



# Better. Mental. Health.<sup>TM</sup> *for Everyone*

Preview Sample

## Who is this book for?

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This workbook is for those seeking ways to deal with everyday incidents that can trigger anxiety, depression and anger. By retraining your brain using these time-tested cognitive behavioral techniques, you can manage your reactions and lead a more peaceful life.

## What's Inside?

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Four-Step Method  
Readings  
Activities  
Worksheets  
Glossary  
Toolkit  
Meeting Information

This workbook is designed to be used as a self-help manual or part of a group training session. While the Recovery International (RI) Method often serves as an adjunct to professional care, it is not a substitute for therapy, counseling or medical advice. If you believe you need such counseling or advice, contact a mental health or health care professional.

Better. Mental. Health.™ for Everyone

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## Course Goals

### Welcome!

We live in stressful times. This workbook is designed to provide you with coping tools for everyday situations which can trigger symptoms. It will teach you to manage anger, alleviate depression, and reduce anxiety. It will help you to lead a more peaceful and productive life.

Founded in 1937, Recovery International (RI) has helped people achieve better mental health all around the world.

“

Thanks to this program, I know that I acted out because I was angry and afraid, but controlling my anger gives me more balance and a sense of accomplishment.\*

”

Marcus G., Chicago, IL

“

I’ve had depression for seven years. I used to have panic attacks. I’ve been attending Recovery International meetings for two years. Now, all of these things are very much in control.\*

”

Deepak D., Pune, India

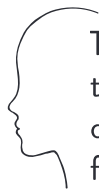
\*Quotes cited throughout this book are from RI members.

## Purpose

The purpose of this workbook is to help you manage symptoms and stressors of everyday life. If you follow the lessons, practice these techniques, and use these tools you will be able to:

1. Identify events that upset you.
2. Distinguish between emergency and routine events.
3. Recognize symptoms you experience when you are upset.
4. Examine your reactions to situations.
5. Use cognitive behavioral tools to help you reduce those symptoms.
6. Learn to express feelings about routine situations without temper.
7. Congratulate yourself for your efforts.

Each lesson includes readings, activities and tool lists to help you learn and practice the Four-Step Recovery International Method.



This workbook book will train you to use a variety of cognitive behavioral tools, called "spots," to control your thoughts and impulses. These "spots" were developed by neuropsychiatrist Dr. Abraham Low. Look for this face symbol which marks tools or "spots" introduced throughout the workbook.

There is a lesson on "Recovery International Language" as there are terms with a different context than what you may be used to. Along with spots, some terms are in bold text and definitions are in Appendix D.

At the end of each lesson are excerpts from one of several books by the founder of the Recovery Method, Dr. Abraham Low. You can find out more about his books in Appendix E.

All of these lessons, combined with regular practice of the concepts and Four-Step Method, will help you lead a more peaceful and productive life and achieve better mental health.

**Fearful anticipation is often worse than the realization.**

*– Worrying about what might happen is often worse than what does happen.*



## The Power of Self-Endorsement

Throughout this book and in Recovery Meetings, you will hear the word “endorse.”

Self-endorsement is praise we give ourselves for any effort. It’s like patting ourselves on the back. *We do not look for endorsement from others. We endorse ourselves.*

We endorse ourselves for *any effort* we make to control how we think and act, whether we are successful or not. We endorse for our efforts to improve our mental wellness. *We focus on effort, not results.*

**What are some efforts you can endorse yourself for today?**

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**Check off the tools that apply to your situation:**

- ☐ Endorse for the effort, not just the outcome.
- ☐ Self-endorsement leads to self-respect.
- ☐ Self-endorsement creates a feeling of security.
- ☐ We endorse even our smallest efforts.



*“What we teach you is to endorse your successes and to refrain from condemning your failures. An attitude of this kind permits you to accumulate a vast fund of self-endorsement.”*

*- Dr. Abraham Low*

**Endorse for using this workbook today!**

# Lesson 1:

## Explore Main Concepts

### Objectives:

- Recognize the difference between angry and fearful temper.
- Distinguish between inner environment and outer environment.

“

I became a much less angry person which made a huge difference for my wife and children. I also better managed my lowered feelings so I was able to work and contribute to the family in ways I had never been able to do before. I think I became a person that was just much nicer to be around.

”

Bob G., Phoenix, AZ

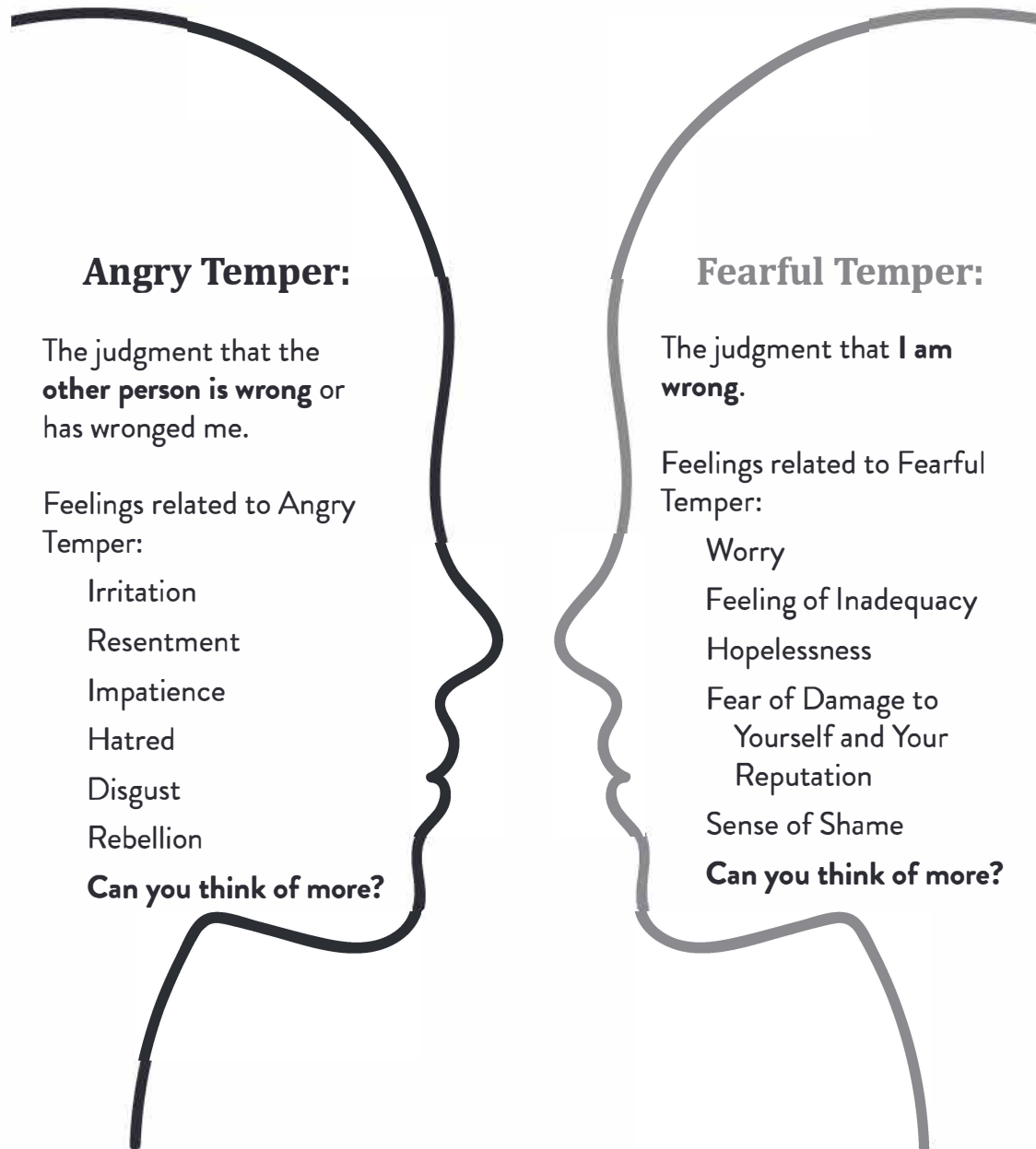
“

I have much greater stability and peace in home and at work.

”

Ian M., Detroit, MI

## Important Concept #1 “Temper” Has Two Faces





## Activity: Identifying Angry Temper

Write an **example of angry temper** - an everyday situation where you may have become angry, impatient, or irritated with others because you felt they were wrong or wronged you.

Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

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Now, check off the tools that could apply to your example.

- ☐ We can assert ourselves without temper.
- ☐ We excuse rather than accuse ourselves and others.
- ☐ Humor is our best friend, temper is our worst enemy.
- ☐ We choose peace over power.
- ☐ It takes two to fight, one to lay down the sword.
- ☐ If we can't change a situation, we can change our attitude toward it.
- ☐ Calm begets calm, temper begets temper.
- ☐ We drop the judgment for our own inner peace.
- ☐ Feelings should be expressed and temper suppressed.
- ☐ Feelings are not facts.
- ☐ Every act of self-control leads to a greater sense of self-respect.
- ☐ People do things that annoy us, not necessarily to annoy us.
- ☐ We can control our speech muscles.
- ☐ We can remove ourselves from a tense and provoking situation.
- ☐ Temper is blindness to the other side of the story.
- ☐ Tempers are frequently uncontrolled, not uncontrollable.



## Activity: Identifying Fearful Temper

Write an **example of fearful temper** - an everyday situation where you felt you were wrong, shameful, or were embarrassed or discouraged.

Situation: \_\_\_\_\_

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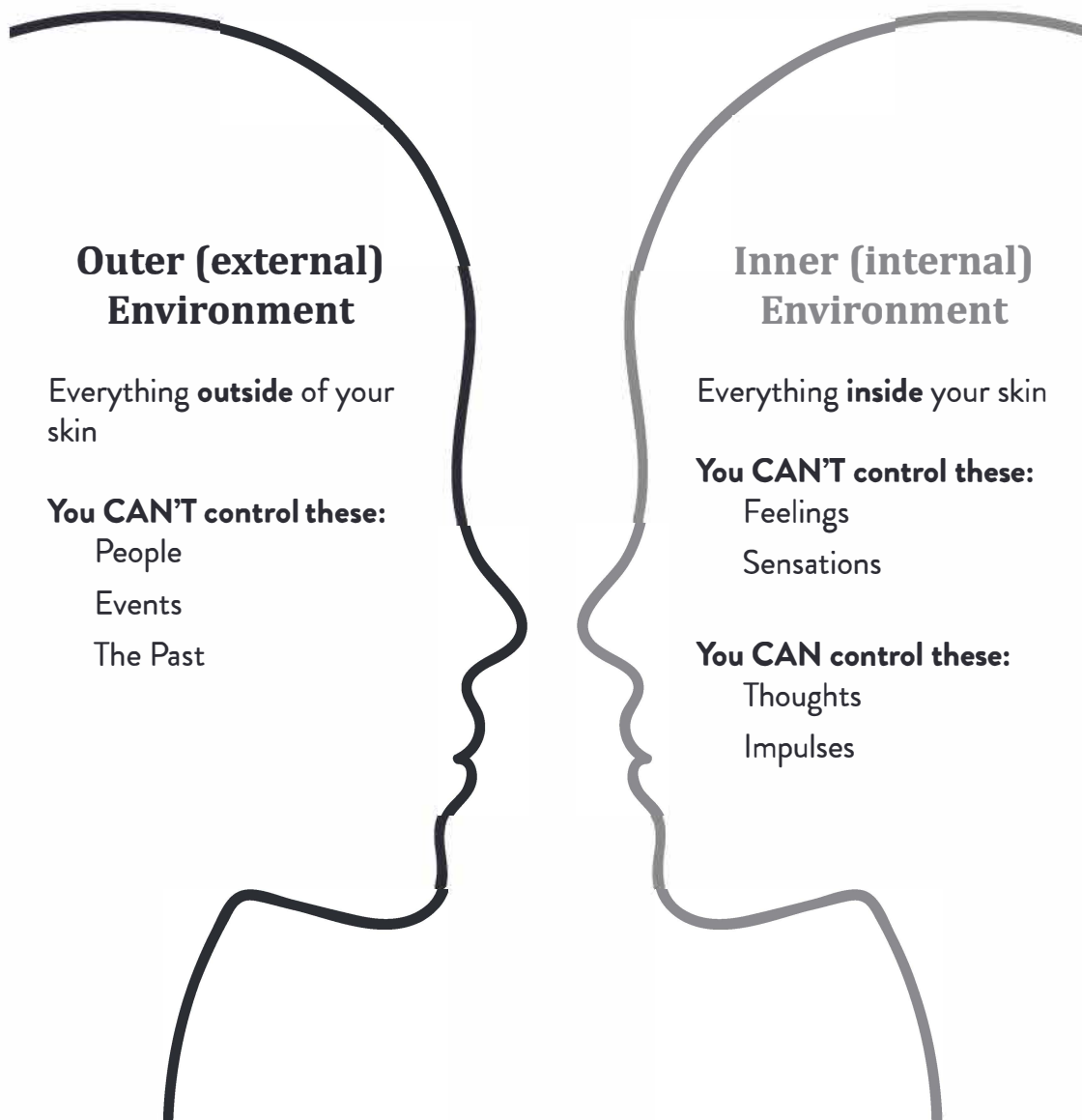
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Now, check off the tools that apply to your example.

- ☐ Humor is our best friend, temper is our worst enemy.
- ☐ We don't take ourselves too seriously.
- ☐ We excuse rather than accuse ourselves and others.
- ☐ Sensations are distressing, but not dangerous.
- ☐ There is no right or wrong in the trivialities of daily life.
- ☐ Calm begets calm, temper begets temper.
- ☐ Helplessness is not hopelessness.
- ☐ Temper maintains and intensifies symptoms.
- ☐ Endorse ourselves for the effort, not only for the performance.
- ☐ Have the courage to make mistakes.
- ☐ Fear is a belief and beliefs can be changed.
- ☐ Replace an insecure thought with a secure thought.
- ☐ Self-appointed expectations lead to self-induced frustrations.
- ☐ Decide, plan and act.
- ☐ When feeling overwhelmed, do things in "part acts."



## Important Concept # Inner and Outer “Environment”



As much as we'd like to, we cannot control our friends, family members, the person on the bus, or the woman driving next to us. We also have no control over weather, world events, the past or decisions we made in the past.

After our initial feelings and sensations during an event, we can control our thoughts and impulses and our actions and reactions to situations. In Recovery language, that is “controlling our muscles” – such as controlling our speech muscles and refusing to say something that’s hurtful, or controlling our muscles to walk away from a situation instead of engaging in conflict. It’s helpful to realize what can and can’t be controlled in a given situation to help you choose how to react.

## The Relationship Between Temper and Environment

We get *angry* when we feel *other people are wrong or have wronged us*. But, we can't control other people or events, so we have to find ways to cope. The tools in this book will help.

If we think *we are wrong*, we worry, feel inadequate and feel worthless. But, after our initial feelings, we can learn to change our thoughts and control impulses, and the tools in this book will teach you how.

When you find yourself getting worked up over a situation, take a deep breath and think about if you are experiencing **angry** or **fearful** temper.

Then think about whether the stress in the situation is a result of the **external environment**—something outside your control—or your **internal environment**, how you are reacting to the situation.

**Example:** Outer environment triggering angry or fearful temper

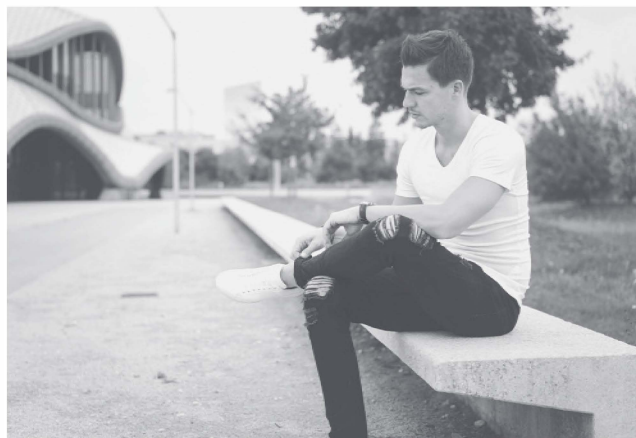
- When we feel anxious about a trivial everyday situation that we cannot control and must endure, for example being stuck in traffic, we can **spot angry temper** (frustration at outer environment) and use the **tools** “*If we can't change a situation, we can change our attitude towards it*” and “*We can take secure thoughts*” that it won't last forever and remember that “*Comfort is a want, not a need.*”



- The same situation could turn to **fearful temper**, by accusing ourselves with thoughts like, *“I should have left the house earlier,” “Why did I take this road?”* and *“I’m always late.”* This is a time to remember **tools** like, *“I spot that it is average to get caught in traffic,” “This is distressing but not dangerous”* or *“Drop the judgment.”*

**Example:** Inner Environment’s reactions to Outer Environment

- Suppose a friend is late picking us up to go to a movie. Initially we may have angry *feelings*. We might have *impulses* to yell at our friend or refuse to go because the movie will have already started by the time we get to the theater. We might have *thoughts* that our friend doesn’t care enough about us to be on time or that it’s our friend’s *fault* that we are so upset. Now we can **spot** our inner feelings of **angry** or **fearful temper** and **use tools** to change our thoughts and control our impulses like *“We can’t control the outer environment, we can only control our inner environment’s reaction,” “Temper is a blindness to the other side of the story,” “People do things that annoy us not necessarily to annoy us,”* and *“We excuse rather than accuse ourselves and others”* for the sake of peace.



By using tools, we drop the judgement and change our thoughts and realize that bad traffic or being late to the movies are trivialities, not emergencies. Our friend may have had a flat tire or lost track of time, or traffic may have been slow. Regardless of the reason for the tardiness, we can adjust our plans and still enjoy time together.

**Calm begets calm, temper begets temper.** – *Angry speech will result in an angry response, speak calmly and things are more likely to cool down.*



More than one million people have benefitted from the tools and techniques outlined in this workbook. The Recovery Method is based on cognitive behavioral techniques developed by neuropsychiatrist Dr. Abraham Low during the course of more than 25 years working with his patients. Recognizing the shortage of psychiatric professionals, Dr. Low created a peer-led self-help program that uses a rigorous format and tools to retrain the brain to react to daily incidents in a calm manner. Whether used by itself or as an adjunct to professional treatment, this method can help anyone lead a more peaceful and productive life.

This workbook can be used on your own or as part of a group introduction to the Recovery Method to help you achieve better mental health.

*"During my years in psychiatric practice, I have learned many different clinical approaches to psychiatric treatment. After attending some RI meetings, reading the literature, and practicing spotting, I was amazed at the potential power and value of this method. My impression is that, for many people, it can be a deeply healing approach to highly prevalent human suffering. One by one, the emotional "strings" that bind us to unnecessary pain are cut. In their place, peace and contentment flow. I have been recommending RI to many patients, friends, and family members."*

- Shelley Uram, MD (Harvard trained, board-certified psychiatrist)

*"Time and again the RI Method offers a way to access more realistic thinking and lower anxiety enough to make choices that work better in daily life situations. As an RI member and leader for over 15 years, I am eternally grateful for the difference it has made in my life as well as the lives of other RI participants and clients in my clinical social work practice."*

- Sandra Painter, MSW, LCSW, Raleigh, NC

For more information, visit [recoveryinternational.org](http://recoveryinternational.org)

For our program geared toward teens and young adults, visit [poweryourmind.org](http://poweryourmind.org)

