



RECOGNIZING THE LESSON

Step 1: Identification. Choose a belief or idea that you hold to be true that informs the decisions you make and the way you operate in the world. This should be a belief that causes you pain, has possibly held you back in some way or has kept you in a situation that was not beneficial to your overall wellbeing.

Step 2: Examine. Think of situations that led you to hold this belief or reinforced it. **WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAIL**, in your journal discuss how those situation made you *feel*. Only use I statements and refrain from speaking on anyone else's perspective, intention or frame of mind.

*Don't analyze your feelings or judge yourself for having them. Just observe them without trying to suppress or avoid them. Give yourself the time and space to process your feelings WITH THE SPECIFIC INTENTION of moving past them. Remember that you are acknowledging them in their fullness so you can release them for good. **Do not hesitate to look for outside assistance if you have difficulty processing anything that comes up. It is okay to seek assistance from a trained professional. ESPECIALLY if you have any history of mental illness.***

Step 3: Self-Care. Take some time to tend to your spiritual, mental, emotional and physical needs. Remind yourself that you are not your past or your pain. Commit to healing it and leaving it behind. Affirm your strength and growth.

Step 4: Reflect. Look for patterns or similarities in the situations that brought about or reinforced the initial belief. Below are some questions to consider during your reflection. **Be honest!**

Could I have made a different choice that would have yielded a better outcome?

Was something exposed to me that I chose to ignore, overlook, or make excuses for?

Did I go against my better judgement or disregard my intuition?

Did I ever think to myself or say out loud that the situation would have a negative outcome?

Did I settle? Did I ever tell myself that I deserved bad things or was not worthy of good things?

Did I allow expectations (my own or those of someone else/society) to steer me in a direction that was not working?

Based on these circumstances, what negative thought patterns did I develop?

Step 5: Release. Forgive the persons involved in all situations and accept everything for what it is. Forgive anyone who told you, directly or indirectly, the initial belief was true or in your best interest. Forgive yourself for believing and perpetuating it. Accept that this belief does not serve you, release all feelings attached to it and replace them with gratitude for your ability to grow from it, look at the bigger picture and use the experience as a tool for creating a new narrative for your life.

Step 6: Reconciliation. Use your answers to step 4 as a guide to find areas of transformation (lessons) and create new beliefs that serve you. Keep the following points in mind:

Be as general as possible – not situation specific. No identifying attribute of any party involved should be included.

Accountability – the lesson should be focused on your thoughts and behaviors.

Empower yourself – the lesson you need to learn will not reinforce victimhood or inferiority.

Positive self-talk – do not degrade or belittle yourself or your capabilities.

Step 7: Review. Do the lessons you came up with meet the criteria from step 6?

If no: Look through your answers to the questions in step 4 and determine how honest you were. Did you sugarcoat anything? Did you leave something out? Do you need more time to forgive and disengage from the pain in order to look at the circumstance objectively? Once the answer to all of these questions is no, go back through Step 6.

If yes: Write them out, and repeat them to yourself 3 times a day (morning, mid-day, night) for 10 days. Look at yourself in a mirror when you do your AM and PM repetitions. Anytime you find yourself thinking the old belief or recalling a situation that reinforced it, acknowledge your egos attempt to keep you stuck and then immediately remind yourself of the lessons.

Like this exercise? Tweet or email us to share your experience!