

BEYOND THE PAIN

**Living with Power & Freedom
After Separation & Divorce**

WORKBOOK

'The only person you need to be enough for is *you*. Start with *you* and *your* life will open like a blossoming flower.'

Congratulations on taking the first step toward moving beyond your past and reclaiming your personal power. It takes a lot of courage to step outside your comfort zone, to take an honest look at your life and to learn a new set of skills.

This workbook is designed to be used alongside 'BEYOND THE PAIN'. It takes the simplified exercises in my book and expands on them, helping you delve deeper and gain more clarity. If you print this you will be able to fill in the tables on the following pages as you ask yourself questions you may never have thought of. It is only as you ask questions that you discover something new. And in order to live a different life, you need to do things differently!

My aim is that my book will inspire you to grow beyond your current knowledge, beyond your current reality and teach you how to harness your strength to move BEYOND THE PAIN into a life full of joy and freedom.

Power & Freedom go hand in hand. Until *you* decide to reclaim your power, you cannot have true freedom. It's all up to you.

I'm thrilled you have decided to take a chance on *you*.

Allanah

CHAPTER ONE - Stress Exercise

We hear this word so often but do we really understand what it means?

The dictionary lists various definitions but they all illustrate or describe the effect of stress on the body.

In **physiology** the definition is: *a specific response by the body to a stimulus, as fear or pain, that disturbs or interferes with the normal physiological equilibrium of an organism*

In **medicine** the definition is: *an applied force or system of forces that tends to strain or deform a body. A physical or psychological stimulus that can produce mental tension or physiological reactions that may lead to illness.*

In **science** the definition is: *a physiologic reaction by an organism to an uncomfortable or unfamiliar physical or psychological stimulus. Biological changes result from stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, including a heightened state of alertness, anxiety, increased heart rate, and sweating.*

When we are under pressure our health suffers in many ways. And not all those ways are immediately apparent or recognisable. Stress releases hormones which give us what we need to cope

can also have a negative effect on the body. These hormones not only impact us at a cellular level but also affect our ability to process information and make decisions in a balanced way. And when things change we often have some life altering decisions to make.

It's worth taking a look at the following stress chart which lists a series of events and measures the amount of stress each will bring. Your total score will give you an indication of the level of stress you have been under and perhaps are still experiencing.

Developed by Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe with the University of Washington School of Medicine, the stressful life events scale is also known as the Social Readjustment Rating Scale. Not only negative events cause stress but also events we would consider good. In times of stress our already busy lives can seem impossible to maintain. Even the simplest of tasks can require a huge effort.

Here's how to use the scale:

- If an event has taken place in your life in the last 12 months, copy the value showing beside the event
- If a particular event has happened more than once within the last 12 months, multiply the value by the number of occurrences.
- Add them up to obtain the final score

Number	Event	Value	Your Score
1	Death of a Spouse	100	
2	Divorce	73	
3	Marital Separation	65	
4	Jail Term	63	
5	Death of a Close Family Member	63	
6	Personal Injury or Illness	63	
7	Marriage	50	
8	Fired at Work	47	
9	Marital Reconciliation	45	
10	Retirement	45	
11	Change in Health of Family Member	44	
12	Pregnancy	40	
13	Sex Difficulties	39	
14	Gain of a New Family Member	39	
15	Business Readjustments	39	
16	Change of Financial State	38	
17	Death of a Close Friend	37	
18	Change of Different Line of Work	36	
19	Change in Number of Arguments with Spouse	35	
20	Mortgage Over £50,000	31	
21	Foreclosure on Mortgage	30	
22	Change of Responsibilities at Work	29	
23	Son or Daughter Leaving Home	29	
24	Trouble with In-Laws	29	
25	Outstanding Personal Achievements	28	
26	Spouse Begins or Stops Work	26	
27	Begin or End School	26	
28	Change in Living Conditions	25	
29	Revision of Personal Habits	24	
30	Trouble with Boss	23	
31	Change of Work Hours or Conditions	20	
32	Change in Residence	20	
33	Change of School	20	
34	Change in Recreation	19	
35	Change in Religious Activities	19	
36	Change in Social Activities	19	
37	Loan Less than £50,000	17	
38	Change in Number of Family Get-Togethers	15	
40	Change in Eating Habits	15	
41	Single Person Living Alone	14	
42	Vacation	13	
43	Holidays	12	
44	Minor Violation of Laws	11	
YOUR TOTAL SCORE			

Everyone's ability to cope with stress and their reactions to it are different, but the following analysis is based on your likelihood to develop a stress-related illness in the near future.

- **Low** – if your score is below 149
- **Mild** – if your score is between 150 and 200
- **Moderate** – if your score is between 200 and 299
- **High** – if your score is above 300

When we look at the chart above, we can see divorce and separation are numbers two and three on the list, suggesting a high level of adjustment and effort required to regain stability. Add to this the additional changes that may occur in your financial circumstances, whether your children continue to live with you, perhaps starting a job for the first time in many years, moving home or any number of flow-on effects from your separation, and you could find yourself under an enormous amount of pressure.

Whilst I have included the chart above to help you recognise the impact stress can have on your life, it is your response to the events listed that determines the level of stress you will experience.

Your ability to recognise and deal with that pressure in a healthy way can have far reaching consequences. The decisions you make at this time will create your future so it's vital that you take care of yourself along the way. Taking the time to stop before making changes is a powerful tool. It allows you some breathing space and the chance to recover your balance before taking the next step.

Some of these events will be the result of a choice you have made and some of them will be out of your immediate control. Your power lies in your decision to *react* or *respond* to the events which happen around you.

**“Stress is not something that happens to us. It is our response to what happens.
And a response is something we can choose.”**

CHAPTER TWO - Analysis Exercise

The next exercise is based on your Heal Me journal writing so if you haven't started this yet, go out and buy one today. Come back after a week of entries and use them to work through this exercise. It is really important to complete the exercises in order as there is a progression in your understanding which will automatically follow. As your thinking changes, you will start to understand where your power lies and how to reclaim it. Embracing your power comes from the awareness we are exploring in the first section of BEYOND THE PAIN.

Find an entry in your journal that is full of emotion. Where you have written exactly how you feel, not only with the words but in the way you've phrased them. Read it with fresh eyes and work to identify the strongest emotion you see in the chosen passage. Write the emotion or emotions in the left-hand column of your chart.

Next have a look at the circumstances or event you have written about. Perhaps a particular behaviour or set of behaviours has evoked your emotional response.

Now is your chance to step back. Behind the actual events and the emotions you feel is an expectation that has not been met. Somewhere along the line you had an understanding of how things would be and when your reality didn't match, your response was the emotion you have identified. So what were you thinking? What was it you expected? Write the thoughts you have discovered in column two.

Let's look at Jennifer as an example. If we were to see her journal entry it might have looked something like this.

"I'm absolutely furious – so angry I can barely breathe. After I have worked so hard for the past sixteen years, he up and decides that he can just swan off with miss fancy pants and leave me! Who does he think he is? I gave up my career so that he could follow his. We agreed that I would look after the kids whilst he provided for us financially. I gave him everything! I couldn't have done any more but somehow it's not enough for him. How am I going to manage on my own with three children? How dare he do this to me?!"

The emotions Jennifer is feeling in this passage are:

- Anger
- Frustration
- Fear
- Betrayal

If we take a look at the circumstances behind this passage we discover that Michael & Jennifer had a conversation about how things would work when they had their first child. They agreed that Jennifer would stay home to raise their children whilst Michael continued to build his career.

Jennifer's thinking therefore was that she and Michael were a team with a deal. Understandably, she expected that this would continue to be the case.

So if we choose a couple of emotions and enter them into the chart below, we can see how this might look.

Emotion	Thought
Betrayal	Michael and I had a deal. He has reneged on his part of the plan
Fear	How can I support myself and my children?

Now it's your turn to create your own chart using your chosen journal entries.

Emotion	Thought

Using the breathing techniques in the first two chapters of *Beyond the Pain* will help you disengage your emotions and engage your thinking. This is the process of stepping back. It is the space you create between you and your emotions which allows you to use the logical, thinking part of your mind. Here you can begin to understand the thinking behind the reactions which have created your life till now.

Use this tool to examine other passages in your *Heal Me Journal* as this is your chance to read what you have previously written without your emotions getting in the way. What do you see in the words and tone of the entry? Does this sound like you?

This is a great way to become aware of how your thoughts and emotions keep you in the grip of a cycle that continues until you break it. As with any new skill, it will take practice. Before long though, you will begin to look at both your entries and the emotions you feel in a new light.

No matter what your current circumstances, there is a way to move beyond your past to a brighter life ahead. Because we have learned that a thought creates a feeling, working backwards will get us to the beginning. Once we stop and step back, we can look at our emotions and figure out what we are thinking. Only by acknowledging the thought pattern and finding out the truth can we move beyond the pain or place of 'stuckness'.

**'When you find yourself stuck in indecision, the scarier choice
is not actually jumping over the cliff into the unknown.
It is more terrifying to stay in a place you already know
is not where you want to be'**

Jena Coray

CHAPER THREE - Challenging Perceptions Exercise

In this exercise we are going to look at a particular occasion when you had a disagreement with your ex-partner. We will be using the skill of stepping back in order to add to your current perception.

With your eyes closed and focussing on your breathing, try to capture your overwhelming feeling when you think about your ex-partner. Conjure up their image into your mind and pay attention to the emotions that accompany it. Do not focus on what comes, just recognise it. Allow the feeling to wash over you and then float away again.

Describe a specific disagreement or event from the relationship with your ex in 'My Reality' column as if you are a stranger viewing from a neutral point of view. Write down your memory of the facts – not all the emotions that go with it but just the facts as you see them.

My Reality	Their Possible Reality

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Now comes the challenging part. You will need to bring your courage to the table for this one. The powerful exercise is not designed to negate your experience but perhaps as an opportunity for you to truly step back from your emotions and engage the logical part of your brain. When emotions flow freely and strongly, it's difficult to think at all clearly. We become so wrapped up in our feelings we cannot see anything else.

If you have written in your Heal Me Journal about some times you have been angry or resentful about your ex-partner's behaviour or actions, this is a useful exercise to help you see things differently and balance your perceptions.

Move on to the 'Their Possible Reality' column and step back to imagine how you ex may have viewed this same situation. You will of course be relying on your memory but try to remember their words or reactions and work to see what the thoughts behind the emotions could perhaps have been. What might their truth be? Using the objectivity we talked about in the last chapter, take a big step back and look at what you have written. Have you been telling yourself the truth?

You are not doing this task to help anyone but you – to take another step forward in your life by letting go of the past. It is your choice whether or not you follow the exercises in this book. I do know however, that if you do, you will never again see your life in the same way. Your perceptions will have changed and once they do, there is not going back to the old way.

'Our perception of reality is malleable. Everything is always shifting. We may not have the power to change an event, but we do have the power to change our perception.'

Stephanie Killen

CHAPTER THREE - Roles I Play Exercise

This exercise is part of reclaiming your personal power. Having a clear idea of who you are and therefore being able to make the choice of who you want to be as your life unfolds in front of you is an essential part of this process. How you see yourself is projected out into the world and drives the responses you get from others. Everything comes from you and therefore having a clear positive definition of self will bring more positive experiences to you.

So how do you define yourself?

We live in a world filled with expectations about how things should be, and these days the expectations on women are overwhelming. The roles we are expected to fulfil are impossible, and when we fail, as we ultimately will, we feel we are somehow less than who we should be; that we have let ourselves down; that there is something wrong with us because we couldn't live up to the expectations we adopted as our own.

Take a minute here and look at these words: 'that we adopted as our own'. Are they really choices you would have made for yourself if you could have had any life you wanted? We are bombarded constantly with images of the perfect wife, the perfect mother, the perfect career woman, the perfect lover, daughter, friend ... every image shows an immaculately groomed, slim, vibrant and satisfied woman. I'm sure if we had to be only one of those things we would manage it magnificently. But to be all of these? I don't know about you but I would need at least three of me to be able to live up to that image!

Yet for many of us our sense of self-worth is defined by the roles we play; the roles society seems to lay out so clearly. 'I am a wife, a mother, a career woman, a lover, a daughter a friend'. When your life suddenly changes dramatically, you can lose your identity. You are still the same person you have always been, but ask yourself, 'Who am I without my partner?'

Is your identity so wrapped up in what you do that you don't know who you are?

I want you to think about the various roles in life that you play. These are the parts of yourself that you give to others. I have listed some suggestions below to help you get started but there are many more, smaller roles you play which are as individual as you are. Some of them are necessary functions and ones we delight in fulfilling for those we love. These are a part of who you are and are valid and often admirable choices to make. The point of this exercise is to help you explore beyond these to discover the unique and valuable individual woman you are. Your value is not defined by how other people see you but in how you see yourself. When you begin to value yourself, your life and the responses from the people around you will be transformed.

Repeat this for all three columns. As you grow through different stages in your life your roles will change and it can be tough keeping up with them all. When you were younger, your role as a daughter was no doubt very different than it is now. If you are a grandmother then your role as a mother has changed dramatically. As you go through life you will collect differing roles like awards or medals, and the requirements and expectations others place on you or you place on yourself, may at times seem overwhelming. It is all the more important therefore for you to discover and maintain your own identity. If you define yourself by the roles you play in life they you are at the mercy of other people's choices or circumstances which occur over which you have no power.

'Be committed and engaged in your responsibilities but be able to see yourself outside of them'

Levo League

If you are having trouble with this, try to think of who you are to the various people in your life. Have a look at the last task and the roles you play. What makes you successful in these roles? What are some of the qualities about yourself you are proud of? You can even ask some of the people who care about you. You might be surprised by the response.

I was taught as a child to be modest; and I know this is true for many other women too; never to praise or talk about my abilities and talents to others as this was seen as bragging. Unfortunately, all this does is reinforce the negatives we see in ourselves, and that we believe other people see as well. We spend endless energy worrying about how people will perceive us, and yet the truth is they are so wrapped up in their own lives they don't notice us at all. Often even those closest to us don't really know who we are. How important then that *you* have a clear knowledge of yourself.

Take all the time you need to work on this task as it is fundamental to your progress. Determining how you view yourself is part of the road to full awareness. Only by acknowledging your true thoughts about yourself can you change them. Your own view of yourself will create the reality around you; how others treat you, how you treat yourself and who and what you attract in to your life.

So how do you define yourself?

Who are you without the roles you play?

There are two words of extreme power you can use every day to transform your life. They are '**I am**'. Every time you say 'I am' the words which follow become a truth in the here and now. Not 'sometime maybe I will be', but 'I am'.

Write your strengths in a sentence starting with 'I am'. For example, 'I am a loyal, kind and considerate woman who is funny, smart, passionate, strong and capable'. Can you see how powerful this simple sentence is? It may feel like a lie when you first write it but this could be your defining moment – a way to rediscover the wonderful woman you are. Repeat your statement several times a day as you go about the busyness of the roles you play. Look yourself in the eye in the mirror and say it to yourself as if you are a stranger, as if it was someone other than you speaking.

**'Unless we base our sense of identity upon the truth of who we are,
it is impossible to attain true happiness'**

Brenda Shoshanna

CHAPTER THREE - What Are You Projecting?

The beliefs you hold about life and the way you see yourself create a projection that sits like a cloak around you. It's this that tells people how to treat you.

If we take the previous exercise and build on it we begin to discover that there is a direct correlation between the view you have of yourself and the way people treat you. You attract to yourself people who mirror, with their behaviour, the image you have of yourself. How people treat you will be a reflection of how you treat yourself. What we put out in life is exactly what we get back.

Ask a friend to take a photo of you, or go to an instant photo booth and have one taken there. Be as natural as possible. I have found that photos are a very good way to see ourselves as others do. Whilst they are not always flattering and often catch you mid expression, to some degree they do tell the truth – at least the truth of that moment.

Name	Date
Post photo here	Your impressions
Your feelings	

Here's how to complete this task.

Most of us make snap judgements every day about the people we see and meet. We decide who they are by the clothes they wear, the colour of their hair, the way they apply their cosmetics – or the lack of them – and the size they are. I abhor our judgemental society and the boxes we therefore put people into, but unfortunately it's part of our sometimes shallow world. In this instance you can use it to look at yourself from an outsider's perspective.

This is not an excuse to focus on the negatives but an opportunity to see what you are projecting to the world. Objectivity is the key to this task. You need to be able to step back from your emotions to benefit from this exercise. Take a minute to breathe, to quiet your mind and spirit before you start.

Stepping back from the fact that this is you in the photo, what is your first impression? Look at the usual things that would stand out to you when you meet someone. Cast your eye over the superficial things – hair, make-up, size and clothing. What do you see? Is this the woman you see in the mirror each day?

Now look more closely at the image of you. What is the feeling behind the photo? What does your posture tell you about yourself? If you are smiling, does it reach your eyes? What do your eyes say about you? Do you see someone confident and radiant or someone who looks somewhat defeated by life? Can you see the pain behind the mask you wear? Is everything you feel written clearly on your face?

Jot down all your impressions on the page. You may not like the image that looks back at you, and this could therefore be painful. However, without honesty you cannot learn the truth which has led you to this point. Be brave enough to start the process of standing up for yourself today.

Next, write down the feelings you experience as you view both the photos and the impressions you have about it. This is where we really get real. How do you truly feel about yourself? What image do you project to the people around you?

If you are feeling overwhelmed by your observations, now is a good time to write in your Heal Me Journal. Use this as a tool to unburden your feelings, cry your tears or vent your anger. It is called a Heal Me Journal for a reason. It is only by getting your feelings and thoughts on paper that you can see them for what they are and begin to heal the pain behind the words. It's this healing process that will give you the strength, knowledge and insight to change your life forever.

'I am not what has happened to me. I am who I choose to become'

Carl Jung

CHAPTER FIVE – Balancing Perceptions

The following exercise will help you understand the concept of responsibility a little more clearly. For every time you feel someone was cruel, controlling and ignorant or behaved in any way you consider unfair, unreasonable or painful, there will likely be occasions where you have behaved in the same way yourself. It is easy to feel aggrieved when someone ‘hurts’ us but much more difficult to recognise the times we cause someone else pain.

This task will open your mind to a new perspective. As we have already learned, the only way to change our beliefs is by adding new information. Knowledge has always been, and will always be power; the key to opening your mind and heart to the truth that will always set you free.

Using your new skills of **stop, step back, look** and **listen**, select an occasion when you feel a friend has hurt you. It may be easier to start with a friend as perhaps the emotions are not as raw as they may be with regards your partner. With the particular event in mind, write the behaviour you feel your friend exhibited toward you. Describe the behaviour in one word and put it in the top of the left hand column. It may be that you feel betrayed, ignored, snubbed, accused, misunderstood or any number of other emotions. Just focus on the one which hurts the most. At the top of each column write a subheading that is the one-word description of your friend’s hurtful behaviour.

In this exercise I want you to try to reconnect with your feelings at the time this happened. Concentrate on the event until you can conjure up the depth of emotion you felt as a result of this occurrence. In the left-hand column write all the feelings you can recall. Be specific and use words that portray the depth of your emotion. Look at the words you have written. Feel the emotions that go along with them.

Their Behaviour	My Behaviour

The second part of this task is more difficult. In the right-hand column, write an occasion when **you** behaved in a similar way to someone else. It could be a friend, family member or your partner. You may have trouble with this to start off with, but persevere as this is an excellent way to push the boundaries your awareness.

Go back to the second column of your chart and re-read the emotions you felt in response to the behaviour you have identified. Is it possible that when you behaved in the same manner to someone else, they also felt these emotions.

It can be hard for us to face the fact that sometimes, as a result of our own choices, someone else feels hurt. This is an inevitable part of life, and in truth we are each responsible for our own emotional responses. How we react to a set of circumstances is a choice, and we start to recognise this as our awareness increases.

How are you feeling after this exercise? Do you feel as if you have created a new perception around the event you described? Perhaps you have been able to step back enough to allow your strong emotions to fade a little.

'If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change'

Wayne Dyer

CHAPTER SIX – Uncovering Beliefs

Starting at the beginning of your Heal Me Journal and using a highlighter pen, read back over your entries, underlining any passages that particularly stand out to you. Read all the way through using every one of the skills you learned in the last section. Listen to the feeling behind the words. Step back to understand the pain behind them. Remember, your perceptions create your expectations.

Having done the analysis exercise in chapter two you have probably already clarified some of your journal entries. Revisit this exercise and work through all your writings so far. What expectations have not been met? What is the perception (thinking) behind the expectation? Where has that perception come from?

Behind the words and emotion is the belief that has created your current reality. I imagine you will find a few in the pages of pain you entered in your journal. This is certainly the point of this exercise and why I encourage you to write whatever you feel without censure or judgement. Highlight whatever stands out for you. Write notations in the margin or on a separate page as you work through this to come back to later.

In order to identify the belief that sits at the basis of your expectations about life you need to ask some questions.

Column One - What is the emotion I have identified?

Column Two - What is the thinking behind the emotion?

Now we are going to take this exercise a step further and ask these additional questions:

Column Three - What is the expectation or assumption that lies behind my thinking (perception)?

Column Four - What is this expectation based on? What belief do I hold that has created this expectation?

As your work through these questions place your answers in the table below. By taking the exercise in chapter two to the next level you can drill down on your deepest level to uncover the belief that has created your life so far. Write a sentence that states the untrue belief you have identified. Write it as if it is a statement of fact, as if you were prepared to fight for this belief no matter what the cost.

Acknowledging your false belief is the fastest way to the truth. If one thing is a lie, then it goes without saying that something else is the truth.

In chapter three we met Greta who had never felt loved. Through time she discovered that the lie she had believed for many years was ... 'if my mother who should love me more than anyone, ever, can't love me ... I must be unlovable.' Once she acknowledged her past belief she was able to move beyond it to a new understanding. Her **truth** is that she is lovable, that she has always been surrounded by people who love her even though she couldn't see it for a long time.

Greta's chart might look something like this:

Emotion:	Rejection
Thinking:	My mother doesn't love me
Expectation:	My mother <i>should</i> love me
Belief:	If my mother who should love me more than anyone else doesn't love me ... I must be unlovable
Truth:	My mother does love me and so do lots of other people. I have failed to see it even though it's always been there.

Write the truth you have uncovered in the fifth column. Remember this is your truth. It cannot be right or wrong because this is your journey. By listening to your intuition you will soon find the words to write. If you are having trouble with this go back to the previous section and practise your awareness skill until you can hear the truth clearly. Complete this exercise for each belief you wish to change. You can continue to do this as you move through the healing process, as I know there will be more you will discover along the way.

Emotion	Thinking	Expectation	Belief	Truth	Affirmation

Your Affirmations

Now you have all but one of the columns filled in, you will see a distinct link between them. You may experience a moment of complete clarity as you see the false beliefs that have formed your life to this point.

For example, perhaps you struggled to excel in the classroom and your peers teased you for wearing spectacles. As a result, the belief you formed was 'I am stupid and ugly'. Looking at the truth you can see you are an attractive woman with an excellent career. Your last three columns might look something like this:

Belief	Truth	Affirmation
I am stupid and ugly	I have a successful career and am attractive	I am an attractive smart and capable woman

For Greta, her last column might look like this:

Affirmation: I am loveable and am surrounded by love

The next step is for you to write an affirmation using only positive language to reinforce the belief you now know is true. Using the example above, I'll explain.

If you were to write a statement that said; 'I am not stupid or ugly', which are the words you would constantly hear? **Stupid** and **Ugly**. Do you think this would reinforce a new belief or perhaps consolidate the old? 'Not' is such a tiny word that in many cases your brain will not even hear it. Therefore using only positive words your affirmation might look something like this; '**I am** an attractive, smart and capable woman.'

With this statement you are hearing a message that builds your self-esteem, one which allows you to stand a little taller and lift your head a little higher. This is the kind of affirmation you need to write.

This can be a difficult task. There may be many beliefs you uncover as you work this process which actually match your current life. This will show you very clearly how your beliefs have created your life so far. So your new truth needs to be the truth you wish to see.

**'the outer condition of a person's life will always be found
to reflect their inner beliefs'**
James Allen

CHAPTER SEVEN – Forgiveness Exercise

In chapter five we explored the possibility that whilst there are occasions when you feel hurt, this can be balanced with the times you have acted in a similar way and caused pain to someone else. If you are feeling strong enough, now is a good time to repeat this exercise but choose your partner's behaviour instead of a friend.

Think of an action your partner has taken that caused you to have painful emotions. Concentrate on your feelings but do not let them overwhelm you. Use some of the objectivity we talked about in chapter two. Simplify the behaviour down to one word and write this at the top of each column.

Forgiveness	
Their Behaviour	My Behaviour

On the left-hand side write as many emotions as you can think of that accompany your memory of the particular occasion you have chosen.

In the right-hand column write all the times you have behaved in a similar way to someone else. Chances are, due to the intimacy of the romantic relationship, you may find it hard to think of anything. Rather than thinking about the circumstances that surrounded the behaviour, concentrate on the actual word you have written to describe it. This part of the exercise is the most important. You can gain a completely new perspective here.

Take a moment to revisit your pain and see if it actually has the same power over you as it did when you started. Even if you have not yet followed the exercises described so far, hopefully you are starting to see there are steps to reacquaint yourself with you and the world around you. There is a better way to live than the one that has caused you so much pain.

For some reason many of us have an expectation that things should be fair. That if you are suffering then one, it must be someone else's fault and two, someone needs to pay. Revenge is often the reaction but this just brings you down to the same level as the person you feel wronged you. In some people's mind this makes things fair but in reality you will not respect yourself down the track when you begin to step back from your emotions to see the truth.

Close your eyes and use the breathing techniques described in the preceding chapters to clear your mind. Remember, you are responsible for your own reactions and responses to the circumstances and changes that occur in your life. Life has not been unkind to you; it just 'is'. It is neutral. It's only your energy added to the circumstances that give them any power. Just as a gun does not kill without the person who holds it, so too, your pain will not exist without your reactions. You can choose to allow the circumstances to hurt and destroy you or let them wash over you with barely a ripple. Bear in mind no one can take your power, but you may have chosen to give it away. By choosing now to see with a new perspective, to accept and forgive, you are taking back your power and as a result you will find fulfilment, peace and a new view of the world around you.

**'When you forgive, you release yourself from a painful burden.
Forgiveness doesn't mean what happened was OK, and it doesn't mean that person
should still be welcome in your life.
It just means you have made peace with the pain and are ready to let it go'**

CHAPTER SEVEN - Photo Exercise Two

Have a new photo taken either by a friend or in a photo booth. Work through the same process as in chapter three and jot down your impressions of the person in the photo. Start again with the superficial things; hair, clothing etc before moving on to the emotions you sense behind the exterior. Finally write your emotions based on how you feel about the 'you' in the photo. Treat this as a completely new process and avoid looking back at your previous conclusions.

Name	Date
Post photo here	Your impressions
Your feelings	

Using the two sets of observations (the ones in chapter three and the ones you have just completed) we are going to analyse further in the chart below.

Copy the impressions you had about yourself from the first photo into the 'then' column. Use as much space as you need, leaving plenty of space for notations along the way. Using the right-hand 'now' column, complete the same process for your impressions based upon the second photo.

Who am I?	
Then	Now
Summation	

If you have been following the processes in each chapter as we have gone along, you may see a marked difference between the two photos. Perhaps the external things look very similar but hopefully a new 'aliveness' emanates from the picture. Perhaps your eyes are brighter, your posture is more uprights or maybe there is just a calmness that wasn't there before. It could just a sense that something has changed that you can't put your finger on. Write a summation of how you feel about the differences you see.

'You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face ... do the thing you think you cannot do'

Eleanor Roosevelt

CHAPTER EIGHT – Creating Congruence

Fake It Till You Make It

Ask a good friend to help you with this next task as you will need to take photos along the way. Open your wardrobe, take all your clothes out and place them on the bed. Pick each item up and try it on. Look at yourself in the mirror and ask yourself these questions:

- Does this item of clothing compliment my new sense of self or is it dragging me down?
- Does the colour make my complexion appear brighter and my eyes shine? Or do I look drab and overwhelmed?
- Does the style make the most of my figure or is it hiding my best attributes?
- How do I feel when I put this outfit on?
- Am I proud of the way I look when I am wearing this?

Mix and match different pieces to see whether each piece reflects how you see yourself now. Anything that creates a negative response should be put in a pile on the floor in the hallway. Put the pieces that bring a smile to your face on a fresh hanger and place them in the wardrobe. Continue with his task until there is nothing left on the bed.

You may have created another pile of garments you are unsure about. Go back through this pile and decide, yes or no. Repeat this exercise for any clothes stored in drawers. Discard the pieces that don't work and put the 'keepers' on hangers to be placed in the wardrobe.

Arrange the clothes you have hung in the wardrobe by colour so you can select pieces easily based on the shade you feel like wearing on any day. If you are unsure about your ability to select outfits that work well together, get your friend to help you with a labelling system based on your trial today. For example, you may have a well-fitting pair of trousers in a neutral colour. Place a number on the hanger of these pants and the same number on any tops that work with it. Continue to do this for each item in your wardrobe so you are confident about the choices you make each day. Photograph yourself in each outfit you put together for future reference.

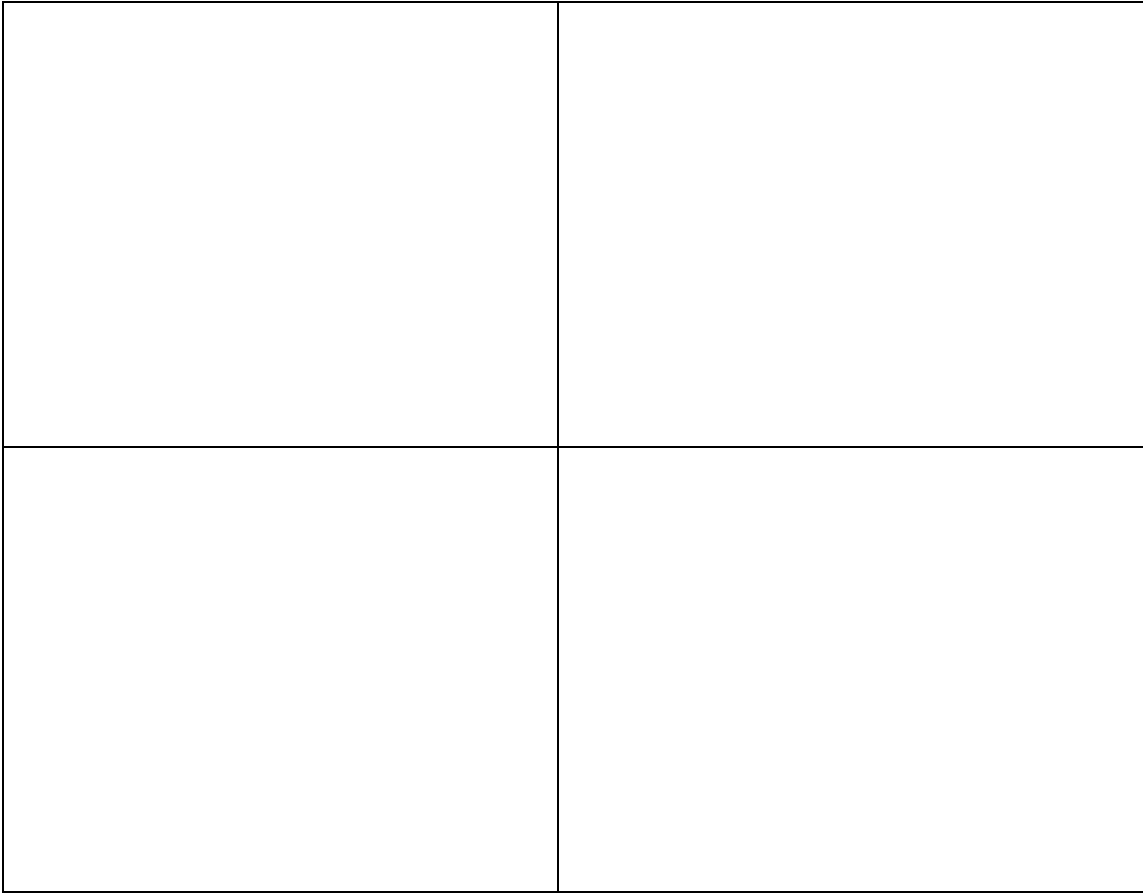
Once you have arranged your wardrobe, take all the clothes in the hallway and bag them up to give to charity. Take them out of the house immediately and place them in the boot of your car to dispose of the next day. Shut the boot and symbolically wipe your hands of the contents. Square your shoulders and return to the house and make a cup of tea or coffee for you and your friend to share as you work on the next exercise.

Print out the photos of the outfits you have chosen and paste them in the left-hand column write any compliments your friend paid and how you felt when you were trying on the outfit. Keeping a record of this will allow you to 'fake it till you make it'.

By choosing clothing by how you felt when you were wearing it, you can replicate that feeling no matter how difficult your day may be. Knowing you look good on the

outside whilst working on the inside, can give you the confidence to go out into the world with a spring in your step and a smile on your face.

Fake it till you make it	
(Paste photo here)	I feel ...



Letting go of the past and embracing the present moment builds confidence both inside and out. As each supports the other, you continue to grow and expand your horizons and experience.

Step out in confidence knowing you look great. Hold your head high and be proud of yourself for all you have achieved so far.

'Sometimes you have to be kind of die inside in order to rise from your own ashes and believe in yourself and love yourself to become a new person'

Gerard Way

CHAPTER TEN – Putting It All Together

Let's have a look at how to take everything you have learned and apply it to your life. Your happiness is not dependent on outward details but on you. Perhaps like the woman in the poem at the start of this section, you feel your life is a mess. Maybe you are living in a basement flat or a friend's spare room. Perhaps you don't have a job and are terrified of how to pay the bills. Or maybe you have all the trappings of wealth but are lonely and scared. Whatever your personal circumstances, as difficult as it is, you are the only one who can change your life. Perhaps you are unable, due to current circumstances to change the outward appearance but you can certainly alter your perceptions about it.

Your Current Situation	
Difficulties	Opportunities

Using the five awareness skills you have learned, select a current situation causing you concern and write it at the top of the page. **Stop** for a moment and breathe. **Step back** and using your objectivity, read the heading as if it were someone else's problem. Okay? **Look** at the heading and write in the left-hand column ten negatives or difficulties you see in this situation. If this situation is causing you concern or stress, this should be very easy.

In the right-hand column write ten positives or opportunities that exist around this same issue. I can hear you telling me there is nothing good about it. Step away from your emotions and with a clear mind look for the positives. I promise you they are there. You may have spoken with a friend or family member about your situation and they may have suggested some solutions or positives about where you are now compared to where you were. This is a good place to start.

Do you find this difficult? You are working to change your perceptions about things. When you judge something as good or bad, you are choosing your response to it at the same time. If you resist putting a label on events and accept they have no power until you choose a response, your experience will be very different.

Listen to the emotion that accompanies each of your responses to this exercise. Can you feel the difference in energy between the two lists? Listen to the self-talk that is part of your constant experience. The first column may cause you to feel tense whilst the second brings a sense of relief. Just by opening your mind to new possibilities you have instantly changed your reality.

Finding and focusing on at least one thing you can be grateful for about your current situation is a great place to start. You could be grateful for a roof over your head; for a societal system which ensures you are not starving on the street; or for the fact you are still alive – where there is life there is hope.

**'alone I walked on the ocean strand, a pearly shell was in my hand
I stooped and wrote upon the sand, my name, the year, the day
as onward from the spot I passed, one lingering look behind I cast
a wave came rolling high and fast, and washed my lines away**

Hannah Flagg Gould