



Checking
Our
Behavior

*Workbook 1 in The Way to Change
Series for Men Who Have Abused
Their Women Partners*

Edward W. Gondolf

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May 28, 2004

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward W. Gondolf". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Edward W. Gondolf
Research Director and
Professor of Sociology



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Workbook 1 in *The Way to Change* Series for Men Who Have Abused Their Women Partners

The way to change is a series of five workbooks for men. Each workbook takes men another step away from abusive behavior and towards better relationships. The workbooks together show men not only how to stop abuse but also how to change the thinking and attitudes behind their abuse.

Workbook 1: Checking Our Behavior focuses on monitoring one's behavior. It is designed to help men realize their ability to stop abusive behavior. ***Workbook 2: Discovering Our Self*** exposes the distorted notions of manhood that pull men down and shows what it means to be a "real man." ***Workbook 3: Appreciating Women*** is about respecting women more and not fearing their feminine nature. This kind of appreciation is the basis of healthy male-female relationships. ***Workbook 4: Reaching Out to Others*** points men toward their community and society at large. It shows how men can counter those social pressures that so often misguide them. ***Workbook 5: Relapse, Reuniting, and Progress*** addresses the stumbling blocks, like alcohol use, that often get in the way of progress. This workbook can be used with other workbooks or as a "refresher" along the way. (See the back cover for ordering information.)

These workbooks are meant to be used in a counseling program where response to the exercises can be discussed with other men. The workbooks can give direction to a group, increase participation, and deepen the discussion. The workbooks might also be used as homework to help keep men on track between counseling sessions. It is important for men to get some basic knowledge about abuse and how to avoid it, as soon as possible. The short book, *Man to Man: A Guide for Men in Abusive Relationships*, is a good place to turn for this. Also, men who heavily use alcohol or drugs, are severely depressed or have uncontrollable thoughts, have physically abused their children, or have been violent outside the home usually need extra specialized help in addition to these workbooks. They may need addiction treatment, psychiatric care, parent counseling, or additional restraint and supervision.

How to Use this Workbook

Checking Our Behavior is the first workbook in *The Way to Change* series. This workbook is designed to make you more alert to abusive behaviors and to your capacity to stop them. Even if you have already been told about some of these things, you need to review and practice them. As we become more aware of our own behavior, we can manage and direct it. In the process, we become less concerned about trying to change others, and worry more about ourselves.

This workbook presents several goals to help you check your behavior. It will show you how to 1) face up to your abuse, 2) assert your capacity to stop abuse, 3) shift the focus of your control, 4) become responsible when you feel hurt, and 5) take better care of yourself.

Each of these goals begins with something to think about — "think pieces." After each "think piece" is a place to respond. Write some comments about how the "think piece" applied

to you in the past, and what it says about your future. When you have finished the workbooks, you will have a diary to review, especially in tough times. Exercises of four to five questions are next. The exercises help apply each goal to yourself. There are no “right” answers to the exercise questions, just honest thoughts. An assignment at the end of each set of exercises will help you to put the goals into practice.

The activities for each goal are designed to be completed on a weekly basis. You may want to spend one day responding to the “think piece,” one day after that on each exercise, and the “assignment” on the next day. At the end of the week’s time, you can share your responses and assignments with others in your counseling group. Then take a day’s break before starting the next goal.

The Challenge of Change

Achieving the goals in this workbook will not be easy. You need to take them on as a challenge. As Abraham Maslow once said: “Self-knowledge and self-improvement are very difficult for most people. They usually need great courage and long struggle.” There may be some aches and pains along the way. But if you keep going, you will also discover a strength that you didn’t know you had. When you are finished, you will look back with a good feeling. Things that do not make sense at the start will make sense. And you will be a better person.

Change often goes against our common sense. It means looking at things in a different way. To get started, think about the statements below. They twist some of our “common sense” to show things in a new light. They can help open us up to the goals of this workbook and move us toward change.

Read through the statements and put a star (*) by a couple of statements that stand out to you. Write them on a card and keep them in your pocket to pullout and look at during the day. This will help bring a new way of looking at things and keep you moving ahead.

The Nature of Abuse

- In the eyes of the victim, we only need to abuse once to become an abuser.
- The most important question is: not “why we abuse?” but “how we stop?”
- The worst part about abuse is that its impact doesn’t stop when we do.
- Being confused about what is abusive and what is not often helps us become non-abusive.
- Acting non-violently may at first heighten our non-violent abuse.
- Anger is a symptom of abuse — not its cause.
- An abusive man who abuses alcohol does not have a problem; he has two problems.
- Letting go of control is the best way to see our behavior become controlled.
- You must accept your own powerlessness before you attain true powerfulness.
- Being non-violent or peaceful makes us more of a man, not a wimp.

Checking Our Behavior

The first and most important step in our efforts to change is to stop our abusive behaviors. Many of us have already admitted our wrongs, faced the consequences of our behavior, and learned techniques to interrupt our abuse. This is, however, only part of the process of staying stopped. We also have to learn to better monitor ourselves and our behavior. In a sense, it is developing a better radar screen.

This part of the workbook is designed to make us more alert to our abusive behaviors and our capacity to stop them. Even if you have been told about some of these things in a previous program or learned them on your own, you need to review and practice them. The objective is to become more aware of our own behavior so we can manage it constructively. At the same time, this means being less preoccupied about others' behavior and what they appear to do to us. The strength and capacity to do this is ours.

The sense of dignity comes from being able to say no to oneself. —Abraham Heschel

☰ Exercise 1 – Things We Do or Say That Are Abusive

Facing up to woman abuse starts with admitting the range of abuses you have done to your wife or partner. Think hard and be honest. Sometimes we forget about things we have done, or we do not think what we have done is abusive. Abuse is something that is said or done that hurts another's self-esteem, or their body. It can cause fear and self-doubt. It makes people feel bad — like they are not worth anything. We can't change if we don't think we have anything we need to change. So let's take a good look at our behavior toward our wife or partner. You may have done this sort of thing before but it is helpful to keep doing it to remind yourselves what you have to change.

Put a check by each type of abuse you have ever used on your wife or partner.

1. **Verbal abuse:** things we say to our partner that put her down or scare her.
 - call her names
 - put her down or insult her
 - accuse her of things you don't know for sure
 - threaten to harm her
 - threaten to hurt yourself
 - threaten to harm the children or to take them
 - threaten to kill her

2. **Psychological abuse:** things we do to make our partners feel bad, confused, or fearful without hurting her physically.
 - follow and check up on her
 - isolate her from her family and friends
 - manipulate her by misleading or deceiving her
 - not allow her to use the car or phone
 - not allow her to have money
 - question her expenses
 - drive recklessly to frighten her
 - harm pets to hurt her
 - break things, or pound or kick something

3. **Physical abuse:** things we do to our partner that can hurt her physically.
 - hold her against her will
 - grab or carry her
 - push or shove
 - slap or spank

- bite or scratch
- pull hair
- choke or burn
- punch
- kick, beat up
- throw something at her
- use a weapon

4. **Sexual abuse:** things we do or say about sex that may make our partner feel uncomfortable.

- accuse her of having an affair
- have sex with another woman
- withhold sex because you are mad
- make kinky demands
- force sex on her when she is not willing
- make threats or accusations if she is not willing
- use hitting or other violence to force sex

☰ Exercise 2 – How Our Abuse Affects Others

One reason that abuse continues is because we tend to deny it, excuse it, or not accept responsibility for it. We say or think things like: “It wasn’t my fault, she asked for it.” Until we take responsibility for our behavior, we can’t change it. It instead changes us. Let’s see to what degree you might be denying abuse or not taking responsibility for it.

1. Below is a list of some common things we often do to deny our abuse. Check the ways that you have denied your abuse or your responsibility.

- forget what happened
- blame your partner (“She called me a name first.”)
- blame something else (“I was drunk and didn’t know what I was doing.”)
- justify the abuse (“I needed to put her in her place or get back at her.”)
- distort the facts (“I didn’t hurt her that bad.”)
- minimize the facts (“All I did was grab her.”)
- omit information (“She just tripped [but after I shoved her].”)
- outright lying (“I never touched her.”)
- not care about it (“I didn’t give a darn how she feels.”)

2. Our behavior sometimes affects people in ways we don't think about or recognize. What has your abuse done to the woman you love? Check all that apply.

■ Caused her to feel:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> frightened | <input type="checkbox"/> frustrated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> terrified | <input type="checkbox"/> ashamed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> unhappy | <input type="checkbox"/> isolated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> depressed | <input type="checkbox"/> worthless, used |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bitter | <input type="checkbox"/> self-blame or guilt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> degraded, dirty | <input type="checkbox"/> hate toward herself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> crazy | <input type="checkbox"/> hate toward you |

■ Caused her to lose:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> self-esteem | <input type="checkbox"/> confidence in herself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> control | <input type="checkbox"/> trust of you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her happiness | <input type="checkbox"/> touch with her family and friends |

■ Caused her to have:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> emotional problems | <input type="checkbox"/> chipped teeth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> suicide feelings or attempts | <input type="checkbox"/> broken bones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> bruises or cuts | <input type="checkbox"/> miscarriage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sprains or dislocation | <input type="checkbox"/> hospitalization |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hurt head or concussion | |

Exercise 3 – How Abuse Happens

Abuse doesn't "just happen." Things are going on before it happens. Things are going on within us. Abuse happens at a certain time and place. Think back to the most recent abusive incident and "size up" the situation.

1. How were you feeling several hours before the abuse? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> withdrawn | <input type="checkbox"/> restless |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nervous | <input type="checkbox"/> tired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> angry | <input type="checkbox"/> mean |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sad | <input type="checkbox"/> empty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cocky | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

2. What physical signs did you have just prior to the abuse?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> panic | <input type="checkbox"/> pacing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tight fists | <input type="checkbox"/> tight chest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> tight jaw | <input type="checkbox"/> bug eyed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> short breath | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hot face | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

3. What other circumstances might have contributed to the abuse?

- use of alcohol or drugs
- other people present
- time of day (e.g., late at night, early morning)
- place (e.g., the bedroom, kitchen)

4. What did you say or think just before the abuse?

5. How did you feel after the abusive incident?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> relieved | <input type="checkbox"/> depressed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more angry | <input type="checkbox"/> happy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ashamed | <input type="checkbox"/> satisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> upset | <input type="checkbox"/> frustrated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fearful | <input type="checkbox"/> victorious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ | |

6. What did you do immediately after the incident?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> acted as if nothing happened | <input type="checkbox"/> denied it or said she wasn't hurt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> apologized | <input type="checkbox"/> said she deserved it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> acted affectionate | <input type="checkbox"/> threatened to do it again |
| <input type="checkbox"/> left the house | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> slept or passed out | <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ |

☰ Exercise 4 – How We Can Avoid Abuse

When we are aware of abuse, we can do something about it. We can see it coming and do something else instead. There are things we can do, as well, to avoid even getting into a situation that might turn into abuse. We do some of these things at least sometimes. Think about a recent abusive incident or close call, and answer the following questions. Be imaginative, be creative in your answers.

1. What might you have done just before the abusive incident in order to avoid it? (e.g., get out of the house, keep my mouth shut)

2. What might you have done just after the abuse to prevent further abuse? (e.g., called someone for help, stopped drinking)

3. Who are three people that you can readily call on for help? (Include phone numbers.)

4. What should you expect or allow your wife to do in response to any future abuse or close calls — without interference or revenge from you? (Check those that apply and add some more tailored to your situation.)

- hit you back
- call a women's shelter crisis line
- leave home
- call the police
- other _____
- other _____

Assignments

1. If your wife or partner is willing, review your responses to any of these exercises with her. Mark her responses to the questions with an “*.”
2. Redo Exercise 3 after any close call or testing time that occurs during the coming week. Put an “*” in front of the items that apply to the new “close call” and see if they are the same or different from your original checks.

Caution: If you are physically abusive, be sure to talk to a counselor about it as soon as possible. Learn something from it so that it doesn’t happen again. You might also look over the exercise “Responding to Relapse” in Part 5 of this workbook series.

❖ Goal 2 – Asserting Our Capacity to Stop

Something to Think About

There are things for which an uncompromising stand is worthwhile. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer

For many of us, a time came when we said, “I’m not going to live this way any more!” This was a deep, internal decision for change. We probably didn’t know how it would come about. Somehow we had reached bottom, and we no longer debated about whose fault our problems were. We quit negotiating over what we would change and what we would not change. We were willing to put all our energy into finding a better life, no matter what it would require. That is the kind of inner “guts” that finally makes real change possible.

Such willingness to take a stand and give ourselves totally to a worthwhile cause is a model for our lives. It’s the beginning of deep change. Many men and women have taken similar heroic stands for other causes like justice, world peace, helping the poor and hungry, human rights, and protection of the environment. We can take courage that what we have to do can be done.

On this day, I will take a stand for what is worthwhile.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – Ways We Stop Abuse

Not only does abuse not “just happen,” it doesn’t just stop. There are things we do, think, or feel to stop it. Let’s take a closer look at how we have stopped an abusive incident before it got worse or happened at all.

1. We have all stopped our abuse from escalating at some time in the past. Did you ever stop short of doing any of the following? In other words, were you about to do something more abusive and then stopped? Put a check by any item you were about to do but didn’t.

- push her hard against a wall or push her down
- hit her with your fists
- cause any marks or bruises
- really hurt her
- put her in the hospital
- try to kill her
- other _____

2. Think back to your most recent abusive incident or “close call.” Why did you stop the abuse or not abuse? (e.g., She called the police. I didn’t want to kids to see.)

3. On the flip side, we sometimes don’t stop our abuse when we could have. Excuses help keep us going. What excuses have you used to **not** stop your abuse? (Check all that apply.)

- she deserved it
- she hit me first
- I was drunk
- she insulted me
- she hit me back
- she disobeyed me
- she embarrassed me
- other _____

☰ Exercise 2 – Strategies for Stopping

There are a lot of ways we can stop our abuse. We are probably using a lot of those ways already to keep us from being more abusive than we are. Other times we could probably stand to use these ways of stopping more. Let's see what "strategies" for stopping abuse we have available to us and what we might draw on.

- Below is a list of some of the most common things men do to stop an abusive incident from happening. Look over the list below of "Stopping Strategies." Put a check in the "Used" column for *each strategy that you have used* in the last three months or so. Then put a check in the "Helped" column if that strategy helped you stop the abuse.

Stopping Strategies	Used	Helped
■ Avoidance Strategies		
stop talking or arguing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
try to talk it out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
go to another room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
take a "time out"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
go to a friend's house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
leave overnight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Self-Control Strategies		
hold back your response/count to 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
think instead of react (e.g., "Do I really want to do this?")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
talk to yourself in a positive way (e.g., "I can stop my abuse.")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
think about how you are feeling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
picture something good or peaceful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
■ Coping Strategies		
do something relaxing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
stop something stressful in your life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
pray or meditate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
do some physical exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
call a friend or a counselor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
tell your problems to someone else	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Circle those *strategies that you plan to use* over the next three months.

3. Are there any other strategies you have used to avoid being abusive that are not on the list above?

4. What are the “payoffs” or benefits for stopping your abuse? (e.g., I didn’t hurt her. The police didn’t come.)

 **Assignment**

1. Review the “strategies” in Exercise 1 with your wife or partner (if she is willing). Ask her which ones she thinks work the best. Ask her which strategies she prefers. Put an “*” beside them. If she is not available, try to imagine her answers. Which strategies do you agree on?

2. Find out her strategies for dealing with the abuse and write them below.

- My partner’s strategies for stopping abuse are:

3. Ask another male friend how he stops his abuse. Find out how to do the strategies and how they work.

- My friend's strategies for stopping abuse are:

❖ Goal 3 – Shifting the Focus of Our Control

Something to Think About

A controller doesn't trust his or her ability to live through the pain and chaos of life. There is no life without pain just as there is no art without submitting to chaos. —Rita Mae Brown

It is very hard for most of us to see how controlling we are. We may feel uptight or careful, but we haven't seen it as controlling ourselves or controlling how people respond to us. We may insist that we are worried about a loved one's behavior or safety, but not realize our hovering over that person is a controlling activity. We may be keenly aware of other people's controlling behavior with us, but unaware we have equaled their control by monitoring them and trying to change their behavior.

The reality is that we can't really control everything and we only frustrate ourselves in trying to do so. Eventually, we have to stop controlling and trust. And we are likely to do so, only to forget and take control back within minutes or within an hour. Then we must let go again. What a moment of discovery when we risk letting go! Sometimes the world works just fine without us controlling it.

*Today, I will submit to the insecurity of a changing world
and have faith that I can live through the insecurities and grow.*

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – What Control Is and Does

Most abuse is really about control. It is about trying to be in control, to take control, or to control somebody else. In some cases, trying to control somebody is a kind of abuse itself. To get to the bottom of it all, we not only have to stop our abuse, we have to “let go” of things we can’t and don’t need to control.

1. What does it mean to be in “control” or to control someone?

2. List ways you’ve controlled your wife or partner in the last week. If you are separated, consider when you were last together. (e.g., “I didn’t give her the money she asked for.” “I made her stay away from me.”)

3. What negative effects does your control have on your wife or partner? (e.g., “It makes her not like me.” “She ignores me.”)

4. What negative effects does controlling someone else have on you? (e.g., “I get mad at them.” “I want to fight back.”)

Exercise 2 – Easing “Being In Charge”

We often feel that we have too many responsibilities. They weigh us down and make us feel “put upon.” But maybe we don’t have to always be “in charge.”

1. Make a list below of your responsibilities (e.g., getting money for your kids). Put the things in a column under “Responsibility.”

**Your
Responsibilities**

**Your
Reasons**

Letting Go

2. Why do you feel these responsibilities thing? Add the first reason that comes to mind in the column entitled “Your Reasons” (e.g., That’s what a man is supposed to do. Because it’s my job.)?
3. What would happen if you did not accept these responsibilities? Put what might happen if you “let go” of a responsibility in the column entitled “Letting Go.” (e.g., My kid would starve. My relatives would feed them.)
4. Circle one responsibility that you feel you most need to control.
5. Put a check by one responsibility that you could let go of.

Assignment

1. During the next week, let go of the responsibility you checked in Exercise 2, Question 5. Make a note below of how others responded and how you felt afterward.

Other’s response

Your feelings

2. List one more thing you could try to let go of for next week.

❖ Goal 4 – Being Responsible When We Feel Hurt

Something to Think About

It doesn't take much to see that something is wrong, but it takes some eyesight to see what will put it right again. —Will Rogers

There are so many times when we would like to blame somebody — wife, child, or parent, “the management” — for our feelings. When we get frustrated, overworked, or angry, we want somebody else to take responsibility. In truth, each of us has his own path and is responsible for his own feelings. One man said that living alone made it clear to him that his wife wasn't creating his feelings. Until then he thought she was responsible. Rather than feel like a “victim,” we can do something about whatever hurts and ultimately deal with our lives.

Today, help me be responsible for what I feel even if it hurts.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – Feeling Like a Victim

A lot of us, sometime or another, feel like we are a victim. We are the ones that have been abused or put upon. We got a bad deal. It can help to step back and take a look at this. Is it as bad as we think? Is there something we can do to stop feeling like a victim?

1. What abusive things has your wife or partner done to you in the last month?

2. What effect did each of these have on you? Did you feel angry, confused, frustrated, emotionally hurt, or fearful?

3. What injury, if any, did any of these “abuses” cause? Did any cause bruises, bleeding, broken bones, or head injuries?

4. Which “abusive” incident bothers you the most? Why?

☰ Exercise 2 – Responding to Abuse

We have to think we are a “victim” to be one. It can be our thinking that makes someone else’s behavior seem abusive, or that makes us feel hurt when we really aren’t. Let’s look at how we respond to abuse and how we might respond instead. This can “protect” us — and keep us from lashing back in abuse.

1. Think of a recent incident when you felt abused. Put a check by any items that you felt before the incident.
 - expectations of what should or was going to happen
 - you felt some pride or accomplishment
 - you were feeling down
 - you were pitying yourself
 - real tired from not taking care of myself
 - a little drunk from alcohol
 - other _____

2. How do you think your wife or partner was feeling at the time of this particular incident?
 - fearful
 - let down
 - run down
 - depressed
 - sad
 - other _____

3. Why do you think she responded to those feelings the way she did?
 - she was acting like me
 - she was brought up that way
 - she was acting out of desperation
 - she was deliberately testing me
 - she was acting out of fear
 - other _____

4. How might you have responded other than by totally withdrawing or by fighting back? Put a check by those that apply and add your own suggestions.
 - admit my mistake
 - say how I’m feeling
 - stop the argument until we’re both calm

- other _____
- other _____
- other _____

 **Assignment**

1. Compare the ways that you have been abused by your partner to the ways you abused her in Exercise 1 of Goal 1. How do your hurt feelings and injuries compare to hers? In most cases, men are the “winners” of the abuse contest. Why do you think this is the case?

2. Making a log or record of when we get our feelings hurt can help us deal better with them. During the next three days, use the log below to record a situation in which you get your feelings hurt — even in the slightest way. On the “response” line write how you responded to the feeling. What did you do about those feelings? (e.g., ignore them, talk about them, fight back, left to calm down). Put down something you might have done instead or in addition to ease the feeling next to “ideal response.”

■ **First Day**

Situation: _____

Response: _____

Ideal response: _____

■ **Second Day**

Situation: _____

Response: _____

Ideal response: _____

■ **Third Day**

Situation: _____

Response: _____

Ideal response: _____

Caution: We believe that to blame the other person doesn't solve anything. No matter what your wife or partner does to you, abuse is still not justified. Moreover, your abuse only makes things worse. Things don't change until you take sole responsibility for your own abuse. In most cases, your wife's or partner's so called "abuse" of you is minimal compared to yours of her. Much of her's is in self-defense or retaliation for how you've made her feel. Recognizing your own hurt feelings which are behind your reaction and the feelings behind her action can go a long way to avoiding your overreaction.

❖ Goal 5 – Taking Care of Ourselves Physically

Something to Think About

The body is the soul's house. Shouldn't we therefore take care of our house so that it doesn't fall into ruin? — Philo Judaeus

Some men think it is a mark of a strong man to abuse his body and pay no heed to his health. Have we done this through drug use or abuse of food? Have we misused our bodies by our sexual behavior? To end abuse of others, we also need to end abuse of ourselves. We need to act in self-respecting ways — sometimes before we feel self-respecting. We need nutrition, exercise, sleep, and health care. Treating ourselves as worthwhile men helps us feel worthwhile. Tuning in to how we feel physically may give us some directions.

I will yield to the messages I get from myself so I can enjoy the physical pleasures of change and give my soul a better home.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – What We Do to Ourselves

Our bodies are us. When we treat them bad, they treat us bad. When we are drained, drunk or wired, it is harder to do our best — to do the right thing. We not only end up hurting ourselves more, but we end up hurting others as well. Let's check how we are taking care of ourselves. You may be surprised at how you are abusing yourself.

1. How many days in the past week have you overeaten, skipped a meal, or eaten fried fast food? _____

2. Why did this happen? Could it be avoided?

3. Which of the following have you consumed in the last three days? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> junk food | <input type="checkbox"/> tranquilizers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> caffeine (coffee, cola) | <input type="checkbox"/> marijuana |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cigarettes | <input type="checkbox"/> uppers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> beer | <input type="checkbox"/> downers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hard liquor | <input type="checkbox"/> cocaine |

4. Which of the above might cause problems for you? Circle those items.

5. Which of the above does your wife or partner think is a problem for you? Put an "*" by these.

6. What action will you take for any drug or alcohol problems? (Check all those that apply.)

- cut back to (amount): _____
- completely abstain starting: _____
- attend Alcoholics Anonymous starting: _____
- join a substance-abuse treatment program starting: _____
- use *Relapse Prevention Workbook: For Recovering Alcoholics and Drug Dependent Persons*
- other _____
- other _____

☰ Exercises 2 – Do We Drink Too Much*

Drinking seems to go hand in hand with a lot of abuse. It doesn't cause the abuse, but it can sure make it worse. It makes us misread things and overreact. Most of us, however, don't think we drink too much. We don't think we have a problem. It helps to know if that is really the case. To find out, answer each question below by checking either "yes" or "no." Be honest with yourself. Then score your answers with the instructions below.

1. Do you feel you are a normal drinker? (or drug user). By normal we mean you drink less than or as much as most other people? yes no
2. Does your spouse ever worry or complain about your drinking? yes no
3. Do you ever feel guilty about your drinking? yes no
4. Do friends or relatives think you are a normal drinker? yes no
5. Are you able to stop drinking when you want? yes no
6. Have you ever attended a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous? yes no
7. Has your drinking ever created problems between you and your spouse? yes no
8. Have you ever gotten into trouble at work because of your drinking? yes no
9. Have you ever neglected obligations or work for two days or more in a row because you were drinking? yes no
10. Have you ever gone to anyone for help about your drinking? yes no
11. Have you ever been in a hospital because of drinking? yes no
12. Have you ever been arrested for drunken driving or driving while under the influence of alcohol? yes no
13. Have you ever been arrested, even for a few hours, because of your drunken behavior? yes no

Scoring: Give yourself a point for each of the questions 2, 3, and 6 through 13 that you checked "yes." Also, give yourself a point if you checked "no" for questions 1, 4, or 5. According to this well-established test, you probably are an alcoholic, or addicted to alcohol, if you got three or more points. If you got two points, you "possibly" have a problem. If you got zero or one point, you don't have an alcohol problem at this point. Be sure to seek help if you have two or more points. You don't need to face it alone, and don't deserve to face it alone.

*Reprinted with permission from Selzer, M., A. Vinokur, and L. Van Rooijen, "A Self-Administered Short Michigan Alcoholism Screening Test (SMAST)," *Journal of Studies in Alcohol* 36 (1975): 117-26.

Exercise 3 – Keeping Alive and Well

Exercise can do wonders for us. It not only can make us healthier, it can also help us relax and reduce stress. We are more likely to think straight, feel better about ourselves, and not over-react. But most of us don't exercise as much as we should or could.

1. In the past week, how many times have you done some physical exercise? (e.g., running, swimming, biking, exercises, long walks, etc.) _____
2. What exercise activities could you begin to do and when would you make time to do them?

Activity

Day(s) of week/time

3. How many hours of sleep do you need to feel well rested? _____
4. In the past three nights, how many nights have you slept that long? _____
5. What hobbies do you enjoy and will begin to do on a regular basis?

Hobby

Day(s) of week/time

6. When will you take some quiet time during the day for yourself? This can be in the form of a "Two-Minute Vacation" of relaxation, doing this workbook, or reading something inspirational. (The "Two-Minute Vacation" consists of consciously relaxing your whole body and taking several deep breaths to release tension. The book *Touchstones* offers a collection of short inspirational passages for men, one for each day of the week.)

Quiet time activity

Day(s) of week/time

Assignment

1. Take a brief body check right now. Rate the following items on a scale from one to five (5 = very high) in the “now” column. Then do some daily exercise, proper eating and sleeping, quiet time, hobbies, and abstain from drugs, alcohol, and caffeine over the next five days. On the sixth day, do another body check and rate yourself again in the “later” column.

	Now	Later
■ low energy	_____	_____
■ body tension	_____	_____
■ low muscle tone	_____	_____
■ sleepiness	_____	_____
■ general anxiety	_____	_____



Discovering
Our
Self

*Workbook 2 in The Way to Change
Series for Men Who Have Abused
Their Women Partners*

Edward W. Gondolf

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Workbook 2 in *The Way to Change* Series for Men Who Have Abused Their Women Partners

The way to change is a series of five workbooks for men. Each workbook takes men another step away from abusive behavior and towards better relationships. The workbooks together show men not only how to stop abuse but also how to change the thinking and attitudes behind their abuse.

Workbook 1: *Checking Our Behavior* focuses on monitoring one's behavior. It is designed to help men realize their ability to stop abusive behavior. **Workbook 2: *Discovering Our Self*** exposes the distorted notions of manhood that pull men down and shows what it means to be a "real man." **Workbook 3: *Appreciating Women*** is about respecting women more and not fearing their feminine nature. This kind of appreciation is the basis of healthy male-female relationships. **Workbook 4: *Reaching Out to Others*** points men toward their community and society at large. It shows how men can counter those social pressures that so often misguide them. **Workbook 5: *Relapse, Reuniting, and Progress*** addresses the stumbling blocks, like alcohol use, that often get in the way of progress. This workbook can be used with other workbooks or as a "refresher" along the way. (See the back cover for ordering information.)

These workbooks are meant to be used in a counseling program where response to the exercises can be discussed with other men. The workbooks can give direction to a group, increase participation, and deepen the discussion. The workbooks might also be used as homework to help keep men on track between counseling sessions. It is important for men to get some basic knowledge about abuse and how to avoid it, as soon as possible. The short book, *Man to Man: A Guide for Men in Abusive Relationships*, is a good place to turn for this. Also, men who heavily use alcohol or drugs, are severely depressed or have uncontrollable thoughts, have physically abused their children, or have been violent outside the home usually need extra specialized help in addition to these workbooks. They may need addiction treatment, psychiatric care, parent counseling, or additional restraint and supervision.

How to Use this Workbook

Discovering Our Self is the second workbook in *The Way to Change* series. This workbook will help you explore who you really are and how to be that person. Much of who we seem to be is the result of how we grew up. But who we are to become can be different if we work to be our real selves.

This workbook presents several goals to help you discover that real self. It will help you learn 1) your father's influence on your life, 2) the role your mother played in who you are, 3) who your heroes are and what they say about you, 3) the feelings you have about others and what you have done, and 4) the importance of a spiritual outlook in you life.

Each of these goals begins with something to think about — "think pieces." After each "think piece" is a place to respond. Write some comments about how the "think piece" applied

to you in the past, and what it says about your future. When you have finished the workbooks, you will have a diary to review, especially in tough times. Exercises of four to five questions are next. The exercises help apply each goal to yourself. There are no “right” answers to the exercise questions, just honest thoughts. An assignment at the end of each set of exercises will help you to put the goals into practice.

The activities for each goal are designed to be completed on a weekly basis. You may want to spend one day responding to the “think piece,” one day after that on each exercise, and the “assignment” on the next day. At the end of the week’s time, you can share your responses and assignments with others in your counseling group. Then take a day’s break before starting the next goal.

The Challenge of Change

Achieving the goals in this workbook will not be easy. You need to take them on as a challenge. As Abraham Maslow once said: “Self-knowledge and self-improvement are very difficult for most people. They usually need great courage and long struggle.” There may be some aches and pains along the way. But if you keep going, you will also discover a strength that you didn’t know you had. When you are finished, you will look back with a good feeling. Things that do not make sense at the start will make sense. And you will be a better person.

Change often goes against our common sense. It means looking at things in a different way. To get started, think about the statements below. They twist some of our “common sense” to show things in a new light. They can help open us up to the goals of this workbook and move us toward change.

Read through the statements and put a star (*) by a couple of statements that stand out to you. Write them on a card and keep them in your pocket to pullout and look at during the day. This will help bring a new way of looking at things and keep you moving ahead.

Knowing Our Self

- Hard work on our lives makes our lives easier.
- We find ourselves by giving up what we thought we were.
- To be happy one must risk unhappiness.
- Sometimes we have to go down in our own self-esteem before we can go up.
- Trying hard to become a man never made us one.
- Being aware of society’s impact on us helps us reduce it.
- We help ourselves the most when we begin to help others.
- Taking responsibility for your own behavior keeps you from over reacting to others.
- In being able to be alone, we grow closer to other people.

Discovering Our Self

Certainly there is more to life than acting as “traffic cop” for our behavior. We need purpose, direction, and inner strength to keep ourselves on track and headed in the right direction. Once we are in charge of our behavior, we need to see what is behind it. That means finding out a little more who we are as men and as individuals. There is a lot more than meets the eye. Most of us in our abuse, however, have been living on the surface.

This part of the workbook helps you explore who you really are, what your potential is, what you have left unsaid in your life, what you have ignored or denied. Much of who we seem to be, at this point, is a product of how we grew up. But who we can become can be a product of us having courage to be ourselves.

The struggle of the male to learn to listen to and respect his own intuitive, inner promptings is the greatest challenge of all. His . . . conditioning has been so powerful that it has all but destroyed his ability to be self-aware. —Herb Goldberg

No man can produce great things who is not thoroughly sincere in dealing with himself. —James Russell Lowell

❖ Goal 1: Finding Ourselves In Our Fathers

Something to Think About

*My father didn't tell me how to live; he lived,
and let me watch him do it. —Clarence Budinton Kellard*

Relationships with our fathers have been central in shaping our characters. We catch ourselves saying what we heard our fathers say, or doing something we know they did. Many of us have had pain and resentments in these relationships. We wanted more time than our fathers gave us, or we longed for praise but got criticism, or we were never sure we measured up to what our fathers wanted.

Some of us can change our relationships with our fathers. We can do it, not by asking them to be different, but by being our full adult selves. This new experience is the doorway to a new aspect of ourselves. Many of us cannot change our relationships with our fathers. However, being with our sons and daughters in ways that support their growth is another chance to redo for ourselves what we missed from our fathers. It also shows that we are more than our father's sons.

My father's importance to me is a fact I must admit; I will take what he has given me and grow with it.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: Thinking About Your Father

All of us need to know our fathers better, since they are such a big part of our life — good or bad. Let's think about our fathers and try to do this. Picture your father in your mind as he was

while you were growing up. (If you did not know your father when growing up, think of another adult man in your life at that time.) Then think about each of the times below:

1. Recall a time when he was *angry*.

- What did his face look like?

- What was he doing or saying?

- How did you feel or react?

2. Picture a time when your father was *critical*.

- What did his face look like?

- What was he doing or saying?

- How did you feel or react?

3. Picture a time when your father was *sad*.

- What did his face look like?

- What was he doing or saying?

- How did you feel or react?

4. Picture a time when your father was really *happy*.

- What did his face look like?

- What was he doing or saying?

- How did you feel or react?

5. Picture a time when your father was caring or really *kind*.

- What did his face look like?

- What was he doing or saying?

- How did you feel or react?

☰ Exercise 2: Your Father And You*

Now it's time to look at the influence our fathers have on us and our lives. Think of yourself as an adult with your father. You and he are face to face. Then think about the questions below and answer them with what comes to mind.

1. In what ways are you the same as your father? (How about appearance, moods, or actions? How about in the way you treat women?)

2. In what ways are you different from your father? (How about appearance, moods, or actions? How about in the way you treat women?)

3. What would you most like to say to him? (Is there something you'd like to ask him to change about himself, to do for you or with you? Is there something you'd like to tell about yourself, about how you feel about him?)

4. What would you most like for him to say to you? (Would you like to hear about how he feels about you, what he likes about you, what he thinks about himself or his life?)

*Reprinted with permission from David Russell, Moving Towards Non-Violence, 7424 Washington St., Pittsburgh, PA 15218.

Assignments

1. Find a picture of your father preferably that has you in it too. Place it on your dresser or on your desk. Look at it once a day and remind yourself that you are not your father and he is not you.
2. Write a letter to your father to tell him about some of your recollections and how you are different now from then. (You can make a tape recording if you don't want to write a letter.) Tell your father what you imagined you'd most like to say to him. Think about sending the letter (or tape). If you don't want to send it, ask yourself why the resistance or fear. Then decide whether to send it or not. (If your father is no longer living you can still imagine a letter you'd like to send him.)

❖ Goal 2: Being a Mother to Ourselves

Something to Think About

My mother was dead for five years before I knew that I loved her very much. —Lillian Hellman

Many men fall into complicated relationships with their mothers that we carry into our marriages or relationships. Our mothers did a lot for us, much of which we came to expect or take for granted. We felt, however, that we had to prove ourselves as men. This meant separating ourselves from our mothers, pushing them away, and even deeply resenting them at times. We enjoyed their attention and care but despised being “mother’s little boy.”

We get married in part to get away from our mothers and be on our own. Yet the care, attention, and service we got from our mothers, we now expect from our wives or partners — consciously or not. Our wives or partners are to cook for us, clean for us, and take care of feelings for us. Yet we don't want to be mothered. We often get angry when our wives or partners don't mother us enough or when they mother us too much. In a sense, we have to grow up and stop being “little boys.” We have to mother ourselves.

I will look for a chance to mother myself and not expect to be mothered by my wife or partner.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: Remembering Your Mother

Our mothers play a big part in our lives whether they are present or absent. Even though we love or appreciate them a lot, it is not uncommon to carry grudges or resentments toward our mothers. These often play out in our relationships with other women. It can help our relationship with other women if we know better how we feel about our mothers.

1. Below is a list of the most common grudges we men have towards our mothers. Check the ones that apply to you. (If someone else raised you or your mother died when you were young, think of another adult woman who was important to you. Think of a grandmother, an aunt, a neighbor, or a teacher.)

- I resent the way my mother came between my father and me.
- My mother treated my father like dirt. No woman is ever going to treat me like that.
- My mother let my father push her around. I hated being around when that happened.
- I can never forgive my mother for letting my father treat me the way he did. I've never gotten over it.
- My mother never really grew up. I always felt like I had to be her "Little Man" and take care of her.
- My mother always took terrible care of herself.
- My mother worked too hard all her life and never took anything for herself.
- My mother could have been great at something. But she gave it all up to get married.
- My mother was much too protective of me. At times I felt like she was going to suffocate me.
- Other: _____

2. Make a list of the "debts" you have toward your mother. How did she sacrifice for you or help you? (Did she take care of you when you were sick? Did she take you places and show you things? Did she help you in school or when you got in trouble?)

3. In what ways have you expected your wife or partner to be like your mother? (Do you expect her to cook for you, clean the house, and wash your clothes? Do you think she should help you when you're hurt, or pay attention to how you feel?)

4. In what ways have you expected your wife or partner to be *different* from your mother? (Do you expect her to be beautiful, to give you sex when you want, not talk back to you?)

☐ Exercise 2: Mothering Others and Yourself*

Sometimes we expect the women in our lives to do all the “mothering” — all the caring, helping, feeling. Mothering is not just for women or our mothers. We all do helpful and caring things that we would expect from a mother. Let’s look at the mothering around us and in ourselves.

1. In what ways have you “mothered” others? Check all that apply.

- washing clothes for the family
- ironing or repairing clothes
- making coffee for guests
- preparing nutritious meals
- shopping intelligently for food
- washing dishes or pots by hand
- keeping the house clean
- keeping the kitchen clean
- cleaning the toilet and bathtub
- living within the limits of my income
- changing diapers and bathing an infant

*Reprinted and adapted with permission of Doubleday from *The Secrets Men Keep*, by Ken Druck. © 1985 by Ken Druck, pp. 173-74 and 194.

- reading to a child
- playing with a child
- tending a sick wife
- caring for a sick child
- giving first aid to my kids
- supervising my kids for several hours at a time
- helping my children with their homework
- other _____
- other _____

2. In the list above, circle all of the things you plan to do this week. Pick at least three.

3. Recall a time when your mother helped you emotionally.

- What was the situation?

- How were you feeling?

- What did your mother do or say that seemed to make a difference?

4. Think of a time recently that you felt that way.

- What was the situation?

- What could you do for yourself to make a difference?

- What could you say to yourself to make a difference?

Assignments

1. Call your mother and mention your appreciation for some specific things she did for you growing up. If you have no contact at all with her, write an imaginary letter to her expressing your appreciation. Also, admit to her at least one grudge you've had toward her. No need to discuss it. Then let go of it by comparing it to all she has done for you.
2. Remind yourself that your wife or partner is not your mother. Talk to your wife or partner about your mother and her. Tell her what "mothering" you are going to do in the next week and do it. Make a note below of what you do, how it felt after you do it, and what your wife's or partner's reaction is.

- Mothering activity:
-
-

- Feelings afterward:
-
-

- Wife's response:
-
-

✂ Goal 3: Having Heroes Worth Admiring

Something To Think About

Without heroes, we are all plain people and don't know how far we can go. —Bernard Malamud

It is useful for us to reflect on our heroes for a time. Who do we greatly admire? Are they men or women? Are they closely involved in our lives, or are they distant and beyond our reach? Can we feel hopeful enough about life to have heroes?

Our heroes inspire us to find new possibilities for ourselves. We see in another man or woman the qualities and values we admire. We find our own best parts, perhaps hidden or underdeveloped, in the people we hold as heroes. For example, if we admire a television personality or sports star, we can learn about our own values by asking what we admire in him or her. If we admire a friend, we may see a trait we hold dear in ourselves. As we grow and change, our heroes are replaced by others who fit our maturing values.

As I think about people I admire, I learn about myself from them.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

Exercise 1: Hero Worship

Let's look at the heroes in our lives to get a better sense of who and what is important to us. Maybe we need or want some new or more heroes.

1. Name three people you consider to be "heroes." (e.g., sports stars, movie stars, friends, relatives, historical figures)

2. What qualities do these people have that make them heroes? (List three qualities like honesty, courage, wisdom.)

3. It is often said that we see ourselves in our heroes. How are you like your heroes?

4. It is also said that we usually fall far short of our heroes. How are you not like your heroes?

☰ Exercise 2: Your Heroes and Women

Our heroes are probably a bigger example to us than we realize — both good and bad. Most of our heroes tell us a lot about how to deal with women by the way they behave or act. Let's see if that is the case or not.

1. How do your heroes treat women — or how would you imagine they treat women? (Are they kind and caring? Do they listen to them? Do they use the women in their lives?)

2. Name a hero who treats women with respect and as an equal (maybe someone not on your list in Exercise 1).

- Person's name:

- How they act toward women:

- An example of how they act:

3. Mark Gerzon in his book, *A Choice of Heroes*, says we need heroes today who act as healers, mediators, companions, friends, and helpers.

- Why do you think he says this?

- Name a person that is this kind of hero.

4. What might you do in your life to be more the modern hero that Gerzon describes?

Assignments

1. Be on the look out in the news, on television, or in the movies, and among people you meet for a “real” hero.

- What do they do that you admire?

- What does your seeing them as a hero tell about you?

2. You are probably a hero yourself to someone, or could be some day.

- What qualities do you have that someone might look up to?

- What qualities do you need to change or improve to be a hero to someone?

✂ Goal 4: Speaking Our Mind With Our Heart

Something to Think About

It takes more courage to reveal insecurities than to hide them, more strength to relate to people than to dominate them, more “manhood” to abide by thought-out principles rather than blind reflex. Toughness is in the soul and spirit, not in muscles and an immature mind. —Alex Karras

We have often heard that it’s better to be men of action, not of words. In our relationships with other men, we have learned to do things together without letting down our guard, keeping a poker face, being “cool” under fire. To show our feelings is considered to be vulnerable and weak.

But in our relationships with women, we often see the other side of this coin. If we haven’t learned to express our thoughts and feelings, the women in our lives may request or demand that we learn how. There is nothing wrong with our not yet having this skill, and there is nothing wrong with women wanting to talk with us. It is wrong to be abusive in order to avoid communicating.

A close relationship promotes talking, and telling our thoughts and feelings. Honest words are ways of becoming clearer and being more personal. We have the right to stumble around with our words. We also have the right to feel unsure of ourselves or frightened of saying what we feel. That kind of fear comes with trying to be close to someone and be more true to ourselves.

Today, I will express my feelings and ideas so others can know me better.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: Knowing How We Feel*

We all have a lot of different feelings. That's part of being human. Sometimes we are out of touch with our feelings — and may even think we don't have any — because we avoid them. Let's check out our feelings and what is going on inside us.

1. In what ways have you avoided dealing with your feelings in order to appear in control? Check all those that apply.
 - Said to myself, "It won't do any good to talk about it."
 - Played the role of boss so I could just give orders rather than communicate.
 - Told myself that my feelings would "pass" and just tried to ignore them.
 - Kept really busy to avoid facing my feelings or having to express them to someone else.
 - Got really angry to divert attention from my real feelings.

*Reprinted and adapted with permission of Doubleday from *The Secrets Men Keep*, by Ken Druck. © 1985 by Ken Druck, pp. 34-35.

- Dulled my feelings with diversionary tactics (like silence, tiredness, laughter) or with drugs or alcohol.
- Bypassed my feelings with logic, analyzing, or rationalizing.
- Tensed up so I didn't feel anything.
- Let a woman do my feeling for me.
- Avoided situations or people who raise certain feelings in me.
- Got sick, acted carelessly, or hurt myself to let out my feelings.
- Acted crazy or exploded so someone else had to take responsibility for my feelings.
- Other _____

2. In the list above, circle those things you have done in the last week.

3. It is often a challenge to state how we feel. It's a habit to say what we think instead. Change the following "I think" statements into "I feel" statements about an emotion you would feel in each situation. Example: "I think your calling the police was unfair." change to "I feel hurt that you called the police on me."*

- I think you are nagging me.

- I think you are trying to get me angry.

- I think you are blaming me for something I didn't do.

- I think that you are going to leave me.

- I think you're a no good _____.

4. Identify a situation or time during the past week when you felt each of the following:

- Sad:

- Happy:

*Reprinted and adapted with permission of Volcano Press from *Learning to Live Without Violence*, by Daniel Sonkin. © 1982 by Daniel Sonkin, p. 56.

- Afraid:

- Angry:

- Calm:

- Confused:

☰ Exercise 2: Feelings of Dislike

The feelings that tend to get to us the most are the one's toward people we don't like. Identifying these feelings can sometimes help us deal with them, rather than letting the feelings run us — and lead us to do something that gets us in trouble. Let's look at these kinds of feelings.

1. Think of someone you do not like. How do you feel about that person? Complete this sentence: "When I think of (person's name), I feel . . ."

2. What sensations, physical cues, expressions, or gestures do you have that let you know you feel this way (e.g., your fists get tight, you feel tension in your chest, you clench your teeth)?

3. What is it about the person that makes you feel this way? Is it something he or she did or said? Is it the way they look? Is it something about his or her background or lifestyle?

4. How do you usually respond to the person when you feel this way? What would you most likely say and do? Do you just ignore the feeling? Do you get up and do something or keep busy?

5. How might you respond instead? What might you say and do to express your feelings without being violent or abusive? Would it help you to take a walk, talk to somebody about it, or think differently about the person?

Exercise 3: Feelings of Like

There are positive feelings we all have, too. These feelings can give us a boost or make a hard time easier. Let's look at some of these feelings through a person we like — a person who brings us positive feelings.

1. Think of someone you do like. How do you feel about that person? Complete this sentence: "When I think of (person's name), I feel . . ."

2. What sensations, physical cues, expressions, or gestures do you have that let you know you feel this way (e.g., your chest and breathing are relaxed, a smile comes on your face, your heart goes faster)?

3. What is it about the person that makes you feel this way? Is it something he or she did or said? Is it the way they look? Is it something about his or her background or the way he or she treats you or others?

4. How do you usually respond to the person when you feel this way? What would you most likely say and do?

5. How might you respond instead? What might you say and do to show your feelings without feeling embarrassed or weird? Would it help you to talk to somebody about these feelings, write them down in a note or card, or do something for this person?

 **Assignments**

1. During the next week, take some time to stop and think about how you have been feeling. Write below when you felt each of the following during the week. What was the situation or circumstance when you felt that feeling?

- Sad:

- Happy:

- Afraid:

- Angry:

- Calm:

- Confused:

2. In #5 of Exercise 2, you wrote some ways you might respond to your feelings of dislike. Think about that person whom you dislike, or, even better, cross paths with him or her. Do all three things you listed in #5 as ways you could respond. Write down how you felt after doing those things. Did they help you any to deal with your feelings?

❖ Goal 5: Learning to Grow Spiritually

Something to Think About

*We cannot merely pray to You, O God, to end war;
For we know that You have made the world in a way
That man must find his own path to peace
Within himself and with his neighbor. —Jack Riemer*

Our contact with God can be called prayer. There are many forms of prayer for a man wanting a change. For some of us it may take the form of talking to God; for others it may be some quiet moments, observing nature, listening to music, or writing in a journal.

We have experienced the healing effect of this relationship. It has allowed us to move out of our willfulness. But we need to take action where we can make a difference. We cannot blame God for every bad thing that happens — or simply wait for God to provide all the good we want. Do we see the power we have to influence our lives? Can we give up our resentments against God for bad things that have happened? Can we let our lives be moved by spirit and shaped by peace?

I am grateful for what God has given me and more aware of what I can do.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: Spiritual Moments

We all have had “spiritual moments” when we feel the presence of some force or power greater than ourselves. These moments give us a boost or settle us down. Most of us wish and need to have more such moments. Let’s try to do that.

1. Recall some moment when you felt a sense of peace and calm deep inside. (If you never had such an experience, why do you think that is?)

- What were the circumstances — when and where did this take place?

- Why do you think it happened — were you alone, were you thinking about something special, were you reaching out for some kind of help?

2. Recall a time when you had a clear, strong hunch or intuition to do something, and when you did it both you and others benefited.

- What were the circumstances — when and where did this take place?

- Why do you think it happened — were you alone, were you thinking about something special, were you reaching out for some kind of help?

3. What might you do to have more of these kind of “spiritual” moments in your life? (Take more time to be quiet and listen to thoughts, read some inspiring book, talk to a clergyman or other spiritual person, try to pray or reach out?)

4. What are the roadblocks that get in the way of such moments? (Are you just too busy? Do you not believe or have faith in God or some Higher Power? Do you not have or know how to have such moments?)

Exercise 2: Identifying Your God

We all worship or heavily value something or someone. In many ways, this becomes our “god.” Identifying this god or gods can tell us a lot about ourselves and where we are headed. Let’s take a look at our god or gods.

1. What do you value the most in life? (How important is money, sex, sports, friends, drinking, going to church, moments of peace and quiet?)

2. Would you consider these things your “gods?” Why or Why not? (Because they run your life? Because they take up lots of your time? Because they make you who you are?)

3. Write a 25-word sentence that describes your sense of God or Higher Power.

4. At what times or situations could you most benefit by calling on this sense of God or Higher Power? (When you are afraid, hurt, in trouble, or each day and each night?)

5. How much power does your God or Higher Power have to change you?

-
- Rate this power on a scale from 0 to 10 with 0 = no power and 10 = all power, absolute power. _____
 - What does this rating say about your faith in your God or Higher Power?
-
-

Exercise 3: Finding Spiritual Support

Getting closer to God or a Higher Power for peace and strength is not always easy. We need some help or guidance from others who have more experience. We also need reminders and new ways to think about God or a Higher Power. Let's explore how this might happen.

1. Think of a person you know that has some spiritual wisdom, experience, or strength.

-
- What is it about this person that makes you think of them as a "spiritual" person?
-

- What would you like to ask this person, get from this person, or do with this person?
-

2. Where are some places you can go or things you can do to become more spiritual yourself?

3. List three things or reasons that keep you from, or would make you stop, going regularly to a religious group or church.

4. List three things you might gain by attending a faith-based group meeting on some regular basis.

 **Assignments**

1. Find a poem, song, religious passage, or book section that shows your sense of God or Higher Power. Write it on a card and carry it with you during the week. Take time to read the card at least twice a day and spend a moment quietly thinking about it.
2. Attend a faith-based meeting and afterward note what you liked and disliked about it. List them below in the two columns. Do the “likes” outweigh the “dislikes”?

Likes

Dislikes

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>



*Workbook 3 in The Way to Change
Series for Men Who Have Abused
Their Women Partners*

Edward W. Gondolf

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Workbook 3 in *The Way to Change* Series for Men Who Have Abused Their Women Partners

The way to change is a series of five workbooks for men. Each workbook takes men another step away from abusive behavior and towards better relationships. The workbooks together show men not only how to stop abuse but also how to change the thinking and attitudes behind their abuse.

Workbook 1: Checking Our Behavior focuses on monitoring one's behavior. It is designed to help men realize their ability to stop abusive behavior. ***Workbook 2: Discovering Our Self*** exposes the distorted notions of manhood that pull men down and shows what it means to be a "real man." ***Workbook 3: Appreciating Women*** is about respecting women more and not fearing their feminine nature. This kind of appreciation is the basis of healthy male-female relationships. ***Workbook 4: Reaching Out to Others*** points men toward their community and society at large. It shows how men can counter those social pressures that so often misguide them. ***Workbook 5: Relapse, Reuniting, and Progress*** addresses the stumbling blocks, like alcohol use, that often get in the way of progress. This workbook can be used with other workbooks or as a "refresher" along the way. (See the back cover for ordering information.)

These workbooks are meant to be used in a counseling program where response to the exercises can be discussed with other men. The workbooks can give direction to a group, increase participation, and deepen the discussion. The workbooks might also be used as homework to help keep men on track between counseling sessions. It is important for men to get some basic knowledge about abuse and how to avoid it, as soon as possible. The short book, *Man to Man: A Guide for Men in Abusive Relationships*, is a good place to turn for this. Also, men who heavily use alcohol or drugs, are severely depressed or have uncontrollable thoughts, have physically abused their children, or have been violent outside the home usually need extra specialized help in addition to these workbooks. They may need addiction treatment, psychiatric care, parent counseling, or additional restraint and supervision.

How to Use This Workbook

Appreciating Women is the third workbook in *The Way to Change*. It is to help you better appreciate, respect, and relate to women. Our uneasiness, fear, and misunderstanding of women often lead to abuse of our partners. Even if we stop being abusive for a while — perhaps to get back our wife or partner or to stay out of jail — a lack of respect could return us to physical or psychological abuse.

The workbook presents several goals along the way to appreciating women. It will help you to 1) recognize the differences between men and women, 2) assert your feelings without being abusive, 3) express intimacy in your sexual relations, 4) promote equality with your wife or partner, and 4) share power and feel good about it.

Each of these goals begins with something to think about — “think pieces.” After each “think piece” is a place to respond. Write some comments about how the “think piece” applied to you in the past, and what it says about your future. When you have finished the workbooks, you will have a diary to review, especially in tough times. Exercises of four to five questions are next. The exercises help apply each goal to yourself. There are no “right” answers to the exercise questions, just honest thoughts. An assignment at the end of each set of exercises will help you to put the goals into practice.

The activities for each goal are designed to be completed on a weekly basis. You may want to spend one day responding to the “think piece,” one day after that on each exercise, and the “assignment” on the next day. At the end of the week’s time, you can share your responses and assignments with others in your counseling group. Then take a day’s break before starting the next goal.

The Challenge of Change

Achieving the goals in this workbook will not be easy. You need to take them on as a challenge. As Abraham Maslow once said: “Self-knowledge and self-improvement are very difficult for most people. They usually need great courage and long struggle.” There may be some aches and pains along the way. But if you keep going, you will also discover a strength that you didn’t know you had. When you are finished, you will look back with a good feeling. Things that do not make sense at the start will make sense. And you’ll be a better person.

Change often goes against our common sense. It means looking at things in a different way. To get started, think about the statements below. They twist some of our “common sense” to show things in a new light. They can help open us up to the goals of this workbook and move us toward change.

Read through the statements and put a star (*) by a couple of statements that stand out to you. Write them on a card and keep them in your pocket to pullout and look at during the day. This will help bring a new way of looking at things and keep you moving ahead.

Responding to Your Partner

- Trying to change your wife or partner will only hurt her.
- The most ineffective way to make a point is to tell it.
- The best way to get others to talk about themselves is to talk about ourselves.
- The most helpful thing your wife or partner may do for you is to leave for a time.
- Forgiveness is a way of letting go of the past.
- Trust that is expected is not trust; trust must be earned slowly.
- Women may trust us the least when we have become more trustworthy.
- Men have much to gain from giving rights and equality to women.
- Doing chores in the house makes us part of a home.

Appreciating Women

Once we come to appreciate and respect ourselves a bit more and are not trying so hard to be something we are not, we are in a position to appreciate others for whom they are. The bulk of our abuse has been directed toward women. We've devalued them, as well as injured and terrorized them. Part of stopping our abuse is in respecting women and especially our wives or partners for whom they are. Even though we don't agree with them and are different from them, we can still admire their unique qualities and learn something about ourselves from them.

This workbook offers thoughts and exercises that help us examine our outlook toward women and the ways we relate to them. It considers our expectations, our communication, and sexuality. The object is to better perceive the worth of one another and respond to that worth. There are satisfying alternatives to constant control, fighting, power trips, and lack of intimacy.

*What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine;
what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine. —Susan Sontag*

The lust for power is not rooted in strength but in weakness. —Erich Fromm

Caution: Make sure you do not use any of these exercises as a means to pressure or control your wife or partner. Discuss them with her only if she is willing and without any threats or promises. It is possible that you are completely separated from your wife or partner. If this is the case, some of the exercises in this part of the workbook may be more difficult for you to complete. You can still use the exercises to reassess your relationship when you were together and to get ready for a new relationship. If you are separated be sure to consult the exercises under the "Special Goal" entitled "Getting Back Together."

❖ Goal 1 – Appreciating Male-Female Differences

Something to Think About

Remember! You're two different animals. Men and women cannot totally unite. —Pierre Mornell

As we relate to women, we are often driven by needs, which no person could meet and are hampered by ignorance of what the opposite sex is really like. Perhaps we want to lose ourselves in a romantic closeness as we once lost ourselves in addiction or violence. Then we get hurt and angry when the impossible doesn't happen. Or we fail to understand that a woman's reactions are sometimes different from our own.

The dialogue between the sexes is as old as the generations. It will always be a mixture of fascination, mystery, frustration, and new understandings. When we realize we cannot merge with a woman, take her over, or be taken over by her, we will meet her as a separate person, and our relationships will become vastly more peaceful.

Thanks to God for the differences. Let me learn more about them and accept them.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – The Ideal Woman

Most of us carry in our heads a picture of the ideal woman — the kind of woman we would like to be with in our dreams. A lot of this image is something that is pushed on us by the world around us. Television, movies, magazines, and our friends all hold up an ideal woman for us. Oftentimes, we end up expecting the real women in our lives to be that ideal and treat them badly if they don't live up to what we expect. We can find out a lot about what we expect from our partners by looking closer at the ideal in our minds.

1. What is your idea of the ideal woman? (Name a person that is most like this ideal or just describe her.)
 - What or who does she look like?

- What or who does she act like?

- How does she behave sexually?

2. Where did your ideal of a woman come from? How did you get it? Number the list in the order of what has helped most to influence your choice of an ideal woman. Name an example of each. (e.g., 1 magazines: *Playboy*)

Television: _____

Movies: _____

Magazines: _____

Friends: _____

Women we've meet: _____

3. Look at the list below of expressions commonly used by men to refer to women. Put a check in front of each expression you've heard used over the last few months.

Common Expressions Associated With Women

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> cover girl | <input type="checkbox"/> unwed mother | <input type="checkbox"/> ball buster |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hen pecking | <input type="checkbox"/> chick | <input type="checkbox"/> women's work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> not lady like | <input type="checkbox"/> little old lady | <input type="checkbox"/> perfect little lady |
| <input type="checkbox"/> isn't she cute | <input type="checkbox"/> loose woman | <input type="checkbox"/> wine, women, and song |
| <input type="checkbox"/> slut, tramp, "hoe" | <input type="checkbox"/> two-bit whore | <input type="checkbox"/> a girl in every port |
| <input type="checkbox"/> be a good girl | <input type="checkbox"/> Mother Goose | <input type="checkbox"/> pretty little maidens in a row |
| <input type="checkbox"/> girl talk | <input type="checkbox"/> dumb broad | <input type="checkbox"/> she's no spring chicken |
| <input type="checkbox"/> silly woman | <input type="checkbox"/> air head | <input type="checkbox"/> gentlemen prefer blondes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> just a housewife | <input type="checkbox"/> space case | <input type="checkbox"/> blondes have more fun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> knocked up | <input type="checkbox"/> plain Jane | <input type="checkbox"/> she's ugly but can cook |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the little woman | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish mother | <input type="checkbox"/> a woman's work is never done |
| <input type="checkbox"/> dumb blonde | <input type="checkbox"/> party doll | <input type="checkbox"/> she's really hot stuff |
| <input type="checkbox"/> my little princess | <input type="checkbox"/> virgin | <input type="checkbox"/> stand by your man |
| <input type="checkbox"/> old maid | <input type="checkbox"/> gal Friday | <input type="checkbox"/> a women's place is in the home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> just like a woman | <input type="checkbox"/> dizzy dame | <input type="checkbox"/> she's really bright for a woman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flighty | <input type="checkbox"/> earth mother | <input type="checkbox"/> don't worry your pretty head |
| <input type="checkbox"/> woman driver | <input type="checkbox"/> what a piece of . . . | <input type="checkbox"/> you've come a long way baby |

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> what a pair of . . . | <input type="checkbox"/> red hot mama | <input type="checkbox"/> nothing like a dame |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sex pot | <input type="checkbox"/> girl watching | <input type="checkbox"/> what a pair of legs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> girlie magazine | <input type="checkbox"/> flat as a board | <input type="checkbox"/> she's so cute when she's mad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> she's stacked | <input type="checkbox"/> foxy lady | <input type="checkbox"/> you can never understand a woman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> she's a bitch | <input type="checkbox"/> ladies first | <input type="checkbox"/> mommy's little helper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hysterical female | <input type="checkbox"/> playboy bunny | <input type="checkbox"/> telephone, tell a woman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> old bag | <input type="checkbox"/> mother hen | <input type="checkbox"/> daddy's little girl |
| <input type="checkbox"/> she goes all the way | <input type="checkbox"/> real babe | <input type="checkbox"/> playmate of the month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> find' em, feel 'em . . . | <input type="checkbox"/> biker chick | |

4. Now look over the list again and circle each expression you've used over the past few months.

5. What do these expressions contribute to our ideal and men's expectations in general?

-
- How have these expressions influenced your picture of an ideal woman? (In terms of what you expect or think is ideal.)

-
- How do these expressions influence how men in general treat women and what we expect from them? (e.g., as friends, lovers, mothers, and so on)
-

Exercise 2 – Positive Images of Women

Men and women are different in many ways. But those differences can be positive. Recognizing those positive things can improve our ideal woman and make our expectations more realistic. We'll also see more good things in the women in our lives and in ourselves. Let's see what positive things we can come up with.

1. What positive expressions of women could we use that recognize women's differences from men? Try turning around some of the negative expressions in the previous list (e.g., she's a real brain, a strong woman, a working woman).

2. What could your wife or partner do, say, or feel if she were a man that she cannot do, say or feel now?

- Do:

- Say:

- Feel:

3. What do you think your partner would think of your ideal woman?

- Would she like her? Why or why not?

- What would she want to change?

- What would she agree with?

Assignments

1. While watching an evening of television, count the times a woman is cast as a sex object or manipulator versus an intelligent and powerful person.

- Number of times positive image: _____
- Number of times negative image: _____

2. Imagine a time during the week when you expect a woman to be your ideal rather than who they are. Describe that time below.

- What was the situation?

- What was your expectation?

- What was the woman really like?

2. Carol Giligan, in a book called *In a Different Voice*, says that women have a more inclusive, cooperative, and caring view of the world. Why do you think this is so?

- What is it about their biology or physical side?

- What is it about how they are raised?

- What is it about the kind of things they do?

3. Giligan also says that a woman's outlook is what the world most needs right now. Why do you think this might be? In other words, what are some advantages of this outlook?

Exercise 3 – In Women's Shoes

We could probably understand women better if we put ourselves in their shoes once in a while. We would be able to do different things, say different things, and think different things if we had been born a woman instead of a man. Let's try to imagine how the world looks from a woman's point of view.

1. What could you do, say, or feel if you were a woman that you cannot do, say, or feel as a man?

- Do:

- Say:

- Feel:

❖ Goal 2 – Being Expressive Without Being Abusive

Something to Think About

Not all disagreements are bad, in fact they are preferable to disciplined serenity. —William Atwood

A good relationship includes discussion, disagreement, and even arguments. Our abuse actually negates these and replaces them with conflict and power struggles. Disagreements, when we express them respectfully, sometime help break through the walls that build up. When we don't agree with someone, we owe it to that person to speak up and resolve the disagreement. It is because we care that we argue at times. But disagreements can easily turn into fights if we let them. We can promise ourselves and the other person that we will be fair through the disagreement.

In any relationship we care about, there will be differences. When we avoid or try to control all confrontations, our relationships go stale or become abusive. Being too careful or overcontrolling undermines love. Such action does not give us room to breathe. But disagreement and anger expressed in honest and respectful ways will open things up and helps love grow.

Today, I pray for the courage to acknowledge my disagreements and angry feelings with others and to accept their feelings toward me.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – Fighting Fair

Disagreements turn into abuse when we don't fight fair. Being "fair" means treating the other person with some respect. It means disagreeing with what another person says rather than attacking her or him personally. It means following some basic rules rather than "anything goes." Let's consider what it means to have a fair fight.

1. What do you and your partner usually fight over? (Check all that apply.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> money | <input type="checkbox"/> religion or church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> the children | <input type="checkbox"/> jobs or employment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> in-laws | <input type="checkbox"/> partner's way of doing things |

- sex relations
- household chores
- other _____
- being told you're wrong
- suspected flirting

2. Think of the last argument or fight you had with your wife or partner. Check each of the behaviors in the two lists below that occurred during that argument.

Fair Behavior

- speaking one at a time
- looking for compromises
- trying not to generalize
- allowing for time-outs and breathers
- observing rules that you set
- no forcing, no threats, no hitting them
- making your agreements clear by repeating
- other _____
- other _____
- being honest with the other person
- giving reasons
- stating how you feel
- sticking to the subject
- admitting when you're wrong
- showing personal respect

Unfair Behavior

- name calling
- denying the facts
- reading the other's mind
- gloating over a "victory"
- getting off on tangents
- using sex as leverage
- making threats
- other _____
- other _____
- opening old wounds/dredging up the past
- withdrawing when things don't go your way
- changing the rules and not saying so
- appearing to ignore the other person
- expecting there to be a winner and a loser
- interrupting or cutting off the other person
- saving up gripes to dump all at once

3. Now go back and circle those behaviors that you usually exhibit in arguments. Then decide whether you are a fair fighter or not. How many "fair" as opposed to "unfair" behaviors did you check? _____

Check one: I am . . .

- very fair
- fair
- somewhat fair
- not very fair
- unfair

☰ Exercise 2 – How to Negotiate

It is not enough to say you disagree and show it. You need to express your disagreement in a way that it can be resolved. That doesn't necessarily mean coming to an agreement, but becoming clearer on what you can accept to differ about. It also means finding what you have in common so you can go on in some way together. A lot of experts try to deal with disagreements all the time between companies and workers, between one nation and another. Let's look at some of the steps they use to negotiate a settlement or resolve a disagreement.

1. Recall your most recent argument and apply these negotiating steps.

- State the *problem* as you see it. (In my opinion the problem is . . .)
-

- State her view of the problem.
-

- State your *feeling* about the problem. (I feel _____ about this.)
-

- State her feelings about the problem.
-

- State what you want as an *outcome*. (I want . . .)
-

- State what she wants as an outcome.
-

- State a *solution* that would be acceptable to both of you.
-

- State an alternative solution that would not necessarily be ideal but could work.
-

☰ Exercise 3 – The Difficult Parts

Negotiating often doesn't go as smoothly as we would like. Someone says something that sidetracks us from being fair. Or, we just can't understand where the other person is coming from. We have to relook sometimes at the difficult parts of negotiation. We negotiate again and again — with some breaks in between. Then things become clearer. Let's look at those difficult parts of negotiating.

1. Why might you not have a clear picture of your wife's or partner's view of the problem (e.g., you didn't listen very well, she was afraid to explain it all)?

2. Why has it been difficult for you to follow the negotiating steps in the past? (Are you too impatient? Do you think you should have your way?)

3. What are some of the reasons that it is difficult for you to ask for what you want instead of taking it? (Do you think you are not good enough with words? Does it just seem easier to take?)

4. What are some of the reasons that it is difficult to say "no" to things that you don't want, rather than using abuse to stop them? (Do you get too angry too fast? Do you think the other person won't listen?)

Assignments

1. If your wife or partner is willing, talk through a problem using the negotiating steps in Exercise 2 and abiding by the "fair behavior" in Exercise 1. After each of you states the problems, feelings, etc., repeat what you think he or she said in your own words before proceeding. Decide together how it went.
2. Check the inventory of fair and unfair behavior in Exercise 1 after having a real argument with someone. Write below what you learned from talking with your wife or partner and from the real argument:

Lessons from talk:

Lessons from argument:

Caution: The exercises in this goal are not meant to encourage fighting or arguing. They do not give you the right to use your anger against your wife or partner or verbally abuse her. They are intended to help you argue and discuss things fairly. They are to assist you in making your feelings known and hearing your wife's or partner's feelings without being abusive. This means that you may not always get your way but you will in the process get a better way.

❖ Goal 3 – Expressing Intimacy In Our Sexuality

Something to Think About

A richer, more fulfilling, and more peaceful masculine spirituality will depend in no small measure upon new ways of learning to be sexual. —James B. Nelson

For most men sexuality is one of the central issues in change. We may have treated ourselves and others as objects. Too often genitals were “tools” to be used, objects of our egos, or a way of taking care of someone else. Maybe we have used sex compulsively, as an escape from other emotions. Changing men commonly encounter problems with sexuality. Those problems often come from knowing deep within that we must change our attitude toward sex but don't know how.

It helps to create new images in our minds. We can imagine being relaxed and playful with our partners, of having sex with no goal in mind, and no judgment. We can imagine talking in detail with someone — our partner or a friend — about our feelings, anxieties, or frustrations with sex. We can imagine ourselves as alone, not with a partner, and okay. Bringing sexuality into the whole of our lives is an important thing to do.

May I find ways to include sexuality in my efforts to change.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: Talking Dirty

We need to do some frank talking here. There is a lot behind how we view sex and how we use it. There are things we have learned from our friends as a kid, in adult magazines, or in locker room talk. *But we seldom look at those things out in the open. Let's get some of these things out in the open.* Then we might be able to do something about them.

1. In the first column write all the words you can think of that men use to describe their genitals. There are some examples in the first line that came out of a men's group.
2. In the second column write all the words you can think of that men use to refer to a woman's genitals. All those words you heard in the locker room, from your friends, in dirty jokes.
3. In the third column write all the words used to refer to sexual intercourse. Don't think a lot about it, just write down what comes to mind.

Dirty-Talk Chart

Men's Genitals	Women's Genitals	Sexual Intercourse
prick	pussy	banging her
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

4. What does your list say to you about the meaning of sex to men?

☐ Exercise 2 – What Dirty Talk Says

The dirty talk all around us says more than we hear. It says a lot about what we as men think about sex and what we expect from it. It also says a lot about the society we live in and how it wants us to act. Let's think about what the sexual words in the previous exercise are saying to us and about us.

1. Look down the column for *men's genitals* and summarize the nature of the words. Are they hard or soft, inanimate objects or alive?

2. Look down the column for *women's genitals* and summarize the nature of the words. Are they hard or soft, inanimate objects or alive?

3. Look down the column for *sexual intercourse* and summarize the nature of the words. Are they pleasurable or work, harsh or embracing?

4. What do these words say about how we view sexuality in ourselves and others? (Is it something shared between men and women, or forced by men? Is it something enjoyable between a man and a woman, or mainly for the man's pleasure?)

Exercise 3 – Being Intimate

Our sexuality can be a very different thing if it is combined with intimacy. It can become something emotional and even spiritual. But it can also keep us from intimacy if we view it just as a physical thing. By “intimacy” we mean feeling and being close to someone, not just physically but also emotionally. You really feel like one, like friends, in touch, without fear or anxiety. Intimacy is something very private, very personal, something between just two people. We can all work on being more intimate.

1. Rate how intimate your current or most recent sexual relations have been (on a scale of 1 through 10 with 10 being very, very intimate) _____
2. What have you done to make that intimacy either high or low? (Have you been forceful or demanding about sex? Have you neglected your partner's needs or wants?)

3. In what way does the “dirty talk” in Exercise 1 go against intimacy? (Does it make sex seem like work, sport, or war? Does it always put men “on top” or in charge?)

4. What can we do to improve our sexual relationship and make it more intimate? (Not just use sex to get what we want? Ask our partners more about what they want? Take more time or be more relaxed?)

Assignments

1. Talk with your wife or partner about your conceptions of sexuality. Ask her about her fears of sex and expectations of sex and write them down below. What scares her about sex, or makes her uncomfortable? What does she want from sex or hope to get out of it?

- Her fears:

- Her expectations:

2. Ask your wife or partner what “intimacy” means to them and how to achieve it. Make a note of your findings below.

- Concept of intimacy:

- Attaining intimacy:

❖ Goal 4 – Promoting Equality in Relationships

Something to Think About

A woman should be able to be both independent and dependent, active and passive, relaxed and serious, practical and romantic, tender and tough minded, thinking and feeling, dominant and submissive. So, obviously should a man! —Pierre Mornell

Our relationships, especially with women, too often appear to be a power struggle. We feel our relationship is not what it is supposed to be, or that it's our responsibility to be in charge. We also have ideas about what the “man of the house” and “little lady” are supposed to do in the family. After all, our family growing-up may have been that way. A man's home is his castle.

We get real rigid and demanding. Our family members, in trying to get some breathing room, may push back or even rebel. We, in turn, attempt to put them in their place. In the process, we keep others and ourselves from being who we are. The tug-of-war often turns into abuse.

Things change, though, when we put down our end of the rope and treat others as equals. We find that we and our wives or partners can be more of who we are.

I pray to my Higher Power for the courage to accept equality in my relationships and the fullness of who we are.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

Exercise 1 – Attraction to Our Wife or Partner

To treat another person as an equal we have to know and respect them. Some of us don't treat our wives or partners as equals because we don't really know them — or we know them in a limited way. We need to build toward a more equal and sharing relationship by re-knowing our partners, and finding out what we really expect from them. Let's look deeper into how you view your wife or partner.

1. Read the list below and place a plus sign (+) in front of the the four items that *attract* you most to your wife or partner.

Attraction Inventory

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> her hair or her eyes | <input type="checkbox"/> her emotional pain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her sexual turn-ons | <input type="checkbox"/> her political opinions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her idea of romance | <input type="checkbox"/> her feelings toward her parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her frustrations at work or at home | <input type="checkbox"/> her outlook on life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her achievements at work or in school | <input type="checkbox"/> her friends and/or family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her breasts or butt | <input type="checkbox"/> her feelings toward you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> the way she dresses |

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> her sexual fantasies | <input type="checkbox"/> the way she moves |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her ideas about marriage | <input type="checkbox"/> her spiritual beliefs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her sports interests | <input type="checkbox"/> her interest in new things and people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> her legs | <input type="checkbox"/> the way she takes care of kids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other _____ | |

- In the list above, place a minus sign (-) in front of five items that you *like least* about your wife or partner.
- In the list above, circle the items that you would most like to *know more about*.
- What do your responses suggest about your expectations of your wife or partner? What expectations do they imply? Do they say you expect sex from her? Do they say you expect her to be "up" all the time? Do they say you expect her to be at the home?

☰ Exercise 2 – Relationship Expectations

Most of us think that our relationships are pretty equal. We do some things and our partner does some things that balance out. If our partner does more to take care of the house or family, we may even think that that is the way it should be. A number of studies have shown that women, in fact, do much more than men in taking care of the house, the children, the groceries, and so on. What we expect or take for granted in our relationships can cause problems that lead to abuse. Let's assess our own relationships and what we expect from them.

- What do *you* expect in the ideal relationship? What things should your wife or partner do or take care of? These are things that you may help with occasionally but in which she takes the lead. Check all that apply.
 - cleaning the inside of the house or apartment
 - buying groceries and getting supplies for the house or apartment
 - preparing meals
 - cleaning up after meals
 - doing laundry
 - ironing and/or putting laundry away
 - taking care of young children when they wake up at night
 - getting the kids up and off to school

- taking the kids to after school activities
- helping kids with their homework or other activities
- talking to the kids about their personal problems
- talking to kids about sex, drinking, and drugs
- paying the bills
- bringing in some of the income
- keeping the car running
- keeping the car inspected and insured
- repairing or getting repairs for things around the house or apartment (e.g., toilet, heater)
- taking care of the garden or inside plants
- taking care of the outside of the house or apartment (e.g. cut grass, shovel sidewalk)
- answering the phone and taking messages
- other: _____
- other: _____

2. What does *your partner* expect or want in a relationship? What things does she expect or want you to do or take care of? Circle the items in the list that apply.

3. What things do you *expect or ask your wife or partner to do* that she doesn't like doing.

4. What things does your wife or partner expect or ask of you that you do not like doing.

5. How equal is the relationship?

- Do you think you have an equal relationship? yes no
- Does your wife or partner think you have an equal relationship? yes no
- Do you expect more than your partner in the list above? yes no

Exercise 3 – Sizing Up Inequality

An unequal relationship can bring us down as well as hurt our partners. But we can change our relationships — at least to some degree. If we see the problems that inequality brings, we may see that a change is worthwhile. If we see the resistance to equality, we may be able to step around it. Let's size up inequality for these reasons.

1. Unequal relationships often have a number of *side effects*. Which of the following apply to you? Check all that apply.

- I feel resentful toward my wife or partner.
- I struggle to assert my authority in our relationship.
- I find it difficult to trust my wife or partner.
- I do not feel understood or appreciated by my wife or partner.
- I make cutting remarks or put-downs even when we are not in an argument.
- I get upset if the house and meals aren't taken care of.
- I'm irritated when my wife or partner spends a lot of time talking to other women or acts friendly toward other men.
- other: _____
- other: _____

2. What three things could you do more of in your relationship to make it more equal, or at least seem that way to your partner? Pick from list in Exercise 1.

3. Why do you think some relationships are so unequal? Below are some reasons from the experts on relationships. Indicate which four are the most important by putting the number "1" in front of the most important one, a "2" in front of the next most important one, and so on.

- What men learn by watching their fathers.
- What men learn by watching their mothers.
- What men learn by watching television and movies.
- What men learn from other men.
- Men's different biology and genes.

- Men and women have different emotions.
- Men's past as hunters and warriors.
- A society that is run mostly by men
- other: _____
- other: _____

4. Circle the items in the list above that men might use as an excuse to *not* have an equal relationship. Do you ever use any of these in your mind?

Assignments

1. Review questions #1 and #2 in Exercise 1 with your wife or partner, if she is willing. Put an "X" in front of the items she picks.

- What responses of hers are the same as yours?

- How are her responses different?

- Why does she have some different responses?

2. Review questions #1 and #2 in Exercise 2 with your wife or partner, if she is willing. Put an "X" in front of the items she picks.

- What responses of hers are the same as yours?

- How are her responses different?

- Why does she have some different responses?

❖ Goal 5 – Sharing Power to Feel Good

Something to Think About

Power is strength and the ability to see yourself through your own eyes and not through the eyes of another. It is being able to place a circle of power at your own feet and not take power from someone else's circle. —Ange Whistling Elk

Seeing ourselves through our own eyes is difficult. When we were children we saw ourselves and other things as our parents or other adults told us to. As men, we first bring some boyhood ideas to what we see and experience. We may be arrogant, thinking we already know the answers to life; defiant, thinking we don't want anyone to tell us what to do; or self-indulgent, grabbing for the greatest pleasure. Those ideas delay seeing ourselves through our own eyes.

Personal power comes when we listen to ourselves and to others. To be independent of everyone may have been our youthful idea of power. In manhood, power comes in being open and honest about our dependency on others, yet knowing we have no claim on anyone else to make us happy.

I will work to find real power by giving more power to others.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

📖 Exercise 1 – The Sources of Power*

We all want some amount of power. That is, we want some kind of influence, control, impact, and strength in our worlds. There are a lot of ways to be and feel powerful — some of them are helpful and some of them are hurtful and destructive. Some of them belong primarily to men, and some of them are left to women. Let's learn a little more about "power."

1. Make a list of all the *sources of personal power* that human beings can muster. Put your answers under the first column titled "sources of power." A couple of suggestions are listed to get you started.

*Adapted and reprinted with permission from John Beams, Men for Nonviolence, 1122 Broadway, Fort Wayne, IN 46802.

Source of Power	Gender
money	M
physical strength	M

- Go back to your list in #1. Look at each “source of power” and decide whether it is associated more with men or women. That is, who has this power the most? Use “M” for males, “F” for females, and “M/F” if you really can’t decide and think it is associated with both.
- Why are there more power sources attributed to men than women? Does it have anything to do with what we learn we should do when we are growing up? Is it because of the opportunities that are there for men, but not as much for women? Does it have anything to do with who runs more things in our society, or tries to run them?

- Which of the items you listed in #1 are related to physical violence — they involve or lead to violence. Indicate with “*” to the right.
 - How many * are there for items with an “M”? _____
 - Does it look like a man can still be powerful if he stops his violence?
 - yes no maybe
 - What sources of power does he need to use to be powerful but not violent?

☰ Exercise 2 – Power Rating

The real question is how much power do we have? Most of us think we don't have enough or very much. Others usually see us differently. Let's evaluate how much power we have. Do we need to be trying to get more of it by taking it from others? Or can we find other ways to accept the power we have or get more by sharing what others may have?

1. Look back over the list of "Sources of Power" in Exercise 1. Rate the amount of *power you have* based on the list. Use a scale of one through 10 with 10 the highest.

• Rating: _____

2. Rate your wife or partner on a scale of one to 10 as to how much *power you think she has*.

• Rating: _____

3. How would *your wife or partner rate you*?

• Rating: _____

4. Why are there differences in ratings between you and your wife or partner (#1 and #2)? Is it because you are bigger and stronger physically? Is it because you have more access to money?

5. What does it feel like *to have no power or less power than another*?

6. What do *you do* when you feel like the underdog?

Assignments

1. Find three ways to feel more powerful while letting others be more powerful. (Name them below.)

2. Try any of the “powerful” ways above. How did other people actually respond to your power sharing?

3. What did you get out of the power sharing?



Reaching
Out to
Others

*Workbook 4 in The Way to Change
Series for Men Who Have Abused
Their Women Partners*

Edward W. Gondolf

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Name: _____
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About the Author

Edward W. Gondolf, Ed.D., MPH, has been developing men's programs around the country for over 20 years. As research director for the Mid-Atlantic Addiction Training Institute and Professor of Sociology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, he conducts research on the response of the courts, mental-health practitioners, alcohol-treatment clinicians, and batterer treatment programs. He has authored several books on domestic violence, including *Man to Man: A Guide for Men in Abusive Relationships*, *Assessing Women Battering in Mental Health Services*, and *Men Who Batter: An Integrated Approach for Stopping Wife Abuse*.

Workbook 4 in *The Way to Change* Series for Men Who Have Abused Their Women Partners

The way to change is a series of five workbooks for men. Each workbook takes men another step away from abusive behavior and towards better relationships. The workbooks together show men not only how to stop abuse but also how to change the thinking and attitudes behind their abuse.

Workbook 1: Checking Our Behavior focuses on monitoring one's behavior. It is designed to help men realize their ability to stop abusive behavior. ***Workbook 2: Discovering Our Self*** exposes the distorted notions of manhood that pull men down and shows what it means to be a "real man." ***Workbook 3: Appreciating Women*** is about respecting women more and not fearing their feminine nature. This kind of appreciation is the basis of healthy male-female relationships. ***Workbook 4: Reaching Out to Others*** points men toward their community and society at large. It shows how men can counter those social pressures that so often misguide them. ***Workbook 5: Relapse, Reuniting, and Progress*** addresses the stumbling blocks, like alcohol use, that often get in the way of progress. This workbook can be used with other workbooks or as a "refresher" along the way. (See the back cover for ordering information.)

These workbooks are meant to be used in a counseling program where response to the exercises can be discussed with other men. The workbooks can give direction to a group, increase participation, and deepen the discussion. The workbooks might also be used as homework to help keep men on track between counseling sessions. It is important for men to get some basic knowledge about abuse and how to avoid it, as soon as possible. The short book, *Man to Man: A Guide for Men in Abusive Relationships*, is a good place to turn for this. Also, men who heavily use alcohol or drugs, are severely depressed or have uncontrollable thoughts, have physically abused their children, or have been violent outside the home usually need extra specialized help in addition to these workbooks. They may need addiction treatment, psychiatric care, parent counseling, or additional restraint and supervision.

How to Use This Workbook

Reaching Out to Others is the fourth workbook in *The Way to Change* series. It will assist you in gaining support, help, and friendships by serving others. We all need to reach out to others.

Included are five goals that will help you to become 1) a real winner, 2) create strong friendships, 3) ably challenge others without aggressiveness, 4) make your world more humane, and 5) serve others. The attainment of these goals will help you to better deal with social pressure.

The Challenge of Change

Achieving the goals in this workbook will not be easy. You need to take them on as a challenge. As Abraham Maslow once said: "Self-knowledge and self-improvement are very difficult for most people. They usually need great courage and long struggle." There may be some aches and pains along the way. But if you keep going, you will also discover a strength that you didn't know you had. When you are finished, you will look back with a good feeling. Things that do not make sense at the start will make sense. And you'll be a better person.

Change often goes against our common sense. It means looking at things in a different way. To get started, think about the statements below. They twist some of our "common sense" to show things in a new light. They can help open us up to the goals of this workbook and move us toward change.

Read through the statements and put a star (*) by a couple of statements that stand out to you. Write them on a card and keep them in your pocket to pull out and look at during the day. This will help bring a new way of looking at things and keep you moving ahead.

Reaching Out

- Playing too hard can make us lose a game we win.
- Always sticking to the rules can make others feel ruled out.
- Being a friend is the best way to get a friend.
- Talking about our problems makes us stronger, not weaker.
- Admitting our abuse to others helps stop abuse in us and them.
- Questioning our friends' abusive behavior is non-abusive behavior.
- Don't take work home.
- Being a slave to work makes us tyrants at home.
- We help ourselves most when we help others.
- We need a broader vision to see where to go.
- Hoping for a better world makes us better in the world.

Reaching Out to Others

There is a world around us that, like it or not, we are very much a part of. It affects us if we don't affect it. For many of us, the world pushed and shaped us. It has reinforced our abuse — even if we are still the cause of it. As we better know ourselves and cultivate more respectful relationships, we develop a base from which we interact with the world and contribute to it. Our efforts to serve others and make things better may be small at first. But they are a part of taking charge of our lives, confirming our new self, and making up for some of our past.

This part of the workbook offers some first steps in this regard. It points us outward toward more genuine friendship, more community involvement, and ultimately toward a re-evaluation of our part in the world. If we are really to be and stay a “new man,” we must live in a new world.

It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do a little. Do what you can. —Sydney Smith

An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity. —Martin Luther King

❖ Goal 1: Being a Real Winner

Something to Think About

In playing, and perhaps only in playing, the child or adult is free to be creative. —D. W. Winnicott

There are so many activities called “play” that are not really playful. For example, organized sports that consumes too much time and energy are not really playful. And partying that is connected with abuse is not playful. Perhaps we need a deeper understanding to take the leap into creative play — to being really playful.

This leap takes a willingness to let go — to be really playful. Maybe we remember hurtful things happening when our guard was down. Creative play involves trusting that every activity doesn’t need a worthy goal, doesn’t need to be planned out. Pleasure, humor, lightness, and aimless passing of time are forms of creative play, and for some an openness to the spirit of God. Creative play is experimenting, exploring, setting aside an ordered and planned approach to most of life, and accepting that what comes out will be all right.

God, help me see the possibilities for play in the moments of this day.

Put Your Reaction and Comments Here:

☐ Exercise 1 – Are You a Real Winner?

Most of us “play to win” in games, sports, on the road, and in the home. We don’t want to lose, but sometimes our winning the game can make use losers in other parts of our lives. Yet we

can be “good sports” sometimes and know that winning is **not** everything. Let’s see what kind of winners we are and whether we can be “real winners.”

1. Why is winning so important to you? (Does it just “feel good” to win? Is it because you don’t want to be a “loser” in life? It hurts your self-image to lose?)

2. How do you feel and act when you lose? (Do you feel depressed and act sullen and down?)

- Feel:

- Act:

3. What could you do instead when you lose and feel this way? (Shake hands and smile? Think about what you learned in the game or competition? Use some of the avoidance skills you’ve learned?)

4. What was the last time you had fun without winning? Describe the situation.

5. List several activities you could do for fun with others that do not involve winning?

☰ Exercise 2 – When Rules Get Broken

Most of us want to play by the rules — especially when they are our rules. We can cause bad feelings and hurt the ones we love if we play too hard or overreact to “the rules.” We get upset when someone breaks “the rules” whether it is in a sport, on the highway, in a check-out line, or in the home. We want to impose a penalty or punishment. Let’s think about dealing with rules in a non-abusive way.

1. What do you do if someone doesn’t play by the rules? (Do you ignore it? Do you just mention it? Do you get angry inside? Do you call the person a cheater? Do you quit?)

2. What could you do instead?

3. What do you do if your wife or partner does not play by the rules of the home?

4. What could you do instead?

Exercise 3 – Sports In Our Lives

Sports play a big part in men’s lives. From the basketball game on the playground or little league with our own kids, sports are there. They show us big-time players who are tough and get what they want. They show us tempers, fights, and egos, as well as sportsmanship, teamwork, and poise. What in sports is also in our home? What part of sports do we take into our lives?

1. How often do you watch sports?
 - On television during a month: _____
 - In person during a month: _____
 - Who else is generally with you: _____
2. What kind of mood are you in during the game? (Most of the time are you intense, relaxed, excited, up-and-down?)

3. After the game? (Most of the time are you relieved, tense, upset, psyched, or upbeat?)

4. Have you ever felt angry, hostile, or like hitting someone after or during a sports event?

- What was the situation in a recent event?

- How did you feel?

- What did you do about it?

- What else could you have done about it to avoid these feelings?

Assignments

1. Take at least 30 minutes to play with a young child in a game that has no winners or losers and no planned goal. Note what feelings you had. Were you able to let go? How did the child feel and act?
 - What did you play?

- Your feelings:

- Letting go:

- Child's response:

2. The next time you are watching a game on television write down how many times you see *positive* examples of sportsmanship and *negative* examples of anger or ego. List the number of times and some examples below. Total the number of *positive* examples and the number of *negative* examples. Which one — the positives or the negatives — did you observe the most? Which — the positives or the negatives — do you usually remember and talk about after a game?

Positive Examples	Number of Times
Sportsmanship	_____
Teamwork	_____
Poise/cool head	_____
Other	_____
Other	_____
Total	_____
Negative Examples	Number of Times
Temper	_____
Fights	_____
Ego/showing off	_____
Other	_____
Other	_____
Total	_____

❖ Goal 2 – Breaking Isolation With Friendship

Something to Think About

How good and how pleasant it is that brothers sit together. —Psalm 133

Men are lonely and more vulnerable to addictions and violence when they have no firm friendships with other men. Do we have one or two male friends who truly know us, know what really goes on in our lives, what we feel, and what our doubts are? If we do, these relationships are like gold. We need to polish them. The joys of finding humor in our mutual flaws, getting congratulations for real change, and joining in similar interests have no substitutes.

If we do not have these kinds of friends, we need to find others who might become such friends. We begin by taking small steps in making new friendships. Friends develop when someone reaches out. It is easier for us to do this if we remember our friendship is a gift to someone else. We need friendships with both women and men in order to be whole.

I am grateful for good friendships with men and women in my life. They help me change and grow. Today, can I strengthen my friendship with another man?

Put Your Reaction and Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – Having Good Friends

All of us have someone we call a close friend. Such friends can be a great support to us. In some cases, they can get us in trouble, put trash in our heads, and put us down. Do we have the kind of good friends we need to make and keep changes in our lives?

1. Identify one of your closest male friends. Put his name here: _____
2. What are his background, position, and family like?
 - Background:

 - Position:

 - Family:

3. Why do you like him? (What qualities do you like? What things has he done that you like? How does he treat you that you like?)

4. What do you not like about him?

5. What influence does this person have on your behavior?
 - Positive influence:

 - Negative influence:

 - Support of your change:

Exercise 2 – Being a Friend to Others

Being a friend to another person means giving of ourself to them, not just doing things for or with each other. It means talking about some of what we feel with them, about some of the

problems we are having, about the changes we are trying to make. If we are not being this kind of friend, we can try to be. Let's look at what kind of friend we are and how to be better.

1. Describe a time when you shared some personal feelings with the friend you mentioned in Exercise 1.

- What was the situation? (Where were you? Where you alone? What were you doing?)
-
-

- What was the topic of the conversation? (Were you talking about women? Were you talking about old times or about another friend?)
-
-

- What feelings did you bring up? (That you were feeling down or depressed? That you were really happy and encouraged?)
-
-

2. Recall a time when you would have liked to talk with this friend about something personal but did not.

- What was the topic you wanted to talk about?
-

- Why did you hold back?
-

- How did you feel afterward?
-

3. What are you willing to do to make your friendship deeper and stronger. Check all those that apply.*

- I will initiate a heart-to-heart talk.
- I will admit my error and apologize to my friend.
- I will tell him how much his friendship means to me.
- I will offer some new ideas for our next time together.

*Adapted with permission from Ken Druck, *The Secrets Men Keep*. New York: Doubleday, 1985, pp. 121-22.

- I will allow myself to ask him for help when I need it.
- I will show my feelings with a touch or hug.
- I will tell my friend when I am angry with him and why.
- I will become a better listener with him.
- I will stop playing the "Big Brother" role.
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

Assignments

1. During the next week, do at least two of the items that you checked in #3 of Exercise 2. Write below which ones you do and what the outcome is.

- Item #1:

- Outcome:

- Item #2:

- Outcome:

2. Share something you consider personal with another man. Note his reaction and your reaction? How might you do it differently next time?

- Topic shared:

- His reaction:

- Your reaction:

- What would you do differently?

⌘ Goal 3 – Challenging Others With Our Change

Something to Think About

If you don't take chances, you can't do anything in life. —Michael Spinks

Many of us have done things in the past that, in looking back, seem insane or dangerous. We may have had friends or family members who got into serious trouble and frightened us by their risky behavior. Out of fear, we may have become too cautious about everything.

Our dilemma is that change is a risk, too. If we avoid all risk, we become stagnant. Change happens when we jump on new possibilities and options. Of course, risk means the outcome is unsure. We may not get the result we desire. But not all risk taking is as self-destructive as it was in our pasts. Now we have our relationship with ourselves and others. Now taking a chance may help us change and grow, even when we don't get what we want.

*Today, let me see possibilities, and guide my inner sense
of when to take a chance for change in myself and others.*

Put Your Reaction and Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – Talking About Your Abuse

One of the risks we have to take with our friends is to talk with them about our abuse. It can't be just "our little secret." Secrets get in the way of friendship and in the way of our change. Talking about abuse with others can help us get clear about where we were and how far we have come. It can also help our friends know us better and help us in a good way. It can also help our friends in changes they need to make.

1. Bring to mind one of your male friends or acquaintances and think about your past abuse.
 - Have you ever mentioned your abusive behavior to this person? yes no

- Why or why not?
-

- What was his response or what do you think his response would have been?
-

2. Think about what it might be like to talk more deeply about your past abuse with this friend.

- What else might you tell him about your abuse? (How about some of the things you wrote in Workbook 1 of this series?)
-

- What will you do if he rejects you or puts you down?
-

- What if he makes a wise remark?
-

- What if he ignores and passes over what you've said?
-

Exercise 2 – Confronting Others

We can be helpful to our friends if we share what we have learned about our abusive behavior with them. The hard part is doing this in a way that is not abusive but also not cowardly. The best way to solve this is to try it. We may not only help our friends, but we will be helping ourselves. We will be affirming our change and changing what is around us.

1. Let's think about our friends and their possible abusive behavior.

- Do you think any of your male friends are abusive toward their wives or partners?
 yes no
 - What makes you think so, or think not? (What do you see in what they do or say?)
-

2. How might you confront a friend whom you think is abusing his partner? What would you ideally say to him? (What has worked with you in the past?)

3. How do think he would react?

4. How might you respond to his reaction?

5. What help might you suggest to him? (People or programs to call? Things he might do to avoid being abusive? Lessons you've learned about the need to change?)

Assignments

1. Talk to a male friend about your abuse. Note what you say and his reaction? Ask that person about his abusiveness. Note what you say and how he responds. What might you do differently the next time?

- What did you say about your abuse?

- What was your friend's reaction:

- What would you do differently next time?

- What did you say to him about his abuse or potential for abuse?

- What was your friend's reaction?

- What would you do differently next time?

2. Take another man friend to a group meeting of a program for men who have been abusive toward their partners. Tell him that the meeting is to talk about how your friend can help you change. This is a way to reach out to others and to learn how to ask for help. It also is a way to help your friend learn about your effort to change. Report below his response to the meeting.

❖ Goal 4 – Making a Man’s World More Humane

Something to Think About

It is beneath human dignity to lose one’s individuality and become a mere cog in the machine. —Gandhi

Our work is often who we are. It runs our lives and in some cases ruins them. “Yes,” you say, “but I have no choice.” As in our personal lives and in our relationships we have to take risks to change things, we must also take some risks at our work places (or in trying to get work). While it seems like we have much to lose if we don’t “do our job” (or have a job), we also have much to lose if we don’t try to improve it. We end up at the mercy of others and witnessing abuse that we carry into our homes.

By taking small steps, we at least move in a different direction. We can begin to identify, question, and even object to work place abuse and harassment. If we have some other changing men to support us, we will feel stronger and more independent in the process. We may even make things a little better for ourselves and others.

*I will begin to act at work as I am in my personal life —
like a different person — and thus begin to make a difference.*

Put Your Reaction and Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – Changing Work

Most of us spend a lot of time at work. In fact, work defines most men. We are our job. What can we do to define our jobs and make the work place a better place for us and others? What can we do to stop some of the abusive behavior at work that gets carried into our homes? Let’s look at your job and work place and see what might be done there. (If you are not currently working, think about a place you once worked and what it was like there.)

1. What do you like most about your job? (The people? The things you do? The place where you work?)

2. What conditions of the job do you like least? (The people, the things you do, the place where you work?)

3. What could you do about one of your dislikes? What would you ideally like to do? (Get put on another shift? Talk with different people? Ask for a transfer?)

4. Think of someone that causes particular problems for you and others at your work place. What could you do by yourself or with the help of others to stop that person's "worker abuse?"

Exercise 2 – Women and Work

There may not be open abuse at some work places, but there may be other ways that women are put in or kept in their place. The positions women hold and how they are treated may say something to us about who should be in charge and what rights women have at home. Let's examine the role of women in our work place.

1. What jobs are most filled by women at your work place?

2. What male jobs have some women working in them?

3. How do the men treat the women in their jobs?

- Women in mostly women jobs (secretaries, dispatchers, nurses, maids, elementary teachers):

- Women in mostly men jobs (supervisors, bosses, machinery operator, laborer):

4. List three incidents in which women were ridiculed, teased, or harassed at your work place and what was done about it.

5. What ideally should have been done to stop it from happening again?

Exercise 3 – Work Place and Home

Some of what we have learned about abuse in the home can be applied to abuse in the work place. We should be able to apply our effort to change our behavior at home to the behavior we see at the work place. Much of the process of abuse at work is the same as it is at home, and much of how we change what is at home can affect the work place. Let's see what we might apply to work.

1. In what ways is your work place like your abusive relationship was? (Is there the same kind of tension between some workers? The same kind of things said? The same kind of control or put-downs? Give some examples.)

2. What lessons from your changing relationship can you apply to your work place? (Are there things you do differently? Think differently about? Say differently with regard to your wife or partner that you could apply to people at work?)

3. What might you do to make the work place more free of abuse for women? (Stop making or passing on bad or dirty jokes? Saying “good job” to a woman more often?)

 **Assignments**

1. Bring up some abusive or harassment incident at work to a fellow male worker. Ask his opinion of it. Does he blame the victim, deny it, or minimize it, like some wife abusers do?

Offer your objection to the work place abuse and what you might like to see happen. Use an “I-feel emotion” statement to do this. Note how the other person responds.

- Working man’s response:

2. Ask a woman worker how she feels about her job and how men in general treat her on the job. Does she see equality there and, if not, does she think there can be? Ask her what she thinks should be done and note it below:

- Working woman’s view:

❖ Goal 5 – Helping Myself By Serving Others

Something to Think About

A man has made at least a start on discovering the meaning of human life when he plants shade trees under which he knows full well he will never sit. —D. Elton Trueblood

Our lives are enriched by the contributions of those who lived before us. Many men and women gave more than they ever took from society, and now we enjoy the rewards. Some people were fired with a spirit to beautify the world and planted trees that will live for 200 years. Others wrote music that speaks to us from another generation, and others established a government that guides our principles of justice. They gave so much because they knew they were a part of their community and the world.

Most of us cannot make the great contributions that will make us famous, but we enrich our lives when we contribute to our community and the world. We do that when we simply say “hello” to our neighbor, when we volunteer to cleanup a local park, and when we do work for a men’s program. We, too, have beautified and contributed to the world, and that gives us a feeling of peace and self-respect.

*Today, I will appreciate all that comes freely to me from others,
and I will give what I can to make the world a better place.*

Put Your Reaction and Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1 – Toward a Nonviolent Society

We live in a very violent society. This violence is not only done by mostly men but it also affects men. If we are going to stop our violence and stay stopped, we also have to change, to some degree, the violence around us. At least trying to do so strengthens our efforts to be nonviolent ourselves and offers an alternative example to others. What do you think of the violence going on around you?

1. Why is our society so violent? List the top five reasons and give an example for each? (Is it because of television and movies? Poor parenting and drug use? The availability of guns and intolerance for others?)

2. What can be done to stem the rising tide of violence among teenagers, family members, and governments?

3. What can you do about violence in your own community?

Exercise 2 – Broadening Your Vision

In order to bring about change in and around us, we have to know what we would like to change. We have examined some of the desired change for ourselves personally. We can look in the same way at the change we would most like for our communities. Where should we be headed? What do we see ahead? What is *our* vision for the future?

1. What is your concept of an ideal community or society? (Is it a place where people are not afraid of one another? Is it a place where everyone has a decent job and home? Is it a place where the schools get more funds and do more with our kids?)

2. What would be the main role of men and of women in this society? Would they do anything more or less than they usually do now?

- Men:

- Women:

3. How would justice be established or maintained? (Would you change anything about the criminal justice system? Would neighbors and family do more or something different to help out? What kind of punishment would be done in cases of violence?)

4. How would peace be established and maintained? (Would the churches do something more or different? Would people have to meet and talk more about their problems in the community? Would education and television be different and present different things?)

5. What role would you imagine for yourself in the world you envisioned in Exercise 2?



Relapse,
Reuniting,
and
Progress

*Workbook 5 in The Way to Change
Series for Men Who Have Abused
Their Women Partners*

Edward W. Gondolf

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Name: _____
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About the Author

Edward W. Gondolf, Ed.D., MPH, has been developing men's programs around the country for over 20 years. As research director for the Mid-Atlantic Addiction Training Institute and Professor of Sociology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, he conducts research on the response of the courts, mental-health practitioners, alcohol-treatment clinicians, and batterer treatment programs. He has authored several books on domestic violence, including *Man to Man: A Guide for Men in Abusive Relationships*, *Assessing Women Battering in Mental Health Services*, and *Men Who Batter: An Integrated Approach for Stopping Wife Abuse*.

Workbook 5 in *The Way to Change* Series for Men Who Have Abused Their Women Partners

The Way to Change is a series of five workbooks for men. Each workbook takes men another step away from abusive behavior and towards better relationships. The workbooks together show men not only how to stop abuse but also how to change the thinking and attitudes behind their abuse.

Workbook 1: Checking Our Behavior focuses on monitoring one's behavior. It is designed to help men realize their ability to stop abusive behavior. ***Workbook 2: Discovering Our Self*** exposes the distorted notions of manhood that pull men down and shows what it means to be a "real man." ***Workbook 3: Appreciating Women*** is about respecting women more and not fearing their feminine nature. This kind of appreciation is the basis of healthy male-female relationships. ***Workbook 4: Reaching Out to Others*** points men toward their community and society at large. It shows how men can counter those social pressures that so often misguide them. ***Workbook 5: Relapse, Reuniting, and Progress*** addresses the stumbling blocks, like alcohol use, that often get in the way of progress. This workbook can be used with other workbooks or as a "refresher" along the way. (See the back cover for ordering information.)

These workbooks are meant to be used in a counseling program where responses to the exercises can be discussed with other men. The workbooks can give direction to a group, increase participation, and deepen the discussion. The workbooks might also be used as homework to help keep men on track between counseling sessions. It is important for men to get some basic knowledge about abuse and how to avoid it, as soon as possible. The short book, *Man to Man: A Guide for Men in Abusive Relationships*, is a good place to turn for this. Also, men who heavily use alcohol or drugs, are severely depressed or have uncontrollable thoughts, have physically abused their children, or have been violent outside the home usually need extra specialized help in addition to these workbooks. They may need addiction treatment, psychiatric care, parent counseling, or additional restraint and supervision.

How to Use This Workbook

Relapse, Reuniting, and Change is the fifth and last workbook in *The Way to Change* series. It is designed to achieve several goals. It will help you should you slip-up or relapse. It will help you should alcohol misuse or someother trigger cause you to slip up. And it will help you, should the case may be, to get back together. It will assist you in undoing any left over felt need to be abusive toward women who challenge you. You will be better able to take care of yourself and thereby overcome the need to govern the women in your life.

Each of these goals begins with something to think about — "think pieces." Following each "think piece" is a place to respond. Write some comments about how the "think piece" applied to you in the past, and what it says about your future. When you have finished the workbooks, you will have a diary to review, especially in tough times. Exercises of four to five questions are

next. The exercises help apply each goal to yourself. There are no “right” answers to the exercise questions, just honest thoughts. An assignment at the end of each set of exercises will help you to put the goals into practice.

The activities for each goal are designed to be completed on a weekly basis. You may want to spend one day responding to the “think piece,” one day after that on each exercise, and the “assignment” on the next day. At the end of a week’s time, you can share your responses and assignments with others in your counseling group. Then take a day’s break before starting the next goal.

The Challenge of Change

Achieving the goals in this workbook will not be easy. You need to take them on as a challenge. As Abraham Maslow once said: “Self-knowledge and self-improvement are very difficult for most people. They usually need great courage and long struggle.” There may be some aches and pains along the way. But if you keep going, you will also discover a strength that you didn’t know you had. When you are finished, you will look back with a good feeling. Things that do not make sense at the start will make sense. And you’ll be a better person.

Change often goes against our common sense. It means looking at things in a different way. To get started, think about the statements below. They twist some of our “common sense” to show things in a new light. They can help open us up to the goals of this workbook and move us toward change.

Read through the statements and put a star (*) by a couple of statements that stand out to you. Write them on a card and keep them in your pocket to pull out and look at during the day. This will help bring a new way of looking at things and keep you moving ahead.

How Change Happens

- There are no shortcuts to change, only shortfalls.
- If you think you’re cured, you are probably not.
- A commitment to a long-term process of change will shorten the time it takes to get results.
- Keep your eye on the long-term goal one day at a time.
- The determination to change ourselves opens us to receive help from other people.
- Talking incessantly about how we’ve changed may show others that we haven’t.
- We reach a point where we need to do more than change the spark plugs; we need to overhaul the engine.
- We have to wrestle with our soul in order to be able to play with life.
- Responding to an unchangeable Higher Power helps to change us.

Relapse, Reuniting, and Progress

The road to change has many bumps and turn-offs. It has twists and turns as well. We may take some detours or side trips along the way, or seem to breakdown or hit a wall. But as long as we know where we are headed and realize we have to keep going, we find our way.

Many men before you have faced these problems and kept going. The map they leave behind points to a number of special issues. These are things that can pull us off the road. If we are on the look out for them, they can keep us going. We can learn from them as well, and be bothered by them less and less.

The first issue is acting abusive again. We are slipping back into old familiar ways. The second is heavy drinking which can quickly undo our good intentions and progress. A third is the push and pull of our relationship. We get caught up in how much time to spend together or apart, what we want versus what is best for us, what our partners need and what is best for them. But knowing where we have come from, what we have accomplished, and where we are headed can move us through and beyond these issues.

In this workbook, we take a closer look at these special issues and stumbling blocks. These are issues that don't come at any particular time or place. So this is the kind of workbook that you should be referring to periodically throughout your change efforts. It should accompany any of the other four workbooks in this series, and be something you refer to as the need arises.

Let no one be deluded that a knowledge of the path cannot substitute for putting one foot in front of the other. —M. C. Richards

There are things for which an uncompromising stand is worthwhile. —Dietrich Bonhoeffer

❖ Goal 1: Responding to More Abuse

Something to Think About

The art of living lies not in eliminating but in growing with troubles. —Benard M. Baruch

Yes, there are going to be times when you feel tested. You are bound to have close calls and may even have a relapse. The tendency is to make either too much or too little of these incidents. On one hand, we may just let them slide by telling ourselves that we really are different now. On the other hand, we may be totally devastated. A sense of failure and guilt may overtake us. We lose our motivation with a “what’s-the-use” attitude and fall back on our old ways.

Instead, we can build on our close calls or relapses for they hold important lessons. In any educational venture, it is the tests that show us what we have gained and possibilities for further growth. Tests can actually be a form of instruction in themselves showing us new ways to apply what we have learned. Above all, the close calls and relapses keep us humble and open to change. They prompt more honesty, hard work, and love of others and ourselves.

May I have the strength to face my close calls and relapses and learn from them.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: Reassessing Our Abuse

This goal of responding to close calls or more abuse is a little different than the goals in other workbooks. It is something we should turn to when we are having a tough time with our partner or have been abusive in what we say or do. There are exercises here that we might repeat several times or review now and then just to keep on track. All of us have had at least one close call when we nearly became abusive, or wanted to abuse somebody. You can begin by thinking about such a time by getting started and practicing moving ahead instead of falling behind.

1. Think about a close call or re-abuse you recently had. What brought on the re-abuse or close call?
 - What was the situation?

- What issue or problem brought it on?

- What were you saying or thinking at the time?

- How were you feeling?

2. The list below has some steps that you might have taken in response to a relapse or close call. Check the steps you have taken in response to your most recent relapse or close call.

- Assure the safety or well being of your partner by not interfering with her seeking help.
- Separate yourself from your partner by leaving the house to stay at another place or cool off. (Be sure to tell your partner what you are doing, where you are going, when you will be back.)
- Call friend or a hotline for men and talk about the incident.
- Review this workbook and your responses in it to re-establish the lessons you've learned.
- Attend a counseling session or group meeting to discuss the incident and what you can learn from it.
- Other _____
- Other _____

3. Circle any items on the list that you think might be helpful to you in the future.

4. In what way did you respond differently to this relapse or close call — different from previous abusive incidents or close calls?

5. How did you feel about yourself after this close call or re-abuse?

☰ Exercise 2: Learning the Lessons

It is important to think seriously about what you've learned from close calls or re-abuse. The lessons we get from these close calls or re-abuse often can have a bigger impact on us than a lot of talk or education. Let's size it up — and build on these lessons.

1. What did you feel you accomplished prior to the re-abuse or close call? (Were you taking better care of yourself? Were you recognizing and avoiding potential abuse? Were you looking at your partner more as a friend?)

2. Are there any goals in these workbooks that you've forgotten about or neglected to practice? What are they and why have you forgotten or neglected them? (Have you not taken the time to review the workbooks, or do all of the exercises? Have you skipped the assignments or not thought about what you learned?)

3. What can you do differently to reduce the risk of re-abuse in the future? (Are there goals or steps that would especially help you? If so, what are they?)

4. What is the main thing you have learned from this re-abuse or close call? (That you have to think more about what is going on with you, instead of your partner? That you have to think before you act? That you have to do something to avoid abuse before it is too late?)

Assignments

1. Be sure to challenge the self-pity, depression, or sense of failure that may happen after re-abuse or a close call. These feelings can lead to future abuse to yourself or others. Also, don't over apologize or make false promises to your partner. Speak with your new non-abusive actions.
2. Over the next week after re-abuse or a close call, make a list below of your non-abusive behaviors and positive accomplishments. Note how you feel after them.

Accomplishment Log

Date	Nonabusiveness or Accomplishments	Feelings

Caution: If your re-abuse resulted in your hurting or beating up your wife or partner, punching or kicking her, or using a weapon against her, be sure she receives the care that she needs, first of all. Also, you should separate from her in order to assure her future safety. Furthermore, you should re-enter a more structured and highly supervised program, if you are not already in one. Talk to a counselor individually and in a group about this abuse. This is serious stuff — it is a crime. It can land you in jail and put your partner in the hospital — or grave. **And**, don't give up your efforts to change.

❖ Goal 2: Preventing Alcohol Misuse

Something to Think About

I drink not from mere joy in wine nor to scoff at faith — no, only to forget myself for a moment, that only do I want of intoxication, that alone. —Omar Khayyam

Drinking alcohol is the fastest way back to abuse and violence. It clouds our thinking, distorts our perceptions, and exaggerates our feelings. It puts us in bad situations, and sometimes with people that get us into trouble. If we are serious about stopping our abusive behavior — and staying stopped — we have to continue to avoid heavy drinking and all that goes with it. This is usually harder than it sounds, especially when we are trying to change. The tendency is to reach for a beer or go out with the guys when we feel stressed or angry. We think we are avoiding being abusive toward our partners or children by doing this, but we can be making things worse.

We can, however, apply lessons we are learning about our being a “real man” to our drinking behavior as well as to our abuse toward others. As we continue to take care of our drinking, we are taking care of ourselves. Our better selves makes staying stopped easier — and more fun.

I know that I can face up to my drinking like a man, and not let it ruin the progress I am making.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: Doing Things Differently*

The experts tell us that we need a strategy to prevent alcohol misuse and the problems that come with it. We need more than will power or hope. We need to plan some strategies and put them into action, just as we would when tackling any major job or project. Here is a list of strategies to put into practice. Apply each one to your life by responding to directions below.

1. Work a disciplined *alcohol recovery plan*. You need to do several things differently. Do them regularly and consistently — and even when you don’t want to. What are four disciplined steps you are taking or want to take to prevent heavy drinking (e.g., going to an AA meeting, checking-in with a non-drinking friend, writing a daily log of “ups” and “downs”).

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Put a check in front of those items you have done in the last week.

2. *Seek support* and help from other men and women in recovery for alcohol misuse. They can be friends, family, and professionals. Don't recover alone. List four people that can give you help, support, and an example.

Put a check in front of each person you have talked to in the last week.

3. *Avoid situations* that influence you to use alcohol or drugs, and practice ways to say no to offers to use or party. Each of us has certain people, places, events, and things that lead us to alcohol misuse. What are some of the people and situations you need to avoid?

Put a check in front of each situation you have avoided in the last week.

4. *Keep busy* and have fun. Build alcohol-free activities into your life. Name some of the new activities you are doing or want to do more of.

Put a check in front of activities that you have done in the last week.

Exercise 2: Dealing With Alcohol-Related Feelings*

Most people slip into heavy drinking in response to certain feelings. Some of these feelings become more intense when we stop drinking. We may have to dig out other feelings to deal with them. Let's take a look at some of those feelings so they don't get the best of us.

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1. **Accept the ups and downs of recovery from alcohol misuse. You will have strong cravings, bad days, and lose motivation from time to time. Accept these as normal and have a plan to help you through the rough spots. List four things you can do to help you in the rough spots.**

Put a check in front of things that you have done in the last week.

2. **Manage your upsetting feelings. Don't let anger, anxiety, boredom, depression, guilt, or loneliness provide you with a reason to use alcohol or drugs. What feelings are most associated with your drinking.**

Put a check in front of feelings that you have had in the last week.

3. **Take an inventory of yourself. Self-examination increases you self-awareness and self-awareness helps you change. List three things you have become aware of by not drinking.**

Put a check in front of the things most important to you.

4. **Appreciate and reward your efforts at recovery. Don't take yourself for granted and don't overlook positive changes, no matter how small. How have you rewarded or congratulated yourself for your efforts and positive changes?**

Put a check in front of rewards that you have used in the last week.

Assignments

There are many temptations, opportunities, and excuses to drink — or drink more. Over the next week, be on the look out for situations and feelings that might have led you to drink — or did lead you to drink. List what they were below.

What did you do — or could have done — to avoid the situations and deal with the feelings?

Check the item that worked the best for you.

✘ Goal 3: Getting Back Together

Something to Think About

Love doesn't just sit there, like a stone; it has to be made, like bread, remade all the time, made new. —Ursula K. Le Guin

If we have abused someone, we have no doubt hurt him or her and our relationship — oftentimes more than we imagine. Many of us will experience separation and divorce as a result of our being abusive. And many of us will hope to get back together and rebuild our relationships or make new ones. Doing so takes much patience, effort, and caring. It cannot be made to happen; in fact, it is likely not to happen if you push it.

The hardest thing to deal with, beside our pride, is the expectation that things should be “the way they were.” Even though you may think you’ve changed, your wife or partner is liable to be suspicious and even afraid of you. Even if you are clearly a different person, your wife or partner may hold too much resentment and fear of the past to accept you. She may, as well, not know how to deal with the person you’ve become or are becoming. In either case, you have to be prepared to start over with your wife or partner — or with someone new.

I pray that I may be patient in getting back together and willing to start over.

Put Your Reaction or Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: Sizing Up the Situation

“Getting Back Together” is a special goal because it may not apply to all of us. It may not apply to us now but could later. It is something to consider as needed. Many relationships go through times of separating and returning. Abuse makes these changes more complicated. Many men become more abusive when their partners leave or separate. They try to make them come back or punish them for leaving. Getting back together may return to old abusive ways when we think we have stopped. Should you get back together with your partner? Should she get back with you?

1. What signs are there that your wife or partner **is** ready to come back to you? (Does she say she feels safe and trusts you now? Does she notice some big changes in you for the better?)

2. What signs are there that your wife or partner is **not** ready to return to you? (Is she still scared of you at times? Does she want to meet or date other men?)

3. What signs are there that you **are** ready to return to your wife or partner? Have you stopped pressuring her or trying to control her? Do you appreciate her more and take more responsibility for things?

4. What signs are there that you are **not** ready to return to your wife or partner?

Caution: If you have not been abusive for at least six months, you may be ready to return to being together. If you have been abusive in any way, you may still need more time apart.

 **Exercise 2: Planning the Return**

You have to prepare for getting back together, just as much as you would for a long trip or a move to another state. The more you prepare and plan, the more likely you will avoid falling back into old patterns and problems. Let's think through what lies ahead.

1. What problem areas in your relationship need the most work (e.g., disciplining the children, paying bills, and having enough money)?

2. What steps can you take to address these problem areas (e.g., negotiate some plans for discipline now, plan a budget together)?

3. What steps might you take to "start over" again? (You might begin by trying a dating relationship, or by seeing a family counselor who is acceptable to your wife or partner and versed in the issues of domestic violence.)

☰ Exercise 3: Facing Separation

Sometimes trying to get back together shows us we should not be together. Disagreements may surface in planning or preparing to get back together. We may have some “close calls” or even be abusive. We might get back together and need to separate again. Let’s think about these possibilities so we are ready to do the right thing.

1. Under what circumstances should you separate again or for good? (If you are abusive again? If you can’t agree on finances?)

2. What should you do if your wife or partner does not want to return? (Should you see a counselor on your own? Should you move to another place?)

3. What can you do to avoid becoming angry or abusive when you separate again or for good? (Participate in a men’s group? Review certain parts of this workbook?)

4. How do you know you are ready to go out with other women without being abusive to them or to your former wife or partner? (Sometimes after men separate they are still angry towards their former partner and may take out that anger on their new partner. Sometimes they go out with a new partner to try to hurt or get back at their former partner.)

 **Assignments**

1. If your wife or partner is willing, review Exercises 1 and 2 in this special goal with her. Have her answer the questions and compare her answers to yours. Write the major agreements and disagreements below.

- Agreements

- Disagreements

2. Talk a separation plan with your partner by reviewing Exercise 3 together. Remember take it slow and easy — for your own sake as well as hers. Summarize the main points of your plans below.

Caution: Many of us give up our efforts to change if our wife or partner leaves us or divorces us. It is important to remember, therefore, that you need to change for your own good, not just to get your wife or partner back. In fact, **not** manipulating her, pressuring her, or begging her to come back may be evidence that you are changing. Be sure not to use this assignment or other exercises as a means of trying to control her or get your way. Also, it may be helpful to know that

most abusive relationships go through numerous separations before they are resolved. So “letting go” with patience is needed whether we like it or not.

❖ Goal 4: Checking Our Progress

Something to Think About

Yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear. —Job 11

The temptation is to slack off, especially if we see some improvements. But it is a trick! There can be no let up. We must continue to do a little each day, grow a little each day, and change a little each day. We must live differently each day, otherwise we will slip back into our old ways.

It is important, therefore, to stick to it. We “stay stopped” by daily participating in our program, following this workbook series, and by thinking about the lessons we’ve learned. We do it by drawing on the inner strength we have as a gift from our Higher Power.

Part of this entails us really being honest with ourselves. Have we done our share? Have we done what we told ourselves we would do? Have we done what we promised others we would do? We have to honestly address such questions daily.

God, please help me to stick to and follow through on my commitment to change.

Put Your Reaction and Comments Here:

☰ Exercise 1: A Staying-Stopped Checklist

This is a “Special Goal” because it is one that we need to work on regularly through our course of change and return to periodically after we finish this workbook. Just as in the first workbook, we learned to check our behavior. We have to systematically check our change. Are we progressing as we hoped and should? Are there areas or things we have become lax about? On a monthly basis, review the checklist below to find out. Check all those items that you have done during that one-month period. (Follow the numbered boxes for the months after each statement.) “I have . . .”

1. Put a check in the first month box of any behaviors you have done. For month two, review the list again and put checks for any behaviors you have done. Repeat each month.

◆ Item: Referred daily (at least five days a week) to this workbook.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Thought at least weekly about some of the paradoxes of change.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Part 1: Checking Our Behavior

◆ Item: Not been psychologically abusive.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Employed stopping strategies to avoid physical abuse.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Consciously “let go” of something I previously felt in charge of.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Recognized my hurt feelings and took care of them.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Exercised or done leisure activities to take better care of myself.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Not abused alcohol, drugs, or caffeine.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Part 2: Discovering Our Self

◆ Item: Consciously considered my separateness from my father.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Offered some specific mothering to someone else in my family.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Identified at least one new hero that is worth admiring.

✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

◆ Item: Used “I-feel emotion” statements with my wife or partner.

- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Taken some quiet time daily to affirm my spiritual nature.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Part 3: Appreciating Women

- ◆ Item: Not used any negative expressions about women in my conversations.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Used “fair behavior” instead of “unfair behavior” in disagreements with my wife or partner.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Discussed openly my sexual fears and need for intimacy with someone.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Inquired about an aspect of my wife or partner that we never talked about before.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Shared a major financial decision and some major household chores with my wife or partner.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Part 4: Reaching Out to Others

- ◆ Item: Played with someone in a game that did not have any winners or losers.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Called a friend to discuss a problem or fear.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Talked to another man about my abuse and questioned him about his.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Spoke to a fellow worker about some means of making the work place less abusive.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- ◆ Item: Gave some service to others in my community.
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

- ◆ Item: Completed the relapse exercise in the event of a close call. (Also check if there were not relapses or close calls.)
- ✓ Months: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
- 2. Size up your progress by totaling the number of checks you have for each month. Write the total next to the appropriate month number below.

Month Number	Total Number of Checks
1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
5	_____
6	_____
7	_____
8	_____
9	_____
10	_____
11	_____
12	_____

☰ Exercise 2: Are You Progressing?

The challenge with change is to not just size up what we have done, like we would by stepping on a scale during a diet. We need to also take a look at the areas where we have made headway and the areas where we have not. Then decide what we could do differently in the next month. In this way we become in charge of our change and guide our course like a driver in a race car.

1. What does your total for the first month say about your progress this far?

- Are you doing as much as you thought to stay stopped? Why or why not?

-
- Are you doing what you need to? Why or why not?
-

-
- Are there areas where you want to do more next month?
-

2. How does the current total compare with your total for the previous month? (For month 1, compare the total to what you expected it to be.) Note whether it is *more*, *less*, or the *same* and why you think there was a difference or a consistency.

	More	Less	Same	Reason for this Result
Month 1:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Month 2:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Month 3:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Month 4:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Month 5:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Month 6:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Month 7:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/>
Month 8:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<hr/> <hr/>

Month 9:

Month 10:

Month 11:

Month 12:

3. Consider the items that you did not do each month. What is the most serious let-down? Why did you let down in that area? What are the possible consequences for that let-down?

• Month 1:

Let-down: _____

Reason: _____

Consequences: _____

• Month 2:

Let-down: _____

Reason: _____

Consequences: _____

• Month 3:

Let-down: _____

Reason: _____

Consequences: _____

• Month 4:

Let-down: _____

Reason: _____

Consequences: _____

- Month 5:
Let-down: _____
Reason: _____
Consequences: _____
- Month 6:
Let-down: _____
Reason: _____
Consequences: _____
- Month 7:
Let-down: _____
Reason: _____
Consequences: _____
- Month 8:
Let-down: _____
Reason: _____
Consequences: _____
- Month 9:
Let-down: _____
Reason: _____
Consequences: _____
- Month 10:
Let-down: _____
Reason: _____
Consequences: _____
- Month 11:
Let-down: _____
Reason: _____
Consequences: _____
- Month 12:
Let-down: _____

Reason: _____

Consequences: _____

Exercise 3: Accomplishments and New Goals

We all have accomplished more than we realize. We have dared to consider new ideas. We have looked hard at ourselves. We have done some things differently. We should take stock of these things and build on them. They give us a foundation, as well as a reminder that we can change. Take a look at what you **have** accomplished. Good job and keep going!

1. What do you consider your major *accomplishment* in the past month? (List positive things that are not on the checklist in Exercise 1 next to each month below.)

• Month 1:

• Month 2:

• Month 3:

• Month 4:

• Month 5:

• Month 6:

• Month 7:

• Month 8:

• Month 9:

• Month 10:

• Month 11:

- Month 12:
-

2. What additional *goals* have you set for yourself over the next month?

- Month 1:
-

- Month 2:
-

- Month 3:
-

- Month 4:
-

- Month 5:
-

- Month 6:
-

- Month 7:
-

- Month 8:
-

- Month 9:
-

- Month 10:
-

- Month 11:
-

- Month 12:
-

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A Poem on Staying Stopped*

by David Russell

I need to get things going
I need to stop to get things going
I need to stop to start my journey

Though
I don't need her to come back to stop me
I don't need it all figured out to stop me
I don't need to fire her to stop me
But
I do need you, my Brother, and a place to sit in council

Though
I don't need me above her to stop me
I don't need to put her down to stop me
I don't need to find her or find her out to stop me
But
I need your words, my Sister, even though I hate to listen

Though
I don't need to beat the rap to stop me
I don't need to shut her up to stop me
I don't need her to be nuts to stop me
But
I do need you, my Memory, and the sting of recognition

Though
I don't need to harass her to stop me
I don't need to feel better to stop me
I don't need her to act right to stop me
But
I do need you, my Brother, and the vision that we hold to:
Vision of peace above me
Vision of peace below me
Vision of peace around me
Let her find the path of freedom
And please, then let me follow

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A Workbook Series for Stopping Abusive Behavior

About the Author

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