

Seven Steps for Successful Life Transitions

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First Edition 2000

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Arrangement and copy editing by: Aimee Bova
Cover Format: **Graphicsphere Design** www.graphicsphere.com

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Written and published by

The Center for Enlightenment
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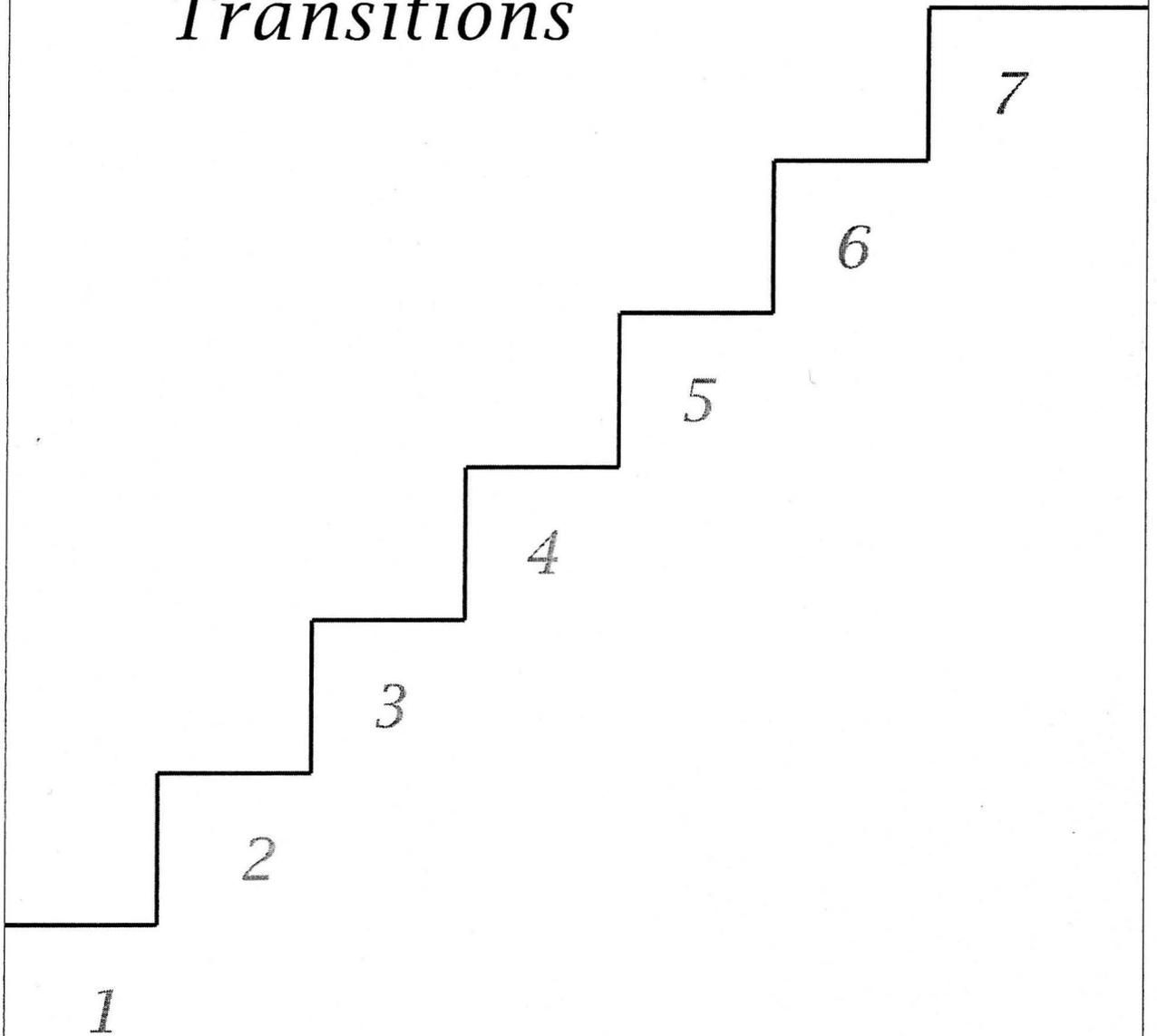
The Center for Enlightenment

With the arrival of the new millennium more people are seeking to learn about their inner spiritual nature and deepen their relationship with God. The Center for Enlightenment was founded to support this need and offer guidance for personal and spiritual unfoldment in a non-denominational environment.

The Center for Enlightenment honors all religions, and the one life (God) manifesting in all things. The foundation of the center's teaching rests upon the understanding that God is energy in expression as the vibration and life of every soul.

The mission of The Center for Enlightenment is to assist humanity in realizing that the soul's purpose is to awaken and live to its highest potential. The Center for Enlightenment exists to provide greater understanding of spiritual concepts and teach practical steps to aid in the soul's evolution.

*Seven Steps for
Successful Life
Transitions*



The Seven Steps for Successful Life Transitions

Introduction

The Seven Steps for Successful Life Transitions are a solution for handling change in your life and in yourself. Change is the number one challenge for most people. Just the thought of change brings forth feelings of fear, loss, not knowing "what's next", anger, anxiety or excitement. Our lives are in constant change.

In this seven step process we are going to address change manifests in our lives on many levels, both the inner and the outer. We will introduce the idea of spiritual law, and how they work so that change no longer is a challenge, but rather an opportunity for growth and learning.

Anything can be taken "up" the seven-steps, i.e.; people, relationships, objects, homes, pets, even emotions. Although this workbook addresses the more challenging aspects of changes, the seven-step process is equally helpful for example, when making a new friend, getting a raise at work, or receiving an unexpected gift. Using the seven-steps during positive change helps us develop detachment and balance.

In working with this process you will discover new strengths, possibilities, and freedoms, clearing the way for better, more productive relations and experiences. You will make better choices and decisions by becoming less attached to things,

people, and yourself. You will become more aware of what you really want and what is holding you back.

Change is imminent, but growth is optional. Remember that you are not alone in your efforts even though you may feel that way. God is always with you.

Blessings!

Jane Hart , Director

The Center for Enlightenment

How the “Seven Steps for Successful Life Transitions” Came About

It was a beautiful spring day. I sat on my patio looking at the new life unfolding in my garden. As the flowers danced before me in the warm sunlight, my heart was breaking. I could not enjoy the day.

Spring had always been my favorite time of year, but this year was different. My mother had recently passed away. I was grieving the loss of this wonderful woman who was also my best friend.

I knew that one of the most important things one must do when a loved one has died is to release that person to God. I had not done that yet. I knew the time had come to face my grief, but I did not know how to deal with all the pain and sorrow.

I began to pray, “God, please help me release my mother.” I repeated this simple prayer over and over again. I felt helpless, frustrated and sad. I was, however, determined to move through these emotions and kept asking God for help.

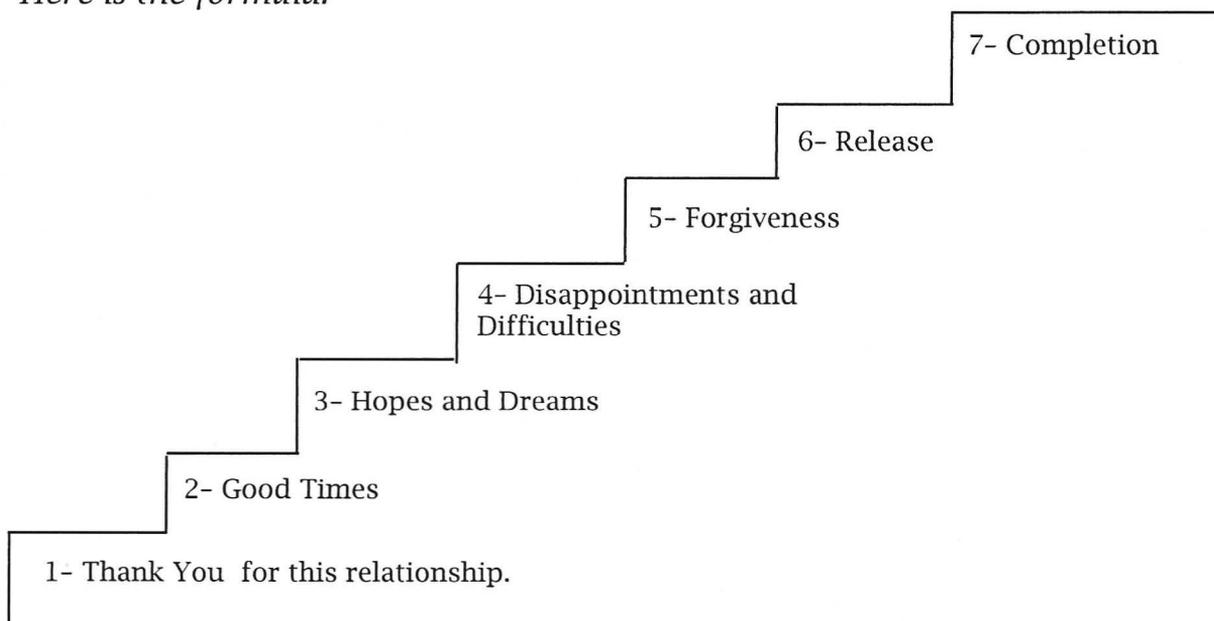
Suddenly, I had a vision. God’s wisdom started pouring into me. I ran to my desk for a pencil and paper. I knew I had been given a way to handle my grief.

Needless to say, I was thrilled. A sense of overwhelming gratitude and peace settled around me. I went about my day with great joy and relief. As I began the process the next day however, the deep sadness and myriad of emotions concerning the loss of my mother resurfaced.

I suddenly realized that God was not going to do the work for me, but like a loving caring parent, had provided me with this formula as a tool. It was slow, painful, and purposeful work. Many times during the following weeks I experienced momentary discouragement over my inability to hurry the process. I felt disappointment as I realized that there had been lost opportunities with my mother which could have brought greater understanding and support our relationship.

Nevertheless, the formula worked in a transformative way. At the last step, I was able to sincerely release my pain. I came out of the process with new strengths which opened the way for new relationships.

Here is the formula.



Begin this process by finding a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Relax and still your mind. Visualize seven stairs. Imagine holding the person in your arms as a symbol of surrender.

Stair 1: *See yourself stepping onto the first stair with the person in your arms. Give thanks to God for the relationship by saying, "I thank You for giving us this opportunity to be together. I now release him/her to You." The purpose of this step is to acknowledge the importance of the relationship. It also recognizes that there is a plan greater than ours. In effect, you are saying, "It is OK for Your plan to unfold in my life, God." This entire seven step process can take days, weeks or months to accomplish. You may find yourself on one step for several days or prayer sessions. Don't get discouraged. For me, this first stair alone took quite a few days to complete and I shed many tears.*

Stair 2: *In your mind, step up to the next stair. With the person still in your arms, see all the good times you had together. Recall the help and support the person gave you. This portion of the process allows you to explore the depth of your full feelings of gratitude and love for the relationship to flow. You grieve during this step as you face your fear of being alone as you work toward giving the person back to God.*

I used a notebook and wrote down all my feelings. I found that looking at a photo album helped.

Stair 3: *Now step up again and imagine all the events and activities you wished you could have done with the person. Think about the unfulfilled hopes and dreams you had for the relationship. Think how you would like the relationship to be. Acknowledge your feelings of loss, as well as the missed opportunities and failings in the relationship. Journal your feelings.*

Stair 4: *On this step, see all the difficult times you had in this relationship. Mentally relive the disappointments that took place. Recognize how your ideas and expectations of the person failed you. Do not be afraid to experience your negative feelings, as they are a natural part of any relationship, even good relationships. Once again, journal sorrow or anger if they arise.*

This was a very difficult task for me because I did not want to feel any negativity towards my mother. As I look back, however, I saw it was a very freeing step, for I realized that part of what I had to forgive was my mother's leaving me.

Stair 5: *This is the forgiveness step. Continue to visualize the person in your arms. Imagine that you are surrounding the person with love. Ask God for assistance. The powerful, forgiving love of God will help you.*

This is for all you have identified in the last several steps. The unrealized hope and dreams, the times that didn't go as planned, and probably to forgive the person for leaving you.

This step can happen in prayer, in visualization, or in action. See each item as a stone in your pocket that you take out and cast away, or you may wish to write each item on a slip of paper, read it, and say, "I forgive _____." Then crumple the paper and throw it away or burn it in a fireplace. Do this for each identified item.

If you have identified things you regret, write these down also. Read them and ask for forgiveness. Accept the forgiveness and toss the paper away.

Continue doing this step until you feel it is complete. You will know you are done with this step when you feel release in your heart, when you no longer carry the bitterness or anger of losing the person, when you experience the love for the person more powerfully than the loss. This is an act of unconditional love. The rewards of this step are many. You are setting yourself and the other person free.

Stair 6: *This step is similar to the first stair. Once again, say the prayer of release. Now you are more conscious of what you are releasing than when you began the process. Offer up a special prayer such as, "God., I pray for the most wonderful and beautiful things to happen to him/her."*

Stair 7: *Stepping onto the seventh and final stair, release the person you have been holding in your arms. Picture yourself handing him/her over into the loving and protective arms of God. Your work with the person is now done and he/she is safe in God's hands.*

It took me weeks to complete the entire process. When I finally reached the seventh step, a sense of peace surrounded me.

I have found these steps very useful in many aspects of my life. This is a flexible and adaptable process, whether it relates to a friend, a family member, or a business colleague. The relationship can be undergoing any sort of transition, be it by death, argument, or geographic distance. This process can be used to be at peace with a loved one who is moving into a new phase of his/her life, for instance, if a child is going away to school or is getting married.

This formula has stood the test of time. At first it was a challenge to go through these steps, but over the years I discovered that the freedom this process brings is well worth the effort.



Step 1
Thanksgiving

STEP 1- Thanksgiving

The first step is to give thanks and acknowledge the importance of this experience in your life. There is a reason that this experience occurred. Whether it was positive or not, there is something that can be learned from it. Perhaps you are releasing an experience in which you can recall much joy and happiness, or, you may be wondering how you can possibly find any redeeming qualities in it. You may need to meditate or pray in order to be at a point where you can give thanks.

Sometimes it takes a long time to get through the first step because you are releasing something enjoyable that you would rather hold on to. Processing positive experiences can be as challenging as the negative experiences.

There is a greater meaning to every situation, and you may need to give thanks that you *didn't* get that promotion, or that your best friend moved away, because you will discover the greater purpose behind those events.

It is important that you understand that God has a plan for you. In turn, you are part of a much larger plan for the world in which you live. By being thankful, you are willing to co-operate with the bigger plan for your life.

Taking the First Step- Thanksgiving

Beginning the Process

Possible experiences to work with using the seven steps:

- releasing aspects of self
- separation
- rejections
- personal change
- addictions
- marital problems
- health challenges
- rivalry/jealousy
- emotion/feelings
- loved ones/friends
- change in profession
- divorce
- death
- moving/homes
- resentments/hatred
- financial challenges
- loss of job
- spiritual growth
- joy/pain
- pets

Giving Thanks

Center in a moment, and select one experience i.e.: person, place, feeling etc., to take this step. The sample prompts on the previous page may help, or you can choose your own subject. Write down what you have selected:

Taking Action

Write down all the things you can be thankful for in this experience that you have chosen to work with. Remember that this step may take more than a few minutes to complete. Often as you go through your day, you will recall other things you can be grateful for in the experience. If this happens, then write these thoughts down as they appear to you. It is helpful sometimes to set your notes aside to come back to at a later time. Be sure to be thorough and take your time.

Journal Page

Question: What are you thankful for regarding this relationship?

Journal Page

Question: What did the relationship give you?

Journal Page

Question: How has this person been important in your life?

Step 2

Good Times

STEP 2- Good Times

The second step in this process requires us to recall the good times we have had in the experience. It can be joyful to remember the good times and in this respect, this step of the process may be easier for you than others. Try to re-experience these moments. It may help you to look at any photos or other things that remind you of this experience.

Sometimes, this step brings forward painful memories. Trying to think of some positive aspect to the experience often causes negative feelings to emerge. This is normal. The fourth step deals with the difficult aspects, and it may be necessary to skip ahead momentarily to that step, and then return to step two.

Sometimes the only positive things or "good times" that we can recall are not directly from the experience itself, but as the result of other events that may have occurred due to, or surrounding the initial situation.

This second step of recalling the good times is a way of acknowledging what you *learned* from this experience. Think of yourself as a puzzle composed of many pieces. If you look at one small piece of the puzzle by itself, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense. But if you put the small piece into a bigger arrangement of many pieces, then you start to see a design. Things start to make sense.

Taking the Second Step-Good Times

Beginning the Process

Following are some things to consider that may help you in recalling some of the good times in the experience you are working with:

- New friends/relationships you may have made
- The times that you laughed
- The skills and abilities you acquired
- New strengths
- New opportunities that occurred
- Gifts you may have received
- Indirect benefits that occurred
- Reconciliation of relations

Taking Action

Take a moment to center in. Spend time recalling the good times and positive aspects of this experience. Look at some photo's if you can. Write down ideas that emerge and memories you recall. Remember to be thorough and take your time. You may need to set your notes aside and come back to them at a later time if you become blocked or have difficulty in this part of the process.

Journal Page

Question: How did this person/place/thing bring new and joyful experience to your life?

Journal Page

Question: What moments do you recall that were especially happy? Write down specific times.

Journal Page

To Jog your memory, look through photo albums, listen to special songs, etc.....

Step 3

Hopes and Dreams

STEP 3– Hopes and Dreams

This is the step to reflect on all that you wished for and hoped for. The thoughts you may have had of “what might have been”, “could have been”, or “should have been” . Recall the moments of regret over what you wanted to say or do, but didn't. It is important to acknowledge your feelings of loss and the hopes that were not fulfilled. Look at how the person involved may have failed you, or how you may have failed them. This step can bring up powerful feelings of sadness, anger, or guilt. Remember that the feelings you are recalling now are only one part of what you are seeing, and do not allow yourself to remain stuck on them.

To work through this experience it is important that you are aware of the many different feelings you may have. Think about your unfulfilled goals, desires, and plans. What promises were made, or what intentions did you have that never came about? Reflect on the expectations you had in this experience, and, your expectations of yourself.

A hope is a desire for something with expectation of its fulfillment. When the desire is not met and our minds continue to dream about it , the unfulfilled desire gets stored in our subconscious mind as a memory. In acknowledging your hopes and dreams and then releasing them, you diffuse all of the emotional energy involved. By doing this, you will be ready to open the doors of new opportunities when they present themselves.

Taking the Third Step- Hopes and Dreams

Beginning the Process

Following are some sample statements to help you define the hopes, dreams, and expectations you had in the experience you are working with:

- I always wanted to.....
- My intention was.....
- I had hoped that.....
- I planned to
- We were going to.....
- I promised that I would.....
- I was promised
- I wish that I could have.....
- I thought I was going to.....

Taking Action

Consider the hopes and dreams you have had for this experience. The above prompts may help you. Write down all of the ideas that emerge. Take your time and be thorough.

Journal Page

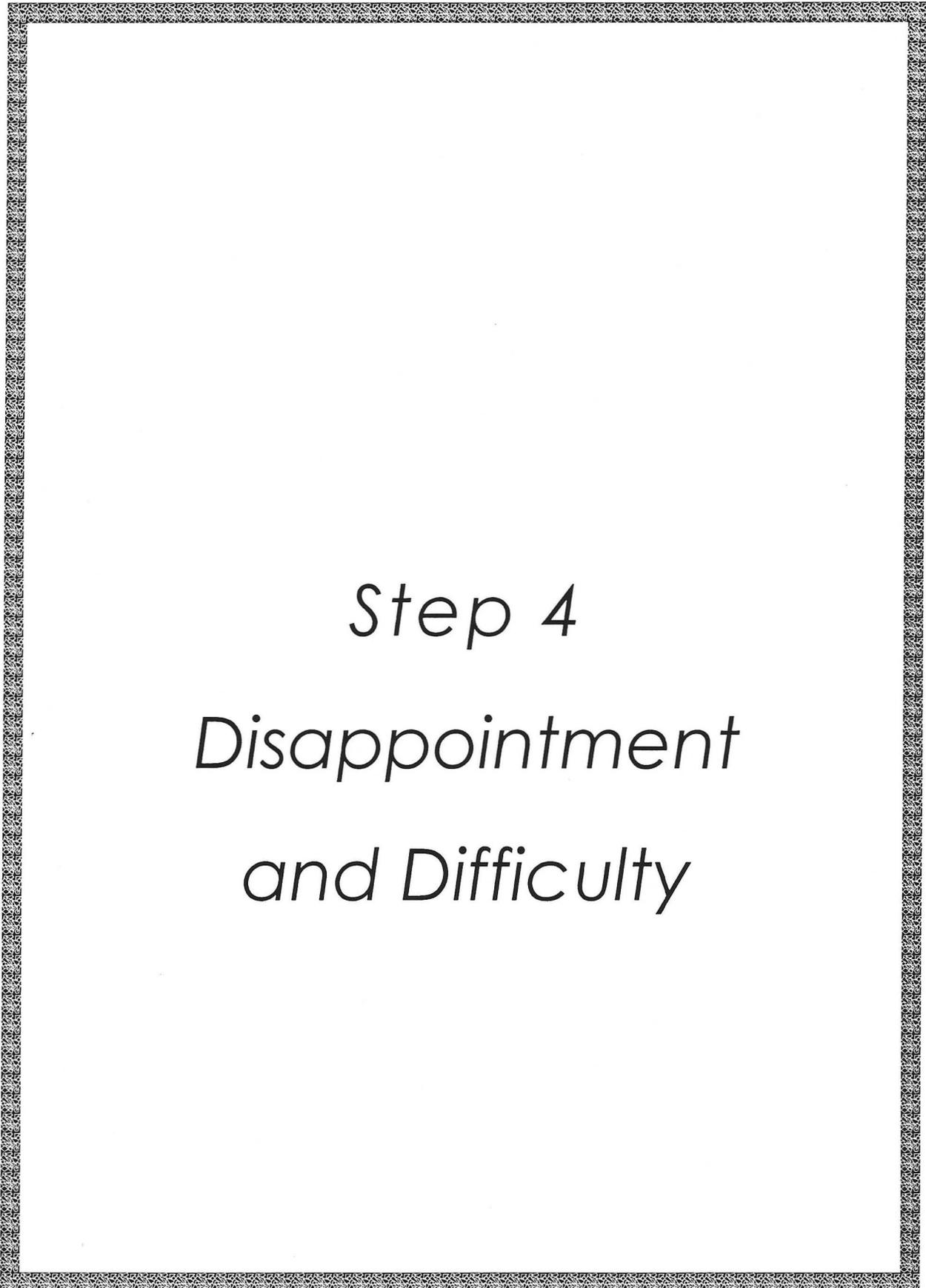
Question: What were your hopes and dreams for this person?

Journal Page

Question: What did you want from this person?

Journal Page

Question: How did you want them to behave?



Step 4

Disappointment
and Difficulty

STEP 4- Disappointments and Difficulties

In this fourth step of the process you will look at all the negative parts of this experience. What you actually felt, how the experience changed the way you feel about yourself, or your future. Negative feelings are part of the relationship you are dealing with. This step may bring up feelings of anger, bitterness, sadness, or, a combination of these. However, remember that these feelings are not wasted emotions, but are part of the spectrum of the experience which made it so important for you. You may feel that what is making you angry or upset doesn't seem valid or make any sense. For example, you may be angry that someone died, or that your mother had to work a regular job instead of staying at home, even though she financially had to. These feelings are very normal, and not something to be worried over.

Going through the process of change can be hard and it takes a lot of emotional work. Emotions can be confusing and overwhelming. At times it feels as though you will be immersed in an emotion that seems endless, that you can never get away from. It is important that you know that this experience is actually a process with a beginning, a middle, and an end. The seven steps are about giving that process a framework to objectively deal with all your feelings in the experience. The seven steps will bring forth your intellectual side, and your outside observer to effectively work with the emotional part of the experience so that you do not become lost or overwhelmed.

Change comes because life happens. Our ability to move through the experience and not hold on to the pain of change is part of what allows us to be successful in life. It allows us to be open to new possibilities and opportunities that may come our way.

Taking the Fourth Step-Disappointment and Difficulties

Begin the Process

Following are some ideas for you to consider that may help you in recalling the disappointments and difficulties you encountered in the experience you are working with. Remember, there is no right or wrong way to feel. The important thing is to give yourself the room to express your feelings honestly and without condemnation:

- I am so sad because.....
- I felt betrayed when.....
- It made me angry that.....
- He said...She said....and it made me feel like...
- I worked really hard but.....
- I don't understand why....
- I hate.....
- I am disappointed that.....
- I think it is really unfair that.....
- I am really mad because...

- I feel like getting revenge because.....
- I always end up feeling like
- I feel like no one really understands and.....
- I resent.....
- I could never forgive him/her for.....
- I am afraid because.....

Taking Action

Consider all of the negative emotions you feel about this situation, as well as any challenges and obstacles. The previous prompts may help you in recalling your feelings. Sometimes this part of the process can take longer than others because recalling the difficult times can be overwhelming. It is important that you give yourself the time to grieve over the losses and missed opportunities. As you work through this step you may find that memories will appear spontaneously throughout your day. If this happens, write them down as they emerge. Again, take your own time and be thorough.

Journal Pages

Questions: Why are you angry? List specific incidents and corresponding emotions.

Journal Page

Question: What disappointed you most regarding this person?

Journal Page

Question: What is the most difficult thing you had to do with this person?

Journal Page

Question: What decisions, attitudes and beliefs do you have about this person?

Journal Page

Question: How are these decisions affecting you now?



Step 5
Forgiveness

STEP 5 - Forgiveness

In this step you actively choose to move beyond the pain of the experience. You choose to accept that the experience has happened to you, but you let go of your judgment about the meaning of the experience. You make the choice to let go of any resentment or bitterness. You may want to hold on to your anger and feel righteous about it. The feeling of righteousness is probably not worth the pain of the anger and bitterness you experience.

In this step you may also need to forgive yourself for what you identified in your previous steps which can take some time. This can happen in areas where you feel that you missed an opportunity in the relationship. You may need to say, "I don't understand why this happened to me, but I forgive myself and the other person for whatever the reasons were." Forgiveness transforms negativity and bridges the distance between people.

Using visualization or symbolic action can help this part of the process. For example, imagine your heart filling up with light, and letting the light burn off the darkness of your anger and pain. Forgiveness is also a transformation of negativity within one's own being that releases attachment. It is the thing that will set you free and expand your consciousness. You will know when you are done with this step when you feel the lifting of bitterness and pain, or possibly relief from guilt.

Taking the Fifth Step– Forgiveness

Begin the Process

Key Concepts -

- Forgiveness is an action of the heart and an expression of love.
- Forgiveness transmutes energy to dissolve attachments.
- Forgiveness reconciles energy.
- Forgiveness balances karma.
- Forgiveness is freedom.

Taking Action

Carefully review your feelings in the situation that you are working with. Ask yourself what you really want for yourself in this situation. Meditation and prayer will help. This is the step of transformation and freedom. No matter how long it takes, the important thing is for you to become free. Inner freedom will bring forth peace and resolution.

Journal Page

Question: What is the hardest to forgive?

Journal Pages

Question: How has the lack of forgiveness affected your life?

Journal Page

Question: What is causing you not to forgive?



Step 6
Release

STEP 6 - Release

In this sixth step we will release our experience. Release is about letting go of our hopes, disappointment, expectations and memories. If you find that you resist this, then you need to go back and revisit some of the earlier steps. It is possible that you may feel awkward in releasing your experience because it feels strange to let go of something in such a direct way. Give the experience to God. Offer the experience to your higher self with gratitude. Release gives you the freedom to move forward.

Taking the Sixth Step- Release

Begin the Process

To help with this part of the process answer the questions in the journaling section.

Taking Action

Carefully review your situation and your feelings. Take a moment and focus on the entire experience, the people involved and your part in it. Release it all to God. Let it all go. You may want to say a simple prayer, for example, "I set all of this free, and release it to its highest good." or "I release this all to you, God."

Journal Page

Question: Is there anything in this situation that I am holding inside that I have been afraid to address? If so, what is it?

Journal Pages

Question: Do I feel equanimity to the others involved in this situation, or do I feel anxious?

Journal Pages

Question: In what ways do I feel letting go will change my life for the better? What positive changes do I anticipate?



Step 7
Completion

STEP 7- Completion

The step of completion is the last step in the seven-step process. It may benefit you to end this experience with some meaningful gesture that is symbolic for you; perhaps a closing prayer or a special meditation. Just as you would acknowledge an important occasion in your life, so you should acknowledge the spiritual work you have done here. Life is dynamic, and you are dynamic because you are the energy of life. You are the energy of God in expression. Allow yourself time to move through this last step, and thank God for the opportunities that will now be possible for you.

Taking the Seventh Step – Completion

Begin the Process

Consider the questions in the journaling section in this process that you are now finishing. If at any time you should find an area that does not feel resolved to you, work through it until you feel confident to take this step of completion.

Taking Action

In this final step, the most accurate reflection of your inner state will be the thoughts, feelings and attitudes you now possess toward your experience. Go back to the previous questions and answer them honestly. This will help you to clarify any remaining issues in completing the process. It would be beneficial if you were to journal your responses and save them for future reference. Journal any intuitive information or other guidance you may have received while working this process.

Journal Page

Question: Do I have a forgiving attitude toward this event and those who are involved?

Journal Page

Question: Did I find attitudes and aspects of myself that I needed to let go of and did I do so?

Journal Page

Question: How do I now see my experience differently in light of the information given and the changes that have been made?

Journal Page

Question: Do I inwardly feel resolved and ready to complete this process?

After the Process Guidance

Once you complete the seven-step process, certain effects may occur as a result of the changes you have made. You may feel anxious, expectant, or you may feel a new freedom. You may find that things that once worked well in your life no longer do so. Your relationships with others may take on a new dynamic, or you may find that some relations become less predominant while others seem to come into a new focus. The most common experience after completing the step process however is the feeling of a void, the sense of "being in limbo".

Know that all these responses are good as they signal that change has already taken effect in your life. Understand that the inner feelings of emptiness and the perceptions that things seem different are just precursors to seeing visible results all around. Therefore, do not attempt to "fill the void" with extra activities. Wait and be secure in the knowing that you have initiated changes that are now taking shape.

1. Handling circumstances that seem out of control. *Take a moment to center yourself and realize that this is the adjustment necessary in preparation for your next possibility. Spirit always will lead you so listen for guidance. Meditate, go for a walk, or write down how you feel and then let it pass.*

2. Dealing with confusion. *When we feel confusion, it is usually because we really don't know what to expect and therefore have no pre-set program to play*

in response. However, this can be the best place to be because in not having a predetermined idea of what to expect, you expand your realm of probabilities even more. Say "thank you" even if you don't understand what is going on. Know that God, the universe and your own higher self are all working on your behalf and that you will receive direction.

3. Getting attuned through sign and signals. Even if you have never taken much notice of coincidence or synchronicity start doing so now. Remember that everything has a spiritual reality and its physical appearance represents that reality, so start looking for clues right where you are. Ask for spiritual help and guidance to take your next step.

4. Staying in focus and starting a journal. One of the benefit of working with the seven-steps is that it opens up your intuitive self. Journal your intuitive leadings even if they seem insignificant. Spiritual guidance can only be given to the extent that you are receptive. You may have a dream, a premonition, or some other spiritual prompting. Again, be attentive and trust your guidance.

Working with the seven-steps is a way to help you flow with the changing energy of your life and start working in your soul's best interest. In the larger scheme of existence, what is most valuable is the growth and evolvment of your consciousness and soul expression. "Everyone wants to be happy and fulfilled. The only way to find true joy is to start inquiring within your own being

*and discovering your real nature. Living in the **present** moment instead of in the past or future will bring you a more balanced life. You have all the strength you need where you are right now to change. Continue to be willing to open your heart and receive the help and guidance that is ever present for you. Take your life as it is, and know that within it lies your opportunity to grow and attain your goals.*