



EXERCISES TO ACCOMPANY THE JOYOUS RECOVERY

Introduction to the Exercises

The Joyous Recovery is a book to use and live by, not just to read. The following program of exercises guides you in putting the concepts into practice so that you can feel your life begin to improve in the ways you have craved.

There are several important points about this exercise program before you dive in:

- 1) *It's important to have a journal or notebook.*
- 2) *Many of these exercises are designed to be done with a healing partner (co-counselor). If you don't wish to work with a partner, you can do those exercises in written form in your journal. If you'd like to find someone to partner with, join the Peak Living Network Slack site (see #3 below) and put up a message on the channel called "# co-counseling-find-partners."*
- 3) *I encourage you to join the Peak Living Network Slack site, to periodically read the discussions that are happening there on various healing topics (called "channels"), and to add some comments of your own. This step is even more important for people who are working this program without a healing partner. To join the Slack site, send a request to PeakLivingNetwork@juno.com.*
- 4) *Any time these exercises lead you to different issues than the ones we're guiding you toward -- including feelings or experiences that may be the opposite of what a particular exercise is asking you to explore -- go with what comes up for you and follow where it leads. Unexpected directions that your thoughts or feelings take will sometimes be the most productive path for your healing. (But don't skip positive topics; your healing will be slowed down if you hurry past the exercises that involve focusing on positive events, feelings, or memories. It isn't true that these are less important or less "deep" aspects of the work.)*



- 5) *Many issues that we spend one or two units on represent months or years of work for many people. These are just beginning explorations -- but opening these questions up, even briefly, will have positive effects. These units are designed to take between one and three weeks – you decide as you go along how much time you need on each one.*
- 6) *Try to write regularly in your journal during this process even if you're also working with a healing partner. Journaling and splitting time (co-counseling) support healing in two different ways, so it's good to have them both going. (But if you only have time and energy for one or the other, make co-counseling your highest priority -- it's the game changer for emotional healing.)*
- 7) *This exercise program is a work in progress. We will add new pieces over time and make changes based on feedback we receive.*

UNIT 1

Read the "Attention" section (in the front pages of the book)

Read Chapter 1, pages 1-11

Read the page on the PLN website about [how to split time](#). (The information on that page is crucial to doing this program of exercises.)

- 1) The main assignment for this first unit is to work on finding a partner to start reading the book and going through the exercises with you (see #2 above).
- 2) In your journal or during a co-counseling turn, do the following:
 - a. Make a list of ways you have tried to heal in the past and discuss how those efforts have gone.
 - b. Reflect on these questions:



- *What do you tend to most dump on yourself about? How might you best argue back against those hurtful internal messages?*
- *When have you felt like you made a difference to someone else's recovery from a hurt or a crisis? Tell about that.*

UNIT 2

Read Chapter 1, pgs. 12-16

Read Chapter 2, pg. 17 - middle of pg. 20

If you're working with a partner, try to get a total of at least 30 minutes each in your co-counseling sessions per unit. (That might mean you split time once a unit and each take 30-minute turns, or twice a unit with 15-minute turns.)

Reflect on the following when splitting time with your healing partner, or in your journal:

- *Do you ever cry hard? Do you feel good afterward, or not?*
- *Explore some happy memories of laughing with people.*
- *What messages do you carry that say you shouldn't need other people?*
- *What do you know about what you were like as a baby? What do you know about how that time went for you?*

UNIT 3

Read Chapter 2, middle of pg. 20 - pg. 30



Questions to explore in sessions and your journal:

- *What kinds of violence (including "spanking") have you been the target of over the course of your childhood? What violence has happened in your adult life? What violence have you witnessed toward other people?*
- *In what ways have you been given the message that something is wrong with you?*
- *How were you dismissed or discounted as a child? After you spend some time answering this question, speak aloud to your young self, as if he or she were in the room, saying how important you think that child really was, and telling him/her how their feelings and opinions should have been responded to.*
- *Was isolation a challenge in your childhood? If so, describe some of the ways that happened for you. What were some of your strategies as a child to deal with isolation?*

What approaches do you remember using as a child to make pain go away? Spend a few minutes taking pride in how important those techniques were to your survival (even if they also had some negative effects in the long term).

Work to remember a time in your childhood when outrageous things were being done to you or to people you loved, and you were silenced from speaking out against it. What can you recall about what happened and how you felt?

UNIT 4

Read Chapter 2, pgs. 31-43

Explore these questions when you're splitting time and in your journal:

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- *What comes up for you when things go well? Have you ever been upset or downhearted after receiving good news? Were you baffled or self-critical about your reaction? Do any of the items on the list on pg. 33 apply to your childhood (or your current circumstances)? If so, explore that some.*
- *What are your thoughts when you learn the concept of "frozen needs"? Does this idea resonate with challenges from your life?*

Building on work you did last unit, reflect further about survival strategies you developed as a child to get through painful periods or to live with ongoing painful problems. Which of these patterns have continued into your adult life? Do you tend to criticize yourself for having these patterns? Write for several minutes, or talk during your turn when you're splitting time, about why these behaviors (or ways of thinking) were once so crucial to you. Then spend some time, looking from that perspective, to see if you can start to feel more self-forgiving about current challenges that you have that are related to these enduring patterns. What could you start forgiving yourself for?

Have you ever been labeled as "mentally ill"? Who put that label on you? How did it affect you? Are there remaining traces/scars from the experience of being labeled in that way?

Look back over the list of balancing acts on pg. 43. What thoughts do you have as you go over these? Spend several minutes sitting with this list and letting these three items sink into you. What feelings come up? Can you begin to envision the kind of peace that could come through finding these balance points?

UNIT 5



Read Chapter 3, pgs. 47-52

Read Chapter 4, pgs. 53-58 (middle of page)

Beginning with the material you read in Chapter 3, spend co-counseling time and writing time on the following questions:

- *How do the ideas from Chapter 3 connect to other things you've heard about healing? Which ideas are new? Which ideas do you doubt, or disagree with? Which ideas go against principles about healing you've heard or believed before? Do any of the ideas from this chapter help you to feel hopeful about healing? If so, why?*

The exercises that go with the reading from Chapter 4 are going to be things to do out in your regular life, though you might also follow these up with some journal writing and co-counseling time about them:

- 1) *Observe yourself during your interactions with other people for a few days. Start noticing who is talking and who is listening during each interaction. Look at both superficial conversations (strangers, acquaintances) and more significant ones (longer talks, whether with friends, co-workers, relatives, children). How much of the time did you spend talking in each interaction, and how much listening? Which person do you think did more of the talking? Did you notice any habits you have of doing more than your share of the talking, or more than your share of the listening? Keep observing yourself in this way for a week and see what you notice, recording your observations in your journal or discussing them with your co-counselor.*



- 2) Notice times during the week when you're finding it hard to listen to someone -- we all have those times. When you sense that happening, examine the feelings or preoccupations you're having that are making it hard to listen. Are you experience cravings and longings that are distracting you? Are you feeling restless? Bored? Do you feel an overwhelming desire to be the one speaking and being listened to, and that desire is making it hard to focus on what the other person is saying? Are you feeling reluctant to ask questions, either because you don't want to listen anymore or because you're afraid of prying?

Try not to criticize yourself about any of these observations. Just notice them, and then see if you can notice what the underlying feelings are for you.

- 3) *During this week, notice if you're feeling the need to come up with "helpful comments" while other people are talking to you. In what types of situations does this tend to happen? Try for a few days to see if you can stop saying "helpful" things, and just listen and express your caring and understanding about what the other person says. Do some writing or co-counseling about what it was like to try to do this.*
- 4) *Finally, during your conversations this week, see if you can slow down the exchange of roles (see pg. 55), meaning that you try to keep the focus on the other person for a longer period of time before you switch to speaking about yourself. Doing this generally requires asking more questions. Reflect in writing and co-counseling about whether you were able to have some success in this respect.*

UNIT 6

Read Chapter 4 middle of pg. 58 - pg. 67



Key questions to focus on in your journal writing and co-counseling:

- 1) *When you're the person speaking, what kinds of comments from other people make you feel that they're hearing you? that they're not hearing you? make you feel good? make you feel bad?*
- 2) *Read the lists on pgs. 59-61, where I'm recommending supportive things for you to say to other people. Which of these do you like hearing back from people? Which ones not? Explain why you prefer some of these responses and why some of them bother you (if there are any that do).*

NOTE: Keep in mind that pgs. 59-61 are offering general suggestions. Each person will be slightly different with respect to what kinds of responses from other people make them feel heard and understood -- or not -- and what kinds of comments they find helpful. We must fine-tune our responses as we get to know people.

A final and important exercise: While working on this unit, see how many questions you can ask people in each interaction you have, and work on listening carefully to their answers. See if their answers give you ideas for more things you can ask. When it comes to asking questions, the best thing is to practice, practice, and practice; you'll get better and better at it. Then spend some time with your co-counselor or your journal exploring what that was like.

UNIT 7

Read Chapter 5 pgs. 68 - 82



Begin by doing the following writing in your journal, which you may want to spread over two or three days:

Make a list of as many ways as you can think of in which you've been courageous over the course of your life. (Review pages 77-78 to help prompt your memory -- it includes many important brave actions that people don't tend to recognize as brave.)

Then make a list of as many example as you can remember of smart decisions that you've made at any point, and why they were smart. (Remember that a decision can be smart and still lead to a bad outcome -- the result doesn't prove that the reasoning was bad.)

Then make a list of the ways you got through the hardest times in your life (building on exercises we've done in recent units of this program). Make sure to give substantial attention to this one.

Then make lists of:

- *the people and animals you have loved*
- *the places you have loved, especially outdoor spots*
- *the ways you've stood up for what's right (again, spend plenty of time reflecting on this question, don't rush past it or decide "I can't think of anything" -- you can)*
- *what you have given to others, or to the world (and I don't mean gifts -- I mean contributions of love, presence, wisdom, assistance, and so forth -- although it's okay to list gifts too, as long as they really meant something to you when you gave them)*



If you're working with a healing partner, share as much as you wish to from these lists while splitting time, and let yourself feel anything that comes up for you as you share.

Next, spend some time, with your healing partner or your journal, exploring the list of different types of intelligence that is on pg. 76. See where you can find your strengths and interests on that list. Do you have strong aspects to your intelligence that have been undervalued? What would it be like for you to start putting a higher value on them from now on?

Try saying several times aloud, "I'm really smart! Here's how!" As you do this, you can point to one or more of the items on pg. 76 if you want. See what comes up when you do this.

When you were a child, where did you get your key messages about what it means to be smart, and about what types of intelligence are valuable? Start reflecting on ways that you may have internalized limiting or hurtful messages about your intelligence -- and other people's -- and consider starting a process to free yourself of those messages.

Reflect on what you might be doing differently if you believed that you were a smart and capable person with important gifts.

UNIT 8

Read Chapter 6 pgs. 83 - 88



Write the story of your life in 1250-1750 words (this exercise is described on pgs. 84-85). That's about five pages of double-spaced text. There is a reason why we give an upper limit; this is an exercise in zeroing in on what has really meant the most to you, both good and bad. We're not asking you to write a chronology of events. Instead, see if you can describe what the events in your life have *meant* to you, what their significance has been. You might address, for example:

- *What would I most want a loved one to understand about what things have been like for me?*
- *What do I most need to say, including pieces that I haven't yet expressed to anyone?*
- *What have I most cared about? What pieces of my caring (toward people, toward beliefs, toward animals or places) have I not yet allowed to fully show?*
- *What are my deepest satisfactions? What are my deepest longings? When has my heart most soared? When did it most break?*

Write this piece under the assumption that you will *show it to no one*. If you decide later to share part or all of it that's fine; but don't hold anything back in this first version out of concern for how it might sound, or because it might hurt someone or make them angry. You can edit it later *if* you decide to share it.

Push beyond habitual interaction with someone this week. When someone asks how you are, for example, tell them how you really are that day. When you're skirting around the edge of an issue with someone, take the dive into what you're avoiding saying or exploring (see pg. 86).



What creative outlet(s) do you have? Do you like to write, draw, sing, write songs, dance, fix up the inside of a house, act, create a garden, or play an instrument, for example? Choose a creative form that you like and try one day seeing how much emotion you can pour into it for a half hour or an hour -- really feel it. (If you feel like you don't have any creative thing that you like to do, now is the time to write a poem -- just for yourself. You don't have to make the lines rhyme; that's totally up to you. If it's written down in a way that looks something like a poem, then it's a poem -- and your thoughts and feelings will come out differently than they normally do. Everyone in the Peak Living Network is encouraged to write poems, with no pressure to share them with anyone else until you're ready.)

UNIT 9

Read Chapter 7 pgs. 89 - 100

Begin with the following assessment of your current support system:

- *To whom do you feel close in your current and recent life?*
- *Which people are the best ones to talk to or be around when things are hard for you?*
- *Which people accept help from you, including reaching out to you when they need support?*
- *Whom do you need to avoid when things are hard for you, because their responses make you feel bad?*
- *What do you need more of in your social connections? (such as more people for fun, physical affection, deep sharing, calling on at a bad time, helping with things, accepting help from you)*



Next, explore the negative messages that are keeping you from reaching out to people you'd like to be closer to or would like to get to know. Spend some co-counseling or journal time on ways to stop being held back by these messages.

During this unit, take three specific steps toward meeting new people (from the list on pgs. 93 - 94). After you've made all three efforts, describe how it went (and how it felt) to your co-counselor or write about it.

Explore these questions:

- 1) *Where do you back off from getting close to people? What can you notice about what's going on inside you when you do that? Are there particular past experiences that you're thinking about at those times? If so, spend some time getting some support about those experiences with your co-counselor.*

- 2) *What messages did you grow up with about asking for help? How do you feel when other people ask you for help? When do you feel happy to help and when do you feel burdened by it?*

During your turn in a co-counseling session, try saying "Help me!" out loud several times. Say it with some intensity and see what it brings up for you. You can try saying it directly to your counselor, and also try looking away and saying it as if there were someone else in the room you were speaking to. (You don't need to have anyone in mind while you do this, but if a particular person comes to mind -- for example, imagining that you're back in childhood saying this to one of your parents or to some other adult -- give that a try.) Notice any feelings that come up.



Spend some time thinking about the people who are your main supports in life, asking yourself these questions:

- *Who is supporting the people who are supporting me? What is difficult for them currently in their own lives? How could I take more care of them (while continuing to accept their support toward me)? Is there any way I could contribute to the nurturing of my support system?*

UNIT 10

Read Chapter 8 pgs. 100-109

Begin by exploring your crying experiences from childhood. What were your parents' beliefs about crying? How did they react when you cried? How did your siblings react when you cried?

When was your last good cry? How did it affect you?

What keeps you from crying more? (Crying doesn't help you feel better? You carry internal messages that you shouldn't cry more? It's hard to find time or safe places? The tears just don't come, even when you wish they would?)

What makes you laugh?

Have you had experiences of laughing until you cry, or being there when that happened to someone else? How about experiences of crying until you end up laughing? If yes, tell about these.



Can you remember any times when you felt bad about laughing because it was a serious occasion or because you felt that you were making light of something you shouldn't? (This is a natural and healthy response to anxiety.) What were you anxious about at those times? Did the laughter help to relieve the anxiety?

Can you think of times (perhaps including ones you already reflected on) in which laughing with other people helped you feel more connected to them? Tell about that.

UNIT 11

Read Chapter 8 pgs. 110-117

Explore memories of times when you got frightened enough to end up trembling. Did other people notice that you were trembling? Do you remember how they reacted? Did you feel like the fact that you were trembling was a bad sign? Did the trembling itself (apart from whatever had frightened you in the first place) frighten or worry you?

How does it feel to hear me say that our bodies actually have a plan to keep us emotionally well? Does it make sense to you that our bodies would need such a plan, or do you doubt it? Describe the range of thoughts and reactions you have.

Flip quickly back through this whole chapter (pgs. 100-117). What pieces most resonated with you? Reflect aloud or in writing on why those parts had an impact.

UNIT 12

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Read Chapter 9 pgs. 121-136

This chapter is an overview. The next two chapters will take you into more detail on the points covered in Chapter 9, and much greater detail is available in *The Healing Partnership: A Manual for Splitting Time* (see below).

If you've been working this program on your own so far, this would be a great time to consider starting to include some work with a co-counselor. Does anybody come to mind who might be interested in splitting time with you? If not, consider joining the Peak Living Network Slack site to seek someone to work with. (See the Introduction to these exercises for more information about the PLN Slack.) The exercises for Chapters 9-11 are all designed to be used by two people who are splitting time together.

The first exercise is simply to quickly skim through [*The Healing Partnership*](#) (free download) so that you get a sense of the range of information that's available in that manual:

What are your first thoughts about the idea of finding and working with a co-counselor? How does this feel different from the idea of working with a professional therapist? Are there ways it might work better for you? Are there ways it might work less well?

What feelings come up about counseling someone else? Do you feel that you could learn to do it well? Or do you self-doubt arising about your capability to learn how?

What do you find exciting about the idea of entering into the co-counseling process? What aspects of it cause you to feel nervous or uncertain about doing it?



If you've already been working with a healing partner, how is that going for you? What's working well for you in that partnership? What could work better? What could you explain or express to your healing partner that could help him or her be more effective in supporting and counseling you?

UNIT 13

Read Chapter 10 pgs. 137-148

Do a few short co-counseling sessions (at least 10-minute turns each) or one full-length one (turns of at least 45 minutes each).

Spend a few minutes with your healing partner, before the two of you split time, talking about the structure and approach you've learned in this chapter. Do you both feel clear about how you're going to proceed? Anything you want to clarify with each other?

You might also check in about the following questions:

- *Are there any aspects of the steps explained in Chapter 10 that you don't feel clear about?*
- *Any parts that don't make sense to you, or that you disagree with?*
- *Any part of the structure that feels too restrictive to you?*
- *Anything from this structure that you're reluctant to try?*

These are all important thoughts and reactions to reflect upon and to process your feelings about.



For the first ten or more times that you co-counsel with a partner, whether short or long turns, and whether on the phone or in person, it's important to check in with each other after the session about:

Did we follow the structure? If not, in what ways did we not? What's hard about following it? How could we make it go better next time?

NOTE: We strongly encourage you to stick to the format described in the book for at least the first several months of co-counseling. Each aspect of the structure is here for a good reason and should not be dismissed lightly. If it's hard for you to follow structures and guidelines in general, or if you're feeling triggered by them, those feelings are in themselves a valuable issue to explore during your turns.

UNIT 14

Read Chapter 11 pg. 149 - middle of pg. 159

When you're splitting time this week, keep the following list open where you and your co-counselor can see it, and see how many of the techniques you can use while you are the one in the listening role:

Counseling Techniques to Practice

- *Validate the speaker's feelings and perspective*
- *Express interest in the speaker's life and experiences*
- *Appreciate aloud the strengths and the goodness that you see in the speaker*

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- *Ask the speaker to spend a few minutes appreciating herself or himself aloud (self-appreciation)*
- *Find two or three occasions to take stands in support of what the speaker is saying (such as "It isn't okay for that person to treat you that way," or "You deserved a lot better than that," for example)*
- *Hold the speaker's goodness (which may not involve saying anything aloud, though it might; the key thing is to keep yourself centered in the person's goodness during his or her turn)*
- *Hold the hope (which, again, may not involve saying anything; the key thing is to keep yourself rooted in a belief that the speaker's life is going to get better and better)*
- *Find two or three occasions to offer reassurance (but remember, don't overdo it; we need to give each other space to feel our feelings and not try to fix them)*
- *If you're co-counseling in person, offer thoughtful physical touch and closeness*
- *Ask questions – lots!*

All of these skills are described in detail in the chapter. The more you practice them the more they'll come to feel natural to you.

UNIT 15

Read Chapter 11 middle of pg. 159 - 170

Spend a substantial chunk of time in a co-counseling session exploring the following list. Reflect on each point and express what it means to you.



Making Your Own Sessions Work Better

- 1) *Do serious work*
- 2) *Take risks in your sessions, open up*
- 3) *Work cooperatively with your counselor (remembering the concept, "During each person's turn, the two of you think together about that person")*
- 4) *Ask for what you need*
- 5) *Take risks outside of sessions, take action, break out of patterns*
- 6) *Give up numbness, including substances*
- 7) *Make your healing a priority (including how often you split time with someone)*
- 8) *Use phone time, build it regularly into your life*
- 9) *Seek a fulfilling life, not a comfortable one*

For the next month (longer if you wish), put this list up somewhere visible (refrigerator, bulletin board, work desk, etc.)

During the next several weeks, glance at this list when you have an upcoming session, and choose one or two items to work into your turn that day. It might be something to practice (items 1-4) or to set goals about (items 5-9).

UNIT 16

Read Chapter 12 pgs. 171-178

Reflect on what it would feel like to be as supported in your life as the people described in this chapter.



Do some reading at the PLN Slack site., and write a message on one of the discussion channels.

Consider starting a new channel on the Slack site (a topic that interests you that doesn't have a channel yet).

Reflect on yourself as a leader/organizer. Is there already a PLN hub near where you live? If not, are you interested in starting one? (If so, read the opening information on the "#pln-leaders" channel on the Slack site.)

UNIT 17

Read Chapter 13 pgs. 181-193

Reclaiming Power

Reflect on areas of your life that you have felt powerless over. Are there areas where you might have more agency or choice than you've been assuming you do?

Are there places in your current life where you feel that you are acting powerfully? Talk about that in detail. What makes you feel able to do so? What results are coming from your actions?

Reflect some on what it means to have the right to defend yourself. Are there areas in your life where you feel it's your obligation to put up with things that aren't right? Where does that belief come from? What could you say back to those voices?



When have you faced disapproval for standing up for yourself or for other people? Tell about that.

What occasions can you remember where you've successfully stood up for yourself, or for people you cared about? Tell about those in detail and notice the feelings that come up.

Leadership

Reflect on what comes up when you consider viewing yourself as a leader. What messages have you internalized that say that you're "just not the leader type"?

What leaders in your life have you admired? What specifically did you like about how they led?

NOTE: *For this question and the next one, we're not talking about distant leaders such as politicians or heads of organizations, but rather people who have directly touched your life or been role models for you, good or bad.*

What leaders in your life have you most disliked? Why?

Facing Retaliation

Are you part of any group that gets retaliated against for standing up for itself? Tell about that. How has your awareness of that retaliation – and your direct experience of it – affected your life? (We'll be exploring these questions a lot more in Chapters 18 and 19).

Living From Choice

In what aspects of your life do you feel like you're "on automatic"? Share your feelings about that.



Do you believe you could live from choice? What internal messages do you carry about this question?

In what aspect(s) of your life do you find yourself able to act decisively or to take charge of how you want things to be? Spend some time talking about this and taking pride about it *even if the only aspects you can think of feel small to you*. Taking time to notice the agency you do have, and to feel your feelings about successes even if they seem small, will help you to expand that agency.

Living from Choice is a huge topic. I need to create exercises that get people to tap into their wise mind. I'll also give an exercise that specifically has them use a co-counseling session to break a pattern or limitation. *** *This will be the focus for the second unit (19)*

Boundaries are a huge topic. Maybe just assign some beginning reflections on it. Also assign some co-counseling work, like moving their counselor closer and farther away, or playing with certain directions such as, "Don't you dare touch me!" *** *This will be the focus for the third unit (20)*

UNIT 21

Read Chapter 14 pg. 194 – middle of pg. 206

The exercise here is to start making your goal chart, following the page-by-page instructions.

Make sure to finish with a few (just a few) goals for the first unit.



UNIT 22

Read Chapter 14 middle of pg. 206 – 211

Do the check-in process to practice it (even though you've only been working on your goals for one unit so there's not a ton to review).

Return to the question of accumulating resource.

Set a direction and try to hold it for a unit.

How has your life been shaped by what other people wanted you to do or be? How might you step out of that influence, and start moving your life toward what *you* want it to be? What matters the most to you?

Make a plan for how often you'll check in on your goal work.

UNIT 23

Read Chapter 15 pg. 212 – middle of 221 (until "Overcoming Addiction")

Begin with introductory comments about how we all suffer from some degree of addictive pull, even if it isn't running our lives. This work can benefit everyone.

What activities in life do you find most pleasurable?



What messages did you get growing up (from family, from religion, from community) that pleasure is bad or sinful?

Try noticing your pleasures for a unit. Which ones feel really good? Which ones make you hyper or numb, or leave you feeling dissatisfied later?

Are there behaviors in your life that you keep repeating even though they make you feel bad? Tell about that. What do you think drives you to keep doing this?

How did you feel reading the section about emptiness (pg. 219)? This would also be a good time to review pgs. 34 – 35, regarding “frozen needs.” Reflect some on this issue.

UNITS 24 & 25

Read Chapter 15 middle of pg. 221 (“Overcoming Addiction”) - 229

Mention that, while we’re spending two units on this work, if you decide (or already know) that addiction is a major obstacle to your happiness and life fulfillment, you might focus your work here for months or even a couple of years.

Use the book to work the steps from pg. 221 to the middle of 228 (over a couple of units – maybe break it down into time frames)

UNIT 26



Read Chapter 16 pgs. 230-241

Pick a tyrant you've had to deal with at any point in your life, whether it was your parent, boss, superior officer, relationship partner, or other individual or group. Go over each of these questions about that experience:

- 1) *What trapped you in that situation? What factors, both external or internal, made it so you could not leave or so that leaving was difficult and involved big sacrifices?*
- 2) *How were you made to feel it was your own fault? (by the tyrant, by responses you received from other people about the situation, and by societal messages you'd grown up with, for example)*
- 3) *What was the impact on you of what happened, both in the short and long terms?*
- 4) *Did the experience leave you feeling alone? Describe how. Is there a lasting isolating effect? (For example, is the tyranny still present in your life?) What strategies might you try to overcome the isolation?*
- 5) *If the situation is over, how did it feel to escape it? Describe the process, short and long term. of getting over what happened. Is there still healing remaining for you to do from that experience?*

If the situation is not over, how could you reach out for more help? (For example, examine the resources on pg. 237-239)



UNITS 27 - 29

Read Chapter 17, pgs. 242 - 256

Who are the people whom you have felt most loved by in your life? What was it about them, and about how they were toward you? Is there anything you wish to express to them (whether they are still living or not) about what their love meant to you and why it was so important? Choose one or two of those people and speak aloud to them, as if they were in the room, saying everything you would want to say to them, and allowing yourself to feel whatever comes up.

What people have you most enjoyed *giving love* to in your life? Did you get to see your love make a difference to them, and if so, how? Explore some of what is powerful and important about the love you must give.

Which people are your current sources of physical touch? Is there anyone who give you a nice, tight hug? Do you experience some loving contact each day? Do you ever get the chance to just lie and hold someone? What might be some ways to increase the affection in your life?

Is physical contact hard for you at this point in your life? Describe your feelings. Does it make sense to put some focus on this issue in your healing work in the months ahead?

How do you best express your experiences, past and present? Do you like putting your experiences into words? What other avenues of self-expression do you have (artwork, writing poems, dancing, athletics, gardening, etc.)? How do you let the world around you know who you are, what you believe, and what you feel?



What messages have you internalized that say you shouldn't play? How might you bring more playfulness into your life?

In what realms of life do you feel like you have the most say over what happens? In what realms do you have the least say? We'll come back later to look at ways to increase your say, but for now spend some time just examining what it feels like to consider the following statement: "I have the right to full say over every aspect of my life." See what that brings up, including feelings or experiences from long ago.

Describe your favorite places from childhood and after. What has been precious to you about these places? Do they still exist? If not, what was it like for you when they were changed or destroyed? What are your favorite places now, both near and far? How often do you get to be in them?

Do extensive exploration, both in writing and in sessions with a healing partner, of the italicized questions on pg. 255. Start creating a creed, which is to say a written statement of what you most deeply believe, using those questions to help you create it. (As with all exercises for TJR, this creed is not to show to anyone else unless you choose to do so -- you're making this for yourself, with the support and love of your healing partner if you're working with one.)

Review the list from this chapter. In what areas do you feel the best right now, feeling that your needs are being met well in those areas? In what areas do you feel that the most is missing? Which missing piece or pieces would you most like to start addressing now? Add one or more pieces to your goal plan (see units 21 and 22 above) to move in that direction.



UNIT 30 - 32

Read Chapter 18 pgs. 259 - 272

What is your reaction to the idea that children are an oppressed group? Spend some extended time exploring your thoughts and feelings regarding this question.

What would it feel like to be a small child and feel happy about being so small? What would it have been like to feel that you were just as valuable as everyone else? How would the world have needed to be different for you not to wish you were older?

What other groups are you a part of, or have you been part of in the past, that the dominant society views as second-class? What can you remember about the period in life when you first started to learn that you were part of this group, and about what that meant?

In what ways have you resisted oppression? Try to remember the first time(s) you resisted. Review times when you stuck up (or attempted to do so) on behalf of other oppressed people (whether part of a group you are/were part of or not). Spend some time taking pride in these efforts.

What prices have you paid for refusing to go along (or attempting to do so) with oppressive treatment toward you or toward others?



Can you remember the early messages you got about other groups? Explore your memories of that early societal training.

When have you felt that you got the opportunity to be an ally to an oppressed group that you aren't part of? How did that feel?

From these pages (259-269), which points had the greatest impact on you (whether the ideas were new to you or not)? Explore your reactions to those sections in depth.

Are there points from these pages that you disagreed with? Explore your thoughts and emotional reactions regarding those points.

Does the concept of "internalized oppression" resonate with you? If so, how? Are there areas where you carry negative views of yourself for being part of certain groups? Do you carry negative views of other members of your own group(s)? Explore your reactions to these questions in depth and consider whether this is an area where you might want to put some of your healing attention in the months ahead.

UNIT 33

Read Chapter 19 pgs. 273 - 282

Explore your associations with terms such as "activist," "militant," "feminist," and "radical." What can you remember about where you first heard these terms? What images come to mind? What can you remember seeing on TV or videos (especially news shows) that shaped your view of what these terms meant and what kind of people got these labels?



Did you see any media images during your childhood -- or since -- where people who had these labels were portrayed as loving, concerned people? When was this? How do you think you may have been affected by how rare such portrayals are?

I write in this chapter that many activists are fun and loving people with great senses of humor. Do you find this surprising? Does it clash with what you've heard or been taught? How so?

Do you think you've internalized any messages that say that you're immature for wanting the world to be different? How about similar negative messages for believing that making a difference is possible?

If you were going to take a first step (or a next step) toward changing the world, what would it be? (You might review the list on pgs. 278-279, and also the box on pg. 276) What, if anything, stops you from doing so? Work with the idea of taking that step soon.

How might things change in your life if you viewed yourself as a leader? Spend a good chunk of time reflecting on this question.

UNIT 34

Read Chapter 20 pgs. 283 - 290

How do you feel when you hear me say that people are inherently good? Does that ring true for you, or not? Where do your beliefs about people come from? What were you taught early in life about whether people are good or not?



Review the list about balance on pgs. 288 - 289. What thoughts and feelings come up as you read this list? Spend some time following those feelings where they take you. Then spend some time with your eyes closed, taking slow, relaxed breaths, and letting a feeling of balance come into you.

Make a list (written, aloud, or both) of reasons to be hopeful about your future.

Reflect on the trajectory of your life so far, toward answering the questions, "What is it about my life so far that proves that I have the capacity to heal from injuries that happen to me? What examples are there that demonstrate that I eventually get out of dark places that I fall into? What does the world need that I have to offer?"