

HOW A RECOVERY INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLE SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED

OUTLINE

Step 1. Report a single situation or event that occurred-an everyday event when you began to work yourself up. Focus on a brief description of what happened: specifically, what triggered temper and symptoms?

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

Step 3. Report your spotting of fearful and/or angry temper, the Recovery International tools you used to help yourself, and your self-endorsement for your effort.

Step 4. Begin with “Before I had my Recovery training,” and describe the temperamental reaction and symptoms you would have experienced in former days. What would have happened then versus what happened now? (*This will help you to note the progress you have made.*)

Learning to give an example simply and clearly in the four-step sequence is an important part of the Recovery International (RI) Method. The best way to learn is to practice constructing and giving a “good average” example. Here are a few basics to work on as you go through each step in turn.

Step 1: When describing the situation or event, be clear but brief. It’s tempting to go into a lot of “background” and detail, but this is usually unnecessary and even distracting. Practice focusing on just a few sentences of basic information that will clarify the situation or event that generated your symptoms or discomfort. Notice in the sample examples how the descriptions in Step 1 are both brief and precise.

Step 2: People often skip this step to get to Step 3, “spotting.” However, while this step, like the others, should be kept brief, an important part of the RI Method is learning to be objective in recognizing and describing physical and mental responses. This objectivity makes those responses seem less threatening and overwhelming. Avoid diagnosing (“I became paranoid”) and spotting (that comes in the next step). Just describe your physical and mental sensations (“I felt flushed and angry, my head hurt,” etc.).

Step 3: Here you identify the Recovery tools – the “spots” – that helped you deal with your symptoms. Stay focused on RI language and concepts; avoid mixing in material from other methods. Be clear about how the spots apply to the symptoms and event, but don’t worry about using every possible tool. Often just one or a few spots are all that you need for the example.

Step 4: A crucial part of getting well through will training comes when we see how we’ve improved through our use of the RI Method. This step is important in helping us to see that improvement.

Note: The sample Examples of RI Practice (see reverse side) illustrate how the four steps can be followed briefly but clearly.



EXAMPLES OF RECOVERY PRACTICE

I had an errand to do downtown today. It was something that could not be put off. I thought that I did not want to go and began to work myself up.

I had fearful thoughts about being out in public and not being able to control my outer environment. I wanted to withdraw, had lower feelings, felt tense and thought of how I could avoid going out today.

I spotted my fearful temper and made a decision to go out and run the errand. I felt steadier having made the decision. I planned and acted in getting ready to go out and went downtown on the bus. As I traveled and took care of my business downtown, I saw that anticipation is often worse than realization because things were going fine. I enjoyed being out on a nice day and people were friendly. Although I could not control my outer environment, I could control my inner environment. Each time I endorsed my efforts, the next step seemed easier.

Before my Recovery training, I might have stayed home, remained fearful and worked myself up into a vicious cycle of lowered feelings and inadequacy. If I had not decided, planned and acted, I would not have had this opportunity to see that anticipation is often worse than realization and that one self-endorsement can lead to further encouragement and confidence.

Coming through customs at the airport at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, I was asked to go through a different area to be searched. That's when I began to work myself up.

My symptoms were head pressure, palpitations, and dizziness. My racing thoughts were, *Why me? There are thousands of people here and they pick me.* I had the impulse to work myself up more.

I spotted aggressive temper towards the customs officials. I had fearful temper that I would be unable to cope with the situation and self-pity – Poor me! I used the Recovery spottings that “helplessness is not hopelessness” and “to excuse rather than accuse” in the interest of my mental health.

In former days, I would have reached for medication. I would have said rude things to the man who searched my luggage. This time I endorsed myself for making the trip and coming to Chicago.

Yesterday I bought a half dozen peaches that were beautiful on the outside but rotten on the inside. My wife and I have different philosophies about buying produce. I buy at a cheaper store where the goods must be eaten in a few days or they will go bad. She buys at a more expensive store which sells produce with a longer shelf life. We have been engaged in a good-natured debate all summer about which philosophy helped us save more money. Several months ago, we had had the same experience with fruit purchased at my store. My wife returned the items and got our money back. Now it was happening again. I began to work myself up.

I had lowered feelings and some stomach distress. I had the fearful thought that I might have failed in the standard of average efficiency. I had the angry thought that my wife was rubbing in my failure.

I spotted to have the courage to make mistakes and that there is no right or wrong in the trivialities of everyday life. I excused and did not accuse my wife. I spotted that people say things *that* irritate us but not necessarily *to* irritate us. I resisted the impulse to start keeping records about how much things cost my way as opposed to her way—thus controlling my muscles to keep from going for a symbolic victory. I endorsed myself for my practice.

Before Recovery I would have felt that I *must* find out who was right. I would not have realized that I had choices about changing my thoughts and controlling my impulses. Before Recovery I was hospitalized with delusions and clinical depression.