

## Permission Distortions

### **Thank you for attending Powerful Brain, Healthy Body**

Thank you for attending Powerful Brain, Healthy Body. We admire your commitment to your health and well being. If you have been practicing the way you have been taught, you should be only two weeks away from having established new health habits that will seem natural and automatic for you. Once firmly established, the consequences of these new health habits will yield delightful results. You can count on it.

### **Thank you for your feedback**

Thank you for giving us feedback and filling out your self-evaluation form. We will look at the feedback very closely to determine how the training can be adjusted to be even more helpful.

### **How is it going for you? Are you seeing yourself making changes?**

I hope that you are doing your homework faithfully. Learning about how to change a habit will not change your habit. You acquire your new habit at the point that you actually go through the steps. At this point in the process, the following actions are important:

- Carrying a typed copy of your Vision card
- Reading it several times a day
- Practicing a visualization every day
- When "in the moment," using the following self-talk:

"Right now I want to \_\_\_\_\_ and what I really want is \_\_\_\_\_ (rehearse your Vision of Your Future). This is important to me because \_\_\_\_\_ (what you concluded in your honest evaluation)."

### **If you are not practicing – why not?**

For those of you who didn't practice – why do you think you didn't do it? What do you think you need in order to succeed in changing your enduring health habits? It may be time for some deep down dirty self honest. You are sabotaging your success when you don't practice. What you stand to gain by practicing is a change in your enduring health habits. As a natural way of life, you will be giving your body exactly what it needs and the consequences will be delightful. Your body will be lean; you will have robust health, your immune system will be great, you will be strong, you will be free from chronic disease, you will be aging successfully, and you will love life. Isn't that worth the effort?

### **Do you remember what we said about the 7 keys to success in the first session?**

#### **The 7 keys to Success**

This experience can merely be a great class, or it can be a life changing experience. The choice is up to you. If you would like it to be a life changing experience, it is important that you clarify your willingness to make seven commitments. These commitments will drive your success. Failure in any of them will seriously limit the chances

of your success. Please honestly evaluate your willingness to make each of the following commitments. Will you:

1. **Be fully Involved in this experience** – This involves more than detached (or even interested) observation. To be fully involved means you will ask questions, participate in the discussions, share your opinions, offer support to each other, be friendly and approachable, and keep your commitments.

2. **Be brutally honest with yourself** – When asked to evaluate your motivation and behavior patterns, avoid the easy, superficial, or socially acceptable answers.

3. **Be willing to challenge old habits of thinking** – Your habits of thinking keep you chained to old habits of behavior. Be brutally honest with yourself and let go of defensive posturing as you are taught new ways to approach change.

4. **Be open-minded and curious about new possibilities** – Don't rigidly hold onto proving that you are right about not being able or even willing to change. Don't let your fear of failure be more important to you than your desire to enjoy the wonderful benefits in store for you as you acquire your new lifestyle.

5. **Be willing to take responsibility for your actions** – Your personal power to change is activated when you embrace your responsibility for your thinking, feelings, and behavior. You lose power when you attempt to transfer responsibility to your environment or upbringing. Don't deny, but rather acknowledge your agency. It's refreshing to put yourself in a position to grow and change.

6. **Actually do it – don't just think about it** – Do your homework, try out new approaches, give yourself permission to change and grow.

7. **Attend all the sessions (and try to be on time)** – Think about it, in only 8 weeks from today, you will have successfully changed your life and be enjoying all the incredible benefits. In eight weeks, as a natural way of life, your daily food choices will cause your body to be healthy, energetic, thin, and disease resistant. You will no longer be on the conveyor belt leading to chronic diseases and rapid aging. You must do this for yourself, yet your growth will bless the lives of everyone around you. Pretty cool!

### **This past week, did you catch yourself engaging in self-defeating behaviors?**

Your assignment for last week was to compassionately observe where you are having difficulty. You were to observe yourself dispassionately, almost like watching yourself in a movie. You were to think about what was happening and see if you could gain any insight into how you were sabotaging your efforts. You were asked to come prepared to identify any specific behaviors that need to be addressed. Session five is designed to help you start to get a better handle on your self-defeating behavior patterns.

### **Self-defeating behavior is when your behavior is inconsistent with your firm decision**

We call it self-defeating behavior because you are choosing to act in ways that sabotage what you have already

decided is really, really important to you. This assumes that you have already done the following:

- Your honest evaluation got to the heart of the matter
- You achieved a 5 on the readiness for change scale
- You made a clear, well-reasoned, firm decision, not merely an “ought to” inclination
- You are not just trying to stop a habit
- You have made a decision to grow something more important instead, and you are clear on what is really important to you

If, after you have taken these steps, you find yourself engaging in self-defeating behavior patterns, it is important to take a few minutes to take responsibility for your actions. Your personal power to change is activated when you embrace your responsibility for your thinking, feelings, and behavior. Review the list of self-defeating behavior patterns you created during the session. The training in session five is designed to help you to address these behavior patterns.

### **What did you tell yourself just prior to engaging in the self-defeating behavior?**

One of the keys to understanding self-defeating behavior patterns is to become aware of the self-talk message you are giving yourself just prior to engaging in self-defeating behavior. You will probably notice that you told yourself something that in some way gave yourself permission to do what you did. We label this type of thought a Permission Distortion.

Remember how we said that when a habit pathway is triggered, that several parts of the brain are triggered simultaneously? These make up a cluster of habits that function together. There is usually a thought habit, a feeling habit, a physical response habit and a behavior pattern habit that are all part of the same habit cluster.

### **How do thought habits impact the self-defeating behavior pattern?**

The thought habit seems to set the stage for the behavior habit. Changing a self-defeating behavior pattern is made much easier by focusing your attention on the thought habit. It is true that when you change the way you think, you automatically change the way you act.

When you have the urge to engage in the self-defeating behavior pattern, focus your attention on the Permission Distortion, the thought somehow gives you permission to violate your firm decision and engage in the old self-defeating behavior habit that is a part of your self-talk. This interrupts the behavior pattern habit and gives you the opportunity to practice “in the moment”.

Permission Distortions are very powerful. It’s almost as if the permission distortion functions as a lock on your behavior habit. Fortunately, when you change your thought, it unlocks the behavior habit and makes it easy to change.

### **Just what is a distortion anyway?**

Look at the picture I took of myself using an apple laptop with a picture distortion capacity.

When you look at the picture, does it seem to be a true image of what I actually look like? (I hope your answer is no.) However, there are elements of truth in the image. I have 2 eyes, 2 ears, a chin and a nose. There is something about the image that is recognizable. So, even though a distortion has elements of truth, it is distorted in a way that obscures accuracy.

Permission Distortions function in a similar fashion. At the time, the thought seems to make sense, but upon closer examination, they fall apart. Permission Distortions obscure the truth from you. They tend to absolve you of your responsibility for your actions and the consequences that inevitably come your way as a consequence. They focus your attention on fleeting sensations. These fleeting sensations (appetites, passions, and desires) fill up the available space in your conscious awareness, allowing you to pretend that they are extremely important. Basically, permission distortions are lies that we tell to ourselves that give us permission to engage in the self-defeating behavior pattern and sabotage your efforts. They don't hold up under the light of truth.

Here are some examples

- "Just one bite"
- "I can't have"
- "Right now I don't care, I'm hungry"
- "This is a special occasion"
- "I'm doing enough"
- "No one will know"
- "I deserve it"
- "It doesn't matter"
- "I want so therefore I do"
- "I'm too busy"
- "I'll do it later"
- "Someday/one day"

### **So how do you free yourself from Permission Distortions?**

Remember how in previous sessions we referred to the following saying from the bible?"

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free."

When you examine your permission distortion closely, you will find that it is in error. If you replace the error with something that is more accurate and true, you free yourself from the power of the distortion and are set free? This is really an amazing process. It takes a little practice, but it really works.

For example, some individuals come in for counseling because they frequently experience an anxiety response in situations where anxiety is not needed and this interferes with their peace. What they want is to be free from having anxiety in those situations. After helping them to understand what an anxiety response really is, a counselor will train them to go through four steps as practice every time they have an anxiety response. In about

21 days, they will have grown a new habit pathway to become automatic that sets them free from their anxiety. Here are the four steps that they will use:

**Step one:** Calm yourself down – breath deep, curiously observe what you are thinking and feeling

**Step two:** Acceptance of the anxiety response – monitor body for the physical effects of the squirts

**Step three:** Identify the distortion and rehearse the truth

**Step four:** Make the decision to follow your previous decision and do it

It's a pretty simple process, yet as long as the person practices using these four steps, it works every time. The hardest part for most people is to figure out the distortion and identify the truth that they will rehearse to themselves instead. This also holds true when it comes to permission distortions. It takes a little practice to be able to see the holes and find the truth. I have provided you with some examples on the next page.

**Permission Distortions:**

"Just one bite"

"I can't have"

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"It doesn't matter"

"I'm too busy"

"I'll do it later"

"Someday/one day"

**Permission Distortions:**

"One bite leads to another bite . . ."

"I can have whatever I really want. The truth is that I want something else a lot more. The choice is really mine."

"I am hungry right now and I do want to binge. And, the choice is mine and what I really want is"

"Soon every occasion will be a special occasion"

"I'll know I'm doing enough when I see the results that I want to see. My body doesn't lie."

"If I keep eating like this, pretty soon everyone will know"

"At fat, unhealthy body is not a wonderful reward. I really deserve & want something better"

"My future matters very much. What I really want is . . . and the choice is mine."

"I'm not too busy for what's really important too me. What I really want is . . . and the choice is up to me."

"No, the time to do it is now. Doing it later is just a permission distortion I use to give myself permission not to do it."

"Someday" is a permission distortion I use to avoid making a firm decision. What do I really want?"

**Your willingness to actually do it is important**

It will take 21 days of practice for your new habit to be dominant and automatic. Choosing the unhealthy option strengthens to old, self-defeating pathway. Remember, choosing to indulge your old, self-defeating habit pathway resets your counter so that you have 21 days to make your new habit pathway your automatic, natural way of living. What do you really, really want? Do you want it enough to be willing to experience a little discomfort?

**Your discomfort is temporary! It will shortly go away!**

Here's a truth for you. You don't have to worry about the uncomfortable feelings associated with a craving or an urge. They are short-lived and temporary. They will go away whether you indulge the craving with a self-defeating behavior or not. It's a temporary feeling. What does matter is that you acquire the habits that will give you what you really, really want. That means that when cravings hit, you are willing to experience the short-lived, temporary discomfort rather than cave in to the craving. The cravings will go away in just a few days if you choose to practice rather than cave in. The choice is up to you.