seldom in accordance with how God sees things.

Further, depressed/anxious people tend to interpret and perceive the past much more negatively than it really occurred. Sometimes these reflections are tied to past experiences, interactions with key influencers (like parents and teachers) or are a byproduct of biochemical changes in the brain that predispose the afflicted person with pessimistic views through no fault of their own. In this session try to notice how your perceptions and interpretations match up with reality as you look into what God has to say on the subject.

Don't beat yourself up for conclusions you have formed without knowing how or why you were doing yourself a disservice. With God all things are possible. I can personally attest to miraculous changes in the lives of people I have worked with.

The Foundation of This Book: Combining Proven Faith-Based Strategies With CBT

This book incorporates your spiritual beliefs and values into a very effective psychological model, best known as the creation of psychiatrist Aaron Beck. The psychological model is called Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or CBT. When this is combined with faith-based approaches to well being it is called Faith Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy of FBCBT.

You will learn a proven treatment approach that combines biblical theory with an approach to understanding human behavior that is centered on examining and changing thoughts, emotions and actions. The approach holds that depression/anxiety arise in most cases because of the thoughts that undergird difficult moods

This approach works just like putting on a pair of sunglasses in the summer. Dark lenses allow a person to see things more clearly, sheltered from the blinding rays of the sun. The glasses don't change the people and things viewed. Rather, they "color" the perspective of the person wearing them.

This is similar to the impact our perspective has on the conclusions we come to. Someone with a negative attitude tends to have pessimistic feelings. These feelings fuel actions that correspond to the thoughts.

A skeptic for example, is less likely to take risks because of the inherent danger perceived. So his views correlate to the moods and actions that follow. The optimist tends to see life through more positive lenses. So he is more likely to take risks or actions that move toward the activity.

People often get mad when others don't meet their expectations or anticipate their needs. While this may not provoke an outburst or physical expression of retaliation, it often follows we get depressed and anxious when others stir up negative emotions inside of us. Here is a key psychological cornerstone principle that frames our whole discussion:

Its not what happens to you that determines your well being.

--Anonymous

Self-Coaching Questions (SCQ)

Throughout this book you will find carefully constructed questions that are designed to allow you as the reader to become a "participant". Rather than just read the words – like in any book, we want to facilitate life application. This makes it easier for you to get a much higher return on investment for the time spent with the material.

Simply copy the SCQ down in a notepad or journal. Find or buy one – its well worth the small investment. Use this as a companion tool. You can also use 3 x 5 cards. Copy the question on one side of a card and make note of your thoughts/feelings on the flip side.

Life coaching is a proven process for maximizing the personal growth potential of people. Its similar to counseling but concentrates on practical life application in the present versus analyzing past influences. Just like an athletic coach gets the most out of his players so you will be tasked with the adventure of optimizing your own development. It's wonderful to have a professional counselor or life coach to help you sort through things. But give this approach a try and see what you think.

There is a tremendous amount of research and evidence that shows self-help strategies, like self-coaching, are just as effective as external resources in helping people accomplish their goals. Just think about the largest section of your neighborhood bookstore. Chances are that the self-help psychology shelves are the most stocked and trafficked of any section on the floor.

CBT Scenario

Here is an illustration about how Cognitive Behavioral Therapy works. Imagine you are stranded on a secluded road. Your car has just broken down and you are standing next to it wondering what to do. Then you notice your next-door neighbor driving by. You can easily see that his eyes met yours as he canvasses your predicament. But he keeps on driving, passing you right by. You then call AAA and have them tow you and the car back to your home

What would you predict is most logical or understandable emotional you might have in response to these circumstances?

The scene continues...

A few minutes later you notice the same neighbor standing in his driveway. Upon seeing you outside he rushes over to your house. He then proceeds to tell you his version of the events

that occurred earlier with respect to your break down. He apologetically explains that he was rushing to the hospital ER because his son had a huge gash on his forehead from an accident with a nail and hammer while building his tree fort. He begs you for forgiveness. He is noticeably remorseful and obviously embarrassed about not stopping to help you out.

As you react to his unpredictable explanation how do you feel? What thoughts go through your mind as you quickly contemplate how to respond to his plea?

Most people would be miffed and mystified after experiencing this type of scenario. Common reactions might be anger, frustration and confusion. It is typically assumed that the friend who passed by deliberately chose to avoid lending a hand, motivated by more pressing matters than a lady or gentlemen in distress.

A core component of this model is the notion that most people experience some form of negativity or unhappiness if things don't go their way. But in actuality it is NOT what happens to us that determines our well being. It IS how we react to others or the circumstances that contribute to our thoughts, moods and/or behaviors.

Locus of Control

You probably know some people who tend to blame others or life events for their behavior (random or seemingly purposeful) and therefore relinquish responsibility for how they are responding; charging outside circumstances for causing their undesirable attitude.

This is called "Locus of Control". Where is your locus of control most of the time?

It's quite common for people to refuse to be accountable for their actions and feelings – citing unfortunate factors seemingly outside of their control as the culprit. In actuality, two people can walk through life even on the very same path; one might have the attitude that a glass of water filled to the 50% level is half empty.

Conversely, the other might conclude that that same glass is half full. The reality of the ratio of water and air doesn't change one bit. But the "glasses" each of the two travelers wears dictate their emotional well being.

In this book you will see how your spiritual beliefs and practices can be used to improve how you are feeling. Since thoughts lead to emotions and moods you can readily replace unwanted thoughts with biblical truth.

This thought-replacement technique has helped millions change their unwanted emotional states and build positive and rewarding new habits.

The "Act As If" Technique:

The "act as if" technique is a common approach to facilitate more assertive risk taking without forcing you to do something against your will. You simply try on new behaviors or actions without waiting for your beliefs to motivate you. These may never come or come too slowly.

This life strategy is also known as "fake it till you make it" or "feel the fear and do it anyway". In all these instances it can be concluded, to be balanced and fair in our assessment of human behavior, that we have the power to choose and move in a direction despite how we might be thinking and feeling inside.

Since you may be weighed down with pessimistic thoughts, worries and distorted viewpoints this technique allows you to try new things – just like an actor. Don't wait till you feel like it...just do it anyways! Jump over the progression of thoughts-feelings-actions and start acting.

Adjusting Your Thoughts

One of the ways we can adjust our thoughts is by changing our activities. Some actions lead to feelings of elation, reward, fulfillment and joy. These positive behaviors (especially when done repeatedly and with improvement over time) have a direct correlation with how we feel. Conversely, if you had a setback of some kind or got a speeding ticket, it's natural to be upset.

But if we meditate or chew on that incident over and over, it will cement the experience in our mind and lead to replicating the same action the very next time it comes around.

Thoughts and Perspectives

So we are saying that thoughts and perspectives lead to feelings and behaviors. But also, there are times when we take actions despite what we may think about the situation and wind up feeling rewarded and accomplished afterward. It can be said that the person who takes a positive action despite how they feel in their gut is brave.

But another way of looking at it is that the individual is acting on faith. They believe in their heart that ultimately taking a step forward will be for the greater good. Their optimism overrides pessimism and new results are obtained.

The Faith-Based Approach

The faith-based model is similar to "acting as if." Faith can be defined as belief without evidence. In other words all sorts of information and facts can be gathered through our five senses as we approach a situation.

Often our personality, brain chemistry and lifelong conditioning can cause us to view a situation according to predetermined factors or unconscious assumptions and core beliefs that are deeply held.

It can be said that faith is the substance of things hoped for against the evidence perceived. A faith-filled person chooses to see things in line with how God looks at them and as the Bible may already have defined the truth.

Faith can turn reality upside down. There are tons of examples of faith-filled people in the Word of God.

The Old and New Testaments are replete with illustrations of how our thoughts and assumptions play an important role in influencing our emotions and behaviors. The original FBCBT proponents can be found in the pages of scripture (even though no one was around to label such a theory in those days)

The Concept of Metanoia: Change Your Mind

Both John the Baptist and Jesus described the concept of Metanoia in their early biblical discourses. Metanoia can be translated as “change your mind” or “change how you think”, which the scriptures sometimes concluded is the description of true repentance.

Repentance is simply stopping, turning around and to start walking in a new direction. Yes, some theologians may associate repentance with identifying and confessing our sins. This is also a true definition.

But one can see the common element in both instances. Changing directions is the core root meaning of metanoia. See Mt 4:17 for the biblical account of this. Consider the apostle Paul’s admonition:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect”.

Rom 12:2

The point being made is that major life change or “transformation” occurs through renewing your mind. Said another way, Proverbs communicates the following message:

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he”.

(Prov. 23:7)

Renewing of the mind takes place when we replace old unbiblical preconditioned thought patterns, with the truth that God sees and describes for us in his written or verbal Word and voice.

It's impossible for us to see things in two different ways at the same time without great emotional disharmony and discord occurring.

-Anonymous

This is a very important principle of human behavior. Let me state it another way. You will go crazy by trying to hold two conflicting ideas as the same time.

After watching sports event on TV its pretty difficult to conclude that the outcome was both horrible and glorious. Humans tend to form a single conclusion about things. That isn't to say that mixed emotions don't come into play. They obviously do.

But when it comes to identifying your core beliefs – those underlying assumptions that you hold about life and yourself... well, they tend to be skewed on way or the other. Just look at the conclusions an optimist and pessimist have about the same circumstances. Their personality shapes or molds their beliefs and observations. Similarly the state of depression/anxiety colors your perception of the world around you.

When we adopt God's viewpoint on something, it can be said that we are acting on faith. Maybe we really don't believe the words at first, but overtime our options about what is and can be true change.

Renewing The Mind

Research indicates that we have about 50,000 thoughts going through our mind in any given day. Unfortunately, most people with mental difficulties tend to think the worst about themselves, their lives, other people and even God at times.

It is therefore not surprising to find out that their thought life is largely responsible for their dark moods.... which in turn lead to adverse activities.

The healthy person tends to have a more balanced viewpoint on self, others and life in general. They are able to discern the good and bad in things but choose to dwell on the positives. They are rewarded with many more feelings of elation and actions that are reflective of optimism.

Another way to understand our thought life is to look at the example found in scripture as to how seeds grow in relationship to how fertile the ground is. Thoughts are like seeds that are planted in the ground by a gardener or farmer.

Apple tree seeds are buried in rich soil and nourished by nature's process of healthy growth feature water and nutrients derived from the ground, sunshine, rain etc. Healthy ripe fruit eventually grows at the end of the vine and branch.

It doesn't just pop in there to be readily picked by a reaper. No, it grows slowly in accordance with the type of make up the seed has and the impact things like weeds and difficult weather patterns can have.

One doesn't expect a pear to grow on a tree that was started with apple seeds that were properly planted. It would not be in concert with its nature. Similarly, if you plant negative seeds in your heart and mind through disconcerting and disturbing conclusions, the most likely fruit to rise up out of the ground is going to be like the seed; bad.

A Change In Your Perspective

The Bible says that one way to begin to change our perspective and therefore the level of depression or anxiety we feel is by planting healthy, positive seeds. In the Word of God, seeds are likened to thoughts. If we replace negative, unhelpful thoughts with positive truths from scriptural promises, principles, practices and moods will be reversed over time.

In fact, the Bible states that the Word of God is in fact “living” and “active” and “more powerful than the sharpest two edged sword.” *See Hebrew 4:12*

As we meditate on scriptural positive truths and faith filled ideas from God a transformation takes place. The new fruit comes alive from the inside out. If you start believing what God’s Word has to say about you, about Him and about life your whole perspective changes!

Chewing Cud

The biblical idea of meditation on things like scripture is derived from the concept of how a cow chews its cud. The animal takes in the food and chomps it up into little pieces before digesting. This process takes time but it is in accordance with the way God divinely wired some animals for natural nourishment and growth.

So when we chew on the inspired words of God, as is done when we review the truths over and over in our mind, our emotional and behavioral life blossoms in accordance with the process.

Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts

As we begin to identify some unhelpful thought patterns in our mind it can be seen how replacing these with positive thoughts in line with God’s truths will reap the good things God

says about our lives. Faith comes alive when we believe God's promises even though they may not appear to be true at the moment we first encounter them.

But as we reflect, meditate and visualize them taking root, shape and form in our lives they will overgrow the dead foliage that used to be in our heads.

Neuroscientists have determined that thoughts are actually chemical pathways that communicate with one another in cellular form. When we think, "I'm no good" for instance, it literally carves a path in our neural pathways in the brain.

The more we meditate and prove this misnomer to be true, the wider the path becomes until it is like a freeway through our mind.

Imagine thought patterns as being like a forest. If a route is travelled over and over as time travels on, so too will our behavior patterns fall in line with the road that has been plowed through the twigs, trees, brush and weeds in the forest.

But if you start meditating on a new inspirational biblical truth the one that follows... your attitude will eventually change... which leads to new actions and behaviours.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"

Philippians 4:13

It begins to carve a new neural pathway through the brain. Eventually, as you fall in line with this new path (by choice), the old unused path of negativity begins to get overgrown and smothered with trees, weeds and foliage again.

The new positive freeway is being built right beside the old road. Eventually, it's easier for your brain to take the new road than the old overgrown one.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

