

Motivate 4 Success

When change is a must

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Living with addiction

Resentments: Learning to let go



Motivate 4 Success

Vol 2

When Change is a Must

Helping individuals find solutions to living with addictive behavior, whether their own or someone they love. Regardless of the addiction, once you decide that change is a must, we help you to develop a lifestyle that brings you the changes you desire.

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This copy can be kept with you at all times, to remind you of healthy questions to ask yourself during moments of difficulty.

Resentment Letter

Dear _____

I was angry or hurt when you _____

I felt fear and doubt because you _____

I feel remorse/ regret that I didn't _____

I feel guilt or shame that I did not _____

I want you to _____

I understand and forgive this incident because this is what I know about you as an individual _____

I am done with these feelings of anger and hurt. I will let these emotions go. _____

emotions went up in smoke. To cope with the addict/alcoholic, you need to get yourself to a state that is non-emotional. This is not easily done, but with practice and tools such as this, you can learn to let go, even if it is just for today.

The letter is a powerful tool and is just one way a coach helps you to understand and work through the emotional walls in your life. This approach is enhanced greatly with another human being to share it. Simply saying out loud what is trapped inside, giving voice to these emotions, allows you to release them.

Working with others who have successfully learned to live with addiction in their family can help.

The following Self-Help groups are available in your area.



Al-Anon <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org> Al-Anon (which includes Alateen for younger members) has been offering hope and help to families and friends of alcoholics. It is estimated that each alcoholic affects the lives of at least four other people.

Nar-Anon <http://nar-anon.org/index.html> members are relatives and friends who are concerned about the addiction or drug problem of another. Na-Anon's program of recovery is adapted from Narcotics Anonymous and uses Nar-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Adult Children of Alcoholics <http://adultchildren.org> ACA. Adult Children of Alcoholics is a [Twelve Step](#), [Twelve Tradition](#) program of women and men who grew up in alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional homes.

Overview

You are sitting quietly or working away when out of nowhere, it hits you. Memories of that so-and-so who did such-and-such return. It takes all of your self control not to throw something hard at the nearest victim. Or, you start to cry and make sure to comment about the horrible allergens in the air, despite it being winter and the ground being covered with snow. Feelings of resentment are like some sneaky monster that leaps out at you when you least expect it. If you had some monster spray handy, you would use it. If you had a two by four, even better.

It is not easy to figure out how to work through resentments.

Regardless of how old they are, the feelings linger and need to be dealt with.

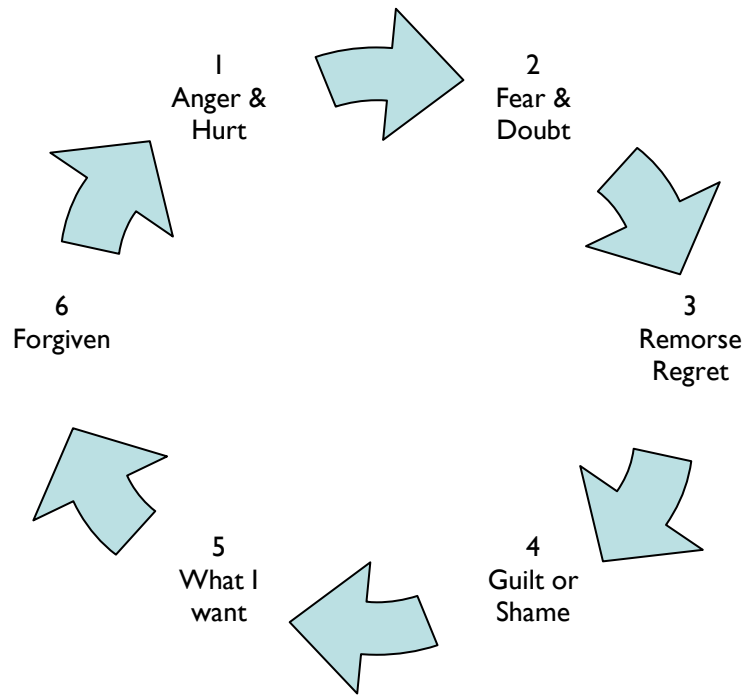


We try to push these feelings down so they do not bother us. These feelings keep compound-

ing until we say and do exactly the opposite of what we would like. We lash out, not because of some new hurt, but rather from the weight of so many old hurts. The question becomes how can you let go of this old pain? Just like a glass filling with water, eventually it will overflow. Most of us stuff our emotions. We become numb to our own feelings. This does not happen quickly, but over time.

Try this: Hold a pen in your hand and squeeze the pen as hard as you can. At first, you will feel pressure. If you keep holding it, you will feel pain. If you can keep holding and work through the pain, eventually it will become numb. Emotionally, this is what we have done with many of our feelings.

Anger, hurt and resentment actually come in Stages



We have learned to skip many of the stages. Think of two children arguing on the play ground. They are told to immediately say “Sorry”, completely disregarding how they are feeling or anything else. We are not taught how to work through a problem or our anger.

As adults we handle our anger in much the same way. We push our real feelings aside and try to “just get over it”. Sometimes we revert to the name calling of childhood, except our names are a bit more vehement.

Stage 1 - Anger and Hurt - or hurt and then anger. Statements such as “How could you have been so mean as to forget my birthday?” turn to, “You jerk, you forgot my birthday again” .

Lastly, try to see their side. Find the compassion in your heart for them. If you have known them for a long time, think of the amount of time that you have known them and the laughter that you have shared. Separate the individual from the disease, (alcoholism or drug addiction.)

I understand and forgive this incident because this is what I know about you as an individual. _____

The purpose of the letter is to help you to forgive. You are **not dismissing** their addiction. You are not condoning their using. You are taking care of yourself, and you cannot continue with this hurt. The more you are able to let go of your pain, the more you are able to take quality steps to creating the life you were meant to live.

I am done with these feelings of anger and hurt. I will let these emotions go. _____

The letter allows you to acknowledge that you have feelings and release them in a healthy way. I suggest that you burn the letter in a safe manner when you are finished. You want to be done with these feelings and the action of burning puts that finality to it. You may remember the incident, but you will not have the emotions attached to the memories. Those

A small child who has been molested is not responsible for his or her abuse. They have no part in the responsibility and here is where you need to clearly own or not own your guilt or shame about a situation. As an adult now, you need to realize your part as a child and the fact that you were powerless.

I feel remorse/ regret that I didn't _____

I feel guilt or shame that I did not _____

From what you have completed above, you should clearly see what you **want**. Not what you don't want, such as "I want you to stop hitting me", but what you do want, "I want you to treat me with gentle loving care." Know your "I want", and write it down.

I want you to _____

Stage 2 - Fear and Doubt - Fear and doubt are either subtle or they are highly protective. They become our references for future relationships. Keeping our fears and doubts hidden leaves us with these references for future relationships:

Fear that this will happen again.

Doubt of our own value to another that we care about.

For many of us this is where we stay. We are stuck in an endless cycle of anger/hurt to fear/doubt back to anger/hurt to fear/doubt again. We need to get ourselves to push through these instead of stuffing the fear and doubt back into ourselves.

Stage 3 - Remorse and Regret – Have you ever had something in your past that you wish you could take back and change? Not just changing the dress you wore to prom or dating the cheerleader in spite of being too chicken to ask her out, but something more important. There is a saying that the worst words in the world to utter upon your deathbed are "What if..." When we have an unresolved issue in our lives, this is what we do to ourselves. We leave regrets unsolved and feel remorse for not fixing what we might have fixed.

Stage 4 - Guilt and/or Shame - These stages are sometimes separate and other times combined. We begin to feel regret or remorse as we start to look at how we set up the incident. What was our part, how did we participate/allow this to happen to us? We may be feeling shameful or guilty. We want to look at these feelings honestly. It is tempting to blame it on the dog, but as adults we are forced to take responsibility for our own actions. What we want to learn is not what an awful person we are, but rather what we **want**. What will make us feel whole. An apology of, "I am sorry" leaves us with nothing. It is rarely what we want to hear, yet it is what we are conditioned to say and to accept. Most of us were never taught to find, much less ask for what we want,

expect or need.

Stage 5 - I want - We want something specific, such as, “I want you to respect me.” “I want you to show me that I have value to you.” “I want you to notice me.” Notice these are quite different from, “stop hitting me”.

Stage 6 - Forgiveness/appreciation/love - This is seeing their side, looking at the incident from the bigger picture and being grateful for the individual they are instead of being stuck on the detail of a particular moment. Yes, they may deserve all the curses that you feel like throwing, but that does neither you nor them any good.

We can never become truly forgiving until we understand for ourselves what it is that we want. It is almost as if there is forever something left unsaid. The resentments seem to gurgle up from somewhere deep inside, and always at the wrong time. It would be like riding on an African river in a small, wooden boat. You think all is well until suddenly a large hippo surfaces and eats your boat. You know that you are next, unless you can tame that hippo. While a wild animal is not easily tamed, your own emotions are given to obliging your wants in the matter once you learn how.

Here is an exercise - Take a particular event and person. Sit down and write them a letter. Write it **to** them. Let the words flow uncensored, just out of you. Don’t let the pen leave the paper.

Start with the feelings of anger and hurt and write a paragraph about them. Use whatever language is comfortable for you. That means if you feel like swearing, it is okay. This is not a PG-13 letter. Each paragraph should take no more than four to five minutes. Stay on topic. Set a timer if you have to. You want the statements out quickly rather than writing a novel. That will only get you into a state of anger. Negative feelings increase. So write quickly

and effectively.

Dear _____

I was angry or hurt when you _____

The next paragraph is your feelings of doubt and fear, the sadness that you felt as a result of this incident. Perhaps you fear that it will happen again. Maybe this is reinforcing a belief that you are not important and never will be. Let the language of your heart do the talking. Again, four to five minutes.

I felt fear and doubt because you _____

There is a bumper sticker that says, “Oh no, not another learning experience.” Now that you have listed your feelings, it is time to take a look at your side of the street. What was your part? What could you have done differently? You may find some feelings of guilt here that you did not take action and allowed something to happen. You may find guilt about allowing your boundaries to be crossed or not standing up for yourself. Alternatively, you may have a difficult time seeing your part.