

The START NOW Program of Self Healing: Self-heal Manual

Let's get STARTed!

- S.** is for Safety. Seek Safety and Support. Sometimes Silence is nice.
- T.** Talk about your trauma and/or your loss. Tell people close to you about how you feel. Translate feelings into words.
- A.** is for Acceptance. Accept what happened to you. What happened was not right, was not ideal, maybe it was unlucky. But nothing you can do now will change it. Accept yourself. Accept the past.
A is also for Action. Take Action, move beyond your restricted sphere. Move out into the world and forward into the future. A is also for Altruism, or doing things for others. Altruism is a way of moving beyond yourself. When you practice Altruism and help others, you are really helping yourself. Use Altruism as a way to move beyond your trauma.
- R.** is for Re-write history. Re-visit the scene of the trauma. Re-live it with new eyes. Take your memories and change them with new facts, insight, wisdom, knowledge, and experience.
- T.** is for Transform. Transform yourself from victim into survivor through re writing your history, and through volunteerism and altruism. Transform society to make it a better place. If there are things you don't like about society, or your own life, change it.
- N.** is for Notice other people around you. Go outside of your shell. Reach out to others. Volunteer. Help others.
- O.** is for Observe and yourself and Others. Observe the world around you, and Open yourself to being a part of **the world**.
- W.** is for Wonder about the World. See things through new eyes. Win your fight against traumatic stress.

Now we're going to start putting some of the things we have learned into action. That starts with re-visiting our traumas and re-writing the history. To do that we're going to do some of the journaling exercises we talked about before. By now you should have already covered some of the points of the START NOW Program that have allowed you to get this far, like Seeking Safety and Support. Or maybe you needed some time for Silence. If you need to, go back and re-visit those points now. If you get overwhelmed or flooded while doing these exercises, step back and take it easy. Give yourself some time, and don't get down on yourself because you "failed."

Remember, this is a circular process. You can come back around to it again after you have reviewed the earlier points again. Congratulate yourself on getting this far! Most people don't even try to make the journal.

Answer the questions below by writing them down. Or maybe you want to write a poem, write a song, or make a painting. Let's get started!

Who is in your family? (list wife, kids, parents, brothers, sisters, close relatives)

[illegible]

Were you separated from family? How did this go? How has it been since you came back?

[illegible]

Your support group is the people you can count on, can talk to. This could include your wife, husband, girlfriend, boyfriend, significant other, brother, sister, brother, father, mother, or your friend or someone at work. Make a list of the people in your support group below. They don't have to be your best friend. And if you don't want to name them (or your relationship to you), put an X, or make something up. Rate how supportive each person is, from 1 (least supportive) to 10 (most supportive).

Now write something about those some of the people, why or why not they are supportive. How you do (or do not) seek support from them? What you do together? How have they (or have not) helped you?

[illegible]

Name five physical places that make you feel safe (e.g, your home or a room in your home, a lake, some place in the mountains, a favorite childhood place or hideaway, etc.).

Now write about times you thought about those places, how it made you feel (e.g., thinking about something good, or a good memory of a place or a person, when things were going bad). Or maybe times you actually went there to feel better.

Name five mental places you can go to feel safe (e.g., thinking about my kids, imagining a scene on the beach or in the mountains).

Now write about times you went to those mental places and how you used them (e.g., thinking about something good, or a good memory of a place or a person, when things were going bad).

Now write about a frightening or negative thing that happened to you (e.g. being physically injured, being molested or sexually assaulted, seeing someone else seriously injured or killed, getting in a car accident, not being able to help or prevent a situation like a death or injury, etc.). Describe it in as much detail as possible.

What were you thinking at the time (e.g., I'm going to get killed, I've got to get someone else out of harm's way, someone screwed up, this is my fault...)?

What were you feeling at the time (fear, rush, anger, horror, disgust, exhilaration)? Use the list of emotion words at the end of the manual or in Appendix A.

What were you seeing at the time? What memory flashes back the most? What were you hearing? Was there anything touching you or injuring you? Were there any smells?

Now write about a second memory of a frightening or negative thing that happened to you (e.g. physically injured, being molested or sexually assaulted, got in a car accident, seeing others killed or wounded, not being able to help or prevent a situation, etc.). Describe it in as much detail as possible.

What were you seeing at the time? What memory flashes back the most? What were you hearing? Was there anything touching you or injuring you? Were there any smells?

What were you feeling at the time (fear, rush, anger, horror, disgust, exhilaration, use the list of emotion words)?

Now write about a third memory of a frightening or negative thing that happened to you (e.g. physically injured, being molested or sexually assaulted, got in a car accident, seeing others killed or wounded, not being able to help or prevent a situation, etc.). Describe it in as much detail as possible.

What were you seeing at the time? What memory flashes back the most? What were you hearing? Was there anything touching you or injuring you? Were there any smells?

What were you feeling at the time (fear, rush, anger, horror, disgust, exhilaration, use the list of emotion words)?

Is there anything about any of these memories that you have trouble accepting? (e.g. people were killed that didn't have to be, we shouldn't have been there, mistakes I made, what would have happened if a different decision was made, could I have prevented it, could I have helped?) Write about those.

Is there anything you would like to change about the past, the ways things went, make things better? Write about that.

Is there anything you would like to change about the future, make things better? Write about that.

Make a list of all the negative comments you heard as a child from your parent/step parent/uncle/sibling/schoolmates. First write down the person, then make a list of comments. Make a different list for each person.

How are you feeling now? You might want to talk to a supportive family member or friend. Seek safety and support. Go back to the start of START. If you've gotten this far, you've done a lot of work. Congratulations!