

The Overwhelmed Brain

Eliminating Emotional Triggers Workbook

Ending the Emotional Overreactions to Life's Simple Events

Introduction

When I was married, all my wife had to do to get me upset was to *look* at a cinnamon bun or a sugary coffee drink at any coffee shop. When I would see her contemplating buying junk food, I would get angry, sad, and have feelings of rejection and abandonment.

Not only did I feel this towards *her*, but I also felt some of these things towards myself. When she ate or drank sugary treats in front of me, it pushed me over the edge. The negative feelings built up and caused me to close her off and detach from my emotions.

She didn't purposely try to upset me, of course. She was just being herself and eating the food she enjoyed.

But I had an issue with the food she enjoyed.

I got "triggered" whenever I saw her eating anything unhealthy for her.

An **emotional trigger** is what happens when you overreact to an experience, usually because of a violation of one of your personal boundaries. When someone does something that offends or upsets you, *that* is the process of "being triggered" - even if what they did is not actually harmful to you.

When my wife reached for junk food, thoughts of her gaining weight rushed through my head. I also imagined her getting lazier, sitting on the couch doing nothing, and spending the money I was bringing home on more junk food.

These thoughts plagued me.

I would go to work, eat healthy and stay in relatively good shape, while being married to someone I watched what I judged to be bad behavior. Again, images of her not working and not moving flashed in my mind *every time* she ate junk food.

The main cause for my wife's suffering and the end of our marriage was because of my triggers.

When you interpret something to be "bad" for you, you can get triggered when it appears in your life. This "trigger" is a defense mechanism that kicks in to protect you from a perceived danger.

The bad feelings you get during a trigger moment are what your mind and body have learned to do over the years in order to warn you of a threat. However, in most cases, *there really is no threat at all.*

In fact, after working through the triggers I had in my marriage, I learned that the only real threat was *my own behavior after getting triggered!*

I learned that when I focused on wanting her to change, and she didn't, *I* created the drama and upset in the relationship.

I spent *years* blaming her for not changing her unhealthy habits.

I spent *years* telling her in subtle ways that if she truly loved me, she would change.

I spent years unknowingly disintegrating a relationship with someone who truly *did* love me because I couldn't accept her behavior.

And by the time I realized that my triggers were the cause of all our strife it was too late.

The very last year of our relationship was a period of healing and evolution for me. As I started learning more about myself, she decided that she was ready to reinvigorate *her* life again too, so she left the marriage and drove back to California.

However, her plan wasn't to leave me. It was to fix what she thought was broken in *her*.

For almost the entire duration of our marriage, she became more and more down on herself and life in general. She hated feeling that way but didn't know what to do about it. She lost her passion.

Then one day she decided that '*enough is enough*' and the only way she was going to change would be to take massive action. She packed up and moved back to her hometown in California.

I was going to finish up the job I was working on in the following months and meet her down there so we could start fresh in hopes that this separation would be good for the both of us.

We were separate for months, and it was exactly what I needed to discover my healing path *away* from my triggers. I helped quite a few clients resolve their triggers, but I was never able to heal my own.

Our time apart was the impetus for me to make some huge changes in my life too.

10 months passed. She was finding herself again and I had started The Overwhelmed Brain.

And, we were getting along stellarly!

We chatted on the phone every day, did video calls back and forth, and shared our healing stories. I felt more close to her than I ever felt. I was able to talk with her without worrying about being triggered anymore.

We both felt great and she could tell that I was certainly a different person. She didn't even know how to respond to me because what she used to fear (my triggers which made her feel bad) simply didn't exist anymore.

The job I had was wrapping up and I was getting ready to move down to California to be with her again. We were going to take it slow, because I knew she had some old wounds that I put there.

However, a month before the lease ended on our condo - before my planned move, I woke up one morning and checked my email (probably not the best morning habit). She wrote me a message I'll never forget:

"After being apart for all this time, I've learned a lot about myself... One thing I learned is that I realize I no longer love you."

I went into what I might call *shock*. There was more to the message, but this one comment was all that I could focus on. It was the beginning of what would soon be the *end* of our relationship and our marriage.

I walked into the living room, my knees got weak, and I collapsed on the floor in tears.

I think I said out loud, *"Oh my god... my marriage is ending."*

The True Test of Personal Evolution

Within two days of my wife's message, I went to the courthouse to find out what it would take to get a divorce. Somehow during the misery I was feeling, I knew that the longer it took to get divorced, the longer it would take for my healing to begin. So I wanted to begin the painful process as soon as possible.

I wanted to get divorced as quickly as possible.

I was very careful before I made the decision to seek a divorce. I talked with my wife and asked her what we could do to fix this. I asked her if there was *any chance at all* at repairing what we have.

She said she was absolutely sure of her decision and that she did not want to continue our relationship.

As awful as it felt to hear this at least I knew where we stood. There was no ambiguity whatsoever. She gave me the gift of clarity so I didn't make any assumptions.

It hurt! But at least I had all the information I needed to start taking action and taking care of myself right away. I pursued divorce as quick as possible.

Some people ask me why I got a divorce so quickly after I found out there was no hope. I ask *them* what takes other people so long to start the process of divorce after they know there's no hope!

Knowing you don't have a chance is a lot easier to accept and move through as opposed to not knowing if you do or don't.

Not knowing creates indecision which prolongs the pain.

One of the biggest steps in forward momentum through your emotional triggers is making a decision and taking action.

There's almost nothing worse than indecision.

Not deciding keeps you stagnant. *Not* moving in one direction or another keeps you stagnant.

Don't get caught up in the rut of indecision. Find out where you stand, then *decide*, then take action.

Your decision may or may not always be "right", *but at least you'll be moving in a direction*. And it's a lot easier to change course than to start from a standstill.

It's called *speeding up the process of closure*.

This concept is something I've gotten in the habit of doing and it has been pivotal in the resolution of most of my emotional triggers up to this point.

This is something I'll be teaching you in this workbook, along with a few other things, that will guide you to a better place with any triggers *you* may be dealing with.

Grieving and acceptance are both part of the process of resolving emotional triggers which is why many people still have them. They don't want to grieve because it's too painful, and they don't want to accept because it means they can't get what they want (which can also be painful).

My marriage was plagued by my continuous and consistent judgments about her food choices. In fact looking back now, I can honestly say that I was triggered for the majority of our 8-year relationship. This made both of us miserable. It's nowhere you want to be.

Command Your Thoughts

When someone does something you don't like and you feel somehow threatened by it and you get a bad feeling. Afterward, you stay on high alert to protect yourself.

A "threat" can be as simple as someone leaving the cap off the toothpaste. The reason you're triggered by something so seemingly innocuous is because there's a deeper, core-level *perceived* threat to who you are and how you want to be treated in life.

Your body has *learned* how to feel bad over the years because learning is what it does best. You learn what to go after and what to avoid. You learn to steer clear of dangerous behavior and you get "bad" feelings when someone does or says something that triggers you.

But there was a time in your life that *you didn't have these triggers*. This could have been when you were a child, or even before that.

What you perceive as a threat during a trigger moment is almost always *not* a threat - It's a *learned* behavior. The first time you *did* perceive something as a threat, you developed a triggered, or unconscious, response to it so that you could feel safe.

This response is your trigger. It's the signal to your mind and body to protect yourself.

But as an adult now, even when you truly believe something to be a threat *you still have a choice* in how to respond to that threat.

You have *four* choices actually, but you can only choose *one*. I call these four choices the **Trigger Response Directives** because in order to get through a trigger moment, you need to choose one directive (or instruction), and *commit to it*.

You need to direct your mind to make a choice.

When you commit, you need to also *accept* the consequences of that commitment. In other words, make the commitment and *follow through with it*.

Committing to a decision is how people move forward and get results.

The following page shows you the four directives you have available to you when you get triggered. Make a choice, follow through, accept the consequences, get results.

The trick is making the *right* choice to get the results that you want!

When you are triggered, there are really only four responses available to you. I call them the "Trigger Response Directives". Don't worry, you won't have to memorize the name, but I do want you to realize that these are your *only* options.

By being limited to four responses, it's easier to commit to a path and come to a solution. Can you guess which path causes the least amount of suffering?

The Trigger Response Directives (TRDs):

- Stay and accept what is (rare)
- Stay and reject what is (common)
- Leave and accept what is (rare)
- Leave and reject what is (rare)

Stay and Accept What Is: Choose to stay in the situation where the triggers are present (a job, relationship, or something else), but accept that there's *nothing you can do to change what triggers you*.

i.e. If someone smokes around you and you don't like it, *accept* that there's absolutely nothing you can do about it.

Ever.

This will force you into acceptance of your circumstances and will help you let go of your *resistance* to the trigger. When there's no resistance, there's no trigger.

This doesn't always mean that staying and accepting is the *right* choice for you, it just means you've come to a place of acceptance and peace with it.

Stay and Reject What Is: Stay in the situation and *reject* the idea that there's nothing you can do to change it.

When you reject what "is", you hold on to your resistance to it. Holding on to resistance causes the most suffering and keeps the trigger alive in you, causing you to get triggered over and over again by the same situation!

Thinking you can change someone else is usually one of the biggest reasons someone stays triggered. Even if the person that triggers you changes and doesn't trigger you anymore, you will *still* carry around the negative emotions that caused the trigger in the first place.

This means that something will fire off those old triggers again in the future.

Leave and Accept What Is: Leave the situation and *accept* that there's nothing you can do to change it.

This is a hard choice, because many times you want to stay and *hope* things work out. Or maybe you believe you can change other people so that they don't trigger your defense mechanisms anymore.

However, you usually leave a situation that triggers you because of the realization that the other person won't change. When you leave and accept the situation *as-is*, you let go of your resistance to it.

Letting go of resistance means the bad feelings go away.

Leave and Reject What Is: Leave the situation and *reject* that there there's nothing you can do to change it.

Even though you leave the situation, you may *still believe* that you can help change the other person. Whether this is true or not, it's a dysfunctional, unproductive belief to hold onto because you end up focusing on someone else instead of yourself. This causes you to hold on to bad feelings.

When you are triggered by something someone does, and you hope that the other person changes so that you are no longer triggered, *your trigger is the problem, not their behavior* - at least in the context of what we're talking about in this workbook.

This is the most important statement in this workbook:

Your trigger is the problem, not their behavior.

When you accept responsibility that your trigger is the cause of your strife, and not someone else's behavior, you are on the path to growing and healing through it.

In order to get over your emotional triggers, you *must* adopt this belief system.

When you believe that your trigger is the problem, you take responsibility for your role in the situation.

If you believe that someone else's *behavior* is the problem, you give up your power and stay triggered. Since we can't change anyone but ourselves, we must be be accountable for our own responses and reactions to the challenging situations that come up in our life.

If however you hang on to the hope or belief that the other person will stop the behavior that triggers you, *you stay in limbo*.

The whole point of this workbook is to help you release emotional triggers so that you can make choices from a clear place inside your mind and be free of a clouded, distorted, and biased perspective.

Triggers distort your perspective and cause you to believe that other people need to change, not you.

It's true that others might need to change some behavior they do, but that's *their* issue. By getting triggered and *expecting* them to change, that's *your* issue.

Let's do an exercise on this concept. It's going to appear a tad redundant, but this is by design so that you can get past the first stage of healing through this.

Are you ready?

Think about something that someone does or says that triggers you.

Got it?

What happens to you when you get triggered by this?

- *Do you swallow your emotions and never mention what triggered you to the other person?*
- *Do you express yourself hoping the other person will get the message and make changes in their life?*
- *Do you send the person subtle messages like disapproving facial expressions or passive aggressive comments hoping they notice how much they are hurting you?*
- *Do you let the other person know that you are triggered and tell them you need to work on yourself?*

Most people will not do what that last question asks.

Do you know why?

Because most people believe that they themselves are not the one with the problem! If you truly believe the other person is the one with the problem, you completely disempower yourself and keep triggers alive in you.

If you're thinking, "Yeah, but they do these awful things! How are they not the problem?"

Here's how:

A problem only exists for the person who interprets a situation to be a problem.

For example, if you were in a relationship with someone and you got triggered every time they belittled you in front of friends, what would you do?

You *could* mention to them that you prefer not to be belittled, and they might apologize realizing that it offends you, promising to never do it again.

If that happened, perhaps things would improve in your relationship and that person wouldn't repeat that behavior. But what *else* could happen is that they don't see their behavior as a problem, so they just think *you're* the one with the problem.

When this happens, a second challenge arises and you now have two separate scenarios to get triggered by:

- The original behavior that triggered you in the first place
- The fact that they don't see their own behavior as a problem

Here's where it's *really* important for you to keep your power. If you accept full responsibility for your responses, you will have a good chance to resolve your triggers.

Take accountability for your responses first and foremost.

If you can do this one thing, you are already halfway to a resolution and release of your emotional triggers. Take *full* responsibility for your responses and you become empowered to make better choices in your life.

If instead you choose to *resist* being accountable for your responses, you compound more negative emotions on top of the existing ones and buy into a belief that your emotions are controlled by someone outside of you.

Think about that for a minute.

If someone angers you by their behavior, what is more empowering?

1. Them *stopping* the behavior so that you don't get triggered?
2. Or resolving your trigger so that you can make clear choices that are right for you?

Most people want another person to stop their behavior. It's perfectly normal to want this, but the reality is people will only truly change when they feel empowered to change. That's when the decision to change rises up inside of them, not from people *telling* them to change.

Yes, you can influence people to change. But if there's any reluctance to do so on their part, any change you see will likely only be temporary.

True, lasting change comes from within by making your own decisions that you know are right for you. That's also the definition of personal empowerment.

This is why when you take full responsibility for your responses, you will have empowering thoughts to help you resolve your triggers. That way, when you release your trigger, the person(s) who caused your trigger will no longer be influenced by your reaction to their behavior.

When someone doesn't react to your behavior, they get the option of being empowered to resolve their issues or not. Whether they do or don't, they are still empowered with the ability to choose what is right for them.

The Beauty of Letting Go of Triggers

Often after your triggers are resolved and released, the person that caused you to be triggered will want to resolve that triggering behavior. In other words, by you releasing those triggers, it gives *their* behavior less meaning.

This is an important point. Many times the behavior you don't like in someone else continues *because* you are triggered by it.

It's even possible that someone else is intentionally triggering you. An example of this is when a wife gets upset every time her husband reaches for alcohol. He *knows* she gets upset, which gets him angry, which causes her to shut down and be quiet, which is what he wanted all along.

But if she was no longer bothered by him reaching for alcohol, he may feel differently about how much he drinks, or if he drinks at all. This is an extreme example but you get the point.

Does that make sense how one behavior causes another? But without one, the other could change or disappear. When you get over *your* emotional triggers, *their* behavior could essentially disappear. Or at the very least, be different in some way.

Of course, the other person may not change at all. You might resolve your triggers but they could continue doing the very thing that caused you to be triggered in the first place.

But if you're no longer triggered, *then it won't matter if they do that behavior.*

That's why it's important to be responsible for your responses so that you can own your destiny (at least with triggers). When you are no longer triggered, you will be in a healthy state of mind to make empowered decisions.

In an uncluttered state of mind, you can choose to stay and accept, stay and reject, leave and accept, or leave and reject.

Empowering decisions lead to making more empowering decisions.

But as you already know from what I mentioned earlier, many people choose to stay in the situation and reject the other person's behavior which causes resistance in the body.

Holding on to resistance is the cause of most suffering and resisting the acceptance that other people will do what they do whether you like it or not will keep the trigger alive in you. When it's "alive", you will get triggered over and over again by the same situation.

Thinking you can change someone else is usually one of the biggest reasons someone stays triggered. Even if the person that triggers you changes and doesn't trigger you anymore, you will *still* carry around the negative emotions that caused the trigger in the first place.

I'll give you one guess which Trigger Response Directive causes you the *most* stress and keeps your triggers coming back again and again (hint: *It's very common*).

Remember your TRDs. They're simple, but absolute:

- Stay and accept what is
- Stay and reject what is
- Leave and accept what is
- Leave and reject what is

Can you guess which one causes the most suffering? We'll talk more about this shortly.

Triggers aren't just one-time occurrences, they happen repeatedly. And you'll feel emotional strain every time. It's like putting your hand close to fire over and over again. Every time you do it, the pain never diminishes - it always hurts.

Like I mentioned in the very first paragraph of this workbook, *triggers happen because they violate your personal boundaries*.

If you don't know what your boundaries are, it's a good idea to learn what they are now. Write them down for the important areas of your life:

Relationships, Career, Family, Spirituality, Personal Growth and Development, etc.

If you need help discovering your boundaries, you can use the *Stop Self-Sabotage Workbook* to discover what you value most in those major areas of life. Or, here's a quick method to discover your boundaries:

Ask yourself the question:

In my _____ (relationship, career, family, spirituality, etc), I feel the line has been crossed when _____.

Examples:

In my career, I feel the line has been crossed when the boss yells at me.

In my relationship, I feel the line has been crossed when my girlfriend refuses to hold my hand.

In my spirituality, I feel the line has been crossed when others make fun of what I believe in.

You may not have examples for all areas of life, but this give you an idea of what you'll tolerate and what you won't in many of those areas. I can't think of any for personal growth for example, so I probably don't need to know my personal boundaries there.

But in my relationship, I can think of plenty! If you choose to use the Stop Self-Sabotage worksheet, you'll figure out what your values are which gives you a lot of insight.

When you know what your values are and you are in alignment with those values, you will honor your personal boundaries by default.

One of the fastest ways to know know when a person or situation is in violation of your boundaries is to ask yourself the following question:

"Does this feel right to me?"

If you answer "no", then that person or situation is something you shouldn't allow into your life, or at least you need to be very careful how far you let them in. A boundary is like a castle wall that protects your emotional core - where you are both vulnerable *and* powerful.

The problem is you can lose your power if you allow your personal boundaries to be violated. When you let a person that doesn't respect your boundaries into your emotional core, *you are giving your power away.*

This is why it's so important to honor and respect yourself first and foremost so that you *stay empowered.*

Once you lose your power, you no longer feel in control of your life. "Control" is not what you're trying to achieve necessarily, but you probably know what losing control feels like and you probably don't like it.

Being triggered feels like you're losing control.

You can be triggered in *positive* ways too (when something causes you to laugh for example), but in this workbook we're focusing on the emotional triggers that make you feel *bad*. After all, we don't want to change the ones that make you feel good!

There is a process for resolving painful emotional triggers, which is to catch yourself just before and during the actual trigger moment.

When you are able to catch yourself in the act of *getting* triggered, you can start to eliminate a trigger's power over you.

Triggers are reinforced over time making them powerful. If something triggers you once, something else is likely to trigger you the same way again causing the effect of that trigger to compound over time.

When you break that repetitive pattern of reinforcement, you regain your power and disintegrate the emotional impact of the trigger.

That's what I'm here to help you do!

Your emotions on cruise control

Triggers happen *fast!*

And the reason they pop up so quickly is because they are *automatic*, buried at very deep, subconscious place inside you. This deep place is where all of your automated responses take place.

The more unconscious a behavior, the more automated it is.

If you know how to type, then you understand this concept. After all, typing becomes natural with practice. Practice often, and what you practice goes into your long-term memory and becomes a completely unconscious process - just like triggers!

But just like typing where you don't have to think too much, triggers are the same way. You don't have to think, they just appear (which is why they're difficult to prevent).

A trigger is learned once (a first or "original" emotional event), then reinforced over and over again throughout the years *priming* you to get re-triggered at a moment's notice.

For example, I remember when I was a teenager. I used to get emotionally triggered when my girlfriend would talk to other guys. There was no actual threat, but I perceived those situations to be threatening, so I became jealous and angry.

I also felt rejected and abandoned. These emotions were over the top considering the situations I'm referring to were completely innocent.

My insecurities caused the trigger.

Every time my girlfriend talked to a guy, I got triggered the same way, over and over again. When you get triggered over and over again, or if you repeat *anything* for that long, it becomes automatic. And at that point, you can get emotionally upset almost instantaneously.

Automatic responses are the problem. And they are also *the* key to understanding how and why we have triggers in the first place. Any type of "automatic" response in us is really just a series of steps that goes by lightning fast.

For example, imagine that you're sitting in a room with white carpet, drinking grape juice.

You place your glass on one of those portable TV trays. You know the type, they stand about 3 feet tall and they fall over if you breathe near them.



Now imagine a small child comes running into the room and starts running around the table. You immediately imagine the grape juice getting knocked over and falling onto the carpet.

And, as you feared, the child bumps into the table causing it to tip. Your glass wobbles and starts to fall off the edge of the table.

What do you do?

Do you calmly watch the event unfold, thinking carefully about what steps you need to take as the glass accelerates toward the table's edge?

Or... do you jump up as fast as you can, grabbing the glass, while knocking your computer off your lap letting it crash onto the floor, just so that you could save the carpet from getting a giant grape juice stain?

Most people would jump to save the drink from falling to the floor. It's a healthy, normal response to protect you and/or your environment.

This example gives you an idea of just how automated your reactions can be in life. You don't even have to *think* about jumping up and grabbing the glass, you just do it.

But you weren't born with this reaction, *you learned it*.

You learned how to respond fast, because there was a time in your past that you saved something from falling. In fact, the very first time you experienced the *consequences* of letting something fall was probably the moment you learned *how* to get triggered by an event like this.

And because the brain is so great at learning, it can *re-learn* a *new* way of handling a situation like this, if you wanted to. Though, you probably wouldn't need to relearn how to catch a falling glass because this type of trigger response can be very helpful.

However, you *might* want to change how you react when you get triggered by *other* things so that you don't feel bad. And in just a moment, you're going to learn *new* ways to respond so that you don't *react*.

What Was Isn't What Is

I'm willing to bet if you knocked a glass of grape juice onto a white carpet in front of a one year old, he or she would probably laugh! Then they would promptly sit in the juice on the floor enjoying the new experience of a soggy carpet.

If that one year old was yelled at or even spanked because they knocked the juice over, they might develop a trigger that could last with them for the rest of their life.

As they grew older, they would remember (subconsciously) *how* to respond when a similar event happened in the future. They might get fearful when he or she dropped things because of that remembered event, even though they most likely have nothing to fear.

You can develop fear of benign circumstances because of what becomes linked to those circumstances.

If you spill your drink at the table and you are yelled at for it, you will likely fear spilling your drink anywhere (this is called "generalizing", where you aren't only fearful in that situation but you are fearful *anywhere* you could spill a drink).

Why would anyone fear spilling their drink? If you think about it, almost always there's really nothing to fear. You spill it then you have to clean it up.

You might fear spilling it near electronics or a baby, but is there really anything to fear in most circumstances?

Typically *no*, but that's what we're talking about now. This is why it's important to understand exactly *what* we're being triggered by and if it's even necessary to be in a place of fear when something triggers us.

Many situations do not require fear, but a long time ago we linked fear to those situations.

If it sounds like I'm being redundant, I'm doing it with a specific purpose in mind:
Repetition of a concepts that I want burned into your mind.

Knowing a trigger is typically an old reaction repeated without thinking about it can be helpful to remember the next time you get triggered.

Knowing most triggers are typically "learned fear" from the past and not actually something to fear today can be helpful to remember the next time it happens.

And knowing that triggers are a sequence of subconscious steps that happens so fast you don't even have time to think about them can be helpful to remember the next time you feel one coming on.

Your Triggers are Who You Were

Using the previous example, let's say that when you were a child you got yelled at for spilling a drink at the table. At that moment, a trigger was created. The trigger was:

- Fear caused by spilling a drink.

Your mind and body stored this as an appropriate response for spilling a drink.

As you grew older you carried this trigger with you and consistently told people to be careful with their drinks. Then when you saw someone knock their glass over you got extremely upset and probably even yelled at them (happens in families all the time, right?).

Most of us got yelled at when we were children, but some of us *still fear* getting yelled at even when there's no actual threat.

It would be helpful if we were all able to adopt that blissful ignorance of a child, as it would certainly be one way to stop the hurtful reactions we experience. But most of us aren't able to just turn that "blissful ignorance" on and feel joyful innocence again.

What we *can* do however is *reprogram* our triggers so that they either don't happen at all, or aren't so devastating when they do.

Would you like to respond to emotional triggers in a more productive, resourceful way?

This entire workbook is written in a way to help you alleviate the impact your triggers have on you. *Even reading these words* is helping you reprogram those triggers inside of you.

Can you feel the changes happening inside already?

Let's talk about generalization. Generalization is when we attach the same pain from childhood to other, dissimilar events causing us to judge all similar events the same. Getting hit on the head with a rubber ball is a lot different than getting hit on the head with a hammer, but if you generalized that *anything* that hits your head is dangerous, you might be afraid of many more things than a hammer!

We tend to generalize and see threats that aren't usually there. This can cause us to be triggered time and time again. Let's talk a little about generalization, then we'll start the process of reprogramming some of *your* triggers.

Triggers are your "emotional security guards".



Each guard has his or her own specialty, and they are all highly skilled *in* that specialty. Their senses are honed, and they're always on the lookout for "danger".

The problem is, the danger that used to exist causing the trigger in the first place doesn't typically exist anymore.

In other words, if as a child you felt hurt when someone called you "stupid", that was the moment you *learned* to get triggered. That was the point in time where you associated pain with someone looking down at you and calling you a name.

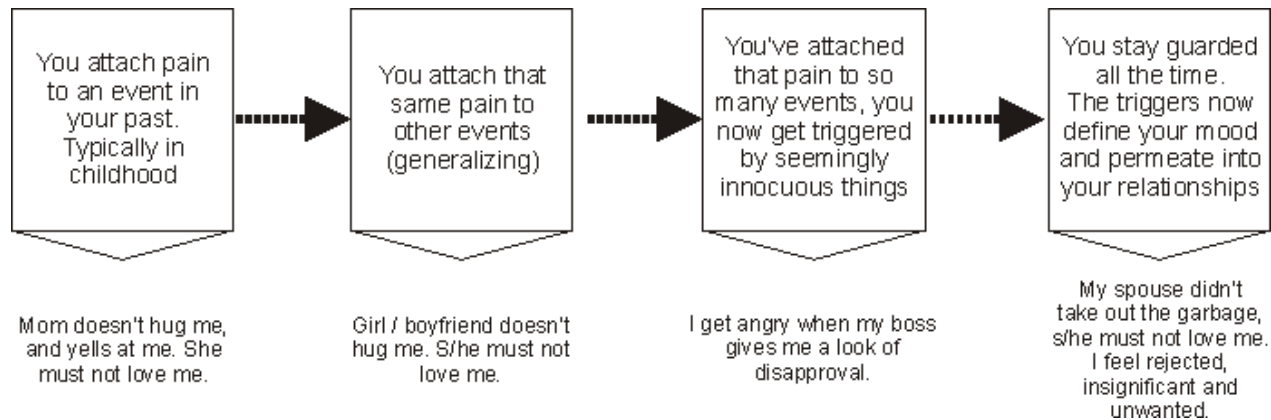
When you take this kind of emotional memory with you throughout your life, it stays an emotional trigger ready to be activated in an instant.

What's worse is that you will generalize a past event making it so that you are triggered *even when what happened in the past doesn't equate to what's happening now*.

Generalizing means that you treat other, unrelated situations the same way as when you first got triggered. You'll unconsciously associate situations that happen to you today (i.e. someone looks at you funny) with what happened to you in the past (someone looked at you funny, called you "stupid", and you felt the pain of being unwanted and insignificant).

If that's a little confusing, take a look at the chart on the following page that shows how you generalize an emotional event, causing you to get triggered at what seem to be benign circumstances.

The Process of Generalization:



The chart shows that *something* happened to you when you were younger (typically childhood) which caused you pain of some sort. Then, as other events unfolded in your life, you applied that *same childhood pain* to other situations. You assumed other situations had the same meaning as that first, original event.

Carrying childhood triggers into your adult world will eventually make even small, seemingly inconsequential events trigger you.

These triggers can lie dormant until someone or something activates them again. So everything can be going well, then suddenly you're triggered! *Something* angers or upsets you, and you may not even know why. Or even when you *do* know why, you can't figure out why you are as upset as you are.

When an emotional trigger is activated in the context of a relationship, *the tone of the entire relationship from that point on can shift for the worse, causing it to disintegrate.*

For example, when I first got together with the person who is now my ex-wife, there were no issues and everything was fantastic. But just a few weeks into our relationship, she told me she was addicted to sugar and junk food.

At the time, I was dealing with my issue of being highly judgmental of people. If they were an "addict" of any sort, I couldn't handle it.

But instead of honoring my personal boundary of not wanting to be in a relationship with an addict, I chose to *stay and reject* (judge) the person I was with.

Read that last sentence again. This is a major cause of breakdown in relationships.

When I saw my wife reach for sweets, I got upset and gave her dirty looks, or said things that were disapproving. Then after a few years, no matter *what* she ate I would get triggered and judge her.

The first, initial trigger defined the tone of our entire relationship from that point on, and was instrumental in the destruction of our marriage. We could be having a great evening eating out at a restaurant but when the dessert menu was handed to us, I started to feel tight inside.

I would hope, "*maybe this time she won't order dessert and we'll have a good evening!*"

But more times than not, this didn't happen. She would order something and I would get triggered. And our happy evening turned into her enjoying her dessert but wondering why I seemed so distant. Then after a few minutes she would feel the eyes of judgment on her and no longer enjoy her dessert.

I *did* get distant. I was angry and hurt. I felt like she didn't care about me or my needs and that she was ruining her body. I pictured her getting larger and larger and becoming a coach potato.

Regardless if the stories inside my head were going to happen or not, I was still triggered. After all, I was creating scenarios that didn't exist but *could* exist if her behavior continued. I envisioned my own miserable future.

Sometimes we are triggered by the stories we make up in our mind.

And our minds are very good at making things up. What's really happening in the moment is usually not what's triggering us. It can be, but most triggers are caused by our own stories.

However, the real problem starts when you choose to focus on what triggers you instead of the trigger itself. You have a right to feel what you feel, but you also have a responsibility to deal with your feelings and work on yourself, not put all the attention and blame on someone else.

Your triggers are your issues.

And whatever external circumstance is causing you to get triggered *doesn't matter*. How you deal with it inside yourself is what matters.

In my marriage, I focused on *her* and *her* issues because I believed everything was fine with me. After all, "*I'm not the one with the problems.*"

The hardest part for me to accept was that everything was *not* fine with me, and that *I* was the one who needed to heal and grow, not her. She may still have had her own personal growth work to do, but that issue was *hers* to deal with, not mine. If I truly didn't like what she was doing, then I needed to make a choice.

Do you remember the choices?

Here they are again...

- Stay and accept what is
- Stay and reject what is
- Leave and accept what is
- Leave and reject what is

I wanted to *stay* with her, but I couldn't *accept* her behavior.

So I instead decided to *stay* with her and *reject* her behavior. This caused strain in the relationship and harmed both her and myself.

What do *you* believe would be the best choice in this situation? If you had to choose one option above, what would be the one that caused the least resistance and the most positive end result for both of us?

If you stay and reject what *is*, you'll force yourself to endure what upsets you. You'll stress and complain and make life miserable for you and other person.

That's what I did.

Think about the best scenario and why it would or wouldn't work. Think of a situation that you'd find *yourself* in, and commit to one of those four choices. Lay out a roadmap of what would happen if you chose 1, 2, 3, or 4.

And when you think about the consequences of selecting one, see it from a few different perspectives.

Choose a path, *then ask*:

- Is this choice good for me?
- Is this choice good for them?
- Is this choice good for everyone involved?

Answer honestly.

What choice would you make, and why?

And are your choices purely selfish or do they include what's best for *everyone*? There is no wrong answer here, just insightful responses from your brain. You might be thinking, "Where's the choice where *they* change? How come there isn't a choice for me to help *them* change if I want to?"

This is an important question!

Triggers are about you and only you. The *behavior* you are triggered by in another person is *their* challenge in life, not yours. In other words, if you're with someone who enjoys smoking cigarettes, that is *their choice*. If you don't like it and you get triggered, it is *your choice* to stay, leave, accept, or reject.

Healing from your triggers involves being completely responsible for your own *reactions* to other's behaviors. The moment you try to change their behavior is the moment you tread on dangerous ground. That doesn't mean you can't say, "It makes me uncomfortable when you do that.", but be ready to make a choice for yourself when they respond, "But I won't (or can't) stop doing that."

I focused so much time and energy in "helping" my wife get better by continuously reminding her that her behavior triggered me and that she should change.

Can you see the bad logic in this approach?

A good example might be if someone was bothered by the number of times you blink in a minute. They look at you and are completely annoyed that you blink so many times per minute. They continually mention it to you and tell you how much it bothers them.

Are you *really* motivated to change how many times you blink in a minute when someone is like this towards you?

Or even if they asked nicely, "Will you please decrease the number of times you blink in a minute, it bothers me", do you feel that you should give up your freedom to blink as many times as you want?

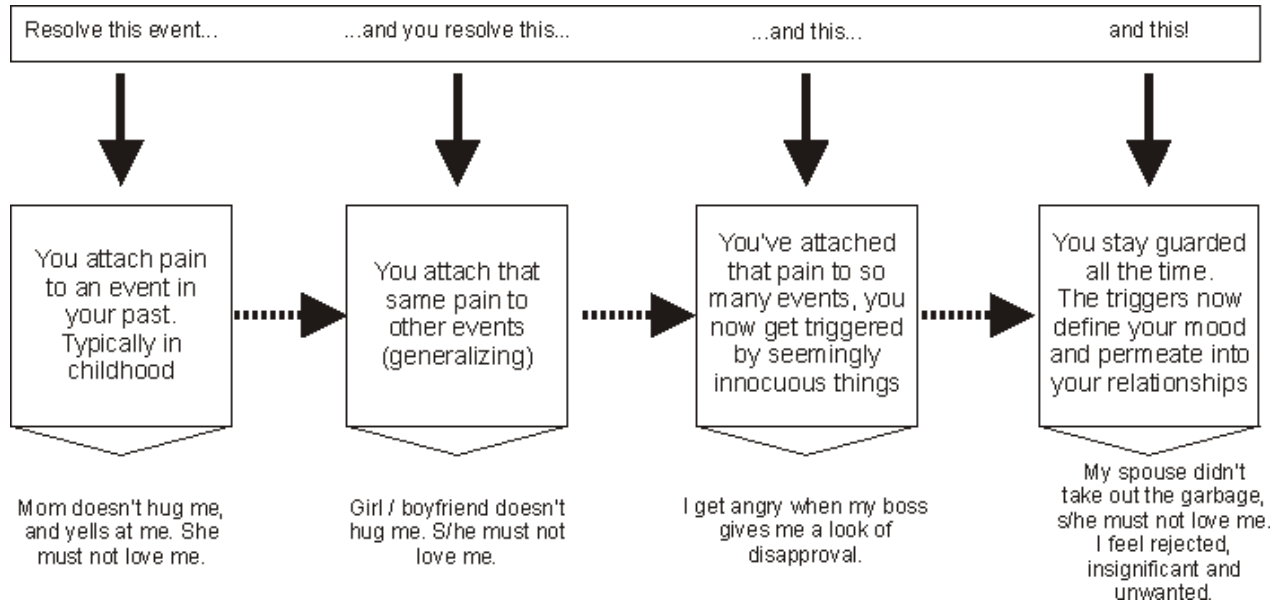
This is what judging others does: *It intrudes on their freedom to be themselves, even if you perceive their behavior to be dysfunctional.*

Do you think it's okay for others to dictate how you should behave because they aren't comfortable with what *you* do? Just some thoughts to ponder as we dive a little deeper into this.

Resolving the Original Emotional Event

When you resolve the pain from the original emotional event that *caused* the trigger in the first place, you eliminate the trigger.

Watch what happens when you resolve the original event



"Resolving" the original event means healing the pain from that event and all related events going forward. In other words, when you address the pain or fear from when the trigger was formed, that pain and fear will disappear when you remember other events in your life that triggered you.

When you are able to identify and come to a resolution about that *original* event, your brain detaches the negative emotions from all memories that are similar. You still have the memories, but the negative feelings are gone. Wouldn't that be great?

Here's an example:

Original Event: Your mom didn't hug you when you were a child causing you to feel unwanted and unloved. An emotional trigger relating to this occurrence was then created.

The Trigger: "*When someone doesn't give me attention, they must not love me.*"

The Generalization: Throughout the years, whenever you didn't get enough attention or affection, you thought the person didn't want you or love you. This situation is different than the

original event, but the pain or fear is the same:

It feels just like it did when your mom wasn't giving you affection as a child.

This is how a trigger gets more and more prevalent in your life. Other events that happen that aren't even related to the *original* event whatsoever, begin to take on the same meaning and the same pain as that original event.

Other events that are similar are generalized to have the same meaning as the original event:

- Mom never wanting to hug when I was younger *is the same as* my boyfriend / girlfriend not kissing me goodnight
- Mom never wanting to hug when I was younger *is the same as* my husband / wife not wanting to be intimate tonight
- Mom never wanting to hug when I was younger *is the same as* my best friend ignoring me at the party

All of these situations could give you the same pain as the original event, which means that once you resolve the pain from that original event, you will no longer get triggered by other, unrelated (but just as painful) events.

When the pain is no longer attached to the memory of an event, the trigger will dissipate. It's quite magical how it works actually.

So finally, let's learn *how* to resolve the pain and fear from the past so *your* triggers can dissipate.

Step 1: What memory evokes the pain of yesterday?

1. Think of something that triggers you today.

Got it? Make sure it's a trigger that *really* bothers you. For example, when I was married, and my wife reached for junk food, I got angry.

If I were still triggered about this today (and if I were still married), I would think about her reaching for junk food as a big trigger for me.

What's your big trigger?

If nothing "big" comes up for you right now, put this away and come back to it as soon as you're triggered. It's good to catch these things while they are fresh in your mind.

2. Now, what emotions are coming up for you?

Anger? Sadness? Other thoughts and feelings? Not feeling loved or significant? Jealousy?

What comes up for you?

You can even go through and name the emotions out loud just to "try them on".

For example, as you sit there with this trigger in mind, ask yourself if the emotions inside are any of the following:

Anger? Fear? Sadness? Rejection? Defeated? Jealous? Annoyance?

(For a full list of possible emotions, flip to the emotion checklist on the very last page)

Sit with the thoughts and feelings that come up for just a moment. Do your best to identify what emotions come up.

3. Now think of something that happened in your past that made you feel the *same way as you do now (in your triggered state), or at least in a similar way.*

For me, using " *my wife reaches for junk food*" example, I remember how much it hurt to watch my stepfather reach for another drink when I was a kid... and another drink... and another drink.

It hurt. I was angry. And I felt unloved because I didn't want him to change into another person. Every time he drank, he changed.

I was scared to be around him. I felt unloved and unwanted.

So in my marriage, the emotions I felt when I got triggered by my wife were the same ones I felt when I was around my stepfather when he drank.

What comes up for you?

Sit with your thoughts for a minute or more.

Did that exercise help you come up with a *specific* memory that has the same or similar emotions as the trigger that happens inside you today?

If not, that's okay. Think of *any* event in the past where you felt in a similar way. There *is* a memory back there where the emotions were extremely similar, if not, *exactly the same* because there was a first time when the trigger was created. Otherwise, it wouldn't be a trigger!

A huge breakthrough in your healing process will be to resolve an emotional event from your past

Most of the time, you *know* the event that caused the trigger to form in the first place. But sometimes you don't and that's okay because there are other ways to do this exercise.

If you *think* you know what the event was, we'll go with that.

If you have no idea what the first, original event was that set things in motion for you, just go with your earliest memory of an event or situation where you felt the same way as your triggered state - even if it was just yesterday.

As you drill down and figure out the origin of your trigger points, *new memories may bubble up*. And because of that you may experience some emotional pain, especially if the memories are traumatic. Just remember your "safe place" and go there throughout this process as needed.

Now ask the deeper part of yourself the following question:

"Is it okay with you to remember something that I forgot so that I can work on resolving it?"

It may seem a little strange to ask yourself that, but I bet you get an answer!

If the answer is "no", that's okay too. That's probably just a part of you protecting yourself so that you don't have to deal with the pain. These protection mechanisms are completely normal. But if you got a "yes", then thank yourself for allowing some resolution to take place.

It's a lot easier when you have your own permission when exploring and resolving these things.

No matter what, just know that early memories may come up for you. And when they do, be grateful for the opportunity to resolve the pain from these memories. Don't fear what comes up, be curious and thankful, because this other part of you trusts "you" enough to present them.

If it sounds a little strange to talk about "another part of you", just think of it as the difference between your conscious mind and your subconscious mind. It's just easier to personify these areas inside of you and *it really does feel like another part of you.*

Again, it's okay if you can't remember the original event that caused your trigger. It may or may not ever present itself for resolution. Either way is fine. If you remember something that happened when you were 12, but not anything before that, stick with that event.

I'll do my best to help you minimize the trigger as much as possible. If not, we'll get rid of it completely.

A *fully resolved* trigger is one that no longer affects you at all. For instance, watching my loved ones drink alcohol doesn't affect me at all anymore, where it used to be a *big* emotional trigger for me.

A *partially resolved* trigger is when you are at a point where something still bothers you, but not enough to stress about it. These kinds of triggers are okay to have as long as they are not affecting your level of satisfaction and fulfillment in life.

Triggers are your defense mechanisms designed to help you stay aware of your environment so that you don't get into trouble. They can be very helpful.

They are not helpful when they are old and have worn out their welcome. Resolving triggers that are no longer useful *does take some mental effort.* But doing so brings huge relief and helps you feel more confident, energized and at peace.

** If you truly have no conscious memory of what created a trigger in the first place, but you know something happened, you may want to consider the possibility that there may have been trauma or abuse in your past.*

Don't jump to conclusions and assume that's what it is for you, but I'd be negligent if I didn't mention this because at least 1 out of 2 children are the victim of some sort of abuse.

Children have been known to disconnect from their auditory and visual senses in an effort to detach from the pain in the moment. What this does is help them forget the trauma so they can survive the pain.

If you've been abused or in any sort of trauma, you may have "physical triggers" in your body that activate when you are touched in a particular way, or are standing, sitting, or lying down in a way that was similar to when the abuse or trauma happened.

One clue to a physical trigger is if you don't like being touched, hugged, or held down. There are other clues as well, in which case you may want to talk to a professional who works with trauma and abuse survivors.

The existence of physical triggers doesn't necessarily mean you've had trauma that you don't remember, but if you know something happened to you when you were younger but just can't seem to recall what it was, then the existence of physical triggers might indicate that you went unconscious at the time as a way to not experience the pain.

If you have not dealt with a trauma or abuse from your past yet, seriously consider seeing a trauma and abuse specialist, or reach out to a support group.

Step 2: Boot Your Old Triggers

Can you think of something else you'd like to do instead of getting triggered?

Really imagine what it would be like to do this other thing.

You can say, "Instead of feeling _____, I want to feel _____" or something similar to that.

How do you want to feel instead of getting triggered?

If I was still married, and wanted to work on my triggers, I would say, "Instead of feeling angry and rejected, I want to feel accepting and calm, as if I were the Dalai Lama himself."

Visualize the image of yourself you want. Hear what you want to hear, see what you would rather see. Really imagine the experience of being this different way when you're triggered.

When you're *not* being triggered, I want you to think about times in the future where you *know* you'll get triggered. As soon as any feelings come up for you (or even if they don't), replace any thoughts and feelings that come up with what you'd *rather* think and feel.

Do this often, and only do it when you're *not* being triggered because it's too hard when you're in the middle of it. This process doesn't erase the triggers, but it helps reprogram your brain a little bit. It also desensitize you to the old triggers too.

Also, remember that some triggers may violate your personal boundaries. If that's the case, remember the Trigger Response Directives and make a choice :

- Stay and accept what is
- Stay and reject what is
- Leave and accept what is
- Leave and reject what is

Let's get to work... It's time to resolve those triggers!

1. Write down the most problematic triggers are for you. Don't write down the emotions you feel when you're triggered, just the events or situations that trigger you.

Examples:

I get triggered when...

- ...my husband drinks
- ...my wife smokes
- ...my boss makes me work on the weekend
- ...someone steals my parking spot

Remember, think of the *most problematic* triggers for you. You may have many small ones, but let's address the big ones first because sometimes the small ones disappear through this process. Remember, don't write down any emotions, just facts.

I get triggered when...

2. Write down *why* you believe you are getting triggered by the above situations.

Knowing the "why" of a trigger can be a crucial step to *resolving* it. Use the word "because" to help you pinpoint the reason. Don't write what you *should* think, just write what makes the most sense.

Examples:

- I get triggered when my husband drinks because he becomes violent
- I get triggered when my wife smokes because she could die from lung cancer
- I get triggered when my boss makes me work on the weekend because I want that time for me and my family
- I get triggered when someone steals my parking spot because they are rude and inconsiderate

Your turn!

I get triggered when _____ because

I get triggered when _____ because

I get triggered when _____ because

I get triggered when _____ because

I get triggered when _____ because

3. Reread all your answers for number 2. After the word "because", identify which statements, if any, are completely about you?

Example:

A. I get triggered when my wife smokes because ***she could die from lung cancer.***

After *because*, this statement is about *your wife*: (she could die from lung cancer) and *not* about you.

B. I get triggered when my boss makes me work on the weekend because ***I want that time for me and my family.***

After *because*, this statement *is* about you: (I want that time for me...) and *not* about your boss.

If you have any statements that are *not* about you, rewrite them below. Make them about *you*. Use "I feel" statements in order to emphasize what you feel instead of what they do.

For example, you could rewrite A to read:

*"I get triggered when my wife smokes **because** I'm afraid to be alone if she dies. It hurts to think she's killing herself. I feel rejected when she chooses to smoke, as if I'm less important than the cigarettes."*

Notice that I kept the focus on *me*, and tried not to accuse her of anything. I only note what she's doing in how it affects *me*. I talked about her choosing to smoke, but made sure I kept my response mostly about me, my thoughts, and my emotions.

If you have any to rewrite, do so here. If not, skip to the next item.

I get triggered when _____ because

I get triggered when _____ because

I get triggered when _____ because

I get triggered when _____ because

I get triggered when _____ because

4. The hard truth: Accept that triggers are about you and no one else.

Emotional triggers can be *activated* by other people, by their behavior, but *you are the person reacting*, therefore *you* are the one who has to heal and grow, *not* them.

**On a personal note, not embracing the above statement was the #1 reason my marriage fell apart. I got triggered every time my wife reached for sweets, and I directed my anger and hurt towards her instead of realizing that I had a problem.*

*I truly believed she was the one with the problem, not me. After all, she told me she had an addiction to sugar and junk food, therefore **I felt absolved of all responsibility for my triggers about her problem.***

There's a serious issue with that last statement, because I truly believed I was absolved of my behavior.

Blaming others for *your* reaction to their issues causes you to avoid dealing with your triggers, which is the *real* issue. Now, you might be saying, "Yeah but he won't change! He's purposefully upsetting me. He knows *he's* the one with the problem!"

It's true, the other person *may* have a problem, but their problem is *their* responsibility. And your trigger is *your* responsibility. That's where your focus needs to stay.

It's your responsibility to deal with your trigger, not deal with what causes the trigger.

Accept that your trigger is all about you and your reaction.

This doesn't mean you have to accept someone else's behavior, it just means that your focus needs to stay on you. Remember the TRDs when it comes to triggers because you *do* have a choice in how to respond. You just may not like the choice you have!

This step is all about owning the fact that when you are triggered, all of the change needs to happen within you and no one else. The people that you get triggered by are either going to change or not, but that's not up to you to make that happen. You can certainly help them change if they want your help, but your job is to keep your focus on how you can overcome or resolve your trigger.

A funny thing happens when you resolve your trigger: *The problem goes away!*

When you are no longer triggered, then whatever caused you to get triggered in the first place suddenly disappears as a problem. Therefore, you are not giving it any of your attention.

It may still be a problem for the *other* person, and you can certainly be there for them if they want you to help them with it, but you'll be able to do so from a place of love and support not judgment and wanting them to change.

People have a hard time changing when others ask them to.

It's just a fact of life! You will have an easier time making changes in your life when others aren't asking you to change. The reason is the difference between empowerment and control.

What makes you feel more empowered - Wanting to change for yourself or wanting to change for someone else?

Typically, when the desire to change happens inside you, you feel more empowered. You *can* feel empowered wanting to change for someone else, but those results don't usually last long because resentment can build.

When you change because *you want to change*, there's a lot of staying power there.

This is why it's important for you to work on your triggers while they deal with their own issues. Then, if they can't or choose not to change, at least you won't be triggered and you can choose to stay or leave.

The choice to *stay, leave, accept* or *reject* comes much easier when you are comfortable honoring your personal boundaries. Once you get comfortable honoring yourself, then you do what's right for *you*.

5. In your mind, visit yourself in the past and be there for yourself when you needed it most

This might be a bit strange if you've never done it before, but the way a memory works is that it can be revisited over and over again.

What typically happens however is that when we recall memories, we tend to access the same emotions that are attached to those memories. We also remember things we don't like the same way over and over again. Our "bad" memories are always from the same angle, involving the same people, the same lighting, the same sounds, etc. It's the exact same experience duplicated in the present to feel that way again.

That's no fun.

Your brain almost always shows you the same memory almost exactly the same way every time. This reinforces the same emotions over and over again. If you felt bad then, you'll feel bad again when you recall it. However, this can also work for good memories.

This is helpful to know. When you want to feel good, remember a time you felt good!

But if you can't get past that bad feeling, this next technique allows you to visit the memory a *different* way. You'll actually be able to rewrite your memory so that any negative emotions that are attached can dissolve.

Let's start.

What's the very first memory that pops into your head when I say, "*Think of something that happened in your past that didn't feel very good.*"?

A. What is it? Write it down here:

Now, how does that memory come up for you? Is it a picture? Does it have sound? Can you feel anything?

B. Write down your experience:

C. Now that you have the memory, I want you to visit yourself in that memory as the person you are now. Visit that *younger* version of you.

While you're there, say what you'd want that younger version of you to hear. If they're hurt or scared, give them what they need to help them get through the situation. Whether that's comforting words, a hug, or other support that they really needed at the time.

Do this for as long as you need to. When you're done, just come on back to "now".

D. The next step is to revisit this memory again. But this time imagine you see your older self talking to your younger self, but you are observing this from about 20 feet away.

I know, it's kind of trippy! But this perspective gives you a different view of the situation. You can watch from above, from another room, or even through a one-way mirror if you want.

Do all of this in your mind's eye. If you're having any trouble visualizing, just hear what you hear and feel what you feel from this place of distant observation.

When you are done, come back to "now", then say this out loud:
"Thank you for what I've learned. I'm ready to release the hurt"

This is not necessarily an affirmation, it's more of a gauge for your body. Because when you say it, you'll feel if you're ready or not to release the emotion. You know the feeling you get when you're kidding yourself, right? If you get that feeling, you're probably not ready to release the hurt.

That's okay! You don't have to be. Just say it and feel what you feel. Any result is a good result because we are working through stuff and it may not go away today.

6. Now, imagine yourself getting triggered again sometime in the future, and visit yourself there.

This one is really interesting. It's the same method as step 5, except this time we're going to visit ourselves at a point in the future.

So in your mind, imagine that you are getting triggered by something in the future. The person you are now zooms into that future event and says what your *future* self needs to hear. Say anything you feel your future self needs to hear in that moment. Just let that person experience what they are experiencing, but you are right there with them.

You may want to tell them that even though they are experiencing this trigger, everything is going to be alright. They don't have to feel fear or anger or upset anymore. And if they are hurt or scared during that trigger moment let them know you are there to support them no matter what.

When you're done, come on back to "now".

You can also revisit that future trigger moment again as a distant observer watching yourself talk with yourself. Strange! But sometimes it takes strange to get beyond some deep rooted stuff.

When you're ready, finish the thought process and become fully present here and now.

7. This is the final step of the process. Take a 15 minute break, then return to this question.

Did you take a break? It's a good time to do it, because your brain needs some processing time.

Before you go to the next step, get two sheets of paper. I want you to write the following on those sheets:

Where
I was

Where
I am

Make sure to create those sheets of paper before the next step.

You should now have a "Where I was" sheet and a "Where I am" sheet. Place those on the floor near you. Put them a few feet from each other, but not too far away from each other.

When you're done, go to the next step.

For this final step, clear your mind. If that is challenging, just go to that safe place you created earlier or think about what you love to do on vacation. *Really feel the experience of enjoying yourself.* See what you'd see and hear what you'd hear, and feel the feelings of complete enjoyment.

Keeping this feeling, stand next to the paper that says, "Where I am". Keep this good feeling with you as you stand here. Put all of this good feeling into this spot.

You can do this. Just imagine that when you stand there, good feeling rush into you. All those wonderful, positive emotions that you feel when you're at that wonderful place you love to be. Amplify those emotions, really crank them up as you stand in that spot.

You are "energizing" this spot so that when you stand there, you feel powerful.

Do that for a minute or so then step off that spot.

Now test it! Step into that same spot again and feel those amazing emotions and wonderful feelings again.

Believe it or not, you are creating a positive trigger that you can access anytime! This can be something you can do anywhere, anytime.

Step out of that spot again, and test it one more time for just a few seconds. Then step out.

If you feel good when you step in, you're ready. If not, then access some even more powerfully good emotions. Something with a lot of positive charge inside you, then step into that spot and "energize" it again.

Now make sure you're not standing in the spot for this next step. Now I want you to think of when you're triggered. Think of all the bad feelings that come up when you're triggered and really amplify them so you really can't stand holding on to them.

When you feel it fully, step and stand next to the "Where I was" paper. Ramp up those bad emotions again. Really experience the trigger full on if possible, and "energize" that spot with all those bad feelings.

Once you feel like you've energized it enough, step off the spot and leave those emotions there. You may still feel residual, but that's okay. Just take a breath.

Now think of that trigger again and experience all the bad feelings again. Amplify them so you can barely stand it - then step and stand next to "Where I was" again. Stand there and really pour all those bad emotions into that spot.

After a few moments, step out of that spot and return to where you were.

Now think of something you like to do on vacation. Just imagine what that is for a moment then come back and finish this process. We're just about done.

Now you should be standing in front of the two spots. Take a breath, then step on to the "Where I was" spot and really feel those old, negative feelings again. Amplify them so they are strong within you.

Now take one foot and place it in the "Where I am" spot so you have one foot in each...

Do this NOW.

You may experience something powerful. If so, stay with it for a minute or more. Let it soak in.

When you're ready, go to the next page.

Step off both spots and be with yourself a moment.

How do you feel? What are you feeling now? Did anything happen? If not, re-energize those spots and do the process again. When this works, it works phenomenally well.

Even though that was the final step, what needs to happen next is more processing.

Take a day off then revisit that trigger. You may find it dissolved a little or *completely disappeared*.

Multiple triggers may need to be handled one day at a time. But some triggers can go away when others are resolved, so you never know until you're finished with one what will happen with the others.

If you feel a little "loopy" right now, that's good! If not, that's good too!

Triggers are one of the most challenging obstacles in life. They sneak up and cause havoc when you least expect. They make you feel angry, unsafe and fearful.

When you're able to "squash" those triggers by doing exercises like this, you can start living a life relatively free of stress and worry. After all, life is *full* of triggers. And eliminating them can be a process.

This workbook is one process but there are more. Your feedback from this process is valuable, so if you'd like to share with me your experience using this workbook, write to me at paul@theoverwhelmedbrain.com

Personal note: This process can and does work as I've used it myself for a couple powerful ones in my life. But it does sometimes take a lot of energy.

Triggers are powerful and they create very strong connections in the brain so sometimes you need to keep activating those neural connections to allow the emotions to detach. The good news is that you get to keep the memories you want and change the emotions you don't want.

I hope this has been helpful. If you have any questions or feedback on this process, please write to me at paul@theoverwhelmedbrain.com.

Thank you for using the Emotional Triggers Workbook. If you found this information valuable to you, tell your friends to visit <http://theoverwhelmedbrain.com/deeper-learning> to discover even more ways to improve yourself and create the life you want.

You are amazing!

Sincerely,

Paul Colaianni

[Personal Empowerment Coach](#)

Host of The Overwhelmed Brain

<http://theoverwhelmedbrain.com/>

Emotion Checklist. When you're triggered, identify which emotions come up for you

Anger		Hatred	
Angst		Horror	
Anguish		Hostility	
Annoyance		Hurt	
Anxiety		Hysteria	
Apathy		Indifference	
Boredom		Jealousy	
Contempt		Loathing	
Depression		Loneliness	
Despair		Outrage	
Disappointment		Panic	
Disgust		Rage	
Distrust		Regret	
Dread		Remorse	
Embarrassment		Sadness	
Envy		Shame	
Fear		Shock	
Frustration		Shyness	
Grief		Sorrow	
Guilt		Worry	