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MASTER YOUR EMOTIONS

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO OVERCOME NEGATIVITY
AND BETTER MANAGE YOUR **FEELINGS**

PERSONAL WORKBOOK

THIBAUT MEURISSE

Excerpted from:

Master Your Emotions

Expanded Edition

A Practical Guide to Overcome
Negativity and Better Manage
Your Feelings

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First published in 2018
Authors Equity edition published in 2026

Library of Congress Control Number: 2026935245
Print ISBN 9798893312010

Printed in the United States of America
First printing

www.authorsequity.com

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Step-by-Step Workbook

Part 1. What Emotions Are

Chapter 1. How Your Survival Mechanism Affects Your Emotions

1. Bias Toward Negativity

Find one specific example of an imaginary threat resulting from your survival mechanism. For instance, maybe you have a fear of being rejected or you blow certain situations out of proportion. Write down your answer below.

2. Happiness Traps

Hijacking of the Reward System (Dopamine)

Identify things that you think hijack your reward system (TV, video games, gambling, social media, etc.). List them below.

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-
-
-

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Now, which one of these things are you the most “addicted” to? In other words, what activity, if you were to take a break from it, would you crave the most? Write it down.

Finally, what is one specific thing you could do to start breaking that addiction?

The “One Day I Will” Myth

Come up with an example of a goal that you believed would make you happy once you achieved it, but it didn’t, or it was underwhelming.

Remember, your happiness has less to do with external circumstances and more to do with your habits, thoughts, and attitude.

Chapter 2. What Is the Ego?

Write down the things you identify with most—that is, the things you are most strongly attached to (e.g., your body, your relationships, your country, your religion, your car, etc.).

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Now rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 for each statement below (1 being false, 10 being true).

I tend to equate having with being.

1_____10

I'm never satisfied.

1_____10

I compare myself with others.

1_____10

I need other people's approval to feel valued.

1_____10

I look for fame and/or try to associate with smart or famous people.

1_____10

I like to gossip.

1_____10

I constantly try to be right.

1_____10

I often complain.

1_____10

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How does your ego impact your emotions? Write down some of the ways it can generate negative emotions. For instance, you may suffer because you compare yourself with others on social media or never seem to be content with what you have.

What's one specific thing you could do to keep your ego at bay?

Chapter 3. The Nature of Emotions

To help you understand the nature of emotions, we'll focus on one specific emotion in this section.

Take a few minutes to go through the following steps in your mind. If it helps, close your eyes.

1. Think of a recent episode when you were sad, frustrated, or angry. Write down below what happened and why you felt the way. Make sure you give a name to the emotion you experienced (sadness, anger, envy, frustration, etc.):
2. Notice how that emotion is nowhere to be found in your present reality.
3. Ask yourself what you can learn from that emotion. What is it trying to tell you?
4. Notice how that emotion probably attracted more negative thoughts on the same emotional range.
5. Remember the urge you felt to identify with it and/or with the story that goes with it.
6. Reflect on how you created mental suffering by adding your own judgment to that emotion.

7. Finally, imagine what you could have done differently at the time to reduce the intensity of that emotion or prevent it from arising in the first place.

Part 2. What Impacts Your Emotions

The key factors that impact your emotional state are:

1. Social connections and surroundings
2. Sleep
3. Exercise
4. Meditation and visualization
5. Self-talk
6. Breathing
7. Diet
8. Music

For each of them, rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10 (10 means you're using that tool effectively to improve your emotional well-being).

1. Social connections/surroundings
1 _____ 10
2. Sleep
1 _____ 10
3. Exercise
1 _____ 10
4. Meditation/visualization
1 _____ 10
5. Self-talk
1 _____ 10
6. Breathing
1 _____ 10

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7. Food

1 _____ 10

8. Music

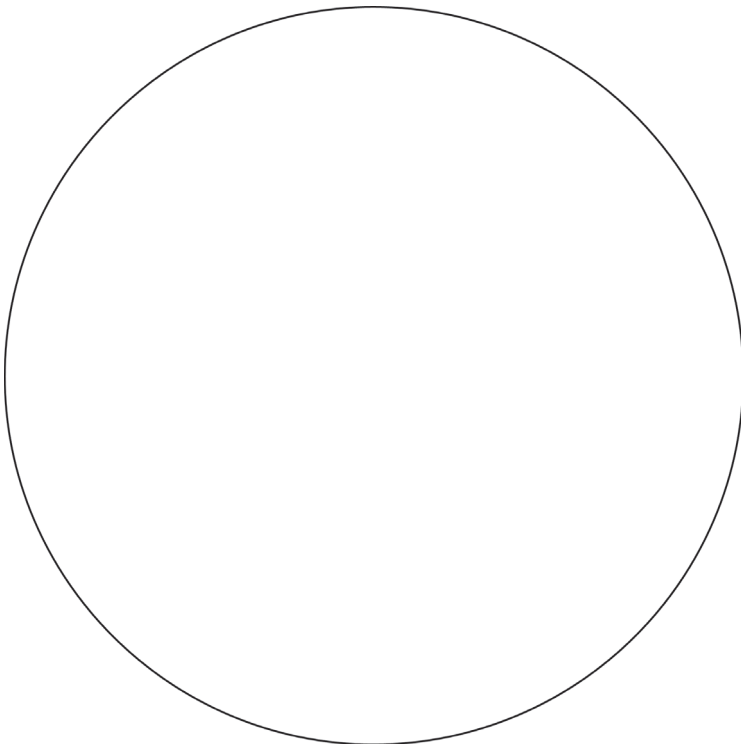
1 _____ 10

Chapter 4. Social Connections and Surroundings: How Your Environment Affects Your Emotions

Human Environment

To a large extent, the quality of your relationships determines the quality of your emotional well-being.

Using the circle below, write down the names of people in your life you're interacting with on a regular basis. It could be family members, friends, or the bus driver you say hi to each morning on your commute. The more time you spend with them during a typical month, the more in the center you should write their name.



Now, among these people, who are the ones you'd like to have in your life twenty years from now? Write their name in the table below. Then look at how much time you're spending with them. If they're not in the middle of your circle, you're probably not seeing them often enough. Why is that?

Person's name	What you could do to nurture the relationship

Physical Environment

We're constantly being influenced by our environment, often unconsciously.

What concrete action(s) could you take to improve your physical environment?

For instance:

- I will clean my desk.
- I will go to events where I can meet like-minded people.

To improve my physical environment, I will:

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Mental Environment

What concrete action(s) could you take to improve your mental environment?

For instance:

- I will read inspirational books for fifteen minutes each day.
- I will spend only fifteen minutes on social media each day for thirty days.

To improve my mental environment, I will:

Chapter 5. Rest: The Impact of Sleep on Your Emotions

The quality and quantity of your sleep affect your emotional state.

What could you do to improve your sleep?

For instance:

- I will go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- I will stop drinking coffee in the afternoon.
- I will avoid watching screens two hours before bed.

To improve my sleep, I will:

Chapter 6. Exercise and Movement: Using Your Body to Influence Your Emotions

Studies have shown that exercising can work as well as antidepressant medicine for people with mild to moderate depression. Just two and a half hours of moderate exercise a week (e.g., a brisk thirty-minute walk, five days per week) could add more than three years to your life.

What could you do to start moving more?

For instance:

- I will go for a thirty-minute walk each morning.
- I will go to the gym twice a week.

To exercise more, I will:

Chapter 7. Meditation and Visualization: Using Your Thoughts to Influence Your Emotions

Your thoughts define who you are and create your reality. By having more control over your thoughts, you can improve how you feel.

What could you do to take better control of your thoughts?

For instance:

- I will practice mindfulness meditation for five minutes each morning.
- I will think about my goals when I'm taking a shower each day.

To gain better control over my thoughts, I will:

Chapter 8. Self-Talk: Using Your Words to Influence Your Emotions

What you say to yourself when nobody is listening largely determines the quality of your emotional life.

What could you do to talk to yourself in a more empowering way?

For instance:

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- I will notice whenever I disrespect myself and will change my self-talk.
- I will create an “I am” statement that aligns with one of my core values.

To improve the quality of my inner dialogue, I will:

Chapter 9. How Your Breathing Affects Your Emotions

While breathing should happen naturally, like many people, you may not be breathing properly.

What could you do to improve your breathing?

For instance:

- I will practice coherent breathing for five minutes each morning.
- I will practice the 4-7-8 breathing technique when I feel a little bit stressed.

To improve my breathing, I will:

Chapter 10. Food: How Your Diet Affects Your Emotions

Healthy food can improve our mood, while a poor diet can increase our risk of depression.

What could you do to improve your diet?

For instance:

- I will replace sugary drinks with sparkling water.
- I will come up with a healthier recipe for one of my favorite dishes.

To improve my diet, I will:

Chapter 11. How Music Affects Your Emotions

Listening to music can help you relax when you're tired, motivate you when you're in a slump, or put you in a good mood.

How could you use music to improve your mood?

For instance:

- I will focus on things I'm grateful for while listening to a song that moves me.
- I will listen to uplifting music when at the gym.

To help me maintain a positive mood, I'll use music as follows:

Part 3. How to Change Your Emotions

Chapter 12. How Emotions Are Formed

Emotions are formed according to this formula:

Interpretation + Identification + Repetition = Strong Emotion

- **Interpretation:** You lend meaning to an event or a thought based on your personal story.
- **Identification:** You give your attention and energy to a specific thought as it arises.
- **Repetition:** You have the same thoughts over and over.
- **Strong emotion:** You've identified with a thought so many times that it becomes deeply ingrained as an emotion.

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Remember a past event when you experienced negative emotions. It could be the last time you were depressed, sad, or angry or felt like you weren't good enough.

Now write down what happens for each of the following:

Interpretation: What events happened and what thoughts arose?

Identification: How did you respond to these thoughts?

Repetition: Did you identify with these thoughts repeatedly?

Chapter 13. Changing Your Interpretation

Think of one emotion you experience often. To help you with that task, ask yourself, "What emotion, if I could get rid of it, would have the most positive impact on my life?" Is it resentment? Feelings of insecurity? Anxiety?

Write it down below.

Now ask yourself, "What belief(s) lead me to experience that emotion?"

Your beliefs:

Finally, come up with a new narrative by asking yourself, “What new belief(s) could I adopt to avoid experiencing the emotion?”

Your new narrative:

Chapter 14. Letting Go of Your Emotions

You can let go of emotions that aren’t serving you well.

Start by making a list of the emotions you would like to let go of. Perhaps you feel like you aren’t good enough, or you feel mildly annoyed about something. Or perhaps you blame yourself for something you did in the past. Write down below whatever comes to mind.

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-
-

Now circle one of the emotions you’d like to work on in this list. Then ask yourself, “Could I let this feeling go?”

As you do so, visualize that feeling fading away or traveling far away from you.

Chapter 15. Conditioning Your Mind to Experience More Positive Emotions

Cultivate the habit of depositing positive thoughts in your mind every day. To condition your mind to experience more positive emotions, try a variation on the “Interpretation + Identification + Repetition = Strong Emotion” formula:

- Interpretation: Visualize certain events or generate particular thoughts you see as positive.
- Identification: Seek to experience the positive feelings associated with these events or thoughts.
- Repetition: Keep repeating the same thoughts and seek to experience the associated feelings over and over. After a while you’ll prime your mind to access the related emotions more easily.

Chapter 16. Changing Your Emotions by Changing Your Behavior

You can change how you feel by changing your behavior.

Remember the last time you were in a negative emotional state that lasted for a couple of days or more. Write down what you felt, why you felt it, and how you overcame it.

How I felt:

Why I felt that way:

I overcome that negative emotional state by:

Finally, ask yourself how you could have changed your behavior to influence your emotions positively.

To change how I felt, I could have:

Chapter 17. Short-Term and Long-Term Solutions to Deal with Negative Emotions

There are many short- and long-term solutions you can rely on to help you deal with negative emotions. Here is a brief summary:

Short-Term Solutions

The following techniques will help you manage negative emotions as they arise. Try them out, and keep the ones that work for you.

As you look at the list, think of one or two solutions that would be the most effective for you.

1. Shift Your Emotional State

- Get busy
- Encourage yourself
- Interrupt
- Move
- Listen to music

2. Act

- Do it anyway
- Do something

3. Notice Your Emotions

- Look at the facts
- Chat with a friend
- Remember a time when you felt good
- Embrace your emotion

4. Relax

- Rest
- Breathe
- Relax
- Bless your problems

Long-Term Solutions

The following techniques will help you manage your negative emotions long-term so that you can durably change your emotional state.

1. Analyze Your Emotions

- Identify the story behind your emotions
- Record your emotions
- Practice mindfulness

2. Move Away from Negativity

- Change your environment
- Remove counterproductive activities

3. Condition Your Mind

- Create daily rituals
- Exercise

4. Increase Your Energy

The less energy you have, the more likely you are to experience negative emotions.

- Improve your sleep
- Eat healthier food
- Rest
- Breathe

5. Ask for Help

- Consult a professional

Part 4. How to Use Your Emotions to Grow

Chapter 18. How Emotions Can Guide You in the Right Direction

Emotions can foster your personal growth by reminding you of what you already know: You need to make changes in your life.

Spend a couple of minutes thinking about how your emotions may tell you to make changes in your life. You can use the space below to write your thoughts.

Chapter 19. Recording Your Emotions

To improve how you feel, you must become aware of the emotions you experience on a regular basis.

Spend a bit of time this week recording your feelings. Each day, rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the best you can feel. At the end of the week, give yourself an overall score and answer the following questions:

What's the main negative emotion you experienced?

What caused it? Did specific thoughts or external events lead you to feel that way?

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What actually happened?

How did you interpret what happened?

What beliefs led to that interpretation?

Are they true?

Could you have felt differently if you had chosen a more empowering interpretation? If so, how?

Finally, how did you get back to your neutral state? Did you change your thoughts or take action, or did it happen naturally?

Chapter 20. Feelings of Inadequacy

When we feel like we aren't good enough, it is often because we have low self-esteem. We focus on what we *aren't* good at while filtering out all the things we *are* good at.

List some situations in which you feel like you aren't good enough:

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Now write down the specific thoughts that lead you to feel that way. In other words, what story are you telling yourself?

The thoughts I have when I feel inadequate:

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-
-

The following exercises will help you overcome feelings of unworthiness:

- Create a win log
- Keep a positive journal
- Learn to accept compliments
- Practice the appreciation game

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Choose one exercise you could do (or action you could take) today or this week to start letting go of feelings of unworthiness. Write it down below.

To let go of feelings of inadequacy, I will:

Chapter 21. Defensiveness

The need to defend yourself stems from your desire to protect your story (or your ego). Whenever you get defensive, ask yourself the following questions:

- What belief am I trying to protect here?
- Can I let go of that belief?
- What would I be without that belief?

Chapter 22. Stress and Worry

You can view stress and worry as an invitation to assess your current situation and reevaluate your choices.

What are you currently stressed about? Make a list of the things that cause you the most stress in your typical week.

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Now choose one source of stress from the list above and write it down.

One thing I'm stressed about:

Then answer the following questions:

Is this situation stressful in itself?

What beliefs led me to experience stress in this specific situation?

What new beliefs could help me reduce or remove stress in this situation?

You can repeat that process with other worries as needed.

Next, let's sort out your worries. What events from the past are you ruminating on? What worries about the future keep you awake at night?

List your worries using the table below. Next to each of them, write "C" if you have full control over it, "SC" if you have only partial control over it, and "NC" if you have no control over it.

Things I'm worrying about	Full control (C) Some control (SC) No control (NC)

Chapter 23. Self-Consciousness

Being overly self-conscious usually means (1) you have a distorted view of the way people perceive you and (2) you are attached to a self-image you want to protect.

To start caring less about what people think of you, try the following exercise.

Write down the name of one person you know:

Write down how often you're thinking about that person in your day-to-day life:

Now put yourself in that person's shoes. How much do you imagine they think of you? That is, how much are they taking notes of what you do or say? What do you think they are worrying about right now?

Write your thoughts below:

Repeat that process with two more people.

Next, do the following exercise to help you realize you don't think about other people much either.

- Go through your day and try to remember all the people you met or interacted with. It might be the server at the restaurant you had lunch in, an old friend you ran into on the street, or some colleagues at work.
- Ask yourself how much you thought about these people prior to this exercise.
- Acknowledge the fact that you don't think about other people much. Let it sink in and allow yourself to feel liberated.

To start letting go of your self-image, complete the exercise below.

List three to five things you're afraid of being judged on. Maybe you worry about your look or you're afraid of saying something silly. Then, for each item, write down why you care. What is the issue here? What image are you trying to protect?

What you're afraid of being judged on	What image you're trying to protect

Chapter 24. Resentment

Resentment occurs when you are unable to forgive and move on with your life. It is the result of being attached to what was in the past instead of focusing on what could be in the future.

Write down the name of someone you resent (even if just slightly). Alternatively, write down a situation you resent.

The person/situation I resent:

Then follow this four-step method to start letting go of resentment.

1. Changing or Reevaluating Your Interpretation

Write down what exactly happened. What are the hard facts once you remove your interpretation?

2. Confronting the Situation

If your resentment is directed toward someone, try to have an honest discussion with that person. If you can't talk directly, consider writing a letter.

3. Forgiving

Now that you've found a channel to express yourself, you can forgive. Write down below how your resentment affects your happiness and peace of mind.

Now imagine how your life would be and how you would feel once you let go of resentment. Then let it go. Allow yourself to forgive—for your own peace of mind.

4. Forgetting

Finally, forget. Commit to letting go of thoughts of resentment. When such thoughts arise, practice letting them go by letting your mind move on to a different subject.

Chapter 25. Guilt

We often seem to go out of our way to find ways to feel guilty. While experiencing guilt is part of being human, too much of it can lead to unnecessary suffering. In many cases we discount problems we're dealing with because we don't feel they're important. When you deny yourself permission to experience the emotions that come with problems, you prevent yourself from working through those emotions.

Think of one problem you're discounting because you believe it's not a big deal.

My problem:

If you were to embrace that problem fully, what would you do differently? Write your answer below.

Chapter 26. Jealousy

Jealousy stems from the belief that you aren't good enough. It comes from a place of lack and scarcity. You want something someone else has, believing that it would fulfill you.

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Think of a time in the past when you felt jealous of someone else's accomplishments. Now ask yourself why you felt that way. What did they have that you don't have? Write your thoughts below.

Then answer the following questions:

What would supporting that person look like?

How could I cooperate with that person instead of seeing them as a competitor?

How could that person's success be good for me?

Complete the exercise below to help you realize you're usually not comparing apples to apples.

Select someone you often compare yourself to. Write down all the signs you're doing better than that person.

Person's name:

Things I'm doing better:

-
-
-
-

-
-
-

Reflect on your findings. Were you actually comparing apples to apples, or was your comparison flawed?

Chapter 27. Depression

Depression is a sign that you've lost touch with reality.

Below are a few things that can help alleviate your feelings of depression:

- Engage in compassionate self-talk. Talking to yourself in a gentle, compassionate way can improve your mood and give you more energy to do things that lift your spirits.
- Exercise. Exercising is a great way to reconnect with your body and become more present.
- Meditate. Meditation can calm your mind and help you distance yourself from negative thoughts.
- Get busy. Immersing yourself in various tasks can allow you to avoid excessive thinking.
- Focus on others. Think of ways to help one person every day for two weeks.

Write down one thing you could do today to start feeling better:

Chapter 28. Fear and Discomfort

The fear of doing something new is often a sign that you should go ahead and do it anyway. This indicates a great opportunity for personal growth.

Today or later this week, do one thing that you know you should be doing but have avoided out of fear. Break it down and make the first step as small as necessary, but get started.

Chapter 29. Procrastination

Procrastination might suggest that you believe too much in what your mind is telling you. Instead of being the master of your mind, you've become its slave.

Follow the steps below to overcome your tendency to procrastinate.

1. Remind Yourself of the Cost of Procrastination

Procrastination is not a minor issue. Its costs are both direct and indirect:

- The direct consequence of procrastination is that you'll achieve far less than you could during your time on earth.
- The indirect consequence of procrastination is that you may feel bad about yourself.

Write down what procrastination costs you. How does it affect your peace of mind? Your self-esteem? Your ability to achieve your dreams?

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2. Uncover Your Story

Write down all your excuses. Then address them one by one. (Examples: I don't have time; I'm too old; I'm not smart enough; I'm too tired.)

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-
-

3. Identify the Ways You Distract Yourself

What are your own ways of procrastinating on that important task? (Examples: going for a walk, watching videos on YouTube, checking Facebook.)

How I procrastinate:

4. Record Everything You Do

Record everything you do for a week. Then tally up how much time you spent doing unproductive activities.

5. Prepare Your Environment

Your mind doesn't like what's hard. It wants things to be easy. So make sure you can start working on your task immediately by removing any friction or obstacles.

Write down below what you can do to make it easier to work on your important task:

6. Start Small

Making your tasks smaller will help you overcome procrastination. Not only that, but it will also allow you to build momentum.

Choose an important task and break it down into five parts:

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-
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7. Build Accountability

How can you build accountability for your important tasks and goals? (Examples: have an accountability partner, hire a coach, send your list of goals to a friend every week.)

Chapter 30. Lack of Motivation

A lack of motivation is a signal that you need to design a life that is more in line with who you are.

To help you take action when you lack motivation, it is important to:

- have a system that allows you to stay on track with your goals
- build the self-discipline needed to do things when you don't feel like it
- have self-compassion and love yourself instead of blaming yourself

What daily routine can you put in place to stay on track with your goals? (Examples: create a morning routine, practice visualization, or work on your most important task first.) Write down your answer below:

To build self-discipline, what task can you commit to doing every day for the next thirty days?

My tasks:

What words of encouragement or mantras can you use to encourage yourself when you feel down?

Additional notes:

Additional notes:

Additional notes:

Additional notes:

Additional notes:

Additional notes:
