

Skillful Thoughts

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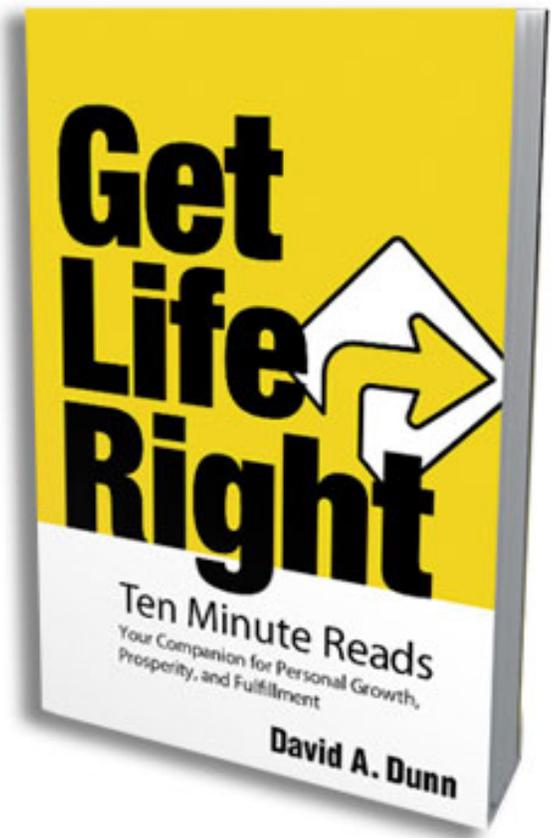
There are thousands of ways we can explain everything to ourselves. The explanations we pick, strengthened by our emotions, make up our image of reality. That image works like a container which confines our thoughts and actions.

The more imaginative, flexible and willing we are to change our thinking the easier it is for us to enlarge or change the shape of our container.

Our life moves forcefully in the direction of our thoughts. Clear plans, goals and a purpose for our life help us coordinate our thoughts and reach our goals faster; provided that the explanations we choose are accurate.

Reliable thoughts for your future contain:

- accurate facts
- recognition of any responsibility we might have for creating the existing conditions
- careful consideration for the interests of all others involved
- the absolute truth about our emotions, motivation and capabilities
- the direction in which we want our thoughts to move us.



The pages in this section contain typical thoughts - restated in more helpful ways. To get started, click on a series below for Skillful Thoughts related to that subject.

[Series A – Sharpen Your Thinking](#)

[Series B – Plan A Really Exciting Life](#)

[Series C – Get the Most Out of Your Attributes](#)

[Series D – Finance the Life You Want](#)

[Series E – Attract People You'd Like to Be Like](#)

[Series F – Improve Your Relationships and Marriage](#)

[Series G – Create a Close Family](#)

[Series H – The Best Life You Can Have](#)

Skillful Thoughts

Series A – Sharpen Your Thinking

In the samples below the underlined statement is a common idea that is self-limiting. It is followed by possibilities (marked with dots) that are more likely to lead us to better outcomes. Those with the best lives have become good at finding the most appropriate explanations for what has happened and what they need or expect to happen.

A-2 • Making Better Explanations

Making Important decisions makes me anxious

- I will make better decisions if I think more about getting them right and less about what will happen if I don't
- If I'm not recovering from bad decisions I've already made I will have more time to make good ones.
- My life is worth the extra time it takes to make good decisions.
- I will resist the pressure to make decisions before I have my thoughts right.
- By think more before I react, I will say fewer things that don't reflect my best thinking or that I can't take back.
- I will do more research before I choose what I will think or do.
- Putting decisions off can make them harder to make in the future.

It is easier for me to just react than to analyze my thoughts moment by moment.

- Long term thinking channels my efforts which allows me to consolidate the gains I make
- Reacting allow less time to come up with my best judgment
- By knowing what I want for my life I can side-step the issues that won't produce lasting benefits.
- I will control my emotions and not let them control me.
- I will make better decisions when I finally respect myself to enough to take the time necessary to make good one.
- I can make better use of my life by taking charge, than by letting it happen.
- By making the right explanations my life will continue to get better.

A-3 • End the Pressure of Guesswork

I hate looking things up.

- If what I'm attempting to do is more important, my need for accurate information will be too.
- Until I have more accurate information why would other people to be interested in what I have to say.
- I can't progress without knowing more.

A-4 • Explaining Our Future

When people are watching me, especially those I don't know, I can't function.

- If I have more patience with myself, others will seem to have more patience with me.
- Where can I get a job dealing with the public where I can have more exposure to working with others?

Skillful Thoughts

A-5 • Take Charge of Your Thought Habits

That's just the way I am.

- I'm ready to learn; who can show me a better way?
- 'I get to do this' instead of 'I have to do this'.

It will be too hard.

- The benefits of succeeding at this will help me for the rest of my life.
- If it's not hard, I probably won't value it much

I wish I could.

- How can I make this happen?
- Where can I go to see this being done?
- What can I read or who can help me achieve this goal?

A-6 • Choose Thoughts That Will Lead You

Happiness for me is just reacting to life not over-analyzing it.

- Being spontaneous is what I'll do for fun, but my long-term future is worthy of my very best thinking.
- My life has been on auto-pilot. Instead of letting it happen, I am going to pick what I want and make it happen.

A-7 • Shed Anxiety and Boost Creativity in Your Fort

Spending time in a Fort is not for "manly" men.

- Going through life without using my best ideas is not manly.
- One really good idea could be more valuable than all the physical work I could do in my lifetime.

I have never been an idea-type person!

- I don't know if I can be clever because I've never attempted to be clever.
- Cleverness like muscles need to be used to grow
- I will act as if I am clever until I become clever.
- When I get good at it I will be able to rely on my creativity.
- Ideas are free and I can have as many of them as I want.
- Using my creativity in everything I do will lead me toward what I can do best.

Skillful Thoughts

Series B – Plan a Really Exciting Life

In the samples below the underlined statement is a common idea that is self-limiting. It is followed by possibilities (marked with bullets) that are more likely to lead us to better outcomes. Those with the best lives have become good at finding the most appropriate explanations for what has happened and what they need or expect to happen.

B-1 • Choosing & Using Goals

I'm not good at writing.

- A simple Plan is better than none.
- I'll do one like a shopping list and make it better as I think of things.
- Writing would require me to think before I act. That makes me uncomfortable because I've never done that before.
- Old pilots file flight plans; those that don't never get old.

Goals make me anxious

- I will concentrate on the rewards and not the work.
- A goal is a target not a demand
- The right goals they will motivate me.

B-2 • Gain Motivation with Visualization

A written Plan would be too hard to keep updated.

- If my life is not worth writing a plan for then that statement is true.
- I'm not a good writer, so I will make becoming a better writer one of my goals.
- Having computer skills would make it easy for me to keep my Plan updated.
- On the first blank line on my short-term Plan I'll write, "Learn how to use a computer."

B-3 • Personal Goals

I already know what my personal goals are.

- As I write them I will see ways I can improve them.
- A written plan will act like a compass I can look at often.
- My Plan will help to keep me from getting off track.
- I can't rely on my memory to give me anything more than the big picture; when I do, very important details always get away from me.

Skillful Thoughts

B-4 • Long-Term Goals

I'll think about them when I am older.

- I am already trying as hard as I can. Having goals will put another layer of responsibility on me.
- Goals aren't for pressure; they are for direction.
- Goals keep me from missing the important things of life
- Goals reduce wasted effort and dead ends
- I could die anytime; would I be ready if I were taken tomorrow?

Thinking long-term makes work out of living.

- Once my accumulation of assets get big enough it will help to support me, protect me and give me options while it continues to grow.
- By making everything I do produce something of lasting value, my wealth will grow faster.

B-5 • Intermediate Goals

If I can barely survive, why torment me with middle goals?

- If I am buried in my current stuff, and the long term stuff is too far off to influence me, my middle goals can keep the carrot in front of me.
- My wife and I use our vacations to check out the things we want to head for next, usually it's the place want to live eventually.

B-6 • Bring on the Spice

Spice costs money and I have none.

- If I don't have any money to make my life more interesting right now, I can do it by the way I use my time?

B-7 • The Engine of Your Future (My To-do list)

What engine? The best I can to is to plug along.

- All progress is plugging along; I will drop or minimize everything on my to-do-list and concentrate on the things that produce the most valuable long term benefits.
- While I am concentrating on the next most important thing I am progressing as fast as I can

Skillful Thoughts

Series C – Get the Most out of Your Attributes

In the samples below the underlined statement is a common idea that is self-limiting. It is followed by possibilities (marked with bullets) that are more likely to lead us to better outcomes. Those with the best lives have become good at finding the most appropriate explanations for what has happened and what they need or expect to happen.

C-1 • The Way You Are

I don't like the way I am.

- When I accept myself the way I am, I make it easier for others to do so.

I haven't made many friends >

- I am not around people interesting enough to invest in.

I can't find friends

- If I do what I like best, I will find others who like it too. They will appreciate the way I am.

C-2 • Learning Made Easier

I only learn by doing.

- I can read and learn anything that's important or exciting enough to me.
- I am just bored. If anything is important enough I will do whatever it takes to learn it.

I couldn't be in charge of anything.

- I am already in charge of myself; I'll start by doing a better job there.
- By acting as a leader I will become one sooner?
- Being in charge of a few things would give me experience; what can I volunteer to run?
- If I know more than most people about anything, I could teach it to others. What would I most like to teach?

I wish I could feel comfortable around people

- When I treat encounters as practice its easier for me to act natural.
- I have been judging others the way I judge myself. By accepting myself others will too.

I can't take criticism.

- If I'm not too sensitive or defensive I can learn from criticism.
- I can learn, win-over and silence those who criticize me by listening and responding graciously.
- I will let the criticizer know they have been heard so he or she is less compelled to comment again.

I'm not sure I can do it.

- Everyone knows when I'm afraid to try and admire those who work through their fears.
- The more confident I am the more likely I will do a good job.
- If I act as if I'm confident, I will become confident much quicker.

C-3 • Using All of Your Brain Power

My brain sucks!

- Instead of steering my brain I am going to give it as much time to be creative as I can?
- How many thoughts have I gathered and written down for the decision I need to make soon?
- What do I need to learn for my next decision?

Skillful Thoughts

C-4 • Cleverness

I'm just not very clever.

- I won't know if I can be clever until I have tried more.
- When I act as if I am clever I become clever.
- Cleverness like muscles needs to be used to grow. The more it's used it the more I can rely on it to be more self-sufficient, self-assured and make money with it.

C-5 • Emotions That Work

It's depressing to not have any close friends.

- There's nobody around I respect enough to make my friend.

He makes me furious.

- The way I think about what he does causes me more pain that what he does.

I can't get him to do anything I need him to do.

- Working with him rather than against increases the chances of me getting him to see things my way.

I am a mess.

- When I act as if I am, I give myself permission to be more that way.
- My brain is wallowing in a pool of bad explanations.
- I will feel better immediately once I loved myself enough to get off of my own case.

I'm not interesting to anyone.

- Showing interest in others is the best way to get others to show interest in you.

She makes me furious.

- When you need another person to listen and change, the following approach is helpful.

When you _____

It makes me feel _____

I wish you would _____

C-6 • Confidence and Self-esteem

I have no confidence or self-esteem.

- Acting as if I have either one is the fastest way to get it.
- Whether I do well or fail trying builds self-esteem; failing to try makes it away.

I could never speak in public.

- When it becomes important enough to me, I'll practice beforehand and do a good job.

C-7 • Acting As If

When I "act as if" it makes me feel fake.

- Even when you are surrounded by people who are not good friends keep it up. As you progress you will leave them in your dust. But also look for better people to be around.

Skillful Thoughts

C-8 • The Power of Wanting

If I want something I get it.

- The small things I get frequently to make me feel good about myself keep me from getting bigger things that will help me for the rest of my life. The longer and harder I work and save for a goal the more pleasure I'll will give me in the long run.

I want to work on custom cars for a living.

- I will learn the skill or get the certification I need to make the most important contribution to a company who customizes cars. I will volunteer to help in any business where I can see it being done.
- Before I head in that direction I need to know how far in that industry I need to progress to make enough to live the way I want to live?

C-9 • Benefit From all Your Turning Points

After losing my house and two jobs, I can't pick myself up.

- While I am looking for a job, I will use every spare minute working for free where I can learn to do what I really want to do. I could take classes to make myself more employable. I could work for commissions by selling products in the industry I want into.

C-10 • Shedding Notions of Suicide

My brain is fried and I am no use to anyone.

- That's easy to think when I didn't know what to think. By becoming my own best friend and developing a plan I will regain control of my life. The most important part of getting momentum is starting. Getting started on the wrong Plan is often the only way to find the right Plan for you.

C-11 • Fixing on the Fly

People avoid me.

- The only people left if my life are those who can't get away from my outbursts.

Using my temper to force people to do things my way has left me alone.

- I will not react to anything without gathering reliable facts and gaining control of my emotions. That involves mending fences and admitting when I'm wrong – helpful acts to offset some of the damage I have caused – as well as following the Peace Process in Get Life Right, Topic F-9.

C-12 • Winning

I never win.

- I've never been willing to put everything I've got into anything.
- When I do my best I win.
- I don't have to win to be a winner.
- I may not be good at winning in direct competition but in the long run, if I like a goal and I can go after it in my own way, I can usually do a very good job.

Skillful Thoughts

C-13 • Willpower Tools

I can't make myself do anything.

- When I get passionate enough about anything I will do whatever it takes.
- Working toward goals I want is easier and more productive than working to get away from things I've already done.
- Find a wholesome substitute for something I want to give up is one of the best ways to ease the transition.

I don't have the energy to tackle something that large.

- Fear of the work is exaggerating the size of the task. I'll divide the tasks into bite-size pieces. Starting on easier parts will prepare me for the parts that seemed as though they would be difficult when I wasn't prepared to attempt them.

C-14 • Longevity and Health

When I am stressed, the last thing on my mind is exercise.

- Not attending to my own health is depressing and produces anxiety.
- Anxiety produces tension and exercise relieves it.
- Comfort food "now" produces discomfort in the long run.
- Good food and exercise make every day better and can give me 30% more of them.
- When I exercise the good endorphins kick in and give me the rewards, self-esteem and motivation I need to keep going.

Skillful Thoughts

Series D – Finance the Life You Want

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D-1 • Choosing a Career Path

I don't know where to start.

- At the best magazine rack in town I will pull out the three magazines that interest me most.
- I will probably enjoy working in one of those fields.
- I will try to find work in the one where entry stems the easiest.
- I will take the best one I can get, and improve myself while I am looking for ways to make a bigger contribution or find a job where I can progress faster.

D-2 • Finding the Most Satisfying Work

I'll take any kind of work I can get.

- This puts my application on the heap with all the others who don't know what they want to do.
- To be someone they'd really like to hire I will show how I can contribute to what they do.
- I'll talk to some employees, customers and competitors to see how this industry is organized, where this business fits into it, and how they do business.
- I'll tell the interviewer I want to do this kind of work at their company _____. But will do whatever it takes to qualify for that kind of work.
- Ask how can I do this kind of work for you? What is the most valuable skills I will need to be able to do it, and where can I learn?
- Can I find part time work or give my time away to qualify for this type of work at your company.
- Meanwhile, I'll ask myself:
 - What is the best sequence of jobs I can get within this company or industry?
 - How far up in this company to I have to progress to live the way I want to life?

● D-3 • Marketing Yourself

● I have no way of differentiating myself from other applicants.

- The most persuasive argument for choosing me is my knowledge of the company and how my skills can benefit them.
- A sales job on straight commission is better than no job, and for the right companies can earn you more than salaried employees.

● D-4 • Applying for Work

● When I fail to get a job or a call back I feel like a loser.

- I will treat each application or interview as a rehearsal for the one the follows.
- I will choose companies that would be a good fit for me, prepare well, learn more about their needs, get those qualifications, and reapply.
- I will make sure I learn something about every company I apply to.

Skillful Thoughts

- I will keep developing skills while I am job shopping.
- **D-5 • Positioning Yourself in the World**
- After I decide what I want to do, then what?
 - I will focus on positioning: being at the right place at the right time, plotting the ideal sequence of jobs needed to get me to where I want to be in life.
 - I will make myself appreciated by showing that the job I am applying for is a good fit for you and them.
 - I will find out what I can learn to make myself more valuable at every moment of my career.
- I can't distinguish my application from all the rest.
 - I will show I know the target company and how important the work I would do for them would benefit my career, and my application will move to their list of possibilities.
 - I will start where I can learn the most.
 - If there are three jobs in the help wanted ads, I will apply first at the company that has the most growth potential
 - I will try to work in the department of that company where the most growth is taking place.
 - I will try to work with the people who are the closest to producing the growth.
 - I will work with smaller companies where the jobs are not already defined.
 - I will try to work where I can see who the leading companies are in the industry so I can move to the one with the greatest potential.
- **D-6 • Crafting Abundance**
- I have to be able to pay my bills before I can think abundance.
 - I can always be accumulating abundance in personality, empathy, effort, energy, imagination now.
 - By planning for it now I will make decisions that are more likely to produce abundance in all aspects of myself life all the time.
- **D-7 • Risk & Persistence**
- Taking risks is exciting.
 - Risky behaviors usually produce small benefits if I succeed and massive penalties if I fail.
- I am afraid to get started.
 - The more I learn about a subject the less risk involved.

Skillful Thoughts

Series E – Attract People You’d Like to Be Like

In the samples below the underlined statement is a common idea that is self-limiting. It is followed by possibilities (marked with bullets) that are more likely to lead us to better outcomes. Those with the best lives have become good at finding the most appropriate explanations for what has happened and what they need or expect to happen.

E-1 • Making Friends

Getting to know people is hard.

- Social skills are easy to learn and use, especially if I practice them with everyone I meet.
- The more interested I can get in them the more interest they’ll show in me.

I am stuck where I am.

- Being stuck is a state of mind suggests I have stopped looking for alternatives. I can choose to be unstuck. I haven’t even scratched the surface of possibilities.

I can’t learn from anyone in my life at present.

- If I do what I like to do, or want to do, people with similar interests will be there and be more like me.

E-2 • Keeping Friends

The people I would like for friends don’t seem to notice that I exist.

- Those who don’t may be so into themselves that they wouldn’t be good friends even if they did.
- I will do more that involves interacting with others.
- Friends will show up if I replace some of my bad Plays with good ones and concentrate on what I can offer instead of what I can get.

I can’t grow unless I move on.

- If my plan for life is good and it includes opportunities for social interaction, the right people will remain and new ones will show up.

My friends will think I am snubbing them if I move on.

- Showing them how to improve themselves and escape their surroundings will be better for them than watching me be stuck with them.

E-3 • Making Conversation

I have trouble getting into conversations because I can’t remember people’s names.

- If I ask questions about what interests others, they will think I am good conversationalist. Once I get a person talking about what he or she likes, if I ask them to repeat their name they won’t mind; it will show I am interested in them.

I just can’t start a conversation.

- If I know a few standard conversation starting questions and practice them on everyone I meet, I can get acquainted with just about anyone quickly and comfortably.

E-4 • Making Yourself Irresistible

The more I want to get acquainted the more I get tongue-tied I get.

- I’ll look at each attempt as a rehearsal and practice on everyone I meet.

Skillful Thoughts

E-5 • Likability Skills

I don't like who I have become.

- The thought of replacing my stale routines with some fresh approaches can be very exciting if I look at it as an adventure.

When there are long silences in the conversation, it makes me anxious.

- They are probably feeling the same; I can put them at ease by ask the other person what they are thinking.
- I will not assume it is my fault.
- I will apply some of my conversation-starting questions to a subject I think my conversation partner will like.

E-10 • Dwindling Romance

He's not affectionate.

- I have not been affectionate with him.
- Every time he starts a conversation I use it to criticize him, give him to-dos, whine, or remind him of how afraid I am about our finances.
- I never tell him what a good job he is doing or show interest in the things that interest him.
- I will start offering ideas on what we can do together that he might consider fun.
- I will touch him every chance I get.

Skillful Thoughts

Series F – Improve Your Relationships and Marriage

In the samples below the underlined statement is a common idea that is self-limiting. It is followed by possibilities (marked with bullets) that are more likely to lead us to better outcomes. Those with the best lives have become good at finding the most appropriate explanations for what has happened and what they need or expect to happen.

F-3 • Relationship Tools

While watching TV, my spouse only talks during the clues, punch lines, and final analyses.

- By listening more intently most of the time, it will be easier for you to get him or her on pause at the critical times.

F-2 • Clarifying Your Feelings (See also E6 & E7)

Once she starts to complain she never lets up.

- If I let her know that she has been heard she will let up. If she knows I have acted on something she has said she'll think I am wonderful.

F-3 • Relationship Clues & Cures

He just closes up.

- He's being the way he is because I'm being the way I'm being.
- What am I doing that is making him guarded with me?
- Because he knows I never let up once I start.
- Because when he does I use the opportunity to tell him what's wrong with him.
- Men tend to deal in issues; women tend to deal in feelings.

F-4 • Fixing Resisting & Controlling

My daughter refuses to listen.

- If I can be more of a fan and less of a coach, she will seek out my company rather than try to get away from all my cautions and criticisms.
- I'll show her lifestyles she likes; it may encourage her to strive for them, without me trying to push her.
- If I had been more interested, available and approachable she would be less inclined to attach herself to the first guy who made her feel loved.

F-5 • The Secret to Fix Others

I would feel better about myself if I could get him to be neater.

- I will praise him enthusiastically whenever he puts things away.
- I will not complain.
- I will remind myself that my inclination to be neat doesn't trump his inclination to be messy.
- I will negotiate which areas can be messy which areas need to be standing tall.

Skillful Thoughts

F-6 • The Bubble Concept

My boss uses harsh tones to help us remember his commands.

- He alienates everyone and will not change.
- He has a good heart and doesn't mean any harm by his gruff manner.
- He has a bubble where most of us have people skills.
- Because I accept him the way he is, he confides in me and gives me more responsibility.
- I have become valuable to him, and my associates know that when they need to get something from him I can get it done.

F-7 • Reducing Conflict

My husband casts me in a bad light in front of friends.

- When we are alone I will explain that **when you** tell others my faults **It makes me feel** unloved and disrespected. If you have problems with me **I wish you would** tell me. If you do I will listen.
- An affectionate response in public: "What would your life be like if you didn't have me to nag?"
- A humorous response (in a group): "I'll stop nagging when you stop wearing my clothes."
- If he responds like he still doesn't get it, tell him in private "Our friends have told me that it makes them uncomfortable when you criticize me in front of them."
- If that doesn't work say that to him in a group so all can hear.

My child refuses to learn.

- I will test to see whether John has physical problems like hearing or vision, emotional problems, a social problems, or bubbles?
- I will get him any therapy or equipment he needs to function well in class.
- How can I make it easier for him or her?
- I'll support my child's non-school interests more so my push for better grades doesn't seem like the only thing I care about; perhaps that's where he will get the kind of validation he needs.
- I will try to get my child into activities with kids who are more ambitious than her current classmates.

My husband bounces checks, even when we can pay them.

- The concentration it takes for him to do the work he's really good at keeps him from doing the accounting he isn't good at.
- Accounting is a bubble we both have we'll look for a bookkeeper we can afford.

My wife is a pack rat.

- Looks like I will be living in a lot more clutter than I want.
- She sees value in everything.
- I can live with it if she'll keep her collecting out of the office, the garage and the front of the house.

I can't control my temper.

- I will take responsibility for my emotions and my words.
- I have been using my temper to get my own way.
- I use my temper when I can't justify what I want.
- My relationships will improve now that I care more and have learned:
- Every emotion I use I chose deliberately to accomplish a purpose.

Skillful Thoughts

F-8 • Making Your Point

He gets difficult every easily.

- I tell him that I am considering changing something about how we interact.
- If we make this change I want you to be happy with it.
- What are your ideas on the matter?
- Let's try it out long enough to get used to it and change it then if we have to?
- He seems to like confrontations.
- I avoid discussions that are likely to get confrontational.
- I can be more persuasive if I wait for the right moment to present my case.
- I don't feel the need to win, just to be heard.

F-9 • Arguments are Opportunities for A Peace Process

What's so wrong with defending myself?

- My protestations tells others that I would rather escalate the matter than take responsibility for actions that are clearly mine,
- My anger is usually directed at one person and causes them to discount anything I have to say.
- For me to get people to value what I have to say they have to be able to expect that I will be civil and listen.

F-10 • Dwindling Romance

I have quit trying because he's so set in his ways.

- The way I am played some part in his behavior today.
- I will Stop trying to control or fix him.
- Give up all of my resentment.
- Show more interest in the things he does.
- Show him appreciation
- Be more affectionate
- Assume the responsibility for my own happiness

F-11 • Refreshing – Your Relationship

She uses the silent treatment all the time. I am beginning to get it. When I don't listen to her hurts, it tarnishes our relationship.

- I eventually do everything she asks but I am not careful to acknowledge that I am doing it in response to her request.
- If I started to put some of her things near the top of my to-do list, my stuff would still get done, and she wouldn't think I was wonderful.
- I will set aside time for an old fashioned date on a regular basis.
- I will show more interest in the things she does.

He's a workaholic.

- He isn't going to give me more time if I continue to withhold my appreciation, approval, and affection.
- The more fun I am the more time he will try to make for us.
- I'll go out of my way to show him thanks?
- Every other Wednesday I'll plan a date.
- Every day we will set aside 15 minutes to chat and coordinate our efforts; no criticisms allowed.
- If I show more interest in his work he will make more time for my company.

Skillful Thoughts

Series G – Create a Close Family

In the samples below the underlined statement is a common idea that is self-limiting. It is followed by possibilities (marked with arrows) that are more likely to lead us to better outcomes. Those with the best lives have become good at finding the most appropriate explanations for what has happened and what they need or expect to happen.

G-1 • Dating

She dumped me; I hate her.

- She gets the only vote.
- She made a nice contribution to my life.
- I learned some things not to do.
- I will put more effort into my next relationship.

G-2 • Look Before You Leap

I have never felt so complete. I want to get married ASAP .

- More than half of all marriages fail, so I will take my time and do my homework.
- So I don't get blinded by the packaging, how can I get to know this person on a deeper level?
- I will discuss all the items on the G-3 check lists with him or her.

G-3 • Compatibility Checklist

I couldn't ask some of these questions.

- The questions you most don't want to ask is where your greatest problems will appear.
- These questions were prepared by thoughtful people who want the best for both of us.
- We won't be held to the answers, but they can show our ability to deal with difficult issues.
- The most essential part of our relationship will be our ability to communicate. If we aren't good at it, we it will be best to take our time.

G-4 • Marriage

He never listens.

- If I go out of my way to praise him and show interest in what he is doing, it will make my company and my input more important to him.
- By being less negative, critical, petty, thankless, and by praising him on occasions, he will be less inclined to avoid me or tune me out.

She nags me constantly.

- By helping her more and doing my thing a little less, we'd keep the closeness we had when we were first married.

G-5 • Parenting

My child tells me she doesn't like me.

- Everything I do seems more important to me than her.
- She is saying she doesn't feel as significant to me as she would like.
- That's just her way of getting her way.

Skillful Thoughts

G-6 • Guiding Your Kids

My son challenges me all the time.

- Strong willed children are a lot more work, but they tend to achieve greater heights than children who are compliant.
- The child who is very good at one part of their upbringing can be troublesome in other parts of their life.
- If I become permissive I reward his challenges.
- I have to be prepared to resist his challenges or he will escalate them until he is running the show; not me.

G-7 • Empowering Your Kids

I can't get my kid interested in anything.

I will:

- Determine if there any difficulties with teachers or classmates.
- Take more interest in all that she does and praise her honest efforts.
- Be quick to support her interests.
- Expose her to more interesting subjects.
- Promote, but not pressure her efforts to interact with her wholesome peers.

Skillful Thoughts

Series H – The Best Life You Can Have

In the samples below the underlined statement is a common idea that is self-limiting. It is followed by possibilities (marked with arrows) that are more likely to lead us to better outcomes. Those with the best lives have become good at finding the most appropriate explanations for what has happened and what they need or expect to happen.

H-1 • Use Your Full Potential

I have used my best thinking to get where I am; this must be my potential.

- With better ideas and less effort I could have accomplished a lot more.
- With better ideas and no more effort, my life can be bigger and better.

Just surviving takes all of my energy.

- I can accomplish more with my mind than I can with body. To make that happen, I am reading Get Life Right.
- I'll worry about my potential once I can pay my bills.
- I will try to think smarter now rather than wait until my life to get better.

H-2 • Make all Your Time Precious

Why live if you can't listen to music or watch sports.

- My time is an asset, and I have decided to make the best use of it that I can.
- Unless I become a disc jockey or a sportscaster, those activities give me no lasting benefit.
- I will choose interests that will give me more to show for my time.

H-3 • Enhance Your Life with a Purpose

I feel bogged down in busy work and not going anywhere.

- A purpose would make me happier about myself and help me prioritize my time.
- My last child is about to leave the nest. Now is a good time to think about my next purpose.

How can I have a purpose when I have to save every cent for retirement?

- Not becoming a charity is an important goal.
- Having financial security for my family is a worthy goal.
- My time and talents are good to give.
- Being a good friend and mentor is a good purpose.
- How can I get the best return on my time and talents in service to others?
- Having a purpose can be fun; what can I work on where I will meet people who are likely to become close friends?