

### C. INTRODUCTION TO EPISTEMOLOGY

Logic is helpful in eliminating nonsense - whatever is sayable need not be meaningful. Epistemology, which is the theory of knowledge, helps us to establish truth because even what is meaningful need not necessarily be true.

Before we proceed further with epistemology, it will be in order to clarify a few concepts:

Belief necessarily involves a gap in knowledge - and thus the elements of risk and probability. (There is no need to *believe* something of which you have absolute *knowledge*.) In a matter of belief, the logical possibility that one can be wrong has to be allowed. (Incidentally, this attitude contributes to intellectual honesty by making the dialogue open and transparent).

There are three levels of thinking:

- (i) Perceptual - associating words with objects.
- (ii) Judgemental - An understanding of the state of affairs; e.g., I am reading this file. When put into words, it becomes a 'proposition'.
- (iii) Inferential - Inference is a conclusion reached by a process of thinking. When put into words, it becomes an 'argument'.

The table outlining the three types of apologetics (page A-5) indicates nine views held by people which are sought to be addressed by philosophical apologetics. These can be considered as epistemological approaches to truth and knowledge which must be critiqued in the light of the fallacies which we have studied thus far.

#### 1. Barriers to Truth

The following three views are self-defeating and thus are barriers to truth:-

a) Agnosticism : The belief that one cannot know anything about ultimate reality (truth) including God. This is a self-defeating statement violating the law of non-contradiction because this statement itself assumes some knowledge, namely, the knowledge that no knowledge is possible. We conclude therefore that some knowledge is inevitable.

b) Skepticism : The belief that one should doubt everything. This is self-defeating because the person who makes this statement expects us to believe his statement that nothing should be believed. We therefore conclude that some belief is inescapable.

c) Relativism : The belief that all truth is a personal matter of one's own perspective - there are no absolutes. This is self-defeating because the statement "All truth is relative" is in itself an absolute statement. Thus even to deny the absolute one has to assume it and therefore existence of an absolute is undeniable.

#### 2. Inadequate tests for Truth

These can be subdivided into objective and subjective truth tests. While these approaches are partly valid, they are inadequate as ways of apprehending the truth.

i) Objective truth tests:

(a) Rationalism: The belief that all truth can be attained by reason alone. This is inadequate because reason deals with mind whereas reality is a matter of fact. Reason deals with truth and therefore cannot tell us anything about things. Reason is confined to a rationalistic conceptual approach and not with empirical reality.

Example : Reason approaches the statement: "Two Pink Elephants (PE) plus two PE equals 4 PE" from the narrow angle of whether two plus two equals four; it cannot tell us whether pink elephants exist or not.

(b) Evidentialism: The belief that truth rests on facts alone. The problem with this view is that evidence is never self-interpreting. For example, in John 12:28,29 the fact of the Father speaking to the Son was interpreted by the bystanders as thunder (naturalistic world view) or an angelic voice (mystical world view). Evidence is always interpreted by a presupposed world view.

ii) Subjective truth tests:

(a) Fideism: The belief that truth in religion rests solely on faith. This approach is inadequate because faith is belief whereas truth is the basis for faith. We need justification for a truth claim (why you believe what you believe) rather than just what you believe.

Example : The pilot of the Indian Airlines flight from Bombay to Ahmedabad sincerely believed that the lights he had seen were those on the runway but actually they were the lights on a power plant. This sincere belief resulted in a tragic air crash.

(b) Experientialism: The belief that all truth is determined by experience. This approach is inadequate because experience is the condition of a person whereas truth is the characteristic of a proposition. Experience may be a source of truth, but what we are interested is the substance of the truth.

(c) Consent of Nations: The belief that truth is found by corporate judgement (majority vote) alone. The problem is that majority can be wrong. Some centuries ago, most of the people believed that the earth was flat.

(d) Pragmatism: The belief that one should not consider thinking or feeling truth but rather discover it by attempting to live it. In other words what works is truth. This is inadequate because truth may not necessarily work beneficially in a given life situation. It may be beneficial to the robber to steal so long as he does not get caught!

iii) Combinationalism:

It can be proposed that two or more of these six inadequate tests be combined in order to arrive at the truth but this would be like putting six leaky buckets together in the hope of holding water! This approach is sometimes called "systematic consistency".

Combinationalism	Logical Consistency
	Empirical adequacy
	Experiential relevance



### 3. Adequate tests for Truth:

Logical consistency removes error but does not tell us what is true. Empirical adequacy and experiential relevance are interpreted by one's own world view which is in itself suspect. Thus combinationalism has to be qualified by applying tests of unaffirmability and undeniability through which its inherent inadequacies are corrected.

#### i) Unaffirmability as a negative test for truth:

- (a) Direct unaffirmability: Example - Never use the word "never".
- (b) Indirect unaffirmability: Example - One cannot know anything about reality - Agnosticism. That which is unaffirmably self-defeating is false. Therefore, it follows that what is undeniable is true.

#### ii) Undeniability as a positive test for truth:

- (a) Definitional undeniability: Example- A triangle must have 3 sides.
- (b) Existential undeniability: Example - I actually exist.

The tests for truth after applying these corrections are summarised below and can be given the title "Qualified systematic consistency".

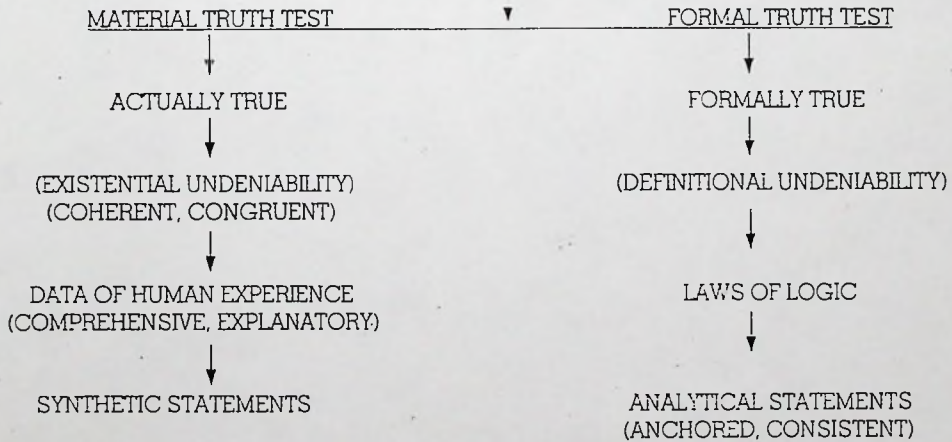
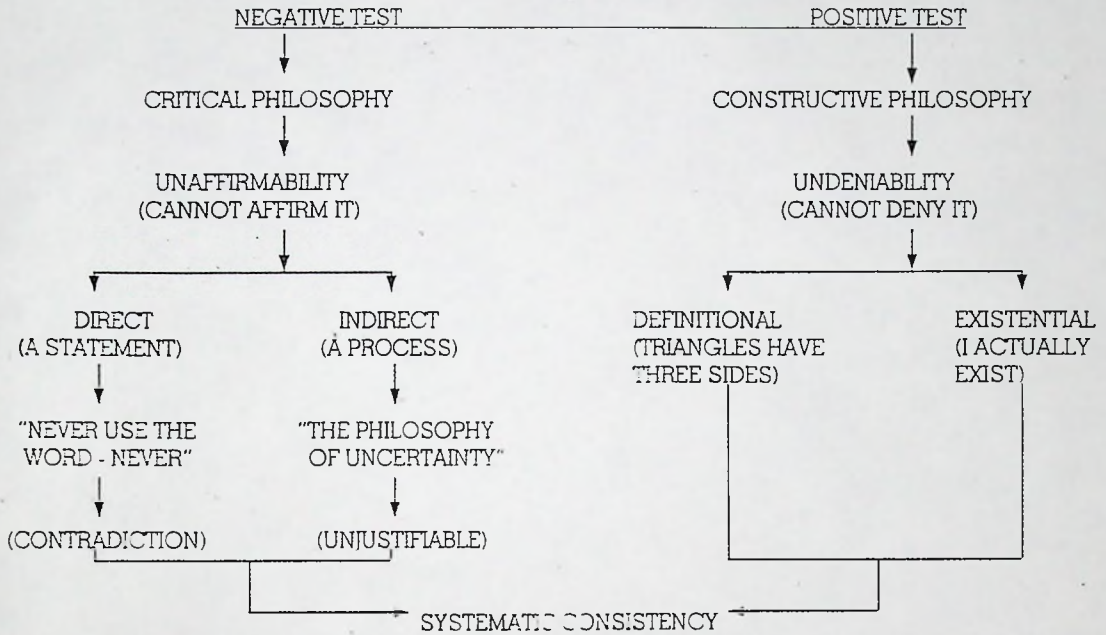
- It is (a) consistent, because it is based upon a rigid application of the laws of logic,
- (b) systematic, because all the data of our experience are considered and
- (c) qualified, because its inherent inadequacies are corrected.

### 4. Summary

- 1 ANCHORED - Based on inescapable reasoning - RELIABILITY
- 2 CONSISTENT - Avoids logical contradictions - VALIDITY
- 3 COHERENT - Keeps a unity and relatedness - UNITY
- 4 CONGRUENT - Theories must fit the facts - COMPATIBILITY
- 5 COMPREHENSIVE - Considers a wide range of experience - UNIVERSALITY
- 6 EXPLANATORY - Explains observable reality - PLAUSIBILITY

*evolution theory = gradual → jumping (Baldwin)*

# QUALIFIED SYSTEMATIC CONSISTENCY TRUTH TEST OF WORLD VIEWS



TRUTH

ORIGIN / CONDITION / SALVATION / DESTINY

KNOWLEDGE / REALITY / GOD / MORALITY / HUMANKIND  
EPISTEMOLOGY / METAPHYSICS / THEOLOGY / AXIOLOGY / ANTHROPOLOGY

**Challenge One: Listening more carefully and more responsively** - acknowledging the feelings and wants that others are expressing - compassionately allowing people to feel whatever they feel (which sets the example for others to hear & accept my feelings, also).



**Challenge Two: Explaining my conversational intent and inviting consent** by using conversational openers

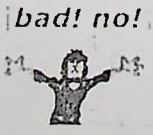
such as, "Right now I would like to take a few minutes and ask you about... [subject]." The more important the conversation, the more important it is to know & share the overall goal.



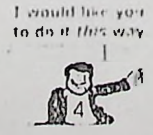
**Challenge Three: Expressing myself more clearly and more completely** - giving my

listeners the information they need to understand (mentally reconstruct) my experiences. One good way is to use "the five I-messages": what/how I observe, feel, interpret/evaluate, want, and hope for.

from:



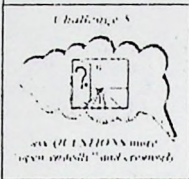
to:



**Challenge Four: Translating my criticisms and complaints into requests & explaining the**



positive results of having my request granted -- doing this for both my own complaints and the complaints that others bring to me.



**Challenge Five: Asking questions more "open-endedly" and more creatively.**

"How did you like that movie?" is an open-ended question that invites a wide range of answers. "Did you like it?" suggests only "yes" or "no" as answers and does not encourage discussion. (How do you feel about this suggestion?)



**Challenge Six: Thanking. Expressing more appreciation,**

gratitude, encouragement and delight. In a world full of problems, look for opportunities to give praise. Both at home & at work, it is the bond of appreciation that makes relationships strong enough to allow for problem-solving.



**Challenge Seven: Making the effort...**

Making better communication an important part of my everyday life... by seeing each conversation as an opportunity to grow in skill, awareness and compassion and turning each opponent into a learning and problem-solving partner.

## PRACTICING LISTENING SKILLS

Listening is an art, a skill, a discipline, and like other skills, it needs self-control. You must understand what is involved in listening and develop the necessary techniques to be silent and listen. You must ignore your own needs and concentrate attention on the person speaking. Hearing becomes listening only when you pay attention to what is said and follow it very closely.

YOU DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU ARE LISTENING BY:

- \* your body language
- \* making eye contact
- \* keeping your body open
- \* echoing words
- \* nods of your head
- \* leaning toward the speaker

YOU LISTEN TO:

- \* show your support and help the other person(s) relax
- \* show you are accepting them, and open to them
- \* enable each one to speak and be heard
- \* be able to ask questions to clarify
- \* check assumptions
- \* clear up misperceptions
- \* re-state or paraphrase
- \* find the key points or issues
- \* provide the silence necessary to encourage speech
- \* know when to bring to closure and when to test for agreements

YOU NEED TO SHOW YOU ARE LISTENING CAREFULLY, THIS IS CALLED "ATTENDING." ATTENDING SKILLS BUILD RAPPORT AND HELP PERSONS FEEL AT EASE.

- \* Listen without interrupting.
- \* Pay attention.
- \* Use supportive body language.
- \* Paraphrase facts and feelings.

YOU ALSO NEED TO PRACTICE REACTING AND RESPONDING IN POSITIVE WAYS. USING GOOD RESPONDING SKILLS HELP PERSONS UNDERSTAND THE THINGS YOU CARE ABOUT AND HELP YOU COLLECT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SITUATION.

- \* Ask clarifying questions.
- \* Ask probing questions.
- \* Restate what the other person is saying catching the essence, but trying to take out the volatile phrases or language. This is called "laundering" language and it can reduce friction.
- \* Summarize facts and feelings.
- \* Reframe issues, focus on the interests, not positions.
- \* Try to always use "I" language instead of "You" Not: "When you do that, you make me feel . . ." instead say, "When you do that I feel . . ."
- \* Try to communicate directly with the other person.
- \* Be forward thinking, try to focus on the future.

USE "BRAINSTORMING" TO FIND AS MANY OPTIONS OR SOLUTIONS AS POSSIBLE. THE GROUND RULES TO BRAINSTORMING ARE THAT THE PERSONS IN THE MEETING ARE JUST THROWING OUT IDEAS. AT THIS POINT IN TIME DO NOT ELIMINATE ANY IDEAS, THAT CAN BE DONE LATER. THE OTHER GROUND RULE IS THAT JUST BECAUSE AN IDEA IS MENTIONED IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE OTHER PERSON IS AGREEING TO THAT IDEA. ITS JUST AN IDEA THROWN OUT FOR PURPOSES OF THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION. BRAINSTORMING HELPS THE PERSON TURN GOOD IDEAS INTO A PLAN OF ACTION.

LOOK FOR POINTS OF AGREEMENT THAT THE PERSONS HAVE IN COMMON, AND MENTION THEM.

PAYING ATTENTION AND LISTENING WITHOUT INTERRUPTION

ALLOWS THE OTHER PERSON TO "LET OFF SOME STEAM." BEFORE ANY SERIOUS RESOLUTIONS CAN OCCUR, YOU NEED TO LET THE OTHER PERSON KNOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND WHERE THEY ARE COMING FROM AND YOU UNDERSTAND THAT THEY FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT THE ISSUES YOU ARE

DISCUSSING WITH THEM. THEIR INTENSE EMOTIONS MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND AFFIRMED BEFORE SERIOUS SOLUTIONS CAN BE DISCUSSED. YOU SHOULD ENCOURAGE THE OTHER PERSON TO "LET OFF STEAM" AND EXPLAIN THEIR CONCERNS BY USING VERBAL CUES SUCH AS:

- \* "I see."
- \* "I understand."
- \* "That's a good point."
- \* "I can see that you feel strongly about that."
- \* "I can understand how you could see it like that."

THESE NONVERBAL ACTIONS ALSO SHOW THE OTHER PERSON THAT YOU HEAR WHAT THEY ARE SAYING:

- \* Squarely face the other person.
- \* Adopt an open posture.
- \* Lean discreetly toward the other person, not threateningly.
- \* Maintain eye contact, take cues from the other person as to how much eye contact s/he is comfortable with.
- \* Try to relax as you interact with the other person.

OF COURSE, FOR THE OTHER PERSON TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE LISTENING, YOU MUST MAKE A RESPONSE. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOUR LISTENING WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE STYLE AND QUALITY OF YOUR RESPONSE.



## Learning through Social Exposure

In views of identifying some ways and means to do some social ministry I began to search for some one to guide me. On my way, at the right time, my rector Fr. Joy OSC helped me out. I was then introduced to Mr. Tomy (CHAKA). It was he who introduced me to Community Health Cell (CHC) Bangalore, more particularly to DR. Ravi Narayanan of CHC. At the very outset I thank all at CHC. I feel I am brought to the right place for social exposure where I can see both the field level activities as well as organizational activities. Thus the first point to remember for me is to be equipped with the knowledge of various elements of social activities. I have been to CHC and CKAKA since three months. I am proud of myself for being there and to be accepted by all. In fact my purpose of coming to the field is to get to know the different dimensions of social ministry. That's being met at all levels in various forms.

Some of my experiences and learnings at the community based development activities are gained in the following areas of my involvement:

- i. The life-skill sessions at Deepahalli
  - ii. Seeds of Hope: a personal study
  - iii. Visit to Holy Cross Comprehensive Rural Health Project
  - iv. Visit to Vivekananda Girijana Kalyana Mandira (VGKK, BR Hills)
  - v. Disaster Management Course, CHAI
  - vi. Drivers Welfare Association, Sarati
  - vii. Training at CHAI, Secndarabad
- i. The life-skill sessions at Deepahalli

A group of drop out boys learning various technical skills in the training center at Deepahalli, Bangalore, are given the life skill sessions. It is proved to be very much needed for those boys in which they gain knowledge as well as it is an aid to attitudinal changes. Through the life skill sessions the boys are informed of the life processes and I see they are motivated to do better and to give up some bad habits. Here the time spent for life skill sessions really builds the life of the boys.

ii. Seeds of Hope: a personal study

I have glanced through the health action series during my college days. But I never knew there are true and inspiring life stories of people who have worked at community level for social development. One amazing thing in my study of the people's life and their projects in health action and Health for the Millions is that they are great people with simple beginning, a beginning to love the poor. All their activities/projects are a concern for the poor and the marginalized at grass root level with people's participation. The risk they have taken is very much inspiring and challenging to me. I pray they may inspire me and many more to live for community development activities. Breaking through the set patterns of a particular society/community and to effect progress which signifies change in the living conditions is not an easy task but is a TASK before me/us.

iii. Visit to Holy Cross Comprehensive Rural Health Project

It was an eye opening sight for me in my own state close to my hometown to see dry plants at the roadsides that too in the month of July. I never thought of it to be. Hanur, which is in Kollegal Taluk is the place where the Holy Cross Sisters are doing the Rural Health Project. Their life in that place is an inspiration. They take the risk to enter any village not afraid of anything that could take place. One late evening that I spent in one of the villages together with the sisters touches my memory. One element of learning at this place is to see the effective way of coordination in which I saw, some of the community members themselves are in charge of various programs and activities. The community is entrusted with responsibilities and they have a great trust in the community. This is where I feel there is a great sustainability of our activity.

iv. VGKK, BR Hills

A house of serenity at the top of BR hills. The formal school education given to those tribal boys and girls of that area is a blessing. I do admire Dr. Sudarshan and his companions who made those tribals that they are somebody. The hospital, non-formal education, mobile clinic service serves the most necessary needs of the people. The task I feel at this point is that for us to find out a community where our help/support is most needed. It is not that others do not need, but to seek the most unreached of our fellow humans.

v. Disaster Management Course, CHAI

There aroused a deep concern at the often-occurring disaster in our country. The CHAI at National level organized a disaster preparedness for five days. I had the opportunity to participate in it. The aim of it was to create an awareness of having how to provide minimum standard of living as per the need assessment at the occurrence of a disaster. It was a joint effort of CHAI and Caritas India. I was blessed to interact with many CHAI office bearers at National and Regional level.

vi. Drivers Welfare Association, Sarathi

It's a voluntary organization situated in Kerala. The objective of this organization is to coordinate the taxi drivers in Kerala and to support them in their activities and also to support their family and children. Speaking to the staff members I could realize that this group is also working at the root level for development and conscientization. They told me that they travel place-to-place organizing and transmitting information and making the taxi drivers as members of this particular association. Though I could not go in person to the field with them I feel this activity is praise worthy in enabling the taxi drivers.



## Problem Management

### **A definition:**

Problems are *thinking choices* which can adversely affect happiness and/or performance unless prevented, managed or solved.

### Problem management analysis:

#### *Grid*

1. Am I checking problem solving grid?
2. Am I owning responsibility for the authorship of life?
3. Am I in touch with underlying feelings?
4. Am I using self-talk constructively?
5. Are personal rules and directives helpful or harmful?
6. Are perceptions regarding others and self-accurate?
7. Are attributions of cause accurate?
8. Are predictions realistic?
9. Am I clearly articulating goals and do they reflect self-values?
10. Am I using visualizing to best effect?

### CASIE: A FIVE STEP PROBLEM SOLVING FRAMEWORK

*CASIE is a flexible framework for the processes of problem management.*

- C    **Confront** problem.
- A    **Assess** and define problem.
- S    **Set** goals and plan.
- I    **Implement** plan.
- E    **Evaluate** the consequences of implementation.

### **Step I: Confront the problem**

- **Orientation:** refers to attitude to problem. Relevant considerations are degree to which problems are regarded as a normal part of life – best approach to problems trying to cope – important to identify problems either before or as they arise before they become full blown; and a ‘stop... think... what are my choices?’ approach is better than impulsiveness.
- **Ownership:** in acknowledging problem. There are numerous convenient reasons to deny or dilute problems significance. Acknowledging means: admitting wrong to self; confronting need to change and having to develop new and better skills. It also involves assuming responsibility for how to think, feel and act rather than choosing to perceive others as responsible.
- **Clearing a space:** acknowledging means going beyond awareness of problem existence to work on it. This involves clearing a space – physical environment free from distractions; psychological space – give problem time & emotional energy it deserves.

### **Step II: Assess & define the problem**

Consider the following statements of problems:

- I am bored/shy/lonely/unhappy
- I can't control my anger
- I get nervous during exams
- I feel my parents dominate me
- I suffer from high BP
- I am good at postponing things
- I am disorganized

All these statements are *descriptive* and don't provide 'handles' on how to work towards change. Make the distinction between *acquired* ('what others have done to me') thinking skills weaknesses and how thinking skills weaknesses are *sustained* ('what I do to myself').

Problem assessment entails detective work of searching for what you do or fail to do that sustains the problem. The purpose of assessment is to move from a descriptive statement to a working definition of the problem specifying thinking and action skills weaknesses sustaining the problem.

### Describing Problems

After deciding to clear a space and focus on a problem, you then need to develop a *fuller understanding of the problem*. Ask questions that elicit specific information about the problem to *describe the problem*. Next, explain *how the problem is sustained*. Elaborate on the initial problem description by asking a series of *how* questions:

- *How* would I like to be?
- *How* long has the problem been going on?
- *How* severe/important is it?
- *How* do I feel/act/think in relation to it?
- *How* have I coped so far?
- *How* is my behavior helping or harming me?



The answer comes by systematically focusing on thoughts and actions. Three methods increase awareness of thoughts in relation to a problem.

- Thought listing – list all thoughts and go on adding till important thoughts in relation to problems are identified.
- A B C analysis – the ABC framework identifies thoughts, feelings and actions relating to problems:
  - A activating event
  - B thoughts and visual images about A
  - C how you felt and acted in relation to A

Describe thoughts specifically.

- Double column technique – method of monitoring thoughts relating to problem for a specific period. Ex: ‘I can’t control my anger’

### Key Problem

## I CAN'T CONTROL MY ANGER

### DOUBLE COLUMN TECHNIQUE

MONTH February LOG			WHAT HAPPENED (anger trigger; behavior during incident)	MY THOUGHTS (before, during and after anger incident)
DAY	DATE	TIME		
Monday	18 <sup>th</sup> .	8:00 am		
		12:00 pm		
		2:10 pm		
		6:15 pm		
		8:20 pm		

### **Problem sustenance:**

The final product-explanation after generating & weighing different options is a list of specific skills weaknesses sustaining the problem.

*The role of self in explaining elements of the problem:*

- Information database-  
Seek & gather information about the self & the opinions of others including how supportive others are likely to be in order to fully describe the problem.
- Knowing what to look for-  
The problem prevention and solving checklist indicates thinking skills weaknesses. Focus on searching for specific action skills weaknesses- relationship & study skills weaknesses (exam weaknesses).
- Generating explanations-  
Be creative generating alternative explanations of problem sustenance in the knowledge that the first explanation is frequently not the best option.  
Creatively *brainstorm* for different options following the brainstorming rules:  
Criticism of ideas is ruled out.  
Freewheeling is welcomed [unrestricted, uninhibited dreaming up of ideas]  
Quantity is wanted (the more ideas the better).

- Weighing explanations-  
Decide on explanations that accurately reflect (fit the facts) the particular problem based on:
  - Past history in relation to similar problems sensitizes the search for characteristic skills weaknesses.
  - Anticipating predicted consequences of certain explanations are more likely to be successful than others.
  - Certain explanations lead to changing thoughts and actions in tune with abilities.
  
- Stating working definitions-  
Working definitions are made on the basis of currently available information about problem sustenance & identifying specific thinking & action skills weaknesses to work on; using specific *handles* to guide change. Working definitions are open to modification and updating in the light of new information.
 

**Example:**

Angry Kumar is a middle-aged man with two teenaged daughters. He had great difficulty in controlling his temper and had recently struck one of his daughters. He is afraid that inability to control anger will lead to the break-up of his family.

A working definition statement of Kumar's anger problem includes the following *thinking* skills weaknesses:

  - a) Inadequately acknowledging responsibility for thoughts, feelings and actions.
  - b) Not using coping self-talk when faced with provocations.
  - c) Having rigid and unrealistic personal rules concerning standards of behavior in the family.
  - d) Misperceiving and insufficiently acknowledging the connection between how he behaves towards his family



and how they behave towards him. Kumar's *Action* skills weaknesses are:

Listening skills

Assertion skills

Conflict communication skills

*NB:* Working definition statement includes atleast two thinking skills weaknesses & one action skills weaknesses.

### **STEP 3: Set goals and plan**

Making a goal statement requires specification of four characteristics-

- i. Reflecting values
- ii. Be realistic
- iii. Be specific
- iv. In a given timeframe

Step 3 focuses on the question— *how can I best manage the problem?*

- ***Setting working goals.***

Goals are stated broadly. Ex: Kumar says, "I want to become less angry"

Descriptive goal statements provide overall vision. Working goals are specified statements targeting change. Working goals statements are the reverse or "flip side" of working definition statements.

An example of changing Kumar's working definition statement into working goal statement by focusing on thinking skills strengths:

- a) Adequately acknowledging responsibility for thoughts, feelings and actions.
- b) Using coping self-talk when faced with provocations.

- c) Having realistic personal rules concerning standards of family behavior.
- d) Realistically perceiving how his behavior affects his family's behavior towards him.

Kumar needs to acquire the following *action* skills strengths in the areas- *listening* skills, assertion skills, conflict communication skills.

Kumar has to start immediately to make significant progress in attaining anger goals in a time frame of one month as he fears divorce & family breakup.

Kumar needs to spell out his working goals further. Ex: 'what kind of coping self-talk to use in which anger evoking situation?' There is sufficient information in the initial working goal statement to give a sense of direction; the details can be filled in later.

- *Developing a plan*

*Six* characteristics relevant to a problem solving plan-

- State goals and sub-goals clearly. Ex: Kumar's main goal is to become less angry. Each of his working goals are sub-goals.
- Break tasks down. Ex: break coping self-talk down into coping self-instructions and calming self-instructions.
- Generate, consider & develop multiple alternative options for attaining thinking & action working goals.
- Anticipate, acknowledge & plan coping strategies for difficulties and setbacks in implementation.
- Identify support sources carefully for better management of difficult problems. Ex: Sometimes a problem shared is a problem magnified & not a problem solved- a person suffering from AIDS faces all sorts of unwanted reactions if

the diagnosis is disclosed indiscriminately. **Write action plan out**—an important problem merits the time and attention for a written plan which- i. clarifies focus ii. strengthens commitment. A written plan which avoids the twin dangers of insufficient & excess detail is easy to understand & follow.

- Homework, rehearsal and practice produces a better understanding of thinking skills weaknesses. Using visualized rehearsal; rehearse thinking and action components required for successfully performing a particular task. Practice on easier problems first.

A firm & flexible plan provides self-discipline to take appropriate implementation steps & openness to realistic feedback.

#### **STEP 4: Elements of plan implementation**

- Pay attention to timing
- Work through doubts about plan aspects
- No excuses
- Openness to feedback
- Use positive self-reward
- Work through guilt of not sticking to plan format.

Learning is the difficult process of persistently altering & permanently changing established thinking & behavioral habits & takes place in fits and starts. Learning success does wonders for commitment.

#### **STEP 5**

Evaluate implementation consequences by clearly stating working goals based on monitoring and evaluating change protocols in terms of thinking & action by asking:



- i. How well am I using my thinking and action skills?
- ii. What are the consequences for myself and others of changes in thinking and action skills?
- iii. Do I need to modify my plan in the light of feedback and new information?

**Example:** angry Kumar after having thought through the consequences of his changed thinking and actions was encouraged to persist.

The consequence of being more rational and less aggressive in approaching family problems was the loss of some power which he did not like. However evaluation of the gains and losses from changed thinking and acting brought the realization that:

- i. Rashmi, the daughter he had struck, was now more understanding and supportive of him
- ii. Both daughters were behaving more considerately at home
- iii. His daughters' friends were more friendly
- iv. The family bonds had definitely been strengthened
- v. Family break-up had been averted.

This confirmed to Kumar the value of continuing to make different and better choices in his family's life.

*Scenario:*

### **Exam Anxiety**

Anuradha age 18 was at the end of the first year at University. Throughout the year she had been very anxious each time she was required to take a test. Her marks were near the top of her class, but she still didn't think that it was good enough. Anuradha had very little social life. She worked very hard all the time to prove she was worthy of her parents' sacrifices in supporting her at university. As the year progressed her concentration seem poorer during revision. She became increasingly tense during tests; ex- at

the start of an exam paper her hand shook so much that she had to struggle to hold on to the pen; her mouth went dry; her stomach felt knotted; her mind felt empty and she was afraid she would faint.

How would you proceed with problem management?

### General Information-

It is normal to experience some anxiety taking an exam. A certain amount of anxiety tones up and facilitates performance. Too much anxiety is debilitating in terms of discomfort and performance.

The grid provides 'handles' for Anuradha to work on exam anxiety.

1. Are you working the grid?

2. Are you owning responsibility for the authorship of life?

Anuradha is not aware of herself as a chooser. She does not realize that she is making thinking choices which influence how she feels. She has the illusion of assuming responsibility for life authorship but does not possess the knowledge and skill to do so effectively.

3. Are you in touch with underlying feelings?

Anuradha is out of touch with her valuing process. She is not listening to her recreation and social companionship needs. She treats herself like a machine and if this continues, risks converting burnout feelings into full blown breakdown.

4. Are you using self-talk constructively?

Anuradha is not using calming and coaching elements of coping self-talk to help her. Coping self talk will help her revise more efficiently – she needs to replace 'you' messages like 'you fool' with coping 'I' messages. Ex: Instead of 'you fool' self-statements can be changed to 'I can handle this exam anxiety. My anxiety is a signal to use coping skills; all I



have to do is to cope.' If coping skills made a situation better, acknowledge: 'I used my coping skills and they worked.'

Calming self-talk, ex: 'slow down, relax, take it easy'

Coaching self-talk, ex: 'focus on talking yourself through the processes of the steps involved in doing the exam without experiencing anxiety. Concentrate on the task and discipline yourself not to think extraneous thoughts.'

5. Are personal rules and directives helpful?

Anuradha is making *mustabatory* demands on herself. Her personal rules are 'I must do extremely well everytime I take a test and I must always obtain parental approval. She is engaging in unnecessary self-rating: 'if I don't do well I am worthless.' She is catastrophising: 'if I don't do well this is an awful disaster I will be unable to handle.' Anuradha also has *pressuriser* directives: 'Achieve at all costs, be in control and hurry up.' She also has inhibitor directives: 'don't enjoy yourself and don't take risks.'

6. Are perceptions accurate regarding self and others?

Anuradha needs to be realistic of her academic ability. She may be trying to achieve standards which may be too high for her without making huge sacrifices. She may be an extremely able student whose anxieties and negative self-labeling interfere with her achievement. Logical analysis of evidence regarding academic strengths and weaknesses helps in perceiving herself more accurately. Additionally she needs to test out her perceptions of her parents- They may be proud of her in her own right and not want her to feel constant pressure to achieve for their sakes.

7. Are attributions of cause accurate?

Anuradha may be overworking because of inaccurate attributions about why she may not do well - 'she regards failure as due to lack of effort.' She needs to review 'better



fit' explanations for not performing as well as she would like – insufficient ability, high anxiety, task difficulty, bad luck, boring subject, poor teaching, emotional staleness, poor revision skills & poor exam skills. Anuradha is undermining her confidence by seeing the causes of poor performance as internal and stable and the causes of good performance as external and transient. She needs to review carefully her explanations of the causes.

8. Are predictions realistic?

Anuradha is making unrealistic predictions – she is so afraid of doing badly that this contributes to her prediction that she will not do well heightening anxiety further. Acknowledging and assessing the evidence will alter the prediction. Also, she may predict she cannot cope in not doing well. A realistic assessment might indicate otherwise.

9. Are goals clearly articulated and reflecting values?

Clearly Anuradha's goal is to manage exam anxiety better and this has to be clearly articulated – she may have unrealistic goals about how well she expects to do and needs to articulate specific and realistic self-goals. Also her life is unbalanced – she needs to articulate social and recreational goals. Possibly, as deep exploration takes place, Anuradha may find that current behavior reflects others' values rather than self values.

10. Are you visualizing to best effect?

*No* – Anuradha imagines herself as behaving incompetently at exam times and unable to cope with bad results. Anuradha must visualize to clarify goals and get in touch with strengths. She must use visualized rehearsal and practice including coping self talk to prepare for exams. She must engage in goal directed visualizing – picturing herself calmly and competently taking exams.

This is an illustrative rather than exhaustive analysis of how Anuradha's thinking skills weaknesses contribute to sustaining exam anxiety problems. Anuradha must look at specific action skills like planning, revision time and allocation of time in tests before arriving at a full working problem definition.

Confronting, assessing and defining the problem lays the solid foundation to work towards change.

## MAKING DECISION STEP BY STEP

### Advantages and disadvantages of making decision by

- a. Impulse
- b. Procrastinating or putting off
- c. Not deciding
- d. Letting others make decision
- e. Evaluation all choices and then deciding

### Steps in decision making

- f. Name the choices and alternatives involved in your decision
- g. Gather information about the decision (considering values and goals list what facts you need to know)
- h. List the advantages and disadvantages of each choice
- i. Make your decision and list your reasons for this.



## LIFE Skill 2

### DECISION MAKING

Life is just one decision after another. Each decision defines your existence. every 'yes' involves 'no'. Decisions involve various degrees of conflict and anxiety. sometimes the correct way to act is unclear and you fear the consequences of making the wrong decisions. You may under stress at the time of decision making, eg: Divorce.

Decisions involve commitment. Commitment means being prepared to carry thru' your decision, taking realistic feedback into account.

#### *Decision Making Style*

It is the way you approach and make decisions. It is the pattern of your information processing and deciding behaviour. Style is not rigid as different decisions are made in different ways. You may have a profile of different decision making styles rather than a single strongly predominant style. Your style may alter in making decisions in conjunction in others.

#### *Individual Decision Making Styles*

There are 7 characteristic overlapping styles.

1. **Rational:** You dispassionately and logically appraise all pertinent important information & select the best options in the light of your objectives.

2. **Feelings based:** The choice is what intuitively feels right based on getting in touch with what you truly feel, your subjective preferences and your inner valuing process. You generate and appraise different options but the final choice criterion is how you feel rather than what you think.

3. **Hyper vigilante:** You try too hard and become anxious and aroused by the conflict and stress involved such that decision making efficiency decreases. You get bogged down in detail, lose perspective and fail to see "the wood from the trees".

4. **Avoidant:** You cope with decisions by not acknowledging, hoping they go away or engage in delaying tactics like procrastination eg: Alcohol related problems. You defensively avoid pertinent information. Your objective is to maintain short term psychological comfort whatever the long term costs.

5. **Impulsive:** Decisions are made rapidly based on sudden impulses. You act on initial or early feelings rather than exploring, evaluating and getting in touch with your deeper feelings and options.

6. **Compliant:** You conform to what others expect of you and depend on them for signs to decision make. You are passive and allow decisions to be influenced or made by others rather than actively decision make yourself.

7. **Ethical:** The basis is the code of ethics. Ex: If you are a devout catholic decisions are made with reference to catholic teachings and papal infallibility. If not religious decisions are made on moral principles of right and wrong for the "good" of humanity and reflecting social as well as self-interest.

#### *Joint Decision Making Styles*

Much of the individual decision making styles format applies. Further conflict is experienced by different styles, wishes and needs.

In a potential 'conflict of interest' situation, the decision is confronted by 3 main decision making styles:

**1. Competitive:** Resources are scarce so there has to be a winner and loser. The approach is "I win; You lose" and you do all in your power to get your way. The risks are that the best solution may not manifest and in your partner feels violated.

**2. Compliant:** You are unassertive and go along with or given. The approach is self-deceiving "I lose; you win". The risks are not finding the best solution and you feeling violated.

**3. Collaborative:** Both search for a solution that best meets both your needs. You work together for an "I win you win solution" freely entered into by both. Neither attempts to impose wishes on the other and acknowledges and states individual wishes. There is sincere commitment for the welfare of each other.

#### **Exercise:**

1. Find your decision making style?
2. Assess the extent to which you and your partner's current joint decision style supports or oppresses your relationship?

#### **RATIONAL DECISION MAKING**

Two main stages:

##### **Stage 1: Confronting and making decision**

- Step 1: *confront* the decision
- Step 2: *generate* options and *gather* information about them
- Step 3: *assess* the predicted consequences of options
- Step 4: *commit* yourself to a decision

##### **Stage 2: Implementation and evaluating the decision.**

- Step 5: *plan* how to implement the decision
- Step 6: *implement* the decision.
- Step 7: *assess* the actual consequences of implementation.

The steps overlap and you may have to backtrack to & fro to make decisions effectively.

##### **Step 1: Confront the decision.**

\* Be open to external information: Many decisions are stimulated by your environment. Ex: You see an interesting job advertised and have to decide whether or not to apply.

\* Be open to internal information: the decision making stimulus is proactive rather than reactive. Be attuned to your changing wants, wishes and needs. Ex: 'more rewarding leisure life'.

Inner changes stimulate you to make decisions about how to attain what you want.

\* Clarity of focus: clearly identify and state decisions. Ex: Ram is very unhappy in his job.

Go beyond vague statements of feelings to a specific statement about the decision faced. The decision is to either stay in and improve or to seek a better job.

##### **Step 2: Generate options and gather information about them.**



### *Generate options*

As decisions are not black and white choices you need to creatively generate and consider different options which may contain effective ones.

It is helpful to brainstorm; "Idea findings" In groups.

You can apply some brainstorming rules on your own. The rules are:

1. Criticism of idea is ruled out
2. Freewheeling is welcome
3. Quantity is wanted.

Brain-storming is likely to generate effective ideas rather than an attempt to produce only good quality options..

### *Gathering information*

Good decisions depend on good information. Further options emerge from information gathering. Rational decision makers aim to gather as much information as they need to make a successful decision requiring a discipline approach to finding out and surveying information sources and also knowing when to stop.

#### **Exercise:**

Decision make in relation to a current life situation and see if you think and feel differently about the decision --result.

Step 3: Assess predicted option consequences.

Options are the basis of choosing the best course of action.

Choices are guided by probability and utility.

Probability is the estimation of the possibility of different options achieving desired outcomes. Utility is your subjective estimation of the value of various outcomes.

The balance sheet procedure is advocated for assessing the consequences of decisions. You need as many balance sheets as there are serious options. The balance sheet helps list possible option consequences. You need to weigh the consequences. Consequences include :

1. Consistency with goals and values
2. Amount of time and effort
3. Amount of tangible reward
4. Emotional cost or gain
5. Approval or disapproval from others
6. Physical well-being.

Ex: 'Ram, ammarried man considering whether to accept promotion that means moving to the other end of the country, takes into account his family's thoughts and feelings about the disruption this would entali. Shilpa, a seperated woman seeking divorce, takes into account the potential impact of this on her children'.

The best way to assess you decision consequences on others is to let them speak for themselves rather than reading their minds.

The more eerrors of omission and commission in the balance sheet at the time of committing to a new course of action, the greater is the vulnerability to negative feed-back at decision implementation.

### ***A Balance Sheet for assessing the consequences of a Decision Oplton:***



**Exercise:**

Do you see decisions differently on the basis of the balance sheet procedure, has it helped you to take a more rational approach to decision making.

**Step 4: Commit yourself to a decision**

Making major decisions confronts you with your existential isolation. Ultimately nobody else can make decisions for you. If the decision is finely balanced we may have regrets about renounced possibilities as well as doubts about the chosen course of action.

Strengthen your resolve

1. Ensure decision is in line with your key values.
2. Be thorough in generating, gathering information about and assessing options.
3. State goal or goals clearly and list specific rewards and payoffs for you and others.  
The balance sheet for your *preferred option* should provide all this information.
4. Carefully plan how best to implement decision, including handling set-backs and negative reactions from others.
5. Adopt flexible attitude and adjust decision and implementation based on feed-back.  
Being flexible means you reaffirm original decisions but adopt different tactics based on continuing feed-backs to carry it out. If evidence warrants you may modify or even totally reject original decisions. For eg: You are inaugurating a soft-ware company with heavy out-sourcing to the US and sept. 11 occurs.
6. Acknowledge and keep in mind the rewards of your decision as they occur.  
Your decisional balance sheet can be completed during implementation of as well as before your decision. You gain more perspective as you experience the efforts and frustrations of implementation.

**Step 5: Plan decision implementation.**

Plans are outlines how to proceed. Planning is part of the decision making process as well as final decision implementation process. Once the decision is arrived at eg: stopping smoking plan how best to act.

1. State goals and sub-goals clearly. Goals statements should be realistic, specific reflect your values and in a given time frame. Sub-goals are the steps taken to obtain your overall goal. Ex: You decide to buy a house and start a family. The stipulated sub-goal is to save a defined sum of money within a year for the house deposit.
2. Break tasks down. You don't have to break all task down at once. Ex: Sita decides to divorce Rama. She breaks decision down into different parts. a. How to relate to Rama, how to handle divorce, how to tell children, how to handle her own feelings.
3. Generate and consider alternative courses of action. Ask "how can I best achieve this subgoal?". Use brainstorming skills for generating and evaluating helpful options, goals and subgoals.
4. Anticipate difficulties and setbacks. Take them into account.

Ex: Govind wants to stop working and live in an ashram to develop his inner self for a year. His wife and family are bound to be unhappy. He plans in advance how he can break the new in an assertive, yet caring way.

5. Identify support sources. Difficult decisions can be adhered to in the context of an adequate support system. Ex: Keshav realises he is more likely to stay with his decision to stop drinking if he is part of a support group rather than break the habit on his own. Consequently he joins an online counselling group.

He thinks it will help him establish relationships with wife and family as well his friends who dont encourage drinking.

### **Write your plan out**

Complex plans are best written out. committing to implementation is easier if the steps are clearly set out. a written plan acts as a reminder in an easily visible place. Dont get lost in the details writing out the plan. Outline or map how to get from A to B but dont fill in every tree and building on the way write it out structured clearly and built around attaining central goal and related sub-goals.

### **Step 6: Implement the decision.**

Implementing may be a straight forward in that you are clear on both decision and how to proceed. Considerations in decision implementing are:

1. Timing: try to choose the best time after you have worked out how to proceed and feel reasonably confident of doing so. Timing may be influenced by others' needs. Ex: If you are a parent you may not wish to transfer when your child is in 12th Std.

#### **2. Post- decisional conflicts.**

Decision implementation generates conflicting feelings. You are sad at some of the trade-offs and compromises being made to get what you want. You still feel you need confidence to implement your decision. You have realistic reservations about the wisdom of your original decision and wish to reconsider. You become highly anxious at having to act and engage in avoidance behaviour. Conflict is usually intense as you start to implement and becomes less so as you carry on and gain confidence in the wisdom of your decision. if you experience persistent conflict implementing, you may choose to reconsider you decision.

3. No excuses. The phrase indicates the importance of assuming responsibility for decision implementation. Whe you face set-backs ask "stop.....think...what do i need to do to handle the situation?" or "how is my behaviour helping me?" rather than indulge in an orgy of excuse making.

4. Openness to feed-back. As you implement you get feed-back from yourself, others and your environment. You need sensivity and good judgement to sort out helpful from harmful feedback. Be flexible in the light of realistic assessment of feed-back. Be strong yet flexible.

5. Use of positive self-reward. Decision implementation is rewarding in its own right. Use rewards to strengthen your motivation thru' positive self talk Ex: "thats great, well done". Make a contract with yourself with a clear connection between specific achievements and self-administered rewards.

a) Buy yourself some nice clothes.

b) No watching TV on sundays for 3 sundays till a particular job is done.

6. Handling guilt. We can handle guilt feeling in ways that weaken or strengthen your resolve. Engaging in self disparagement lower self-esteem such that your self-talk becomes negative.

"I am worthless, anyway so why bother?" or "I made a mess of it once, so its obvious I may not going to succeed".

A more rational approach is to try and understand why you did not live up to your decision and make plans to stop this happening again. Tell yourself set-backs are part and parcel of difficult decision implementation and giving up bad habits. Have the courage to persist and dont think yourself into giving up.

### **Step 7: Assess actual implementation consequences**



Don't stay stuck with decisions and plans that don't work for you. Decide to review your original decision and restart from Step 1 of the 7 step model. Rational decision making involves accurate feedback perception and willingness to act on it. Efficient information processing helps make and assess decisions

### **IMPROVING DECISION MAKING QUALITY**

Increase the probability of making decisions that work for rather against you.  
Increase the self-supporting and decrease self-oppressing elements of your decision making.

*A decision making check-list:*

When making a decision you may help yourself by asking the following questions:

1. Am I engaging in the steps of rational decision-making?
2. Am I owning responsibility for the authorship of my life?
3. Am I in touch with my underlying feelings?
4. Am I using self-talk constructively?
5. Are my personal rules and directives helping rather than harming me?
6. Are my perceptions accurate regarding myself and others?
7. Are my attributions of cause accurate?
8. Are my predictions realistic?
9. Am I articulating my goals clearly and do they reflect my values?
10. Am I using visualizing to best effect?

#### **1. Am I engaging in the steps of rational decision making.?**

Go through again the rational decision making steps already discussed.

#### **2. Am I owning responsibility for the authorship of my life?**

- \* There are many ways you fail to own responsibility for life-authorship.
- \* You are not fully aware of your capacity to make your life thru your choices.
- \* You lack full existential awareness. ( You have not adequately grasped the transitory nature of your life)
- \* You expect others to be responsible for what happens to you.
- \* You bring ongoing anxieties into your decision making and when the stakes are high, the decision is complex, there is value conflict and no clear "best option" you handle decision anxiety using inappropriate avoidance impulsive and hyper-vigilante styles.
- \* You have become used to depending on others (parents for advice on how to act).
- \* You are hyper-sensitive to peer group rules and afraid to lose their esteem.
- \* You obey authority figures and cede responsibility to them, thereby gaining external approval at the expense of losing integrity.

Ask courageously " am I too passive in my life approach and wait for things to happen?; do i take the easy way out by avoiding decisions?; do I get so anxious I am afraid to make up my mind?; do I lack the courage of my convictions and become too dependent on others for my decisions.

#### **3. Am I in touch with my underlying feelings?**

Decisions define and create you. Good decisions require reasoning skills, getting in touch with your underlying feelings and getting more deeply centred in listening to your own valuing process.

*Ways to get in touch with your feelings?*



**Take more time:**

Before making important decision sleep on it. A good night's sleep puts matter into perspective, lessens the risk of hasty decision making and allows decision making when refreshed. Given some more time, you may find yourself confident enough to make a previously difficult decision.

**Gather external information:**

Relates to decision making readiness. Making decision is a process. As you collect more information you are able to understand what you really want. Attention to process reduces a decision with which you are comfortable.

**Inner listening:**

A vital source of information from within. develop inner-focusing and listening -to-feelings skills. Allow time for creative contemplation. Focus on inner listening when a decision bothers you. Inner listening skills are : Physically and psychologically clearing a space; spending 'quiet time' periods, after relaxing yourself- with your eyes shut dont analyse or think through the decision but experience your flow of feelings in relation to it. See if you feel differently about the decision after the quiet time period.

**Assert Yourself:**

Assert yourself because outer noise (other people with/without vested interest in your decision outcomes may be ready to offer advice rather than to help you with your decisions) is so great it blocks your inner listening.

**Anxiety management skills:**

Anxiety is a devastating anaesthetic for feelings. Coping self-talk and realistic personal rules lower debilitating anxiety and put you in touch with you wants, wishes and feelings.

**4. Am I using self-talk constructively?**

Some self-talk ways:

a) I 'self-talk.

It is constructivel self-supporting to say to yourself "I cant make up my mind" rather than "you fool why cant you make up you own mind?"

b) Calming self-talk.

Say to yourself " keep calm, relax, I can cope" when you experience anxiety over decision making.

c) Coaching self-talk.

Consciously instruct yourself through the steps of the rational decision making process. Ex; "Am I adequatly confronting the decision?" "How do I go about this?" "What do i predict are the option consequences and what are the criterea for assésing them?" "what is the best option and am I prepared to commit implementing?"

d) Self-talk dialogue.

Conduct a dialogue with yourself. Part of you in favour of the decision ofan option holds a dialogue with part of you that is against it. Weigh pros & cons like this prior to the decision. Given privacy you can self-talk dialogue with yourself aloud.

**5. Are my personal rules and directives helping rather than harming me?**

Self-oppressing mustabatory personal rules come in the way of content and process of decision making. "I must always make the right decision". "I must always make decisons quickly and easily" "I must always get what I want". " I mut be liked by everyone" "I must get into the most prestigious job" "I must make more money than my friends"

Mustabatory related "pressurizer and inhibitive" directives rules in pair decision making.  
Pressurizer directives "hurry up" " be in control".  
Inhibitor directive "dont think; dont feel ;don't take risk"

Become aware, dispute and reformulate self-opposing rules into self-supporting language.  
Become aware, understand origins, dispute and grant yourself permission to think and act differently about pressurizer and inhibitive directives  
Struggle hard to combat self-defeating "voices in the head", internalised from others with your own rational rules and directives.

#### **6. Are my perceptions accurate regarding myself and others?**

Check whether you are making the distinction between facts and inferences. Where facts are limited make your inferences as realistic as possible.

\*self-perceptions: Evaluate yourself realistically. Dont attach false or negative labels for yourself. Focusing on your weaknesses and unnecessarily putting yourself down cause you to be over-anxious and miss good opportunities. Being defensive and not acknowledging realistic weaknesses distance you from having a sound information base for your decisions.

\*Perceptions of others: Decisions require you to perceive others accurately. Focusing on other people's weaknesses rather than strengths finds you making decisions to end relation- ship's and jobs when it might have been in your interest to stay in with them. Thinking- perceptual errors contribute to perceiving others unrealistically. Ex: Black & white thinking- S/He either all for me or all against me.

Ex: Overgeneralising-- because h/she ignored me once s/he will always do so. Good decisions require good information. the more you misperceive, the poorer your your information & greater the cahnces of poor decision making. The first perception is not necessarily the best perception. Take time and trouble to check out the accuracy of your perceptions of yourself and others. These are important building blocks for your decisions.

#### **7. Are my attributions of cause accurate?**

Below is an example of making a decision based on attribution: "Shiva aged 21 has decided not to do post-graduate studies. His marks this year at college has not been as good expected-wanted . He attributes this to lack of ability. Shiva is making an all important decision on the basis of his explanation of the situation in which he finds himself. His explanations may or maynot be accurate. In making important decisions , consider carefully the explanations you give to yourself for what is happening to you. Seperate facts from inferences and logically analyse the factual underpinning of any causal inferences you may make.

#### **8. Are my predictions realistic?**

- \* Collect information to increase the probablity of realistic prediction
- \* Have a realistic general decision making style rather than a optimistic or pessimistic one.
- \* Dont rush into decisions based on rosy expectaions and live to regret them.
- \* Dont fail to create and take good opportunities by being too pessimistic.
- \* Dont jump to conclusions based on erroneous and simplistic information. Poor decisions are founded on faulty predictive reasoning.

Example: I could never work under a woman

I cant stand the sight of blood and can never become a doctor.

A woman like me will never be able to compete in a man's world.

Discipline your thinking to sort out facts from inferences in making predictions. You may have some basis for some of your perceptions. However the conclusions drawn may be inaccurate.



Ex: You may have realistic evidence which is much harder for a woman than a man to succeed careerwise, but it is probably leap of logic to say *that you* will never be able to compete. Think of 'Sushma Swaraj & Indira Gandhi'. Like them you also have strengths you don't fully acknowledge.

**9. Am I articulating my goals clearly and do they reflect my values?**

During the decision making process goals may not be altogether clear. Part of the decision making process entails making decisions about what goals you choose as well as how to go about obtaining them. Ideally your goals reflect your values. Occasionally values conflict making it harder to articulate your goals. Ex: You have materialistic values at the same time as wanting to help others in your work. You need to spend time clarifying your goals and values before making a more specific decision in this instance. The trade-offs and compromises involved in articulating your goals are more likely to help rather than harm if you approach your values-decisions in a rational way taking into account deeper feelings and ethical commitments.

**10. Am I using visualising to best effect?**

Use visualising to clarify goals, review options, deploy positive imagery and applying worst 'possibility scenarios'

**\* Clarify your goals.**

Have a vision of what you want to make of your life. Daydreams are one excellent source. Visualised goals in the process of articulating goals to give you a feel of what it is like to attain your goal. As you visualise you may choose to modify your goals.

**\* Review options**

As you review and weigh decision options, mentally picture implementing the main options and experiencing their consequences. Ex: Visualise a day in the life of a different career. Practise doing it systematically. Use of positive imagery concerning your strengths and coping capacities makes your decision making more confident. Ex: If you are afraid of the consequence of accepting a promotion visualising yourself coping the more difficult job assists you in deciding to accept rather than rejecting the promotion. Consider the worst possibility if you are avoiding making a decision, visualise the 'worst case scenario' of carrying out one or more options. Visualise how you will cope with the difficulties and what support you will get from whom, where and when. Visualising yourself coping in adversity helps overcome blocks both to making and implementing the decision.



## Self-Awareness

Self- awareness is a remarkably difficult concept to define.

The Webster's third new international dictionary, 1981 provides a working definition.

*Self-awareness is an awareness of one's own personality or individuality.*

Self awareness helps us to:-

- delineate our ego boundaries.
- self monitor.
- Notice when we are being stretched beyond our limits.
- Notice physical and Psychological changes.

***It helps you to realize that***

1. I love myself because I'm special.
2. It's OK to have different feelings.
3. I take care of my body because it's the most valuable thing I'll ever own.
4. I'll strive to take care of my body.

## *Self-Awareness Management*

### *(a) Delineate our ego boundaries.*

The ego boundary is our psychological line of concept(LOC). The LOC is the place where "I" ends and "you" begin. The LOC demarcates which problems belong to us as opposed to the problems of others. The LOC mediates optimum psychological distance in relation to others; neither so close that we are over involved nor so far detached that we are unable to appreciate the problems of others.

### *(b)self monitor.*

As we begin to notice our actions and reactions, we are better able to choose certain lines of action rather than feel acted upon. We initiate action. We begin to take responsibility for what we do.

### *© Notice*

When we are being stretched beyond our limits. Without self awareness we fail to notice and are "blind" to our own actions.

### *(b) Notice*

Physical and psychological changes; If we are not particularly self aware, we lose touch by failing to "connect" with our physical (we don't notice what is happening to our bodies or our physical fitness)and psychological states(we don't notice our changing moods). We tend to be more aware of some areas of our self-awareness as compared to other areas. Self-awareness is heightened by discovery and confirmation through self - observation, observation by others and in interactive observational situations.

*We can increase the depth and range of our self-awareness through practicing (with a view to action) the self-awareness strategies mentioned below.*

- TALK/write
- SUPPORT / groups
- Counselling
- Uncover, challenge and replace **IRRATIONAL BELIEFS**
- **CLARIFY** values develop other assertive qualities and skills.

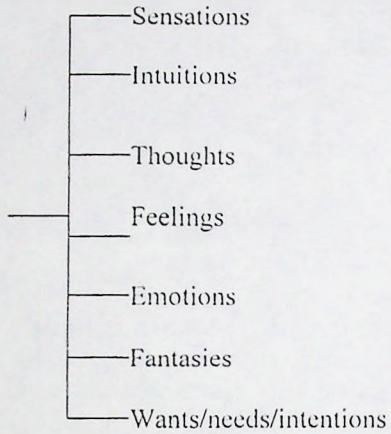
Sara Paddison, *The Hidden Power of the Heart*  
As you sincerely go for deeper levels of love, the results you'll have in well-being and increased quality of life will motivate you, leading you to a wider dimensional awareness. The results are so rewarding you can easily develop a passion for self-management.

*Robin Williams, comedian once said- you are given one streak of madness, do not lose it.*

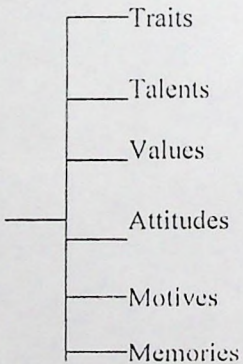
*Anonymous*  
*Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves, for they shall never cease to be amused.*



fore  
uid



fore  
able



M  
O  
D  
E  
L  
  
O  
F  
  
I  
N  
N  
E  
R  
  
S  
E  
L  
F  
  
A  
W  
A  
R  
E  
N  
E  
S  
S

*The model of inner self-awareness above makes the process of raising our self-awareness more systematic.*

A am I thinking?  
S What am I sensing?  
K What am I feeling?  
What am I?