

## How to Manage our Feelings

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*So convenient a thing it is to be a rational creature, since it enables us to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to.* Ben Franklin

The guy was a big, fierce looking man who I would have avoided in a dark alley after midnight. I was nervous just meeting him for coffee at Starbucks. I got there early and saw him drive up in a new Corvette with a blonde hanging on his every word.

I wondered what in the world he wanted to talk to me about. My buddy Ron asked if I would see him over a cup of hot French Roast and see if I could figure out why he was so uptight. He certainly didn't look like he needed anything I had. I suppose that was my poverty immersed background talking again.

Gabe came in and saw me sitting in the far corner and asked what I was drinking. "The real stuff," I replied. He asked for a latte with cinnamon on top and I knew that anyone who would pay \$4.50 for a coffee drink was loaded. After a few minutes of weather and Bengal's, he jumped into the thing with both feet.

"I've had it," he growled. "I can't figure out what is wrong with me. Everything in my life great but I feel lousy all the time."

"Has it always been like this?" I asked.

"No. I used to feel great most of the time but now I am all bummed out."

"Ah, so this is something new for you?"

"Well, not brand new. When I was a kid I had some bad spells but after I got involved in sports I felt a lot better. I was picked on a lot but decided to work out and fight back so the guys wanted me to be their friend and that made me feel a whole lot better."

"So, you felt good through sports but now you are back to bummed out. Is that right?"

"Yea, I am out of sports now. I hurt my leg and can't play ball any more. Right after that, I started getting all nervous and shaky inside. I don't know why because I have it pretty good. My contract to sign with the Colts gave me a lot of money and I have everything I ever wanted. But I am pretty miserable now."

People tell me that I should cheer up because most men would die for what I have. But I can't help it. I feel awful. The docs gave me anti-depressive medication but it made things worse. I felt like a wuss because I couldn't make it on my own so I threw it all away. I've always had to do it on my own. Even as a kid I had to take care of myself. If I didn't I would be in real hot water."

“What did you do when you were in trouble?”

“Well, if somebody was on my case I would just knock them down and threaten to hurt them real bad if they bothered me any more. In sports and school I just worked hard and beat everybody else in the competition.”

“How did you motivate yourself to excel?”

“I beat myself into a pulp if I lost a game or failed in class. I would be real hard and say terrible things to myself in order to psyche myself up. I hated to lose. I was depressed for days if we lost a game, especially if I screwed up.”

“OK, Gabe, how do you handle failures now? Like with your wife or kids or at work? What do you do?”

“Oh, man, I still beat myself up. I call myself names and say I am stupid and really get worked up. We were playing Scrabble last week and I messed up on a word. I got so mad at myself that I quit and went home. Nobody likes to be around me when I lose. Then I beat myself up for acting like a jerk.”

“OK Gabe, I think we can work this out together. You are just the kind of guy who can get hold of this type of problem and lick it. Why don't we set up another time to get together and see if we can beat this thing?”

All right, Doc. I feel like you understand me better. How about next Wednesday after I get back from my golfing game in Hilton Head? Do you play golf?”

“Yes, I love the game. I'll see you Wednesday at 2:00 in my office.”

The next week, Gabe and I had a few relaxed minutes discussing his golf trip and sharing our mutual frustration at hitting a little white ball. Then he launched into a time of complaining about how badly he felt about losing at golf. “I know it isn't important to win all the time. I am just playing for fun but it isn't fun when I play badly. I feel lousy about myself and my anger gets the best of me. My friends don't want to play with me any more. What can I do?”

I listened for a few more minutes and then asked if he really wanted to change his bad feelings. “I sure do. Everybody is on my case. I've tried to blame my wife, my business and my age but I know I have to do something different. What do you suggest?”

I first gave Gabe a brief overview of how we can renew our mind. He had heard the scripture taught many times but had never known how to apply it in real life. “Well, Gabe, let me explain a couple of things to you about how the brain works. I will write out the simple looking formula ABCD.” I proceeded to elaborate how we can take charge of the feelings that harass us day and night and stop blaming others.

A Stands for the Activating Events in life

B stands for the Belied Systems that we carry around with us all the time. It includes values, memories, habits, self talk and so forth

C is for the Consequential Feelings that come as a result of our Beliefs about the Activating Events

D is the Decisive Behaviors that we choose to engage in as a result of the B's and C's.

E is for the ways we can evaluate what we are thinking, feeling and doing to see if they are reasonable, rational and biblical.

I told Gabe the following story.

### **Stormy Weather**

Several years ago our friend called and asked if we had been able to sleep because of the tornado warnings. Karen asked, "What tornado warnings". Julie responded with a lecture that we should be more anxious about storms or we might be blown away by a tornado some day.

Karen and I responded differently from our friend to the same warnings. We ignored them and she worried all night. What is the difference? At the very simple level, we decided not to get upset and she decided to get upset. In the same way that I often chose to allow my family to control my feelings when I was young, Julie let the TV weather forecast control her emotional state.

Humans do like to claim we are rational but I will have to agree with Ben Franklin who said "We rationalize but we are not rational." Beliefs are filled with a combination of facts and perceptions, memories and current events. Our past and present are all mixed up in our brains and turn our world into mush unless we are careful. This mix can distort our ability to think clearly.

Look at the **ABCD** process but add **E** for **Evaluate** to learn to think more clearly.

A = Activating Event

Storm Warnings on TV

C = Consequential Feelings of mad, sad, glad, that come as a result of Beliefs

Julie was very worried, anxious and upset

We were peaceful

D = Decisive Behavior describes what we decide to do because of the way we feel

Julie and her family stayed up all night

Karen and I slept all night

E= Evaluate our reactions according to reality and our Beliefs about reality.

Julie said, "The warnings kept me up. They made me nervous."

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We said, "What warnings? Oh, we ignored them and went to sleep. "

It was not the warnings about bad weather that scared our friend nor was it the lack of warnings that made us peaceful. Julie scared herself by what she Believed; the way she perceived and thought about the warnings. Karen and I made ourselves peaceful by ignoring the warnings but Julie chose to make herself anxious by the thoughts she chose to think about. We all went from A to C to D automatically. We did not slow our mental processes down to analyze why we felt as we did.

Let's take a look at the Beliefs. (This is E-Evaluation.) Taking the Belief System apart can help us moderate our feelings and behavior. It also assists us in training our kids how to manage their feelings.

B = Beliefs about the Storm Warnings

Our friend thought, "I am sure there were tornadoes heading my way. My children are in mortal danger. The TV weather people are usually right about such things. It must be an awful storm that will wipe us out for sure."

Karen and Gary think, "Those TV guys are just trying to pull my chain to sell TV time and gain more audience. They love to get people worried and excited with anxiety-ridden warnings. It is hype. They make alarmist warnings out of small storms."

It is easy to see the difference. When a person believes that tragedy is coming, it is right to have feelings of fear, anxiety and alarm. These are good and natural. Their C or Consequential Behavior is rationally based on the rational feelings. The fact that she went down to the basement with her family was a wise decision based on what she perceived to be facts.

But, Karen and I were calm. Our Consequential Feelings and Decisive Behavior were also based on what we perceived to be Facts. We felt differently than our friend because of the beliefs. However, it was not very rational to act as we did without examining where our beliefs originated. We were irrational to assume there was no storm.

Note: We are controlled by our Belief System and need to examine it carefully to make sure it is filled with Truth not just some old tapes from our dysfunctional past or hype by TV talking heads.

We have a habit of saying, "The TV weather forecast made me afraid," but that is not technically true. What causes us to fear was what we thought about the TV forecasts. People say things, 'You make me feel mad or sad or bad when treat me that way". This is a natural way to think and speak. However, it is not really true and is usually not very healthy. When I think that others are responsible for my feelings I am a Victim. So, I give that person control over my Feelings and Behavior. I become a puppet that reacts

to whatever others' say or do. I passively wait for the world to control me. I do not like that kind of life.

A fellow golfer is chronically anxious about the environment. He allows the birds that chirp, airplanes that fly over and the places each of his foursome stand bother him. He often gets himself upset, angry, frustrated and sullen. He blames everything else for his poor play and his misery. Good golfers do not do that. They control their thoughts and do not allow others to "Get inside their head."

The next question was, "So, Gabe, you are letting a little white golf ball control your feelings and behavior. Would you like to stop victimizing yourself?"

"Sure, but I am not so sure you are right. I get upset so fast that it doesn't even seem like I have time to think! How can my frustration be connected to my thinking? It seems they are connected to how well I hit the ball."

"Gabe, think about it this way. We have been inundated with media hype about the tragic lives of two beautiful and wealthy women. Anna Nicole Smith, a former Playboy Bunny and a very wealthy heiress, recently died. Despite her wealth and beauty she lived in constant misery. Not because of her looks or troubles but the ideas in her mind that attacked her self worth.

Britney Spears is another beautiful, successful and wealthy woman who lost her sense of reality and personhood. Reared as a Christian, Britney showed signs of great instability and started dabbling in the occult, drugs sex and wild attempts to get attention. She recently shaved her hair and shows other signs of deep depression. Her money, fame and beauty did not make her happy or unhappy. Both come from within.

External beauty, fame, money, partying and power are not the basis of inner peace. Joy arises from within the mind. Take a look at this Bible passage."

*Mark 7:14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.' "*

*17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? 19 For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")*

*20 He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' 21 For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' "*

It is important to “Guard the heart for out of it come the issues of life.” Language and thoughts are powerful. What I think in my heart either strengthens or weakens me. If I give that power to others I am giving away the most precious thing God ever gave us. He placed His image in us and that includes the ability to think clearly.

Self victimization leads to hopelessness and helplessness and I cannot deal with life’s adversities. I cause myself to live in misery rather than joy. For example, I dislike the current laws about “hate speech”. It seems to me that they are teaching that people are helpless Victims. The laws can be worse than the hate speech they are designed to combat. I have taught positive speech for years but I still dislike laws that make people seem helplessness.

“Sticks and stone may break our bones but words will never hurt me”. We can go through life with more joy; happiness and energy by choosing to work renew our minds. I create my own feelings and behavior by how I choose to think rather than by what others say or do.

I try to say, “I make myself mad when you reject me” or “I make myself feel mad when you say nasty things to me. Those nasty remarks cause me to perceive that you do not love me. Would you please start being nicer so I will not be confused?” This means I am responsible for my feelings.

### **Old Habits**

In my younger days, I just skipped **B** and went directly from **A to C to D**. The Power Thinking Approach allows me to be more in control of my feelings by recognizing my responsibility. The traditional way leaves my **Belief System** out of the equation and causes **self-induced** emotional trauma.

Even times of great trauma can be overcome if we will follow the counsel of the Bible. Many men and women have experienced traumatic sexual invasions by people in authority. This is a terrible thing and those criminals need to be prosecuted severely. However, hope and healing to the victims is the most important thing we can do.

### **Sexual Trauma is not as bad as how we respond to it**

Emotional trauma is not like physical trauma. The damage of physical trauma is directly related to its force and placement. But emotional trauma is different. We can either reduce or raise its damage by how we think about it. The more we think about and revisit the traumatic event in a harmful manner the worse effect it has. If we allow Stinking Thinking to dominate our thoughts we can “re-traumatize ourselves” over and over. Reviewing and re-feeling the original shock, trauma and abuse is actually worse than the original crime.

One attacking comment from a complete stranger can haunt me all day if I ruminate on it. In fact, even warnings about the weather can cause emotional harm. But it will

happen only if we allow negativity to control us. Thankfully, we can learn how to understand and manage feelings and behaviors.

## **Belief Systems and Self Management**

The Belief System consists of:

- Perceptions
  - My unique view of reality
  - Facts and my interpretations
  - Sometimes accurate and sometimes not inaccurate
- Self-talk
  - High speed audio video of my experiences
  - Rewinds and reviews of my Life
  - Can remember Positively or Negatively
  - The cause of most deep trauma
- Memories
  - My unique Perceptions and Self Talk about my past
  - Facts and Perceptions Mixed
  - Causes chronic feelings and behavior
- Convictions
  - Decisions about Life
  - Strong ideas
- Values
  - Core ideas about relationships
  - Morals
  - Ethics

## **A Formula for Power Thinking and Gabe's Golf**

Let's review my conversation with Gabe about golf. First, I reminded Gabe about the ABCD or ACD-B. He was amazed that outside events do not cause his feelings. He was shocked to learn that he was responsible for his feelings and behavior. It gave him hope that change was possible! And, he needed hope because he was chronically bummed out with False Guilt over past temper tantrums and irrational behavior.

After some discussion he grasped the freedom of this formula and he started to work hard to understand it better. Until we get it strongly planted in our thinking we can continue to be Victims to our Stinking Thinking.

I drew the following formula on a Panara Bread napkin.

A = Activating Event-The ball goes into a water hazard

B = Beliefs about the A- (Unknown at this point)

C = Consequential Feelings- mad, sad embarrassed

D = Decisive Behavior describes what I decide to do because of the way I feel

E = Evaluate the sequence to see what is in my Belief System-B.

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I said to Gabe, "It may seem like Activating Events control our feelings but they don't. When the ball goes into the water and I feel frustrated and angry and yell at my golf club I am blaming the event rather than taking responsibility for myself. That makes me a Victim in life and means I cannot change how I feel."

Gabe responded by saying, "I sure don't want to be a Victim. My whole life I have tried to be a responsible person."

I replied, "Every Activating Event is filtered through a Belief System and causes us to have Consequential Feelings. Our brain usually skips the **B** and just automatically goes from **A to C to D** as if our Belief System is unimportant. This short cut can cause us a lot of bad feelings. The key to relief is to get to know your own Belief System. What do you believe about a bad golf shot that makes your feel so miserable?"

Gabe, "I don't know, exactly. Maybe I think that I am getting so old and decrepit that I can't perform any more. I and will be rejected by my friends and family. I always did great at sports to get peoples' approval. If I can't do well now will they still respect me?"

Gary, "So, hitting a golf ball well actually means more than having a good time. It means that you are a real man that should be respected. However, hitting a poor shot means you are a failure as a man. Is that right?"

Gabe, "It sure sounds about right. I have never really enjoyed sports that much. I made myself work hard because everybody liked me and bragged on me when I succeeded. If I can't succeed maybe they won't like me as much."

Gary, "It seems that your Belief System has a lot of ideas, Self Talk and Perceptions about acceptance and rejection around how well you hit a golf ball. If you don't hit it well you actually think that people will dislike you. No wonder you feel so badly. If I thought the only way people would like me is when I am successful at sports I would also have bad feelings on the golf course."

The only way to change the feelings is to change your thinking and behavior. It has taken you a lifetime to develop these ideas so it may take a while to actually and completely change them. We usually say it takes 30 to 45 days to change Stinking Thinking into Power Thinking. Now is the time to begin that process if you are ready."

### **From Possibilities to Pessimism**

Our unique Perceptions arise from family background; personality, memories, etc can cause miscommunication and misunderstanding. If I perceive your request to resolve a miscommunication problem to mean that I have failed you will be hurt. However, if you see my volunteering as a gesture of love and support you will probably feel good. Here is the rub. Perceptions can vary in accuracy from Zero to 100%. "I say tomahto, you say tomato..."

When I perceive that my boss treats me with Criticism and Contempt my automatic mental, emotional and physical Reaction will be defensive. If I perceive others are attacking me, I will live in a state of emotional flooding. The way I see the world sets me up for either peace or pessimism. I will begin to RUMINATE about the Perceived attack and replay it with my self-talk long after it has passed, leaving me in a state of perpetual attack, perpetual defensiveness and perpetual emotional flooding. My ability to remember an attack with audio and video clarity can lead me into a state of continual attack and exhausting defensiveness.

Many people have Belief Systems filled with self-Criticism and self-Contempt. They don't need any outside assistance to make the feel bad. They are experts in that game. This leads to a cycle of chronic anxiety, guilt and shame with defensiveness. They probably suffered from trauma or emotional neglect as children and this turned into a mental process that operates in continual self-punishment.

Dr. Martin Seligman is an expert in helping people understand the origin of low self-esteem and bad feelings. His research on depression and anxiety is classic. He found that depressed and anxious persons all have a few things in common. They share negative ways of thinking about life events. We call it, "Stinking Thinking" and he calls it by a fancy name: Explanatory Style. Those who suffer from mood disorders and other mental lock ups use their minds to let Adversity to overcome them. The formula is

**A-Adversity**

**P-Pessimistic Thinking**

**A-Anger**

**R-Ruminating Self Talk**

**T-Traumatic Emotions**

A-Adversity is chronic, pervasive and life long. It comes along at school, sports, marriage, games, rejection, thoughts, etc. When Adversity arrives, I must take care to "Mind My head!" If I start to think that the problem is the fault of: P-Personal Flaws that are Pervasive and Permanent

I will end up with:

A-Angry Attacks on Self or Others and my response is to

R-Ruminate about these things much of the time

T-Traumatic Emotions. The Limbic system is deeply wounded and the feeling system set on fire with emotional flooding

Dr. Martin Seligman discovered that people habitually think about life's Adversities in differing styles. When Adversity happens we can look at it through the lenses of Permanence; Pervasiveness and Personal responsibility. When we give events a negative spin it leads to long-term sadness, anger and depression. This is the preferred course for a Pessimistic Person.

On the other hand, when we assume that the Adversity is Not the result of Personal faults, weaknesses and flaws we can usually recover quickly from the normal feelings of

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sadness and frustration. Yes, Adversities normally cause some loss of energy, sadness and pain. However, long term sadness, anger and frustration lead to bitterness and depression/anxiety.

When my self-talk says that all Adversity is the result of my Personal Flaws it leads to doubt my place in God's family. One young man told me that he was depressed because he knew he was just like his father, a drug addict. "I can't win. I am marked for life as a failure. My wife tells me that almost every day."

"Do you agree with her?"

"Yes, I agree with her."

This is chronic **Stinking Thinking** and leads to depression and anxiety

The second P stands for Pervasive for I believe my Personal Flaws are all encompassing in every area of life. Like the man mentioned above who thought every area of his life was marked for failure because he was "Just like his father". No wonder he feels badly and wants to drink and do drugs. Drinking is an attempt to medicate his pain. It is a very poor solution for the pain is still there from his "Stinking Thinking".

Third, our Pessimistic Belief System is fixated on Personal flaws that are Pervasive and also Permanent. Yikes! I cannot change. It is hopeless. I am predestined for misery and nothing can stop it. And the devil also gangs up on us and declares we are licked and finished. We are like Humpty Dumpty who cannot be put back together again.

A belief system filled with the Pessimism of the three Ps will lead naturally to Anguish and usually comes out as Anger. The Anguish/Anger is sometimes aimed at others, or a golf ball, but always ends up back at home; at myself. I am the person with the Personal Flaws that are Pervasive and Permanent so I must attack myself. Some of the harshest words ever spoken to any person come from my own mind and are aimed at myself.

The R in APART stands for Ruminates and it is a self talk killer. A simple mistake like flubbing a golf ball can lead me to a day of misery when I Ruminates on it. I go over and over the stroke, the flight of the ball and see it hit the water and disappear. My mood gets worse and worse as I replay a high quality audio-video player in my head we call the brain. With every Ruminates I feel worse and worse about myself.

Finally, we come to the T in APART and it means I end up Traumatizing myself. No person can hurt me as badly as I hurt myself. I have control over what I think say to myself, visualize and perceive. No one else can feed their ideas into my head unless I constantly Ruminates on what they said.

My Self-Traumatization leads to Total Black and White Thinking that is separated from reality. Everything about me and my life, not just the game or that one hit, is either wonderful or terrible. There is no middle ground, no gray and no balance. My mood is not just sad after a poor golf shot, I am miserable for hours and days. It is normal and

healthy to feel badly when we lose a game or make a bad shot. But misery and awfulizing is not normal and it is self-inflicted."

"Gabe, what do you Ruminates about when you make a bad shot?"

"Oh, that is easy," Gabe said. "I cuss myself out and think about how awful I am as a person. I really beat myself verbally."

"What motivates you to beat up on yourself, Gabe?"

"I think that it will help me want to play better. If I tell myself how dumb and stupid I am it may help me improve my game."

"Does that really work?"

"Uh, not really. In fact, it makes me so upset I can't focus on the game."

"Well, Gabe, if it doesn't work, why not come up with another way to handle things?"

### **Three Rules:**

If it doesn't work STOP IT!

If it does work DO MORE OF IT!

If it ain't broke DON'T FIX IT!

### **Breaking the Cycle of Despair and Misery**

We call this Power Thinking because it brings a fuller activity of God's power when we have the mind of Christ. On the other hand, it is irrational, unreasonable and unreal to Believe and think according to the dysfunctional world. The world is fallen and always leans toward sin, psychopathology and self-condemnation. However, it is not easy to stop our Stinking Thinking and develop Power Thinking. It takes a lot of motivation and hard work as well as some people to support our growth.

In Deuteronomy 15 God took His chosen Hebrew people aside and said:

*15: See I have I have set before you today life and prosperity and death and adversity... God said choose life.*

It seems strange that the Lord who created us and chose us would have to urge His children to choose life not death, yet that is exactly what He did over and over. Many people who have spoken with me tended to ask negative questions about the Christian life. Like, "Do Christians have to pray, go to church, help others, etc?"

"No, but you get to pray, have fellowship and help folks live with abundance."

The Christian life is one of receiving and achieving the good news. Why do so many of us make it bad news? Why does God repeatedly tell us to choose life and reject death? Why are we so perverse that death is preferred to life; poverty to abundance and stinking thinking to Power Thinking?

Ask yourself right now why you choose to think negatively about yourself. What rewards your Stinking Thinking? If your stinking thinking habits are persisting there must be a reward or they would disappear. For example, I smoked for 15 years even though I knew it was harmful. However, smoking had its rewards. It reduced my anxiety and calmed me down. I chose to ingest poison into my body to stay calm.

When the Lord spoke to me to stop smoking I replaced the calming poison of nicotine with calming ideas and calming actions. My baby daughter had just been born and I wanted to live a long, healthy and prosperous life to enjoy her. This provided the motivation and energy for me to accomplish a goal that I had failed at meeting hundreds of times before.

I channeled my thoughts and feelings into work and worship. I had to develop new and healthy Beliefs and Decisive Behaviors to drive out the Pessimistic Thinking. I decided every day in every way to choose life rather than death.

Maybe your preferred way of choosing Stinking Thinking is about Self Condemnation. Like my friend Gabe, you have developed a self talk habit that angrily attacks your worth and abilities. You might call yourself stupid foolish and dumb as a way to motivate perfection the next time. Choosing death by self talk is often rewarded by irrational ideas about motivation. But it always fails as a good motivator because it leads to depression and anxiety.

My habit of self condemning self talk was a way of covering failures. I thought in a crazy, depressing manner. I had the idea that God would not to condemn me if I condemned myself strongly enough. It was a rough form of trying to reform myself and it made things much worse. I finally learned to "Renew my mind..." according to the truth of the Bible. I learned how to identify those negative thoughts and stopped them from controlling me. I even developed a way to teach others about the pain and power of Pessimistic Thinking. I call it: "Self Pity as Works Righteousness"; a feeble attempt to please God by choosing death instead of life.

Looking back it was the opposite of the good news of mercy, grace and forgiveness in Jesus Christ. I had a core belief system that said I was responsible to be perfect and pure. Every day I was reminded that I was imperfect, impure and a failure in my self. Instead of allowing Jesus to help me I covered up my weaknesses with self condemnation.

What is your habit pattern? How do you try to cover up your guilt and shame? What ways do you try to avoid looking realistically at your weaknesses and problems? Can Jesus help you?

## The Original Serenity Prayer

Rev Reinhold Niebuhr

God, grant me the serenity to accept  
The things I cannot change  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference

Living one day at a time,  
Enjoying one moment at a time:

Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace:  
Taking, as Jesus did,  
This sinful world as it is,  
Not as I would have it:

Trusting that you will make all things right  
If I surrender to your will:  
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life  
And supremely happy with you in the next

## *Autobiography in Five Chapters*

### *Nyoshul Khenpo*

1) I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk  
I fall in.  
I am lost.....I am hopeless.  
It isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

2) I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I'm in the same place.  
But it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

3) I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall in...it's a habit  
My eyes are open  
I know where I am  
It is my fault.  
I get out immediately.

4) I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it

5) I walk down another street.