

TAKING — — CHARGE

OF YOUR LIFE

FEELINGS — PART ONE



WHAT TO EXPECT

Understanding and getting in touch with our feelings so as to:

- recognise and overcome depression
- deal with anger and guilt
- experience the power of positive feelings
- build deeper relationships
- enjoy wholeness and happiness

**“You desire truth in the inward
being; therefore teach me
wisdom in my secret heart.”**

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PSALM 51:6

RSV BIBLE



OUR POWERFUL EMOTIONS

The affective or feeling part of our experience can be positive or negative. Positive emotions tend to produce healthy behaviour and negative emotions tend toward unhealthy behaviour.

Positive emotions are pleasant feelings:

- happiness
- elation
- wonder
- surprise
- excitement
- contentment

Negative emotions are unpleasant feelings:

- anger
- worry
- fear
- disgust
- sadness
- loneliness
- depression

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Longsuffering
- Kindness
- Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control

SYMPTOMS OF EMOTIONAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- Bitterness, Resentment
- Depression,
- Low Self Esteem
- Anxiety, Guilt
- Dissatisfaction Suspicion, Selfishness Denial, Defensiveness
- Infidelity
- Aggression, Rage
- Addiction, Codependency

It is interesting to examine the qualities associated with positive emotions, as listed in the Scriptures (see Galatians 5:22-23). They contrast the classic symptoms of mental and emotional disorder.

“Positive emotions can enhance our lives and make us healthier. Negative emotions can make us sick.”

DRS. MINIRTH, MEIER
AND ARTEBURN

THE COMPLETE LIFE
ENCYCLOPEDIA



DEPRESSION

—THE COMMON COLD OF THE EMOTIONS

Everyone experiences depression. It is a normal reaction. It can become chronic and abnormal if not properly dealt with.

In the quote from Mark Harris, on the next page, the proportion of patients who suffer anxiety or depression is:

“One in

Depression can strike any age group. It is most common, however, among people in the forty to fifty age group. Depression is two to three times more prevalent in the wealthier sector of society. Depression occurs twice as often in women according to statistics.

There are numerous causes of depression: reaction to loss, over-stress, repressed anger, repressed guilt, negative thinking, negative self-talk, low self-esteem, guilt, poor eating and sleeping habits, genetic predisposition, painful memories.

Chronic depression is a symptom or a warning system telling us there is some specific cause we need to discover.

Chronic depression can intensify if we ignore the early warning signs.

Chronic depression is the number one factor in suicide. Even the hint of suicidal thinking indicates professional medical help is urgently needed.

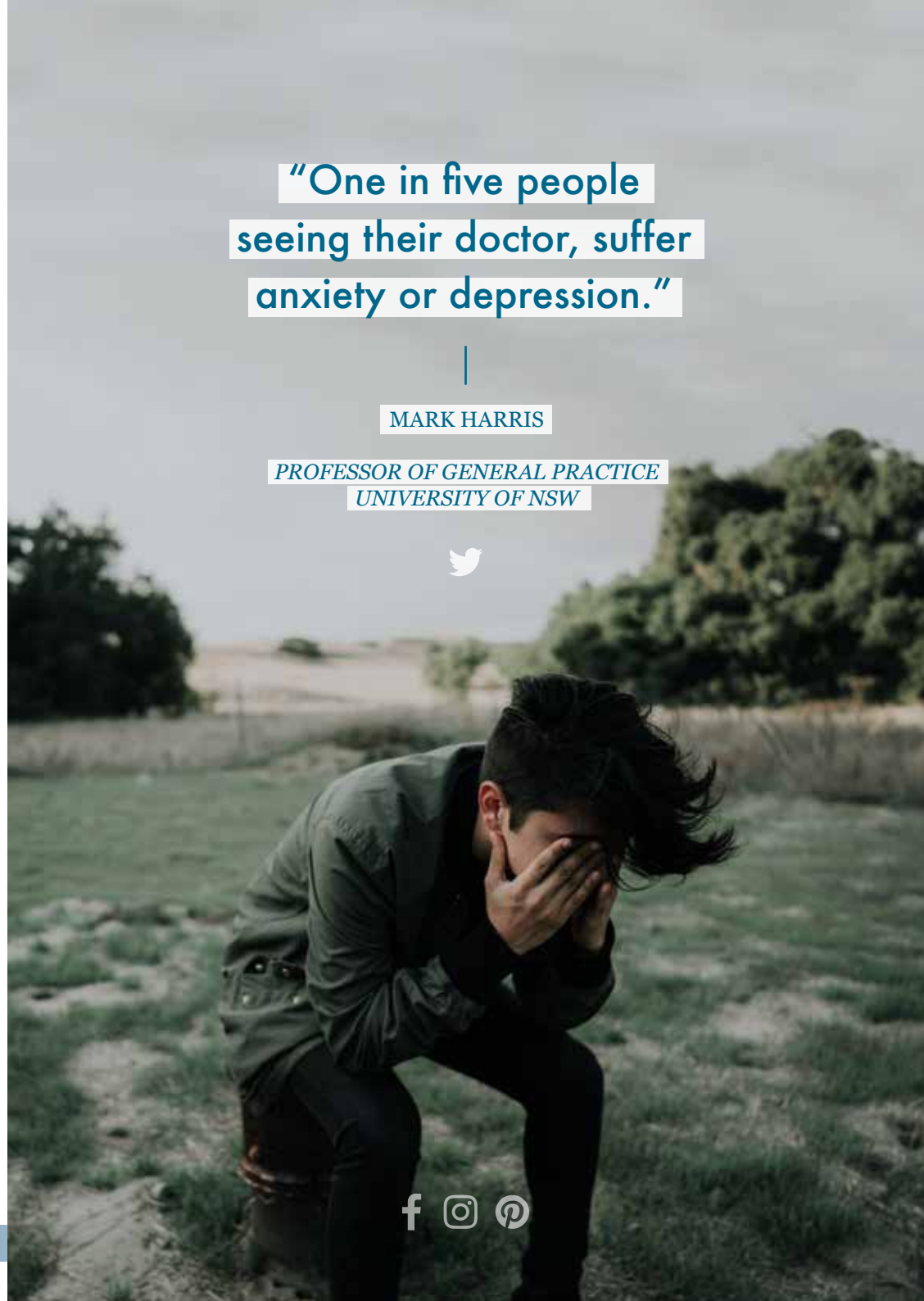
WARNING SIGNS

1. moodiness
2. painful thinking
3. anxiety
4. physical symptoms (sleep, appetite, headaches)
5. delusional thinking

“One in five people seeing their doctor, suffer anxiety or depression.”

MARK HARRIS

PROFESSOR OF GENERAL PRACTICE
UNIVERSITY OF NSW



UNDERSTANDING AND DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

- **Post Adrenal Depression:** This occurs as a reaction to excitement, fear or shock. It can be a response to something positive or negative. Either way, depression can result. This kind of anticlimactic reaction is a healing process—a natural way to slow us down. The adrenal system is primarily designed to produce instant energy in emergencies. It has its limits and needs to be replaced.

The response to POST ADRENAL DEPRESSION is simple. Take a break—have a rest. Humans need a day away from work per week. Annual vacations are also very important. The balanced lifestyle that incorporates rest, exercise, nutritious diet, and a positive outlook is important. Ignoring our natural needs can lead to chronic stress and burnout.

- **Biological Depression:** This is largely genetic. Many, with this kind of tendency, go through life without experiencing abnormal depression (it is actually a deficiency of the neuro-transmitters of the brain.) It usually takes sustained stress to trigger it. Ten percent of the population will experience this kind of depression.

The only known reliable treatment for BIOLOGICAL DEPRESSION is antidepressant medication. This needs to be combined with the application of positive life and stress management principles. Counselling, group therapy, and personal study programs can be valuable healing factors.

- **Reactive Depression:** This is a response to loss. It is psychological and spiritual. It is a natural reaction to the loss of a loved one. Any form of loss, however, will take us into some degree of reactive depression: loss of property, job, reputation, meaning, a marriage, control, freedom. Reactive depression will affect all of us. Everyone is going to be affected by loss by varying degrees throughout our lives.

Our losses need to be properly grieved. It takes time to put them into proper perspective. Patience and quiet faith are vital healing factors. Unresolved grief will sustain REACTIVE DEPRESSION. It is tempting to try and short-circuit the pain of loss and grief inappropriately: premature marriage after the loss of spouse, for example. The process of grief is a search for meaning, rediscovering our values, adjusting to and accepting the new situation. It is letting go.



TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR FEELINGS



“There can be no transformation of darkness into light and of apathy into movement without emotion.”

Carl Jung

Is it possible to actually take charge of our emotions and experience happiness? What do you think?

YES

NO

The New Testament Scriptures present an encouraging point of view: When the Apostle Paul was in prison, he wrote a letter to his friends about joy. In fact, he urged them to be joyful (Note the quote on the next page). It would seem Paul had not allowed his environment to take charge of his emotions—he was in charge.

SELF-TALK IS THE KEY

A key to attitude and, in turn, your emotions is your self-talk. Human beings talk to themselves and interpret their experiences. This inner dialogue is carried on at the astounding rate of about 1,300 words per minute. This contrasts with the 150 to 200 words per minute of verbal conversation.

Most self-talk is unconscious and undirected. Unconscious self-talk can be positive and constructive. It can, on the other hand, overemphasize painful memories. It can place too much emphasis on what other people think and say about us.

Very often, these negative memories are rooted in low self-esteem. This kind of self-talk is a powerful factor in initiating and feeding negative and damaging emotions. **Note that in the quote below, Drs Minirth and Meier assert that we have the power to change our self-talk and self-esteem.**



“Our self-talk doesn’t have to be negative or self-defeating. We can change . . . and as our self-talk changes, our self-esteem changes.”

Drs. Minirth, Meier & Arterburn, *Complete Life Encyclopedia*

“Always be full of joy
in the Lord; I say it
again, rejoice!”



PHILIPPIANS 4:4

TLB BIBLE



HOW SELF-TALK WORKS

Dr. Chris Thurman likens our self-talk to replaying tapes on a tape deck. (See quote on the next page)

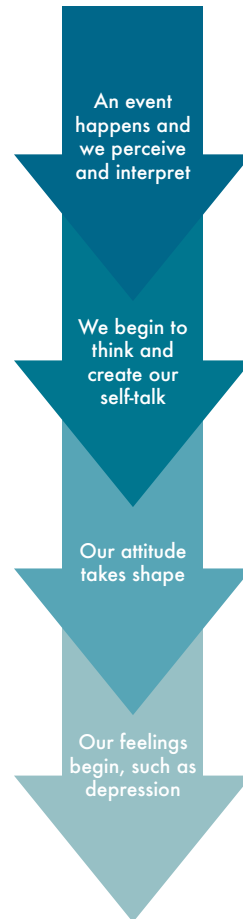
We tend to interpret all the new situations of life from the negative or positive perspective of our self-talk. If we have not dealt with the negative memories of the past, we compound the pain through the ongoing negative self-talk that misinterprets the new, emerging situations of life. Even small disappointments can become very painful and damaging.

The information we store and replay can be largely categorised as positive or negative; true or false; constructive or damaging. Our emotional health hangs in the balance. It directly reflects the pattern of thinking that dominates the mind.

If the event is a loss or a disappointment, it can be the trigger for negative feelings. The fact that we cannot change the event suggests, to many, that our feelings are controlled by circumstances—that we do not really have a choice. What do you think?

- Yes, we have choice
- No, we are victims of circumstances

It is not the event that determines our feelings, but the way we interpret the event through our self-talk. This booklet will help you with the skills to change your self-talk and thus take control of your feelings.



“Your brain . . . has access to a personal library of thousands of tapes . . . They hold all your beliefs, attitudes, and expectations . . . Some are truthful and others are lies . . .”


DR. CHRIS THURMAN

THE LIES WE BELIEVE



REPROGRAMMING FROM NEGATIVE TO POSITIVE

The key to change from negative and damaging to positive and healthy self-talk is reprogramming. It is important to learn how to monitor our thinking.

 "The primary challenge is to make our mental tapes truthful . . . Lies produce emotional misery. Truth produces emotional health."
Dr. Chris Thurman, *The Lies We Believe*

Note, in the quote, Dr. Chris Thurman says, "The primary challenge is to make our mental tapes"

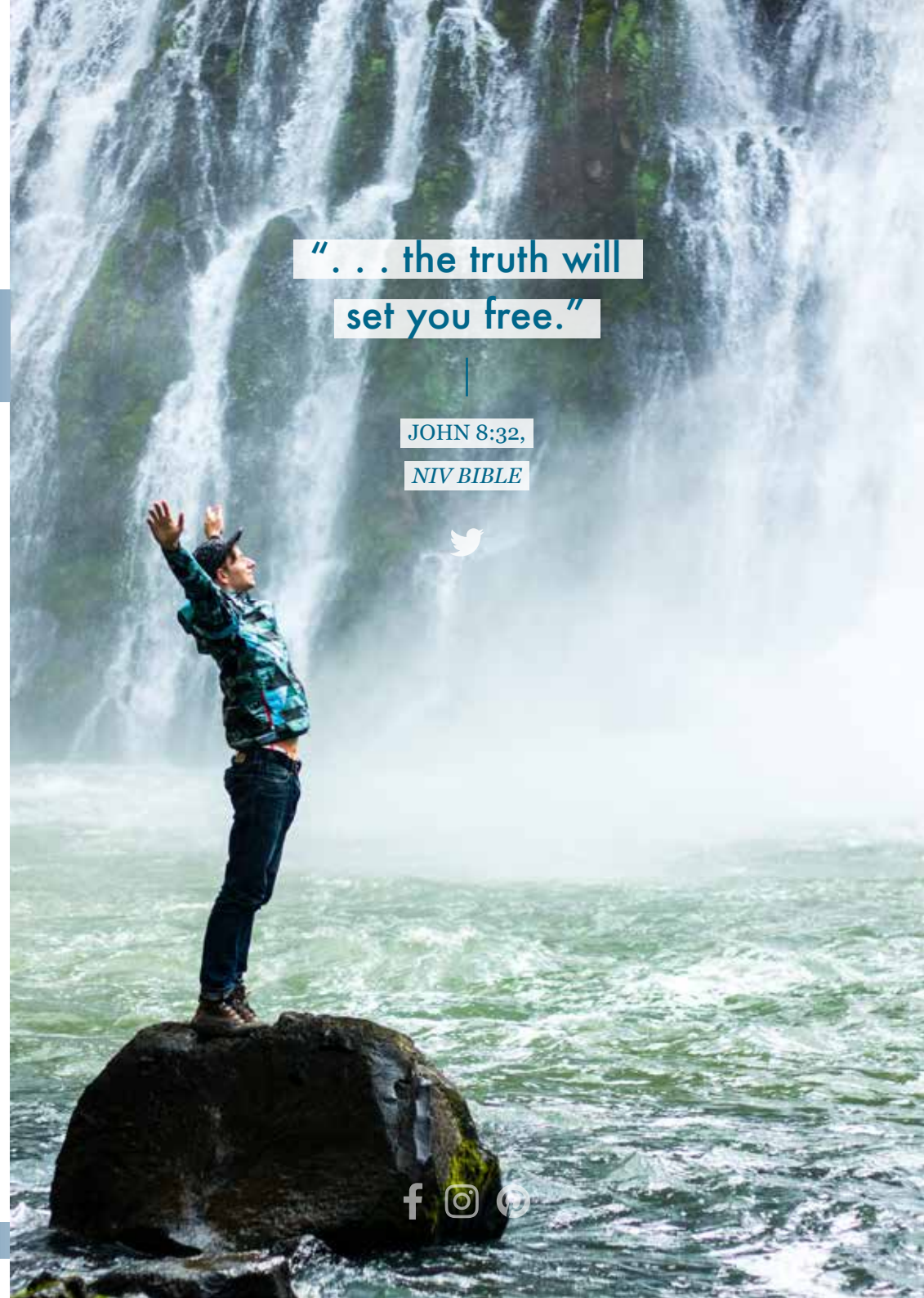
It is practical and powerful to identify the untrue assumptions that feed our emotions:

- "I don't deserve to be happy."
- "I can't hope for more than a mediocre career."
- "I'll never be able to change."
- "How could God have made a useless person like me?"

We all have painful memories and we have made mistakes we regret. The negatives of the past are often exaggerated. They can become a dominant theme in our self-talk. This is a primary factor in the way we feel, the decisions we make and the ways in which we react to events in the present.

You can only be free, as you are willing and able to accept the truth about yourself. There is much wisdom in the Scriptures. You will note, in the quote on the next page, "The truth will set you"

Accept and confront the truth about yourself - positive and negative. Get the past into perspective. Refocus your thinking and self-talk. Think, for example, of the people who love you, your goals, the things you enjoy doing, your sense of purpose your values . . .



“. . . the truth will
set you free.”

JOHN 8:32,

NIV BIBLE



HOW TO REPROGRAM

We need skills to monitor and change our self-talk and our feelings. It can be elusive but not beyond reach. It requires the will to do it, time, patience and practice.

The steps outlined are powerful in the lives of those who take them seriously and practice them.

- STEP 1**—identify the way you are feeling and write it down.
- STEP 2**—identify the event that triggered your feeling and write it down.
- STEP 3**—identify your self talk that interprets the event and write it down.
- STEP 4**—Dispute your self-talk—in other words argue with yourself, asking if your interpretation is accurate and reasonable—it is common to exaggerate our disappointments in our self-talk. Write down your modified self-talk.
- STEP 5**—identify your modified feeling and write it down.

EXAMPLE:

1. THE FEELING

“I feel terrible—sick in the stomach—day ruined. My depression ratio is 70 out of 100.”

2. TRIGGERING EVENT

“I just got booked for going through a red light—the on-the-spot ticket is \$160.”

3. SELF-TALK

“I must be a complete idiot; I shouldn’t have driven today; I don’t deserve a licence; My wife will hate me for this; I hate driving; the police are always picking on innocent people like me . . .”

4. DISPUTE SELF-TALK AND MODIFY

“I shouldn’t have gone through the red light and I deserved to get booked. I am not a complete idiot. My wife won’t like what happened, but she won’t hate me. The police were doing their job and there’s a lesson in it.”

5. MODIFIED FEELING

“I still feel disappointed with myself, but it’s not the end of the world. The disappointment is in perspective now and I am ready to learn the lesson and get on with the rest of my life.”

TRY THIS!

This blank form is for you. Your growth in managing and enriching your life will be enhanced as you complete this assignment.

It is important to get in touch with your feelings. Writing things down helps in being objective and getting them into perspective.

Your triggering event may be a minor setback such as the example on the previous page. On the other hand, you may be burdened with deep emotional pain because of a major trigger or disappointment. It may be a recent event or something that happened as far back as childhood. Many carry the continuing pain of sexual or physical abuse.

We cannot change the event, but we can deal with our personal pain.

1. THE FEELING	
2. TRIGGERING EVENT	
3. SELF-TALK	
4. DISPUTE SELF-TALK AND MODIFY	
5. MODIFIED FEELING	

POSITIVE SELF-TALK

—IT'S YOUR CHOICE

Self-talk is an invaluable tool for improving emotional health. Monitoring our thoughts and getting in touch with our feelings can be challenging. The theme upon which your mind feeds is the fuel that feeds your self-talk. Your choices—every day—are the key.

“I keep score of the good things in my life.”

“I choose to forgive and get on with my life.” “I face up to my feelings.”

“I am a lovable person.”

“I am a useful person.”

“I can succeed in life.”

“I can be a winner.”

“Set-backs are my growth stepping stones.”

“I am getting the job done, one task at a time.”

“I am moving toward my goals.”

“I can enjoy my relationships.”

“My spouse is my best friend.”

“I accept myself just as I am and I am willing to grow.”

“God cares for me and meets my needs.”

“God loves and forgives me; I accept His forgiveness.”

THE CHALLENGE OF NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

FOUR OPTIONS

“If you want to make your life really work, you must make your emotions work for you. You cannot run from them; you cannot tune them out; trivialize them or delude yourself about what they mean. Nor can you allow them to just run your life.”

Anthony Robbins, *Awaken the Giant Within*

1. AVOIDANCE

Some, who have emotional pain and disappointment from the past, attempt to avoid future situations that could be painful: Shying away from beneficial relationships or applying for a challenging job. Avoidance, in the long run, does harm and compounds our emotional problems.

2. DENIAL

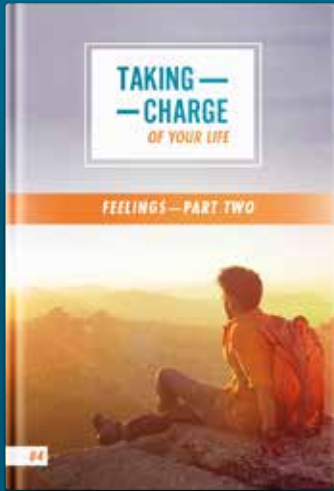
Suppressing our painful feelings does not get rid of them. It is when they are repressed and seemingly out of reach that they do their damage. In fact, suppressed anger or guilt can turn inward to become depression. These powerful and painful emotions are addressed in the next booklet: Feelings—2. Experiencing an emotion and trying to pretend it's not there may drive the pain underground, in the short term, but it hangs around to sabotage our happiness, relationships, and our capacity to fulfil our potential.

3. PERSONAL VALIDATION

Some indulge their painful memories as a mechanism to authenticate themselves, get attention or manipulate and control others. This is a dreadful option as it compounds personal pain.

4. ACCEPTING, MANAGING AND PROCESSING

It is important to confront and take charge of our feelings. They can work for us. The life-management skills in this and the next booklet are vital. Taking charge of our feelings is essential if we are to take charge of our lives.



CONTINUE YOUR JOURNEY

FEELINGS—PART TWO

The next booklet continues focusing on the feelings, to look at anger, guilt, and conflict management. Email or call HopeChannel to receive your copy and continue in your journey.



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