



Better  
Mental  
Health  
for  
Everyone

*Sample Copy*

Recovery International

This workbook is designed to be used as a self-help workbook or as part of a group training or program. Recovery International is a peer-led, self-help educational program designed to promote *Better Mental Health for Everyone*. 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 are in crisis and need support, please contact a mental health or health care professional for additional support, treatment or advice. In the United States, you can also dial 911 or contact the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline at 988.

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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 stress. It will teach you to reduce anxiety, manage anger, and alleviate depression. Practicing the Recovery Method regularly may 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. We hope you will find it helpful, too.

"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 Recovery International members.

# Purpose

The purpose of this workbook is to help you manage the 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 everyday 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 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 Abraham Low, M.D. Look for this image which marks tools or "spots" introduced throughout the workbook.



Lesson 2 is on "Recovery International Language." There are terms in this program with a different context than you may previously have encountered. Along with spots, some terms are in bold text. Definitions are in Appendix B.

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.

These lessons, combined with regular practice of the concepts and Four-Step Method, may 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 can be worse than what actually happens.*



# 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 well-being. We focus on effort, not results.

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

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**Check 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 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 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 my home and at work.”

*Ian M., Detroit, MI*



# Important Concept #1

## Two Types of Temper

You are probably used to thinking about the concept of “temper” as being associated with anger directed at someone else. But there are times when you might also feel angry with yourself and with your own actions. Look at the difference between these terms.

	<b>Angry (Outer) Temper</b>	<b>Fearful (Inner) Temper</b>
<b>Judgment</b>	Judgment that the other person is wrong or has wronged me.	Judgment that I am wrong.
<b>Feelings</b>	Irritation Resentment Impatience Hatred Disgust Rebellion  Can you think of more?	Worry Feeling inadequate Hopelessness Fear of damage to myself or my reputation Sense of shame  Can you think of more?

With **Angry Temper**, we are judging that another person has wronged us. This judgment is directed outward. This type of temper can also be referred to as **Aggressive Temper**, which appears in various shades and nuances: resentment, impatience, and others listed under the *Angry Temper* column above. We may not have all the facts, but we feel **they** are wrong.

With **Fearful Temper**, we put the blame on ourselves for being wrong. This type of temper can also be referred to as **Retreating Temper** which may express itself in many different qualities and intensities: discouragement, preoccupation, embarrassment, withdrawal, and others listed under *Fearful Temper* above. We direct our judgment inward.

Judgment is the one thing that both types of temper have in common. The Recovery Method is about learning how to **drop the judgment** against ourselves and others for the sake of our mental health. It's not easy, but the cognitive behavioral tools you learn in this program will help.

# Activity: Identify 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: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

- We can assert ourselves without temper.
- We excuse rather than accuse ourselves and others.
- Temper is our worst enemy. Humor is our best friend.
- We choose peace over power.
- If we can't change a situation, we can change our attitude toward it.
- Calm produces calm, temper produces 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 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: Identify Fearful Temper

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

Situation:

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Now, check the tools that apply to your example.

- Temper is our worst enemy. Humor is our best friend.
- 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 produces calm, temper produces 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, initiate and act.
- When feeling overwhelmed, do things in "part acts."



# Important Concept #2

## Inner and Outer Environment

### Outer (External) Environment

You CAN'T control people, events, the past or future

### Inner (Internal) Environment

You CAN'T control your initial feelings and sensations, but you CAN control your thoughts and impulses

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

After our initial feelings and sensations during an event, and the uninvited thoughts that enter our mind, we need to focus on what we **can** control. 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 or keyboard muscles and not saying 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 each situation to help us choose how to react.

"These tools help me interact in a calmer manner, which increases healthy communication with my family."

*Neil O., Orlando, FL*

# 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 healthy 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. The tools in this book will teach you how.

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

Are the symptoms we're experiencing a result of the **external environment**—something outside our control? Or are they a result of how we are reacting to the situation—our **internal environment**?

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 **tools such as**: "*If we can't change a situation, we can change our attitude towards it,*" and "*We can take a secure thought*" that it won't last forever, and remember that "*Comfort is a want, not a need.*"



The same situation could turn into **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:

- People do things that annoy us, not necessarily to annoy us.
- Control of inner environment is more important than control of external environment.
- Temper is a blindness to the other side of the story.
- We excuse rather than accuse ourselves and others for the sake of peace.

By using tools, we drop the judgment 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 our time together.

**Temper is blindness to the other side of the story.**

*The person you are upset with may have a good reason.  
Don't judge.*



## Activity: Apply Tools to Your Situation

To better learn these concepts, reflect on a situation you've experienced involving **outer environment** that caused a temperamental reaction.

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Review the list of tools below and put a check by a few that might help reduce temper in the above situation.**

- We can't control outer environment. We can only control our inner reaction to outer environment.
- Be self-led, not symptom-led.
- Symptoms are temporary not permanent.
- Feelings should be expressed and temper suppressed.
- We can do the things we fear or dread to do.
- If we can't decide, any decision will steady us.
- It's not that we *cannot*, it's that we *care not* to bear the discomfort.
- Replace an insecure thought with a secure thought.
- Initial sensations cannot be stopped, but thoughts and impulses can.
- There are no uncontrollable impulses, only impulses that are not controlled.
- Thoughts can be suppressed, dropped or changed.
- Frustrations are tolerable and average.



# 4-Step Example Worksheet

**Step 1:** Report a single situation or event that occurred – an everyday event when you began to work yourself up. Focus on a brief description of what happened: specifically, what triggered temper and symptoms? Indicate that you have finished this step by writing: "That's when I began to get worked up."

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**Step 2:** Report the symptoms you experienced, both physical and mental. *(For instance, angry and fearful thoughts, confusion, palpitations, disturbing impulses, tightness in your chest, lowered feelings, sweaty palms and so on.)*

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**Step 3:** Report your spotting of fearful and angry temper, the Recovery International tools you used to help yourself, and your self-endorsement for your effort. *(Endorse yourself for your effort or any improvement.)*

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**Step 4:** Begin with "Before I had my Recovery training," and describe the temperamental reaction and symptoms you would have experienced in former days. What would have happened then versus what happened now?

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