

# “Working Smart”

Soft Skills for Workplace Success

work and life skills that enhance employee productivity

2

*Module 2:*

## Self- Management



*Name:*

*A product of  
Charlotte Mecklenburg Workforce Development Partners*

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WORKBOOK

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# “Working Smart”

*Soft Skills for Workplace Success*

*work and life skills that enhance employee productivity*

Module 2

**Lesson 4**

## DEALING WITH **STRESS**

**Today's Vocabulary:**

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**Quote of the Day:**

# Module 2: Main Characters



**Crystal** works at the cosmetics counter of a department store, and is hoping to leave her painful past behind.

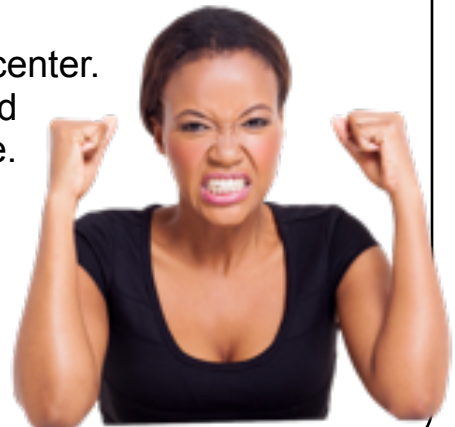


**Matt** is a department store security officer, a flirty co-worker of Crystal's.



**Benny** is a man with a record, trying hard to find a good job and be a part of his kids' lives.

**Ashley** is employed at a call center. She has a quick temper and lots of stress in her life.



# Crystal deals with a flirt



Crystal is a 22-year-old woman struggling to make ends meet on her minimum wage job at the cosmetics counter of a department store. Crystal had planned on being a teacher, but dropped out of college after being sexually assaulted last year. She'd kept the assault a secret from everyone except her two roommates. They encouraged her to talk to someone about what happened, but she said:

Crystal (ashamed): **"You two are the only people I've EVER told, and don't you dare tell anyone else. What happened to me is no one's business but my own. I'm trying to put it in the past and move on with my life. What's done is done. Talking about it won't change anything."**

Crystal was at work one day when one of the store security officers, Matt (a known flirt in his mid-30's) started hitting on her.

Matt: **"You look so fine today, Crystal! You do your hair yourself, or do you go to one of the salons in the mall?"**

Crystal (uncomfortable): **"I do it myself, Matt, but why don't you let me get back to work, okay?"**

Crystal tried to walk away, but Matt followed her around the counter.

Matt: **"Sure, hon. But first let me say that you make that outfit look GOOD! I always had a thing for lady doctors in lab coats..."**

Crystal (nervous): **"Ummmm... thanks, I guess. Matt, aren't you going to get in trouble hanging out over here? I mean, aren't you supposed to be patrolling the store or something?"**



Matt: **"That's sweet of you to worry about me like that, but Bob's got me covered."**

Crystal moved across the counter to take care of a customer. Her co-worker Amber rolled her eyes and gave her an amused "That's Matt for you" look. But Crystal wasn't finding him amusing at all. In fact, she was beginning to get a little scared. A minute later, she looked up from re-shelving an item to find him right in front of her.

Matt: **"Listen, do you like to dance? Cuz I know a club downtown that just jams on Friday nights! I'd love to take you out and show you a good time..."**

Crystal jumped, heart racing and skin crawling. In a fearful voice, she loudly blurted out:

Crystal (panicked): **"Leave me alone, you perv, or I'll report you! I'm not kidding! LEAVE ME ALONE!"**

Matt jumped back so quickly he nearly fell over his own feet. Amber rushed over to help, and a nearby customer asked "Are you okay?" Crystal's heart was pounding and her face turned bright red as the tears began to flow. Later, when her supervisor asked her to describe what happened, she found it hard to recall exactly what Matt actually did or said to freak her out so badly.

# In Survival Mode

The human brain and body are hard-wired to react quickly and instinctively when triggered by high stress or sudden threats. Under stress however, we can't always tell the difference between a real threat and a perceived one.

**"WARNING: SABER-TOOTH TIGER NEARBY!"**

1. Eyes, ears, nose or skin sense some kind of threat.
2. Brain sends out an emergency signal along nerves.
3. Adrenal glands (near kidneys) shoot adrenaline into blood stream.
4. Breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure instantly increase, drawing blood away from skin to vital organs, creating a tingling sensation.
5. Oxygen moves quickly to the brain and muscles, along with sugar for quick bursts of energy.
6. Eyes widen, pupils expand, muscles tighten, skin becomes more sensitive to threats.
7. Vision, hearing and smell become keener but very focused, creating tunnel vision.
8. Muscles get much stronger, body becomes less sensitive to pain, able to ignore injuries.



**In 2-3 seconds, the body and brain are in perfect sync, ready to survive the threat.**

## Survival Instincts

*Depending on the situation and our personality style, we may slip into one or all of these survival instincts during a perceived crisis. Which did Crystal fall into?*

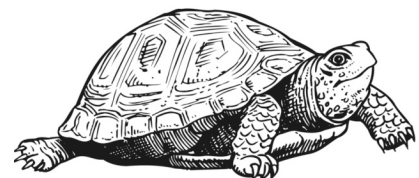


**"LASH OUT" IMPULSE:** Reacting aggressively or sarcastically to a challenging situation by attacking verbally or physically... (hoping the threat will back off if we can intimidate or outsmart it).



**"GET AWAY" IMPULSE:** Reacting defensively to a tough situation by running away physically or mentally... (hoping the threat won't be there when we return).

**"SHUT DOWN" IMPULSE:** Reacting passively to a difficult situation by hiding, avoiding, or doing nothing at all.... (hoping the threat will bypass us or that someone else will handle it).





# Three Kinds of Stress

The **Cognitive Cycle** shows how stress contributes to our problems. High stress can make small issues seem big, kicking us into fight/flight/freeze survival mode. This often leads to negative outcomes, making problems worse. There are three kinds of stress:



## 1. What-If Worries

Stressing out over possible future events, worrying about things that might happen (but seldom do). These are often based on negative assumptions and get worse if we obsess on them.

List some "What If" things you worry about:

What if my spouse loses his/her job?

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## 2. Daily Stress

Short-term stress of the moment, reacting to immediate demands, challenges, or threats. These often fade away in a few minutes or hours.

List some Daily stresses in your life:

Arguments with my teenagers.

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## 3. Chronic Stress

Persistent, building stress over issues not in our control. These issues may wear us down slowly over months or years, and seldom go away on their own.

List some Chronic stresses in your life:

My father had a stroke and needs much more of my time.

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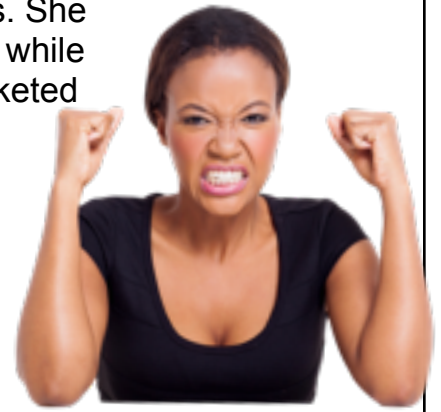
# Ashley gets a speeding ticket

1. Ashley is a 34-year-old single mother struggling with diabetes. She was arguing on the phone with her teenage daughter, Jasmine, while driving into work today when she got pulled over. The officer ticketed her for speeding and distracted driving.

She worried: *'How am I going to afford this? \$180 and 2 points on my license?'*

When Ashley finally arrived at the call center, she was 20 minutes late for her shift, feeling light-headed and out of breath. Her boss gave her an angry, impatient look, and the receptionist snickered under her breath.

Ashley got to her desk as quickly as possible. She was trying to deal with her first caller, but he was being really rude to her, demanding to speak to the manager. **"I'd be HAPPY to let you speak to my shift manager, sir. Just one moment and I'll get him on the line..."** and then 'accidentally' hung up on him!



- Underline each of Ashley's stresses. Are they What-If Worries, Daily, or Chronic Stresses?
- In the end, her survival instinct was: [Fight] [Flight] [Freeze]
- In a situation like this, my own stress level would be \_\_\_\_\_ (1-10). I would probably want to:

# Benny misses his appointment

2. Benny is a recovering addict who's been out of prison for over a month. Even though he learned some solid computer skills in the prison's vocational program, he was having a hard time finding work.

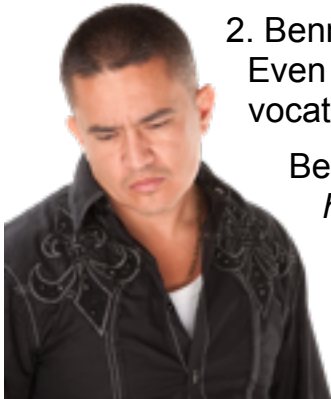
Benny was getting desperate for a job, worrying: *'What if no one EVER hires me? If I don't have a job, Marie won't let me spend time with my sons. They'll grow up thinking their father is a loser.'*

Benny made an appointment to meet with an employment counselor. He rode three crowded buses trying to get there on time, but arrived to the office 20 minutes late anyway.

Standing outside the building, he thought: *'I know what they're going to say. If you can't get HERE on time, how are you going to get to a job on time? I can't do anything right these days...It's not even worth going in...'*

Feeling depressed and totally stressed out, Benny walked back to the bus stop.

- Underline each of Benny's stresses. Are they What-If Worries, Daily, or Chronic Stresses?
- In the end, his survival instinct was: [Fight] [Flight] [Freeze]
- In a situation like this, my own stress level would be \_\_\_\_\_ (1-10). I would probably want to:





# Reducing Stress in Our Lives

There is no doubt that stress can become very unhealthy, affecting us at home and work. There are many specific strategies which can help bring life back into healthier balance when we are stressed out. *Circle one good idea from each box that you can use.*

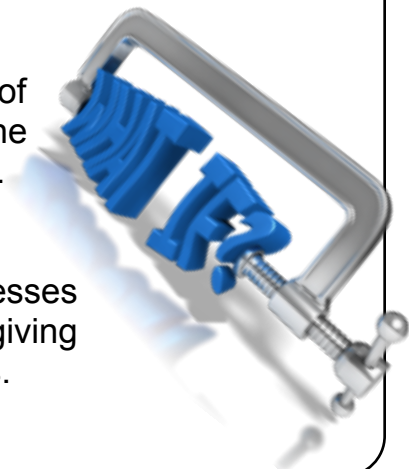
How to reduce **What-If Worries** (*Circle one strategy you can use*).

## 1. LIVE IN THE PRESENT.

Most things we worry about never come to pass. Instead of constantly worrying, try to enjoy your daily blessings. Visualize the future you want to have, and focus on possibilities, not obstacles.

## 2. FORGIVE YOURSELF.

We often judge ourselves too harshly. We minimize our successes and relive our failures again and again. Instead, get better at forgiving yourself for your shortcomings and accepting praise for your gifts.



How to reduce **Daily Stress** (*Circle one strategy you can use*)

## 1. BREATHE.

Reacting to stress by hunching over, gulping air and taking short breaths leaves us oxygen-deprived. Instead, sit up straight. Take a slow, deep breath through your nose. Hold it for a second or two, then slowly release it through your mouth.

## 2. HYDRATE.

Anxiety often leaves us with a dry mouth. Instead, take a sip of water, which will immediately make you feel better. Keep a bottle of water nearby all day, and stay fully hydrated.



How to reduce **Chronic Stress** (*Circle one strategy you can use*)

## 1. TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY.

Chronic stress takes its toll on the body over a period of months or years. To reduce its hold, take care of your body. Drink more water, eat more fruits and veggies, get at least 6-8 hours sleep, and exercise daily, even if it's only a short walk after dinner.

## 2. DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

Chronic stress often creates unhealthy routines. Break out of it by doing something different. Plan a fun vacation, get involved in a weekly community group, plant a small garden, eat dinner out one night, or implement a family game night... just do something different.



# Lesson 4 Summary

**Key Point 1:** The human brain and body are hard-wired for survival, ready to fight back, get away, or shut down when our physical safety seems threatened. Unfortunately, the primitive part of our brain sometimes overreacts, so it may tell us to fight, fly, or freeze when our lives are safe but our dignity is threatened.

**Key Point 2:** High stress can be very unhealthy. What-if worries (worrying about things to come), daily stress (short-term frustration over everyday issues), and chronic stress (long-lasting problems which build over time) can become overwhelming if we do not address them. As we get better at reducing stress, we can think more clearly and respond more carefully to problems.

## Lesson 4 Quiz

**Part A:** Alan, Betty, Charlie, and Debbie all have their 90-day performance reviews today. Each feels attacked by their boss' critical comments, although each reacts differently. Identify each reaction as Fight, Flight, or Freeze.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Betty says: "I'm out of here. I quit."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Alan threatens: "Why don't you meet me in the parking lot at 5:00PM?"
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Charlie looks down and doesn't say anything back.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Debbie waits until after the meeting, then sends an angry text-message to everyone she knows.

**Part B:** Identify each of the following as an example of What-If stress, Daily stress, or Chronic stress.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. You got a parking ticket on your car this morning.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. You have painful neck and back problems that get worse every month.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. You are worried about what might happen if your daughter drops out.

**Part C:** Answer T (true) or F (false). If false, explain the correct answer.

- [T] [F] 8. Living in the moment instead of worrying too much about the future is an especially good strategy for reducing what-if worries.
- [T] [F] 9. Taking a deep breath and sip of cool water is best for managing daily stress.
- [T] [F] 10. Creating new routines for your life is especially important when dealing with long-term chronic stresses.

**Something I will remember about today:**

# “Working Smart”

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Work and life skills that enhance employee productivity

## Module 2 Lesson 5

# WARNING SIGNS

**Today's Vocabulary:**

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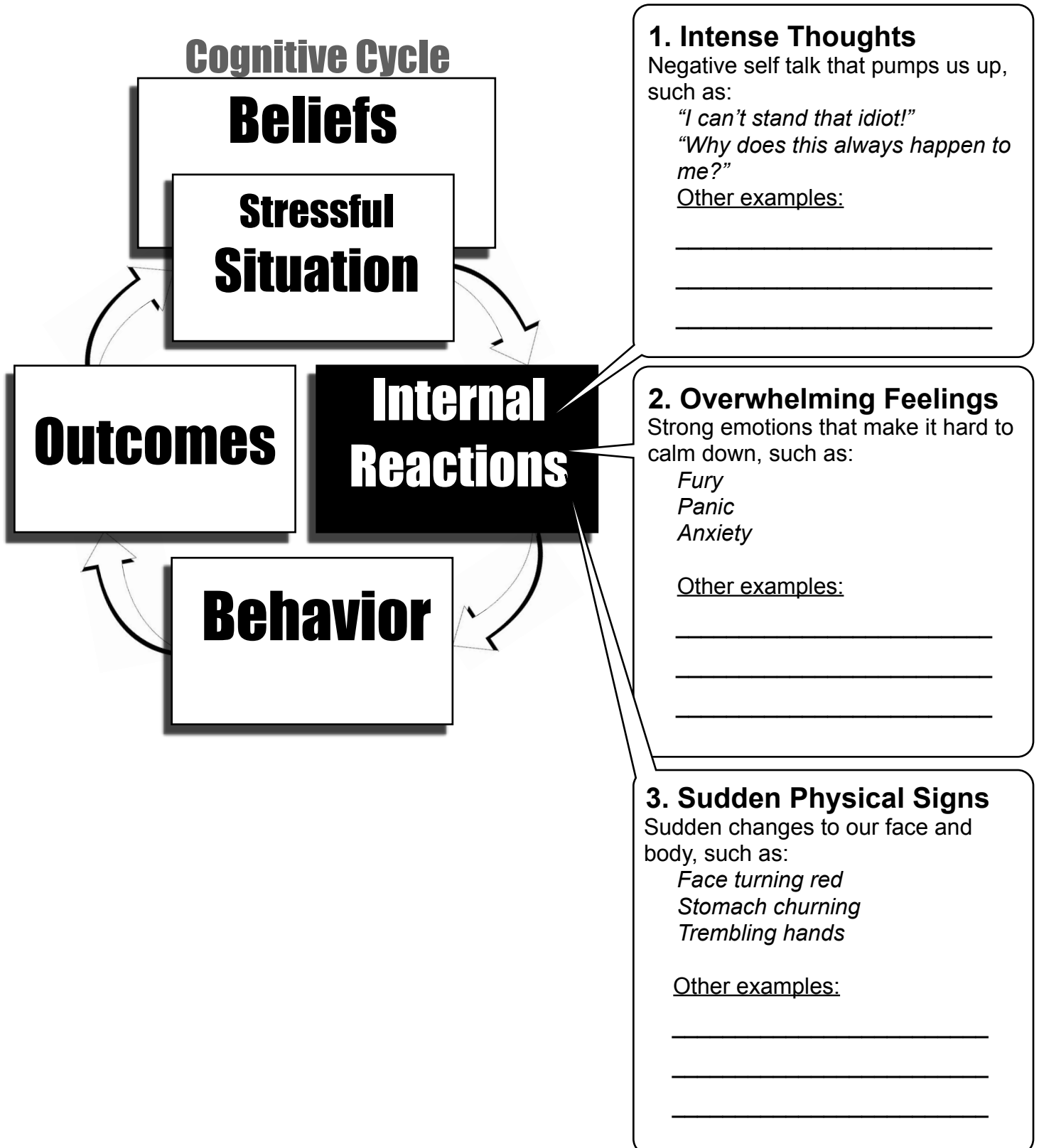


**Quote of the Day:**



# Three Warning Signs

The Cognitive Cycle reminds us to pay attention to our **internal reactions** during a stressful problem. If we notice our warning signs soon enough, we can catch ourselves before an impulsive behavior leads to negative outcomes. There are three kinds of warning signs:



# Feeling Families

Stressful situations can be like intense thunderstorms. We can be blinded by lightning, unable to think clearly. We can become flooded by overwhelming emotions, and find ourselves overreacting to the problem.



Naming our feelings often gives us a handle on them, and makes us feel more in control. There are four main “Feeling Families” or categories of emotions:

1. Anger (MAD)    2. Sadness (SAD)    3. Fear (SCARED)    and 4. Happiness (GLAD).

*DIRECTIONS: Categorize each of these FEELINGS. There may be more than one good answer.*

<b>MAD</b>	<b>Feeling Faces</b>	<b>SCARED</b>
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<b>SAD</b>		<b>GLAD</b>

# Ashley's Warning Signs

A closer look at Ashley's really bad morning (from the previous lesson) shows many warning signs. If she'd just paid more attention to them, she might have been able to calm down before putting her job at risk.

Directions: Pick out all of Ashley's warning signs below.

1. Underline her intense **thoughts**.
2. Circle her overwhelming **feelings**.
3. Box her sudden **physical signs** (changes to face/body).



## STRESSFUL SITUATION 1: Ashley gets a ticket.

Ashley was arguing on the phone with her teenage daughter Jasmine on the drive into work today when she saw flashing blue lights in her rear view mirror. Instantly, her heart began pounding faster and her face got hot. She was filled with embarrassment as the officer ticketed her for speeding and distracted driving.

Ashley (worried and angry, to herself): *'How am I going to afford this? \$180 and 2 points on my license? Just wait till I see that girl of mine tonight!'*

## STRESSFUL SITUATION 2: Ashley is late to work.

When Ashley finally arrived at the call center, she was panicked. She was 20 minutes late for her shift, feeling light-headed and out of breath. Her boss gave her an impatient look, and the receptionist snickered under her breath. Ashley's teeth gritted.

Ashley (aggravated, to herself): *'Who does she think SHE is? Acting like she's better than the rest of us. All up the boss's butt like that, it's a wonder she doesn't suffocate!'*

## STRESSFUL SITUATION 3: Ashley deals with a rude caller.

Ashley got to her desk as quickly as possible, feeling completely overwhelmed. She'd missed breakfast so her blood sugar was low, and she was a little dizzy. She was trying to deal calmly with her first caller, but he was being really rude to her, demanding to speak to the manager.

Ashley (disgusted, to herself): *"You know what? I'm sick of all the @#\$. After the day I've been having, I don't need to listen to jerks like this!"*

Ashley could feel her jaw tighten up and an angry smile cross her face as she prepared to 'accidentally' hang up on the caller.

Ashley (sarcastic): **"I'd be HAPPY to let you speak to my shift manager, sir. Just one moment and I'll get him on the line..."**



# “Dangerous Curves Ahead!”

Our internal reactions act as **Warning Signs**, like road signs of “**Dangerous Curves Ahead!**” They warn us that our stress level is getting high, and that we are about to overreact. If we don’t pay attention to these, we risk an emotional accident.

Intense <b>THOUGHTS</b>	Overwhelming <b>FEELINGS</b>	Sudden <b>PHYSICAL SIGNS</b>
		

1. **Rhonda** works for a cleaning service. She forgot to set her alarm last night, and woke up 45 minutes late. She is rushing to get out the door to work, upset with herself and yelling at everyone else because she’s behind schedule again. Her kids are out of school and fighting loudly over breakfast, and her unemployed boyfriend is sleeping in... again.



Thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

Feelings: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical signs: \_\_\_\_\_



2. **Barbara** works as a CNA at a nursing home. She has had a very long day and her shift is almost over. She is changing a patient’s sheets when a visitor sticks his head in the room and rudely says: “**Listen lady, I brought my father some new flannel pajamas last week and now they’re gone! Somebody BETTER find them or it’s going to come out of YOUR paycheck! For what we pay this place...**”


Thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

Feelings: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical signs: \_\_\_\_\_

# Applying the Skill

What really pushes your buttons at work? When we are aware of our stressful “hot spot” situations, we can take time to calm down before we get caught up in power struggles.

<b>STRESSFUL SITUATION:</b> It really bothers me at work when:	<b>VALUE / BELIEF:</b> This bothers me because I believe that:	<b>INTERNAL REACTIONS:</b> My warning signs would be:
<p><u>It bothers me at work when:</u></p> <p>... someone at work takes my soda (one that I bought myself) out of the fridge and drinks it.</p> 	<p><u>Because I believe that:</u></p> <p>... people should keep their hands off stuff that doesn't belong to them!</p>	<p><u>My thoughts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Are you kidding me?'</li> <li>• 'This is NOT happening!'</li> </ul> <p><u>My feelings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shocked</li> <li>• Angry</li> </ul> <p><u>My physical signs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mouth open</li> <li>• Eyes wide</li> </ul>
<p><u>It bothers me at work when:</u></p>	<p><u>Because I believe that:</u></p>	<p><u>My thoughts</u></p> <p><u>My feelings</u></p> <p><u>My physical signs</u></p>
<p><u>It bothers me at work when:</u></p>	<p><u>Because I believe that:</u></p>	<p><u>My thoughts</u></p> <p><u>My feelings</u></p> <p><u>My physical signs</u></p>

# Lesson 5 Summary

**Key Point 1:** We all have situations that push our buttons, and tempt us to fight, run, or hide. When we are aware of these predictably stressful triggers, we can prepare to calmly deal with them on our own terms.

**Key Point 2:** There are usually warning signs that a small problem is escalating into a bigger one. By paying attention to our internal thoughts, feelings, and physical signs, we can tell when things are getting too personal, slowing down before going off or running off.

## Lesson 5 Quiz

**Part A:** Alan, Betty, Charlie, and Debbie just finished their 90-day performance reviews. Afterward, each of them feels some serious warning signs of stress. Identify each of their Warning Signs as:

**T (thought)**

**F (feeling)**

**P (physical sign)**

- \_\_\_ 1. Alan says to himself: ‘OMG, I can’t believe I just threatened my boss!’
- \_\_\_ 2. Betty has a stomach ache.
- \_\_\_ 3. Charlie is completely depressed.
- \_\_\_ 4. Debbie’s neck and shoulders are stiff.
- \_\_\_ 5. Alan is angry and in shock.
- \_\_\_ 6. Betty wonders: ‘How will I explain this to my husband?’

**Part B:** Answer T (true) or F (false). If false, explain the correct answer.

- [T] [F] 7. Knowing our warning signs guarantees that we will never have an “emotional accident.”
- [T] [F] 8. If we pay close attention to our warning signs, we have a chance to slow ourselves down before we do or say something we might regret.
- [T] [F] 9. There are four feeling families: Snickers, Kit-Kats, M&M’s, and Twizzlers.
- [T] [F] 10. Being able to label our feelings often makes it easier to understand and gain control over them.

**Something I will remember about today:**

# NOTES

# “Working Smart”

*Soft Skills for Workplace Success*  
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## Module 2 Lesson 6

# PERSONAL REACTIONS

**Today's Vocabulary:**

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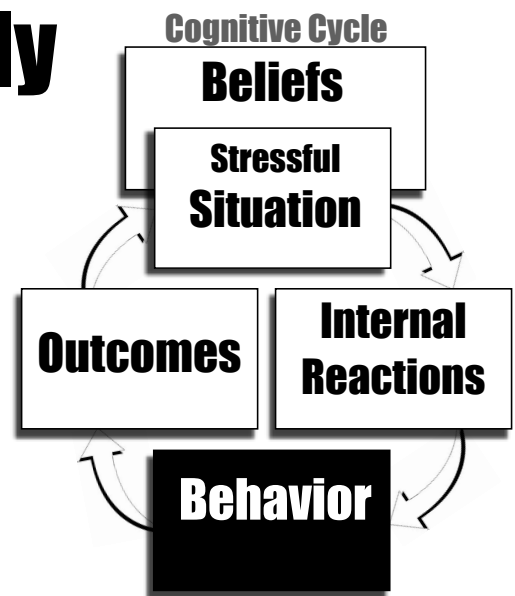


**Quote of the Day:**

# Overreacting Personally

The Cognitive Cycle shows how our personal behaviors can often backfire on us in a professional workplace. It can be very easy to overreact to stressful problems with customers, co-workers and supervisors, often leading to negative outcomes and bigger problems.

There are four common styles of “personal reactions.” Even the calmest people can sometimes overreact when they are triggered. Can you spot your own style of overreacting? What triggers this behavior for you?



## 1. AGGRESSION

Main feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

Typical aggressive behaviors:

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## 2. PASSIVE AGGRESSION

Main feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

Typical passive aggressive behaviors:

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## 3. AVOIDANCE

Main feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

Typical avoidant behaviors:

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## 4. DEPENDENCY

Main feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

Typical dependent behaviors:

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# Which Personal Reaction?

In each of the following scenarios, identify the employee's main behavior pattern.

A few months ago, Bill was promoted to supervisor. He now has to manage people who were once his co-workers, and are still his friends on the outside. Four of them have been late over and over, and Bill has started to get grief from the company owner about it. One by one, he pulls them into his office to address the issue.

"Listen, I need to talk with you about your chronic tardiness. Today makes two times this week you've been late -- and a total of four times in the past month. You have no idea how many problems this is causing up top. I know that we used to be co-workers and that we're friends on the outside, but this CANNOT keep happening! What are we going to do about this?"



Employee 1 (cynically): "Jeez Bill, I'm sooooo sorry! I didn't realize that you were such a control freak. Fine .... whatever. I'll be right on time, to the minute, every single day from now on. Will that make you happy?"

*Aggressive • Passive Aggressive • Avoidant • Dependent*  
*What kinds of problems can this behavior cause in the workplace?*

Employee 2 (whining): "I am soooo sorry. I should have called, I know, but my phone got cut off last week. And I would have been here on time except that my boyfriend overslept. I don't mean to take advantage of our friendship, but you KNOW what'll happen to my kids if I lose this job. You gotta cover for me, Bill!"

*Aggressive • Passive Aggressive • Avoidant • Dependent*  
*What kinds of problems can this behavior cause in the workplace?*



Employee 3 (yelling and shoving chair): "Are you kidding me? After all I did for you back in the day, you're gonna threaten my job? Boy, you've really changed Bill, I gotta tell you. You've turned into a real backstabbing jerk, I gotta tell you."

*Aggressive • Passive Aggressive • Avoidant • Dependent*  
*What kinds of problems can this behavior cause in the workplace?*

Employee 4 (looking down): "I don't know what to say, Bill..... Can I get back to you tomorrow with some thoughts on that?"

He does his best to stay out of Bill's way and never does get back to him with any ideas.

*Aggressive • Passive Aggressive • Avoidant • Dependent*  
*What kinds of problems can this behavior cause in the workplace?*



# Professional Response: Assertiveness

A professional alternative is an **ASSERTIVE** response: Calmly, firmly standing up for ourselves, without attacking the person or avoiding the problem. This approach is direct and solution-centered, but it takes both courage and skill to be this straight-up with problems.



Employee 5 (calmly): “You’re right, Bill. I have been late a few times this month, and I can imagine that it’s created some problems for you here at work. I have a lot going on at home right now, but I need to do a better job of juggling those things so that they don’t get in the way of doing my job.”

Discuss: What are the benefits of handling problems this way instead?

1. **Rhonda** works for a cleaning service. She forgot to set her alarm last night, and woke up 45 minutes late. She is rushing to get out the door to work, upset with herself and yelling at everyone else because she’s behind schedule again. Her kids are out of school and fighting loudly over breakfast, and her unemployed boyfriend is sleeping in... again.



An **avoidant** impulse behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

An **assertive** response would be to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



2. **Barbara** works as a CNA at a nursing home. She has had a very long day and her shift is almost over. She is changing a patient’s sheets when a visitor sticks his head in the room and rudely says: “Listen lady, I brought my father some new flannel pajamas last week and now they’re gone! Somebody **BETTER** find them or it’s going to come out of YOUR paycheck! For what we pay this place...”

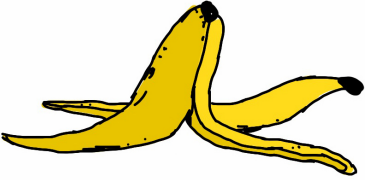
A **passive aggressive** impulse behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

An **assertive** response would be to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Applying the Skill

Reconsider your “hot spot” situations from the previous lesson. What is your impulse behavior or “gut reaction” in each case? What would be a more assertive way to handle these situations?

<b>STRESSFUL SITUATION:</b> It really bothers me at work when:	<b>IMPULSE BEHAVIOR:</b> If I wasn't worried about consequences, what I'd be tempted to do is:	<b>PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR</b> It wouldn't be easy, but a more assertive response would be:
<p><u>It bothers me at work when:</u></p> <p>... a coworker leaves a mess (like a slimy banana peel) on my desk/work area.</p> 	<p><u>What I'm tempted to do is:</u></p> <p>... hide the banana peel in their drawer or bag so that it stinks everything up!</p> <p><u>This behavior is somewhat:</u></p> <p>Aggressive    <u>Passive Aggressive</u>            Avoidant    Dependent</p>	<p><u>To be assertive, I could:</u></p> <p>Ignore it if it's a one-time problem. If it's happening often, bring it to them and calmly tell them how aggravating it is getting.</p>
<p><u>It bothers me at work when:</u></p>	<p><u>What I'm tempted to do is:</u></p> <p><u>This behavior is somewhat:</u></p> <p>Aggressive    Passive Aggressive            Avoidant    Dependent</p>	<p><u>To be assertive, I could:</u></p>
<p><u>It bothers me at work when:</u></p>	<p><u>What I'm tempted to do is:</u></p> <p><u>This behavior is somewhat:</u></p> <p>Aggressive    Passive Aggressive            Avoidant    Dependent</p>	<p><u>To be assertive, I could:</u></p>

# Lesson 6 Summary

**Key Point 1:** It is easy to take issues personally in the workplace, to get in the habit of reacting in ways that make problems worse. Four personal reactions are angry Aggression, sarcastic Passive Aggression, overwhelmed Avoidance, and anxious Dependency. Each of these patterns escapes the immediate problem, but creates long-term consequences.

**Key Point 2:** A fifth pattern is cool, calm Assertiveness. An assertive approach is emotionally controlled and solution-centered. This style gives us the strength to stand up for ourselves without attacking others or getting defensive.

## Lesson 6 Quiz

**Part A. Match each personal reaction with 2 emotions that go with it (one from each column). There may be more than one right answer.**

	<u>Personal Reaction</u>	<u>Common Emotions</u>	
___ & ___	1. Aggressive	a. Worried	e. Worthless
___ & ___	2. Passive-Aggressive	b. Cynical	f. Furious
___ & ___	3. Avoidant	c. Depressed	g. Insecure
___ & ___	4. Dependent	d. Angry	h. Superior

**Part B: It's been 30 minutes since Alan, Betty, Charlie, and Debbie finished their performance reviews. Each character is highly stressed out, but dealing with it differently. Identify each behavior as "Agg" (aggressive), "Pas" (passive aggressive), "Avd" (avoidant), or "Dep" (dependent).**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Debbie is gossiping about her boss and her co-workers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Alan is yelling abusive words at the UPS delivery man.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Betty has walked out of work and is on her way to a bar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Charlie is keeping to himself, hoping everyone leaves him alone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Debbie tries to manipulate the company owner into firing her supervisor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Charlie later tries very hard to please his boss, begging for his job.

**Something I will remember about today:**

# “Working Smart”

Soft Skills for Workplace Success  
work and life skills that enhance employee productivity

## Module 2 Lesson 7

# STAYING CALM & CLEAR

Today's Vocabulary:

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Quote of the Day:

# Benny Gets a Job

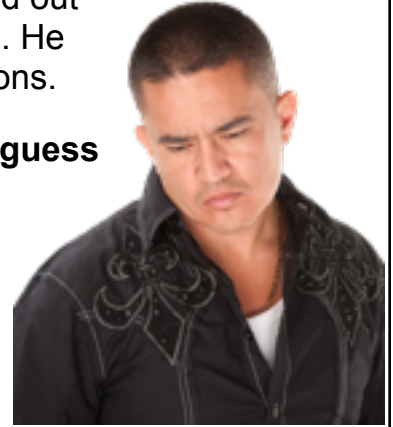
Benny had been out of prison for 6 weeks now. Although he'd stayed out of trouble, he still hadn't found a job, and it was really getting to him. He was talking on the phone with Marie, the mother of his two young sons.

Benny (sad): **"I'm sorry I was so weird a couple of weeks ago. I guess I was kind of hurt. Why were the boys so scared of me?"**

Marie (sympathetic): **"They weren't scared, just shy. They'll come around once they get to know you. Call me again when you get settled in, and we'll work something out."**

Benny could feel his stomach clench in knots as he thought:

Benny (depressed, to himself): *'Well that means I should be able to see them in exactly -- NEVER! If I can't find a job, I'll never have any real money. And that means I'll never get a place, and never see my boys. Not unless I go back to my old ways...'*



One Sunday after church, his Uncle Don pulled him aside.

Don: **"I hear you're not having any luck finding work, is that right? If you're okay working for your old Uncle Don, I could give you a shot in my landscaping business. I could use a hard worker who doesn't mind getting his hands dirty. It's not fancy computer stuff, but it's honest work, and it pays \$12/hour. What do you think?"**

Benny: **"I think I could KISS you, Uncle Don! Yes, I'll take it!"**

A few days later, Benny was wearing a green "Don's Landscaping" t-shirt and pulling up to a big house in the suburbs. He was in training with a hyperactive 19-year-old named Richie, his so-called 'supervisor.' As they got out of the truck, Richie explained the difference between a balanced fertilizer and a growth fertilizer... for the third time.

Richie (talking fast): **"See? The balanced one is a 6-6-6. That's good for flowers, but not for lawns. For lawns, you want a growth fertilizer, like this 34-0-0..."**

Benny (disgusted, to himself): *'Seriously? I have to listen to this from a scrawny teenager who still has pimples on his face? After what I've been through in my life, I shouldn't have to get schooled by some punk kid...'*

Benny rolled his eyes and did his best to look interested as it all went over his head. He got to work pushing the spreader around the lawn, then went around back to trim some of the tree branches.



Benny was stepping up to a wood pile when he saw a long black snake move past him so fast he could hardly believe it. Instantly, he jumped back. His heart leapt in his chest and his mouth went dry.

Benny (shocked and afraid, to himself): *'What the ---? Was that a snake? A SNAKE? Naw man, this city boy don't do snakes! I'm not gettin' bit!'*

He dropped his equipment on the ground and flat out RAN back to the truck. He sat inside, doors shut and windows rolled up tight. Richie saw him there and came over to ask him what was up. Benny told him about the poisonous snake that nearly bit him.

Richie (hyper): **"About 3 feet long? Really fast? Sounds like a black racer. They're not poisonous, and they'll only bite if you try to pick one up. Did you try to pick it up?"**

Benny (scared): **"Heck no! And I'm not going back down there... not right now, anyway."**

As Richie went to grab the equipment, Benny's heart rate slowed down and he was able to start thinking again.



## After Reading the Story

1. Benny has at least three times where his feelings are nearly overwhelming. Find those three places in the story and put a STAR beside each one.
2. In each of those three places, Benny has warning signs to let him know he is getting worked up.
  - a. Underline Benny's **thoughts**.
  - b. Circle Benny's **emotions**.
  - c. Box Benny's **physical signs**.
3. Benny's survival instincts took over when he saw the snake. Which of the three instincts did he use? [FIGHT] [FLIGHT] [FREEZE] What would you have done?
4. Despite all his negative thinking, Benny didn't actually DO anything negative. What do you think he was TEMPTED to do in each of his stressful situations?

### Stressful Situation

### Benny was tempted to:

- a. After his conversation with Marie
- b. While listening to Richie explain
- c. After being startled by the snake

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5. Sitting in the truck, Benny has a chance to think this out. What advice would you give Benny to help him make a good decision?

# Thoughts & Feelings

High stress can temporarily “short-circuit” our ability to think clearly. Under high stress, our old hard-wired survival patterns sometime kick in, making situations seem more threatening than they really are.

As we become more self-aware, we are able to recognize our intense thoughts and feelings before they take over. We learn to control our feelings, instead of letting our feelings control us.



**Situation 1:** You’ve been waiting to interview for a job you really need. The interviewer has been spending a lot of extra time with the person before you, so you are now 20 minutes behind schedule.

I’d probably be feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

because I’d be telling myself: \_\_\_\_\_

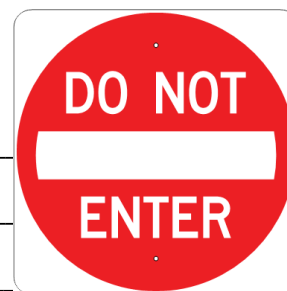
\_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 2:** You took a wrong turn on the way to your new job and will now be at least ten minutes late.

I’d probably be feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

because I’d be telling myself: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**Situation 3:** Technically, there’s a dress code on your job, but it’s almost never enforced. You come in to work today in your casual street clothes and notice that everyone else is dressed up. Your supervisor yells, “The District Manager is coming today! Why are you dressed like that?”

I’d probably be feeling: \_\_\_\_\_

because I’d be telling myself: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# 'Feeling Faces' Chart



EXHAUSTED



CONFUSED



ECSTATIC



GUILTY



SUSPICIOUS



ANGRY



HYSTERICAL



FRUSTRATED



SAD



CONFIDENT



EMBARRASSED



HAPPY



MISCHIEVOUS



DISGUSTED



FRIGHTENED



ENRAGED



ASHAMED



CAUTIOUS



SMUG



DEPRESSED



OVERWHELMED



HOPEFUL



LONELY



LOVESTRUCK



JEALOUS



BORED



SURPRISED



ANXIOUS



SHOCKED



SHY

# 'Calm & Clear' Strategies

When strong feelings lead us to act out impulsively, work relationships can be damaged and jobs can be lost. We can counteract strong emotions by deliberately using our minds and bodies to help us get calm and clear-headed.

**Calm your Body • Clear your Mind • Act the Opposite**

## Step 1. Calm Your Body (\_\_\_\_\_)

You know you're uptight, so don't make hasty decisions.

Instead, take a deep breath and slowly release it. Do it again.

Stretch your neck and shoulders, then try to relax any tight muscles.

Other strategies to calm your body:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## Step 2. Clear Your Mind (\_\_\_\_\_)

When strong feelings like anger, worry, and sadness flood you, clear them out with positive imagery or counteract them with positive self-talk (thoughts).

**Positive images:** Imagine the feelings coming in like an ocean wave: swelling, crashing, and receding. Let them come, and then let them go out too. The flood won't last forever.

**Positive thoughts:** *'I'm feeling really angry right now! But this intense feeling will pass in a minute or two. Don't act on it yet. Don't dwell on it.'*

Other positive images or positive thoughts to clear your mind:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Step 3. Act the Opposite (\_\_\_\_\_)

Your first impulse may not be the best one in a stressful situation. Try doing the exact opposite of what you feel like doing.



When I feel like:

Frowning

Getting Loud

Attacking

Defensive

Isolating myself

Instead I can try:

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# Applying the Skill

*Directions: Return to the situations below, and identify strategies to stay calm and clear.*



**Situation 1: You've been waiting to interview for a job you really need. The interviewer has been spending a lot of extra time with the person before you, so you are now 20 minutes behind schedule.**

Calm my body: \_\_\_\_\_

Clear my head: \_\_\_\_\_

Act the opposite: Although I'd feel like \_\_\_\_\_

I'll do my best to \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 2: You took a wrong turn on the way to your new job and will now be at least ten minutes late.**

Calm my body: \_\_\_\_\_

Clear my head: \_\_\_\_\_

Act the opposite: Although I'd feel like \_\_\_\_\_

I'll do my best to \_\_\_\_\_



**Situation 3: Technically, there's a dress code on your job, but it's almost never enforced. You come in to work today in your casual street clothes and notice that everyone else is dressed up. Your supervisor yells, "The District Manager is coming today! Why are you dressed like that?"**

Calm my body: \_\_\_\_\_

Clear my head: \_\_\_\_\_

Act the opposite: Although I'd feel like \_\_\_\_\_

I'll do my best to \_\_\_\_\_

# Slogans to Help You Stay Calm & Clear

Can you use any of these to counteract negative thoughts?

1. Easy Does It
2. First Things First
3. Live And Let Live
4. One Day At Time
5. Let Go And Let God
6. Keep It Simple Stupid
7. This Too Shall Pass
8. If It Works, Don't Fix It
9. To Thine Own Self Be True
10. Live In The Now
11. Be Part Of The Solution, Not The Problem
12. Keep An Open Mind
13. Go For It
14. Let It Begin With Me
15. Pass It On
16. Before You Say "I Can't" Say "I'll Try"
17. Practice An Attitude Of Gratitude
18. Count Your Blessings
19. Share Your Happiness
20. What Goes Around, Comes Around
21. Change Is A Process Not An Event
22. Put Your Mind In Gear Before Engaging Your Mouth
23. Sorrow Is Looking Back. Worry Is Looking Around.
24. Minds Are Like Parachutes. They Won't Work Unless They're Open
25. Serenity Is Not Freedom From The Storm But Peace Amid The Storm

Based on the Collected Wisdom Of Alcoholics Anonymous  
<http://aaslogans.com>



# Inspirational Quotes to Change Your Thinking

Can you use any of these to counteract negative thoughts?

1. You can't change what you refuse to confront.
2. If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it.
3. Sometimes good things fall apart, so that better things can come together.
4. Sometimes you need to distance yourself to see things clearly.
5. Fools buy things they don't need with money they don't have to impress people they don't know.
6. Making one person smile can change the world. Their world, at least.
7. Telling someone they're ugly doesn't make you any prettier.
8. Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it.
9. It's better to be alone than to be in bad company.
10. If you really want to do something, you'll find a way. If you don't, you'll find an excuse.
11. Never do something permanently foolish because you are temporarily upset.
12. You can learn great things from your mistakes if you aren't busy denying them.
13. If you don't risk anything, you risk everything.
14. Everything that has ever happened in your life is preparing you for a moment yet to come.
15. Trying to be someone else is a waste of the person you already are.
16. You will never become who you want to be by blaming others for who you are now.
17. Someone else doesn't have to be wrong for you to be right.
18. When you're up, your friends know who you are. When you're down, you know who your friends are.
19. The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the best intention.
20. When you choose to see the good in others, you end up finding the good in yourself.
21. You don't drown by falling in the water. You drown by staying there.
22. It's better to try and fail, than never to have tried at all.
23. Happiness is not determined by what's happening around you, but rather what's happening inside you.
24. If you tell the truth, it becomes a part of your past. If you lie, it becomes a part of your future.
25. You'll never start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading your last one.

Based on a Post Written By Marc Chernoff  
<http://www.marcandangel.com/2012/06/08/60-quotes-change-the-way-you-think/>

# Optional: Grab Bag Situations

Choose one of the following “grab bag situations,” or make up a similar one of your own. Then use the worksheet on the following page to plan out a mini-skits using your “Calm & Clear” skills.

## 1. Home Situations

1A. You're at work when your undependable ex-spouse texts you: "I can't take the kids this weekend after all. Sorry!" Unless you can fix this soon, you'll have to change your plans to go out of town on Saturday.

1B. You're at home at noon, getting ready to go into work in 90 minutes when your kids (7 and 10 years old) walk in. School got out early today, and you totally forgot to make arrangements! You're desperately searching for someone to watch them until your sister gets there at 4:00PM.

## 2. Co-Worker Situations

2A. You're the main receptionist at a busy staffing agency, waiting for Cheryl (your back-up) to arrive so that you can finally go off to lunch. After 15 minutes, you go to find her, and she says, "Oh, let me run to the bathroom. I'll be right there!"

2B. You just started a food service job in a nice hotel, and are trying to keep your past a secret. As you walk into the employee break room on your second day, the room goes quiet. You hear someone whisper, "That's him/her. That's the one!"

## 3. Supervisor Situations

3A. You work at a call center. Technically, there's a dress code, but it's almost never enforced. You come in to work today in your casual street clothes and notice that everyone else is dressed up. Your boss says, "The District Manager is coming today! Why are you dressed like that?"

3B. You work in a busy shipping center and have been sneaky-texting back and forth with your ex, trying to settle an issue. You look up and see your supervisor staring at you with an angry expression. S/he says: "We need to talk..."

## 4. Customer Situations

4A. You're working at the returns desk of a big box store after Christmas. An angry customer is arguing with you about returning shoes that have clearly been worn outside: "This isn't right! If I'd bought these shoes at Wal-Mart, I'd get my refund in 2 minutes and I wouldn't have to listen to crap from a jerk like you!"

4B. You took a second job waiting tables at a little diner so you could make ends meet. Tonight you've had one customer who's run you ragged fetching coffee all night long, then left you a 10 cent tip! He's still standing at the register, smirking at you.

# Optional: Practicing the Skill

1. First, individually choose a situation of your own and complete the top box on your own. Identify your negative internal reactions (thoughts, feelings, and physical signs), a negative impulse behavior (what you feel like doing), and the negative consequences which would probably follow.
2. Next, get in teams of 2, 3, or 4. Share your situation and details with your partners, and listen while they do the same.
3. Working as a team, use the bottom box to plan out a simple “calm & clear” strategy to calm your body, clear your mind, and act the opposite. Do this for each partner.
4. Finally, prepare to act out a “skit” or role play illustrating all these steps in your situation. Your partners will play the other characters. Extra people can play good friends (angels) or bad friends (devils), giving you good or bad advice as you struggle to stay calm. You do NOT have to solve this problem -- just calm down enough to be able to think clearly and avoid a negative behavior.

## 1 & 2: Analyzing My Situation

Situation (rewrite & personalize): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

Feelings: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical signs: \_\_\_\_\_

Impulse Behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Negative Outcome: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3 & 4: My “Calm & Clear” Plan (see WB p 28 for steps, and WB p 34-35 for self-talk statements)

a. To *Calm my Body*, I will: \_\_\_\_\_

b. To *Clear my Mind*, I will imagine my feelings as a \_\_\_\_\_

then tell myself: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. To *Act the Opposite*, I will: \_\_\_\_\_

**Then I'll take some time to really think this out before making a final decision.**

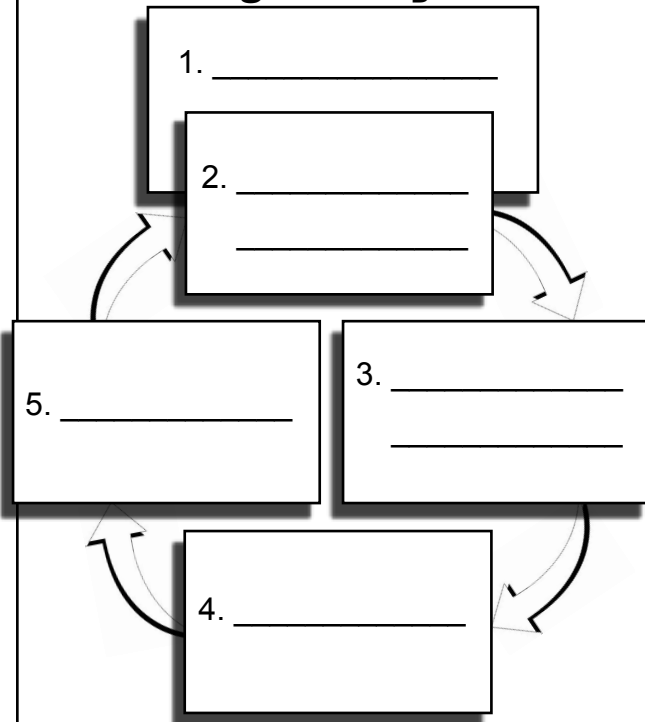
# Lesson 7 Summary

**Key Point 1:** In stressful situations, our feelings can become like overwhelming thunderstorms, making it easy to overreact. When we recognize our feelings and the negative thinking that drives it, we gain more control over our emotions and ourselves.

**Key Point 2:** Managing powerful emotions is easier when we can calm our bodies and clear our minds. Later, when our emotions are under better control, we can address the problem clearly and professionally.

## Lesson 7 Quiz

### Cognitive Cycle



**Part A:** The Cognitive Cycle shows how what happens **INSIDE** us influences what happens **OUTSIDE** us. Fill in the boxes of the Cognitive Cycle using the five terms below.

Behavior  
Beliefs  
Internal Reactions  
Outcomes  
Stressful Situation

**Part B.** Match each “Calm & Clear” step with 2 strategies from the list that go with it.

\_\_\_ & \_\_\_ 1. Calm Your Body  
\_\_\_ & \_\_\_ 2. Clear Your Head  
\_\_\_ & \_\_\_ 3. Act the Opposite

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| a. Think “This won’t last forever.” | d. Go for a short walk                 |
| b. Smile instead of frown           | e. Imagine a peaceful beach            |
| c. Take a deep breath               | f. Get involved instead of being alone |

**Something I will remember about today:**