

# Processing Triggers

Information Collected, Compiled & Adapted  
by members of VA  
©2022 Violence Anonymous World Services, Inc.

Approved for use in Violence Anonymous by the VA Fellowship-Wide Group Conscience. VA's use of the techniques within this pamphlet does not imply VA's endorsement of each creator's other works or activities.

***A trigger is our internal reaction to a person, place, thing, situation or thought.***

Triggers can range from mild to intense, and our reactions can include emotions, thoughts, beliefs, physical sensations and sensory perceptions.

When we are negatively triggered, we are casting ourselves as victims. We are unconsciously regressed and reliving a past experience in which we were victimized or in which we picked up disempowering feelings or beliefs. This puts us on the drama triangle, making it difficult to think, speak or act without causing harm.

In recovery, we recognize that when we are negatively triggered, we are at risk of behaving compulsively, so we halt and process the trigger.

***Processing a trigger is investigating the trauma that lies beneath the trigger and neutralizing our reaction to the trauma.***

We don't have to process triggers alone. Neutralizing traumas with the guidance of a trusted peer, sponsor or therapist helps us become adept at processing triggers ourselves.

By processing triggers that come up, we gradually clear our inner landscape of the traumas that set off our compulsive behavior. In time, we begin to view each trigger as an opportunity to achieve greater freedom.

We can also clear our inner landscape of limiting or maladaptive beliefs that are not connected to trauma.

This pamphlet contains a collection of techniques that can be used to process triggers as well as some that can be used to de-escalate strong emotions first. If you find that you are still triggered after completing a processing technique, there may be another layer (or angle) of the trauma that needs to be healed. You may choose to use additional techniques or the same technique on other layers (or angles) to process the trigger fully to completion.

## Signs of Being Triggered

Developing awareness of when we are triggered is essential. Below are some common signs and symptoms of being triggered. It is most often hindsight, which teaches us what our individual signs are.

- **creating a predictive story** of the future based on our history (past experience) – usually a very negative story of doom and gloom
- **difficulty finding words** to describe what we are feeling or thinking (can indicate pre-verbal trauma)
- **child-like thinking** – “This need is never going to be met – it’s always going to be this way!”; egocentricity – everything has happened or is happening *to us, for us* and *because of us* (TUFUBU); feeling helpless/powerless
- **generally adrenalized**, a strong sense of urgency and fear, everything seems big or hugely important, logic & reason seem irrelevant, thoughts bouncing all over the place, obsessive thinking (going over an experience in our mind more than once or twice), feeling on edge, heightened startle response, hypervigilance, rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing, rapid shallow breaths, tense muscles, face feels flushed or hot as if blushing
- **“fight” mode**, anger, resentment, rage, arguing, yelling, profanity, judging, blaming, complaining, criticizing, character assassination, wanting to attack because we feel under attack or because we believe others are trying to hurt us, getting defensive, strong need to convince someone of something or make someone understand
- **“flight” mode**, panic, feeling unsafe, sensing danger, strong desire to avoid (run, leave, move, keep away, set a rigid boundary), exaggerating, minimizing, lying
- **“freeze” mode**, tired, frozen, paralyzed, passive, confused, indecisive, ambivalent, conflicted, procrastinating, unmotivated, uninspired,
- **cravings** for power, control, safety, certainty, connection, significance, relief, escape, substances, activities/behaviors, outcomes, etc
- **compulsions**, impulsivity, addiction, self-harming, repetitive thought, eating or shopping frenzy, binge or restriction, frittering time or money, spending beyond our means, hoarding, using power or control or violence, “acting out” in any way

- **feeling “off”** in any way; feeling down, unsafe, stressed, worried, upset, ashamed, embarrassed, guilty, grumpy, irritable, impatient, annoyed or frustrated; negative thinking; no sense of humor; not enjoying things we normally would; pervasive lack of pleasure in life (could be subtle or strong); feeling disconnected
- **auditory sensitivity** to certain sounds in certain situations
- **dissociation** - heightened sensitivity to sound in general (music, machines, talking, laughter, chewing), lack of body awareness, bumping into things, finding bruises with no idea how we got them, clumsiness, dropping things, breaking things, trips, slips, falls, poor aim, lack of attention to personal grooming, poor attention to detail, poor comprehension and retention, needing information repeated in order to absorb it, spaciness, losing things, leaving or forgetting things, forgetting where we are going or what we are doing, missing a turn, not recognizing familiar surroundings or people, losing time

### Signs the Trigger is Processed

These are some common signs that we are no longer triggered – that the trigger has been neutralized.

- fear, anger, and confusion are gone
- no longer feeling powerless or helpless
- feeling like a weight has been lifted – easing of a burden, subtle release, relief
- pleasant, peaceful lightness
- joy, laughter, and sense of humor return
- a new story or healthier belief seems true or believable
- feeling of spiritual connection returns (if applicable)
- feeling of empowerment and choice
- logic & reason can be appreciated and utilized
- can clearly see what is true and respond appropriately
- the appropriate response feels right instead of wrong
- clarity and decisiveness
- knowing the next right thing to do, intuitively knowing how to handle a situation
- seeing how we were projecting a trait of our own onto someone else or recognizing how, in the past, we have done the same behavior, which we just found triggering
- boundary setting is done organically, with ease, and out of compassion and understanding rather than fear

## DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

Here are some techniques that can help reduce the intensity of a trigger, allowing our minds to settle and our bodies to relax enough to focus on processing the trigger.

### Change Location

Moving to a safe location can reduce the effects of the situation and give us crucial time and space to allow our thinking to return to a neutral state. If we are indoors, we can move to another room, go sit outside, take a walk, go for a drive or sit in our car. If we are on the phone, we can get off the call.

### Burn Off Adrenaline

Any physical activity, which under normal circumstances would make us feel tired, can quickly clear the adrenaline out of our system, restoring our ability to think clearly. (exercise, dance, a long walk, a run, a long motorcycle ride)

### Heart Math

Placing your hand over your heart, breathe deeply for 2 minutes.

Heart Math is a way to synchronize the electrical output of the brain to the electrical current of the heart, which become out of alignment when we are triggered.

### Deep Breathing

Take 10-20 deep breaths.

### Circular Breathing

Breathe in and out naturally (not deeply) for 15 minutes, without pausing between the in and out breath.

We have a tendency to hold our breath when stressed, and not doing so requires paying attention to our breathing, which brings us back into our physical body and into the present moment.

### Sustained Out-Breath

Long, sustained out-breaths calm the vagus nerve, which activates the parasympathetic (social) nervous system and lowers the heart rate. Activities such as humming, singing, chanting, playing certain instruments, or holding a sustained “voo” or “om” sound are ways that we can use long out-breaths to de-escalate a trigger.

A simple breathing exercise emphasizing a longer out-breath is to breathe in for a count of 3, hold for a count of 3, and breathe out for a count of 6. (Or in 5, hold 5, out 10)

### Prayer

Here are some prayers that can help us feel more grounded. (Secular versions are included for a non-religious approach.)

- **Serenity Prayer:** *God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.*

(I have the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.)

- **11<sup>th</sup> Step Prayer:** *God, grant me knowledge of Your will for my life and the power to carry that out.*  
(Universe, please give me knowledge of Divine/ Higher Will for my life and the power to carry it out.)
- **Seeking Prayer:** *God, please help me find in you what I am looking for in this person, place, thing or situation, and help this person, place, thing or situation find in you what they are looking for in me.*  
(May I find in myself what I am looking for in this person and may this person find in themselves what they are looking for in me.)
- **Needs Prayer:** *God, please help me find in you a way to meet my need, which I am looking for this other person to meet, and/or help this other person find in you a way to meet their need, which they are looking for me to meet.*  
(May I find in myself a way to meet this need, which I am looking for this other person to meet and/or may this other person find in themselves a way to meet the need they are looking for me to meet for them.)

### Meditation

Meditation can lead us on an emotional journey of discovery and insight. There are many ways to meditate. One way is to just notice the sounds around you and the sensations, emotions and thoughts that arise from within.

### Body Sensations

We can gain insight into the source of our emotions, by finding out where they are being stored in our bodies. Ask yourself, “Where do I feel this in my body?” Then focus on the sensation. “Does it feel big or small, light or heavy, bright or dark, hard or soft, dull or sharp? Does it have a color, shape, texture, taste or smell?”

### Thank Goodness!

Instead of complaining, try saying, “Thank goodness for whatever it is I was about to complain about!” Then see what comes to mind next. It can be truly amazing.

### Telephone

Calling someone and talking to them about what is upsetting to us can help decrease the emotional charge and help us gain new insights. The person may also be able to help us process the trigger or find a handle for processing the trigger.

**A ‘handle’ gives us something to work with when processing a trigger. A handle can be a sensation, emotion, thought, belief, story, pattern, memory, etc. It gives us a way to grab hold of the trigger and plug it into a processing technique.**

*NOTE: Some de-escalation techniques can also double as trigger processing techniques – the key is to acknowledge the underlying trauma and neutralize our reaction to the past event, too, not just to the current one.*

### Loving Presence

This technique is performed with a partner, who acts as a Compassionate Witness. Finding a person, who can be a patient, non-judgmental loving presence, as we feel, express and explore our feelings, is a tremendous gift. Often, their ability to feel empathy for us helps us begin to feel empathy for ourselves.

**Important Note** – Not everyone can tolerate listening to negativity for more than 5-20 seconds let alone 5-20 minutes, so it’s a good idea to ask what the other person’s tolerance level is first for non-judgmentally listening to us talk about what triggered us. Finding out in advance how much time they have, can help prevent lack of closure from unexpectedly running out of time.

The process is simple. Express your thoughts and feelings about the event that you find disturbing/upsetting, allowing your stream of consciousness to lead to a vital realization. The person acting as a loving presence can ask questions that organically arise for them as they are listening, which may help lead you to greater clarity. Receiving empathy from yourself and the other person, can lead to the realization of what your true needs are. It can also lead to uncovering and acknowledging the underlying self-centered survival fear and where it is originating from. The fear then usually dissolves.

## TRIGGER PROCESSING TECHNIQUES

Processing a trigger is investigating the trauma that lies beneath the trigger and neutralizing our reaction to the underlying trauma.

### Self-EMDR

EMDR balances our brain hemispheres and allows us to neutralize a trauma without having to re-experience it.

(1) Visualize the stressful experience, taking yourself back to the emotions and sensations you felt at that time.

(2) What is your prevailing thought?

[e.g. I'm stuck and I'm gonna die!]

(3) Test how truthful that statement feels from 1-10.

(4) What would you like to think about this situation?

[e.g. I got this! My Higher Power is taking care of me.]

(5) Test how truthful that statement feels from 1-10.

(6) Process the experience with the help of EMDR bi-lateral music, visual aids or physical tapping. For music, headphones are best so the sounds can alternate between ears, thus balancing the brain hemispheres. Recalling the stressful experience, listen to the music, watch the visual aid or feel the physical tapping and follow your stream of consciousness to see how your brain is wired around this trauma (fantasies, thoughts, memories, etc.). Eventually a core thought or real experience will stop or break the trigger. You will come across something truthful that will unlock the trauma and create relief. This may result in tears or releasing of grief, but it is not required to neutralize the trigger.

(7) Re-test how truthful each statement feels now.

**ALTERNATIVE #6:** We can visually process by looking at a visual aid – such as a finger, dot or a pencil – that moves back and forth across our visual field, or by looking back and forth at two points far apart from each other on a wall in front of us. The process of the eyes moving back and forth balances the brain hemispheres and allows us to neutralize the trauma. Alternately you may prefer to use a physical bi-lateral cue like tapping one side of the body then the other. Some EMDR users even process triggers while walking or running, using the repetitive pattern of the feet touching the ground as the physical bi-lateral cue.

**NOTE:** EMDR music and visuals can be found on-line in free videos. There are also Self-EMDR apps available.

### “Tapping”

One of the Emotional Freedom Techniques, also known as Tapping (sometimes called EFT), uses the nervous system to release stuck emotions, interrupting the patterns created in the brain by past experiences. Based on neurology and acupuncture, it involves tapping on points on the body, which have a connection to the amygdala, the part of the brain responsible for emotions, memory and survival instincts.

**Points** – Diagrams of these and alternative tapping points (ears, hand, etc) can be found online. (There are also apps.)

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Side of Hands<br>(Karate Chop points) | 5. Under Nose            |
| 2. Inside end of Eyebrows                | 6. Under Mouth           |
| 3. Side of Eye socket (bone)             | 7. Under Collarbones     |
| 4. Under middle of Eyes                  | 8. Under arms (bra line) |
|  | 9. Top of Head           |

**Important Note** – Make sure to tap on bone at the eye points and to tap underneath the collarbones.

**Tapping** – With one or more fingertips or the flat of the hand, tap a minimum of 5 times on each point. A flat hand can be used at the head, collarbone, and underarm points, to cover a larger area. Fingertips can be used for other points. It doesn't matter if we tap on the left or right side of the body. We can also tap on both sides – either at the same time or down one side and then down the other.

**Process** – Name your trigger, what you're upset about. It may help to rate the intensity of it on a scale of 0 to 10 (10 being most intense). While tapping the **first point**, repeat out loud a statement about it 3 times such as...

- *“Even though I am angry beyond reason right now, I choose to honor and accept who I am now.”*
- *“Even though I think I'm no good and that everyone is better than me, I totally love and accept myself.”*
- *“Even though I feel sad because of what happened to me at age \_\_\_\_, I deeply and completely love and accept myself.”*

The point is to acknowledge your pain, and move toward love and acceptance (even if you don't believe in it yet).

**Process** – For the **remaining points**, it can be shortened to one abbreviated statement, if desired, such as...

- *“This sadness and incompetence I feel”*
- *“This reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_”*

New things can be added at each point, such as...

- *Acknowledging where the feeling is in your body*
- *Other feelings that come up*
- *Situations you're reminded of*

After completing one round, take a deep breath and tune into your feelings. Rate the intensity now (0 to 10). If you still feel activated you may want to do another round. When you feel calm or neutral that may mean you are done tapping.

## Regression Technique

When we get triggered, we can follow this process:

- (1) How am I **feeling** (about this situation)?
- (2) What are my **unmet needs** (around this situation)?  
It can be helpful to refer to lists of feelings & needs words.
- (3) When was the **first time** I ever felt this way?  
(OR What does this **remind me** of?)
- (4) **Acknowledge** every experience that comes to mind, giving yourself empathy for the feelings and unmet needs you had. Eventually a core experience will come up that stops or breaks the trigger. You will come across something that, once acknowledged, brings understanding and release. Your feelings are transformed about both past and present.
- (5) **Imagine** what it would have been like if your needs had been met during the core experience. Imagine how the remainder of your life would have played out. (The body knows no difference between imagination & reality.)

### Feelings

(When Needs Are Not Met)

Afraid	Depressed	Forlorn
Affronted	Despair	Fragile
Aggravated	Despondent	Frazzled
Agitated	Detached	Frenetic
Agonized, Agony	Devastated	Frenzied
Alarmed	Disaffected	Frightened
Alienated	Disappointed	Frustrated
Aloof	Discombobulated	Furious
Ambivalent	Disconcerted	Fuzzy
Angry	Discouraged	Gloomy
Anguished	Disenchanted	Grief-stricken
Animosity	Disgruntled	Grieving
Annoyed	Disgusted	Guarded
Anxious	Disheartened	Guilty
Apathetic	Dislike	Harried
Appalled	Dismayed	Hate, Hateful
Apprehensive	Displeased	Heartbroken
Aroused	Disquieted	Heavy
Ashamed	Distant	Heavy-hearted
Aversion	Distaste	Helpless
Baffled	Distracted	Hesitant
Beat	Distraught	Hopeless
Bereaved	Distressed	Horrible
Bewildered	Disturbed	Horrificed
Bitter	Downcast	Hostile
Blah, Blue	Downhearted	Hot
Bored	Dread	Humdrum
Broken-hearted	Dull	Hurt
Burnt-out	Edgy	Impatient
Chagrined	Embarrassed	Incensed
Cold, Cool	Embittered	Indecisive
Concerned	Enraged	Indifferent
Confused	Envious	Indignant
Contempt	Exhausted	Intense
Crabby	Erratic	Irate
Cranky	Exasperated	Irked
Critical	Fatigued	Irritable, Irritated
Cross Dazed	Fearful	Leery
Dejected	Fidgety	Lethargic
Demoralized	Flustered	Listless
Depleted	Foreboding	Livid

Lonely	Perplexed	Stressed out
Longing	Perturbed	Surprised
Lost	Pessimistic	Suspicious
Jangled	Petrified	Tepid
Jarred	Pining	Terrified
Jealous	Puzzled	Tired
Jittery	Rancorous	Torn
Jumpy	Rankled	Troubled
Keyed-up	Rattled	Uncomfortable
Lazy	Regret	Unconcerned
Mad	Reluctant	Uneasy
Mean	Remorse	Unglued
Melancholy	Removed	Unhappy
Miserable	Repelled	Uninterested
Mistrustful	Repulsed	Unnerved
Mopey	Resentful	Unsettled
Morose	Reserved	Unsteady
Mortified	Restless	Upset
Mournful	Sad	Uptight
Mystified	Scared	Vengeful
Nervous	Seething	Vexed
Nettled	Self-conscious	Vicious
Nostalgic	Sensitive	Vindictive
Numb	Shaky	Violent
Outraged	Shocked	Wary
Overburdened	Skeptical	Weary
Overloaded	Sleepy	Wistful
Overwhelmed	Sorrowful	Withdrawn
Panicked, Panicky	Sorry	Woeful
Passive	Spiritless	Worried
Peevish	Spiteful	Wretched
	Startled	Yearning

### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Survival	Social	Esteem (from Self)	Goals
Oxygen (air)	Acceptance	Competence	Growth
Water	Belonging	Freedom	Lack of prejudice
Food	Colleagues	Independence	Mate
Sleep	Community	Mastery	acquisition
Shelter	Confidants	Acceptance	Maturity
Clothing	Family	Confidence	Morality
Reproduction	Friendships	Connection	Parenting
	Groups	Love	Peak experiences
<b>Safety</b>	Intimacy	Respect	Problem-solving
Accommodation	Love	I matter	Pursuit of happiness
Comfort	Mentors	My needs matter	Self:
Consistency		Strength	-Awareness
Health	<b>Esteem (from Others)</b>	Value	-Expression
Insurance	Attention		-Fulfillment
Savings	Contribution	<b>Self-Actualization</b>	-Realization
Security	Fame, Glory	Accept Facts	Spirituality
Solitude	Importance	Accomplish	Transcend
Stability	Prestige	Altruism	Utilize abilities & talents
Support	Recognition	B all U can B	
Well-being	Respect	Creativity	
	Status	Development	
	Value	Full potential	

## Tony Robbins – Basic Needs

<b>Certainty</b> Comfort Safety Security Solitude Stability Support Survival Well-being	<b>Significance</b> Importance To Matter Have Meaning Have Value  <b>Connection</b> Acceptance Belonging Caring Closeness Communication Companionship Compassion Consideration Cooperation Empathy Humor Inclusion	Intimacy Love Gifts Service Time Touch Words  <b>Growth</b> Development Maturity Self-Actualization Self-Fulfillment  <b>Contribution</b> Add Value Give Help Meet Needs Improve Uplift
---	--	--

## NVC – Basic Needs

<b>Autonomy</b> Choice Freedom Independence Space Spontaneity  <b>Connection</b> Acceptance Affection Appreciation Belonging Closeness Communication Community Companionship Compassion Consideration Consistency Cooperation Emo safety Empathy Inclusion	Mutuality Nurturing Intimacy Love Reassurance Respect Safety Self-Respect Security Stability Support To know To be known To see To be seen To understand To be understood Trust Warmth  <b>Honesty</b> Authenticity	Integrity Presence  <b>Meaning</b> Awareness Celebration Challenge Clarity Competence Consciousness Contribution Creativity Discovery Effectiveness Expression Growth Hope Learning Mourning Purpose Stimulation Matter Understand	<b>Peace</b> Beauty Communion Ease Equality Harmony Inspiration Order  <b>Physical Well-Being</b> Air, Food, H2O Exercise Movement Protection Rest, Sleep Safety Sexuality Shelter Touch  <b>Play</b> Fun, Joy Humor
--	--	--	---

## NVC Technique

- (1) At the top of a piece of paper, write a statement describing the trigger or the trauma (what happened) without any evaluation, judgment, or analysis.
- (2) Draw a line underneath the statement, going across the whole page. Draw another line under the first line going down the middle of the page.
- (4) Put the letter “F” at the top of the first column. In that column, list all of your feelings about the situation.
- (4) Put the letter “N” at the top of the second column. In that column, list all of your needs in the situation.
- (5) After completing both columns, read the entire page and write down anything that occurs to you as a response, realization, or awareness.

**OPTIONAL:** Do the whole exercise again from the other person’s point of view.

**OPTIONAL:** Meditate afterwards, asking for guidance about the situation. Then, without thinking, start writing with your non-dominant hand whatever comes to you.

## Reframing “Graduation Exercise”

This exercise gets us back on the page of feeling empowered & responsible for our part and allows us to celebrate change in a positive way. We search for a way to take responsibility without blaming ourselves or anyone else. This takes the power away from the situation, over which we have no control, and gives it back to us.

(1) *What is your overriding thought about this situation?*

E.g. *My son doesn't respect me, and I hate being late.*

Once you identify this, you have a handle – something to work with.

(2) There is a part of you that created this situation and that has been creating situations like this for a long time. Call upon that part of yourself. Sometimes it feels masculine or feminine. Sometimes it has a name.

Begin graduating that part of you. The dialogue with yourself goes something like this:

*“Thank you for creating situations where I feel disrespected and the stress of being late. I am very grateful for your service – for your work in reliably maintaining this belief and using this strategy for so many years. You have created situations like this for me most of my life and you have done it with great precision. I appreciate all of your effort. Today is your graduation day. A day for you to be promoted, if you wish, to a new position. Congratulations!”*

(3) Now let the part of you that has been creating situations like this give a speech.

*“Well, it's true I have worked very hard, and at times it has been exhausting and even grueling work, but ultimately I enjoyed it, and I couldn't have done it without the help of some people and situations that I want to thank now. Thanks to my son who helped by participating in this situation. Thanks to my father who usually ran late. Thanks to my mother who was always uptight about how I got ready for appointments. And thanks to my boss who is scary if I'm late.*

*I am now ready to release these duties and my new role will be making sure that we are always 10 minutes early to appointments so we can enjoy the ride.”*

(4) Close by saying, *“Thank you for your service. If there is any assistance you need to succeed in your new job, I am here for you.”*

## Reframing “The Story”

This exercise helps us get out of the past and into the present, connect with what is truly happening now, and feel empowered & responsible for our thoughts & feelings.

(1) *What happened? What are you upset about?*

E.g. This is escalating into physical violence. This is getting really dangerous. I'm afraid she is going to get hurt really badly.

(2) *What situation in your past does this remind you of?*

The violence in my 3-year marriage escalated to where I was getting thrown around like a rag doll by my husband, who was much bigger than I was.

Through this situation, you are reliving an unhealed trauma from the past. The current situation is resonating with something that happened earlier in your life. You are emotionally regressed to whatever age you were during that prior experience, and you fear that the present situation will have the same outcome. You are unable to see any differences between the past and present situations – only the similarities.

(3) *What story are you telling yourself about the situation?*

She is going to get thrown around like I did.

(4) *What is really happening? He is harassing her.*

(5) *What is a new story you can tell yourself?*

Her situation is very different from mine. In 30 years he has never thrown her around, so he's not likely to start now.

### Example 2:

(1) *What happened? What are you upset about?*

My body generated a huge shot of adrenaline, when another driver darted out in front of me, and I had to brake suddenly to avoid hitting their car.

(2) *What situation in your past is this reminding you of?*

23 yrs ago an oncoming driver was driving too fast on a snowy road, slid and crashed into me totaling my car and injuring me.

(3) *What story are you telling yourself about this situation?*

It's not safe to drive. I am in danger. There are too many reckless drivers on the road and drivers with poor judgment out here endangering their own and others' lives.

(4) *What is really happening?*

Obviously I can handle these drivers and whatever comes up on the road because I haven't been in a single crash in over 20 yrs.

(5) *What is a new story you can tell yourself?*

I got this! I'm an experienced driver now. I have over 20 years of driving experience, not less than 1 year like I did back then.

## TAT™

Tapas Acupressure Technique™ is an energy healing technique created by Tapas Fleming using acupressure and cognitive statements to clear the brain of old patterns. It doesn't require getting in touch with the emotional components of a memory, re-experiencing trauma or even knowing what the trauma was. Memories are gently unburied, gradually, over time. Below is an abbreviated version of this technique that works very well.

**Important Note** – Only hold the pose described below for a max of 20 minutes in a 24-hour period. This technique makes such big changes in the brain, the body needs time to regroup and catch up. Also recommended: drink 6-8 glasses of water on TAT days.

**Pot** – First, take some time to gather all of your thoughts about the situation. Imagine putting them all into a big pot together. Say, “I will call everything in the pot ‘THIS.’”

**Pose** – With the thumb and ring finger of one hand, lightly touch the upper inner corner of each eye while placing the middle finger between and slightly above your eyebrows (3rd eye). Place the palm of your other hand on the back of your head at the base of your skull (visual center) – with your thumb resting just above your neck at the hairline.

### Process

- Get into the pose and put your attention on a statement. Keep your attention on the statement, and relax into the pose, noticing if anything occurs (sensations, images, emotions, thoughts, memories...). Hold the pose until this feels complete (some VA's find it helpful to set a timer for a minute or two.)
- Rest your arms and reflect in un-timed silence, noticing if anything else occurs. (You can jot down notes before, during & after the reflection.)

Do the process with each of the following statements:

- (1) **Everything that contributed to my resonating, identifying and connecting with THIS happened.**
- (2) **All that happened is over, and I no longer resonate, identify or connect with THIS.**
- (3) **All the places in my body, mind, heart and life where THIS has been stored are healing now.**
- (4) **All the origins of THIS are healing now.**
- (5) **All the communications and connections related to THIS are completed now. I apologize to those I have hurt and forgive those who hurt me related to THIS. I wish them love, happiness and peace. I forgive everyone and everything I have blamed for THIS, including God and myself.**
- (6) **All the parts of me that have been involved in THIS are healing now.**
- (7) **Whatever's left about THIS is healing now.**
- (8) **I choose \_\_\_\_\_ (whatever positive outcome you want related to THIS).**
- (9) **This healing is completely integrated now with my grateful thanks.**

Find out more about this process at [tatlife.com](http://tatlife.com)

## Thought Rhyming

This is a way to intimately interact with our Higher Power, who is glad to be with us and capable of helping us. This is a written journaling exercise. Take a few deep breaths to slow yourself down, be fully present to the presence of your Higher Power, and ask for help to ground yourself in the love of your Higher Power (HP).

(1) *I can see you...*

Imagine HP seeing your situation, environment, movement, inner experience, etc.

Example: *I can see you sitting at your dining table in the dark, breathing heavily. I can see your eyes beginning to fill with tears. I can see you crying inside.*

(2) *I can hear you...*

Imagine HP hearing all your thoughts that are spoken and unspoken.

Example: *I can hear you say to yourself, "How will I ever get everything done? Why isn't my partner helping me and concerned as much as I am? Why do I keep messing up like this? I'm so frustrated with myself."*

(3) *I understand how big this is for you...*

Imagine HP knows you well, validating your experience with compassion and revealing an anchor.

Example: *I know this is a pretty big deal for you. It feels all-consuming for you. It looks like this is about to overtake you. **This is as big of a deal as when your parents announced their divorce.***

(4) *I am glad to be with you, and I see your weakness tenderly...*

Imagine HP calling your name lovingly and simply enjoying being with you.

Example: *I am always glad to interact with you anytime, including this moment of frustration/pain/sadness.*

(5) *I can do something about what you are going through...*

Imagine HP assuring you of HP's power to help you and give you everything you need.

Example: *I am with you and for you. I will strengthen you with my grace. Remember how your friend encouraged you last week? I will continue in that way.*

**RECOMMENDED:** Read your interaction with HP aloud to someone you trust.

## Body Talk

We can let physical sensations guide us to emotions and memories that are beneath our conscious awareness.

Silently ask your body, *"Body, how are you feeling?"*

Turn your focus inward... As you do so, your attention is drawn to a physical sensation somewhere in your body... You allow yourself to fully feel this sensation... As you are feeling this physical sensation, an emotion is entering your awareness... You allow yourself to fully feel this emotion... As you are feeling this emotion, a memory is now surfacing into your awareness... You are letting any memories that want to surface do so naturally... You are just observing and feeling whatever is coming up with curiosity... Now you are noticing that this gentle trip down memory lane is revealing connections between events in your past and recent feelings and events in your life... You are beginning to see a lifelong pattern emerge... A significant issue in your life is now illuminated... You see that an old "program" has been running on the "hard drive" of your subconscious mind... You clearly see where this program came from, and you can clearly see that it is no longer relevant... You let it go now... It is being uninstalled and replaced. Your system is being updated... You feel light... free... joyful...

## Deeply Acknowledge

Trauma is about survival and safety. Any being when subjected to a perceived threat, reacts by trying to protect itself against the threat, trying to be safe, trying to survive. To let go of trauma, we need to deeply acknowledge the very first reaction we had. Then we can "complete" the trauma instead of staying stuck in the survival instinct, which protected us in the moment of trauma. We can peel back the layers of safety that we have been holding onto. "I deeply acknowledge the subconscious association between \_\_\_\_\_ and safety. It is safe now to \_\_\_\_\_"

**SUGGESTION:** After saying these two statements, say the two statements from the technique below.

## Breaking Agreements

"I no longer agree that \_\_\_\_\_ is bad."

"I no longer agree that I am bad if I \_\_\_\_\_"

When many of us were kids, people told us a bunch of untrue stuff in order to get us to behave how they thought we should. By complying with what they said and trying to be "good", we effectively "agreed" with them that our natural, true selves were "bad". Now we can break all those agreements, as they surface. This frees us to be who and how we really are, instead of who and how other people told us to be.

## Notes on Childhood

It can be helpful to understand a little about child development, since many of our subconscious reactive patterns were established in childhood, especially during the first 7 years of our lives.

### Limbic Imprints

Memories are used by the hippocampus to imprint emotional and physical experiences into the brain. The amygdala controls emotional regulation & responses to experiences. Survival fears get imprinted on the amygdala, controlling our emotional responses to everyday life. When imprinted with trauma in the womb, at birth or in infancy, we come to view trauma as a normal part of life and look for it everywhere. Acknowledgement can be liberating.

### Egocentricity

Young children are egocentric. They can't see a perspective outside of their own. As kids, everything happens to us, for us and because of us (TUFUBU). We are the center of the world, and, cognitively, we can't see otherwise. When harm is inflicted upon us, we can't help but think it's because of us. However, it was never about us. Almost nothing done to us is ever about us. Now that we have aged out of this egocentricity, we can de-personalize what happened to us.

### Age 7

Children are emotional beings – tuned in to the emotional state of those around them. Children under age 7 can't actually distinguish between their own and others' feelings because their prefrontal cortex is not fully developed yet. When a childhood memory arises from before age 7, we note who else was present in the situation and acknowledge that we must have felt every emotion they were feeling, as though it were our own. We absorbed a lot of other peoples' emotional baggage that way and have been carrying it through life thinking it was ours. We can let it go now.

## WORKING WITH BELIEFS

### Core Beliefs

*Beliefs generate thoughts, which generate feelings, which inspire actions, which repeated over time create habits.*

- (1) Describe the activating event.  
*What happened? Who was there? What did they do?*
- (2) What were your **actions**? *What did you do?*
- (3) How did you **feel**? [See list of feeling words p. 9-10]
- (4) What were you **thinking**? *What were you telling yourself? What self-talk was going on in your head?*
- (5) What was your underlying **belief**? *Do your thoughts or self-talk match any of the 12 Core Irrational Beliefs?*

- (1) **Where did this belief come from?**
- (2) Now discard the irrational **belief** and replace it with a rational belief (see list of Rational Beliefs). (You can use reframing here or employ a technique called "disputing" to help you let go of the irrational belief. To dispute a belief, ask questions such as "Who says it's true? Where is the proof/evidence? So what if it IS true? Who cares?")

(3) What **thoughts** are entering your mind now?

*What is your self-talk like now?*

(4) What are you **feeling** now?

(5) Are you inspired to take any **actions** now?

## 12 Core Beliefs

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) has found that at the root of most emotional disturbance are certain core irrational ideas, which have been clinically observed.

Irrational Belief	Rational Belief
Misery is always externally caused – forced on us by outside people and events.	Misery is largely caused by <u>the view that we take of conditions &amp; events.</u>
We have virtually no control over our emotions, and we cannot help feeling disturbed about things.	We have real control over our destructive emotions, if we choose to work at changing the core beliefs creating them.
Because something once strongly affected our life, it should indefinitely affect it.	We can learn from our past experiences and don't have to be prejudiced by them.
If something is or may be dangerous or fearsome, we should be terribly upset and endlessly obsess about it.	It's better to simply face it and render it non-dangerous, and, when that's impossible, accept the inevitable as gracefully as possible.
We must have certain and perfect control over things.	The world is full of chance and uncertainty, and we can still enjoy life despite this.
It is horrible when things are not the way we like them to be.	If things are not the way we like them to be, we could try to change bad conditions to become more satisfactory, and, if that is not possible, it is best to temporarily accept their existence <u>as gracefully as possible.</u>
Certain acts are awful or wicked, and the people who perform such acts should be severely damned.	People's poor behaviors do not make them rotten individuals. Certain acts are self-defeating or antisocial, the people who perform such acts are behaving stupidly, ignorantly, or neurotically, and maybe they could be helped to change.
We should be thoroughly competent, intelligent and achieving in all possible respects.	It's better to simply do, rather than always need to do well, and to accept ourselves as imperfect creatures, with general human limits and specific individual fallibilities.
It is a dire necessity for adults to be loved by significant others for almost everything they do.	It is best to concentrate on one's own self-respect, on winning approval for practical purposes, and on loving rather than being loved.
We absolutely need something other or stronger or greater than ourselves on which to rely.	It is better to take the risks of thinking and acting less dependently.
It is easier to avoid than to face life's difficulties and self-responsibilities.	This so-called easy way is usually much harder in the long run.
Happiness can be achieved by inertia and inaction.	We tend to be happiest when we are <u>vitaly absorbed in creative pursuits</u> or devoting ourselves to something outside ourselves.

## The Work of Byron Katie™

We can obtain freedom from Victim Thinking by questioning our beliefs.

### I. Writing

[1] In this situation, who angers, confuses, saddens or disappoints you and why?

[Name] because s/he/it/they is/are \_\_\_\_\_.

[2] In this situation, how do you want them to change?

I want [Name] to \_\_\_\_\_.

[3] In this situation, what advice would you offer to them?

[Name] should/shouldn't \_\_\_\_\_.

[4] In order for you to be happy, what do you need them to think, say, feel or do?

I need [Name] to \_\_\_\_\_.

[5] What do you think of them in this situation?

[Name] is \_\_\_\_\_.

[6] What about this do you never want to experience again?

I don't ever want \_\_\_\_\_.

Apply Steps II-IV below to the thought in the first statement. Then apply those steps to the second statement & so on.

### II. Questions

Investigate the statement, giving yourself time to go deep.

(1) Is it true? (Yes/No) (If No, skip to 3<sup>rd</sup> question.)

(2) Can you absolutely know that it is true? (Yes/No)

(3) When you believe that thought, what happens?

How do you feel and react? How do you treat that person?

(4) Who would you be (right now) without that thought?

How would you be and feel? What would you do?

### III. Turnarounds

Turn the statement (thought) around...

To Yourself: \_\_\_\_\_ To the Opposite: \_\_\_\_\_

[1] I am [...]. [1] Name is not [...].

[2] I want me to [...]. [2] I don't want Name to [...].

[3] I should/shouldn't [...]. [3] Name shouldn't/should [...].

[4] I need to [...]. [4] I don't need Name to [...].

[5] I am [...]. [5] Name is not [...].

[6] I am willing to [...]. [6] I look forward to [...].

**Note:** Until you can look forward to this aspect of life without fear, your Work on this is not done.

### IV. Examples

Find at least 3 specific, genuine examples of how both turnarounds are true, in this situation.

## RESOURCES

**ViolenceAnonymous.org** (Drama Triangle, Tools)

**CNVC.org** (Lists of Feelings and Needs)

**LynneForrest.com** (Victim Triangle, Triangle Roles)

**NewJumpSpot.com** (Boundary Styles, Triangle Roles, Push/Pull)

**TATlife.com** (Tapas Acupressure Technique by Tapas Fleming)

**SmartRecovery.org** (ABC Worksheet – 12 Core Beliefs)

**Dhamma.org/en/about/art** (Vipassana Meditation – Sensations)

**ImmanuelJournaling.com** (Thought Rhyming)

**TheTappingSolution.com** (Tapping Technique/App/Summit)

[www.thetappingsolution.com/tapping-101/](http://www.thetappingsolution.com/tapping-101/)

**TheWork.com** (The Work of Byron Katie)

**TheExercise.org** (The Shift Exercise by Thom Bond)

### Books

**Non-Violent Communication** by Marshall Rosenberg (Feelings)

**The 5 Love Languages of Children** by Chapman & Campbell

**The Four Agreements** by Don Miguel Ruiz

**Intuitive Self-Healing** by Marie Manuchehri (Chakra Clearing)

**Mindsight** by Daniel Siegel (Implicit Memory)

**And So We Begin: The founder of Violence Anonymous Shares a**

**Decade of Experience Working the 12 Steps of VA.** by James M

(Seeking Prayer, Reframing "Graduation Exercise")

### YouTube

**Dr Nicole Le Pera** interviewed by Lewis Howes

Secrets to a Healthy Relationship

**Marisa Peer**

How To Take Control of Your Past (interviewed by Tony Gonzalez)

The 6 Secrets to Completely Heal (interviewed by Lewis Howes)

Know You Can Have it All (on Mindvalley)

**Regression** posted by Jovanna Casey:

NJS – Regression 1 of 3 – Jovanna Casey (new)

**Somatic Experiencing** posted by Kati Morton:

What is Somatic Experiencing in Trauma Therapy?

**Vedic Completion Process** posted by Nithyananda:

Completion Process for Health, Wealth, Relationships...(4:27+)

**Trauma Work** posted by Ben Ralston:

How to Let Go or Release Buried Emotions...?

...Unresolved Trauma (14:11-15:38, 18:27-20:30)

**Completion Process & Shadow Work** posted by Teal Swan:

What is Shadow Work?

Secrets to a Spiritual Awakening... (41-46:28-47:35)

Follow the Feeling Process

How to Find a Core Belief & How to Change a Belief

**Ancestral Trauma Release** posted by Wisdom From North:

Trauma Release Session 2:2 with Evette Rose

**Forgiveness** posted by Center for Spiritual Living – Seattle:

January 29, 2017 Edwene Gaines (20:51-25:35)

**The Work of Byron Katie:** My Son Is Selfish

**TAT – Tapas Acupressure Technique** posted by Tapas Fleming:

My Inspiration for TAT™ and How I Came Up with It

How to do TAT™ – A Comprehensive Intro

TAT Pose and Stoppers...

**EFT Tapping:**

EFT Tapping – Trauma Release with Eric Crake

Discreet EFT Points for Tapping in Public posted by Shalini

EFT Universe (channel) – Techniques, trauma release & research

with Dawson Church

Tapping with Brad (channel) – Brad Yates