

THE
KIND
SELF-HEALING
BOOK

SELF-HEALING VOCABULARY

ABANDONMENT

Abandonment occurs when a parent or caretaker leaves a child or the person being cared for physically or in spirit. It can occur through leaving without notice, being present but emotionally vacant, or being present but intoxicated or high. Parents or partners who regularly use mood and physiology-altering substances to cope with their emotions spiritually abandon their children as well as their partners. To feel abandoned is to feel left behind and insignificant, untethered, and cut off.

ABUSIVE DYNAMIC

A dynamic in which you and/or someone else acts from a spirit of manipulation, fear, and control, which can involve: taunting, shame, bullying, belittling, acting like a child as a parent, or using minimizing, insults, rumors, lies, or heightened, extreme emotions. Whether conscious or unconscious, the aim of abuse is to have power, control, or influence over the other person. It is an unhealthy dynamic that can be tempered with compassion, vulnerability, and honesty if the participants in the dynamic are ready to transform. An abusive dynamic can involve verbal insults or physical aggression, as well as suggestions and threats of violence, passive-aggressiveness, or the threat of abandonment.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The act of owning one's own truth and of embracing responsibility and ownership of your actions, needs, and wants. It means being good to your word, doing what you say you will do—or plainly, honestly communicating why you cannot—and being willing to see how your words or actions have impacted another person. Being accountable is not accepting blame; it is a shame-free, honest act that removes blame from the equation.



ADDICTION

Being unable or unwilling to refrain from a substance or act and regularly seeking relief and escape from reality, feelings, or events through a substance or act. An addiction quietly takes priority over human interactions, intimacy, and responsibility by appearing to “heighten” a moment as it becomes irresistible and essential in ways one can inevitably find rationalizations for. Addictions eventually—and inevitably—become more powerful than their host. Some examples of addictive substances or acts are sex, sugar, daredevil excitement, shopping, debt, food, gambling, violence, gossip, alcohol, and drugs.

ANXIETY

A state of distracting, ongoing fear usually brought on by what-if-scenario thinking that the brain believes to be nearly real, and therefore causes the stress chemical cortisol to be released in the body. It is an emotional-physiological reaction of the body and mind to irrational thoughts, worries, substances, and outside stimuli that produces a fright, fight, or freeze response and can escalate into a panic attack. In short, it is emotional overwhelm.

BALANCE

The necessity and fact of balance can be seen in nature by way of the seasons, day and night, and the phases of the moon. A life of balance is manifested by taking time to be quiet following activity, eating simply after indulging, resting following work, listening as much as talking, and moving one’s limbs after they have been sedentary. Balance includes enjoying creative and sensual aspects of one’s humanness as much as the analytical and intellectual spheres.

BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT

When you give someone the benefit of the doubt, or it’s given to you, assumptions and conclusions are absent, as well as the emotions and reaction that accompany or are the result of making assumptions. When the benefit of the doubt is given, trust and compassion are activated, defensiveness is avoided, and true listening (also known as *love*) takes place.



CODEPENDENCY

A state in which you believe others cause your feelings, pain, or actions, or that you have the ability to control or influence the actions and feelings of others through obsession, powerful thinking, or control. We overcome codependency by taking ownership of our feelings and actions, by seeing and valuing our separateness from others, by accepting that others are their own entities, and by pursuing our bliss while encouraging others to pursue theirs. If you've ever heard, "So-and-so will be upset if you don't do such-and-such," you've been invited into codependent thinking.

COMPASSION

Living and acting from the belief that we all share common origins and a need for love, nourishment, and shelter. Living with compassion means embodying the understanding that not one of us is alone and that every one of us counts and is valid, deserving of kindness and understanding. Compassionate actions are kind, loving, obligation-free, and unconditional.

COMMITMENT

Choosing to give yourself to something in a wholehearted yet open-eyed, open-handed, and humble yet ambitious way over a period of time.

CONTENTMENT

Between the poles of upset and glee are the calm waters of contentment, in which one feels truly fine, even-keeled, satisfied, and in the simplest, most essential way *alive*.

DENIAL

To be in denial is to activate wishful thinking, pretending, and self-delusion when life presents challenges beyond one's comfort zone and ability to cope, or when one's beliefs and desires are challenged by events that they wish weren't occurring.



DEPRESSION

A state of being in which a person can't experience highs and lows of emotions, but rather lives in a muted emotional state. When depressed, a sense of helplessness and hopelessness permeates everything, as if nothing matters and never will; it's a state that endures for weeks, months, and sometimes years if not dealt with. Whereas Major Depression is a more devastating depression that impacts day-to-day functioning, Dysthymia is a milder "walking depression" that can last for long stretches of time and make one's daily life muted yet still livable.

DETACHMENT

When you detach from a person, a person's addiction, or a group, accepting that they exist as they are, doing what they will do—and you exist, but separately from them. You then can refocus on your own journey, actions, and health while allowing others to do the same. Detachment means accepting what is, allowing others their life choices as well as the consequences of those choices, and seizing your journey. The beauty of detachment is that it doesn't require forgiveness in order to take place, yet it frees you. The opposite of detachment? Obsession.

DISASSOCIATION

The state of going numb, the sensation of leaving one's body, or the shutdown of a part of your emotional self to cope with a situation. It can feel like entering a state of unreality or of having a fuzzy brain, and it can be triggered by highly stressful or abusive scenarios in which "going numb" enables survival of the moment or situation. (*See also* Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Physical violence—hitting or pushing—is an obvious form of domestic violence and abuse, but the definition of home-based violence is not limited to physical acts. Domestic violence includes many forms of control, intimidation, and manipulation, such as the



threat of violence, aggression, hard pinching, threats, name-calling, isolation, stalking, taking money, bullying, bribes, taunting, and intimidation.

DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

A family is dysfunctional if they lie, deny, blame, shame, or avoid certain topics to protect a secret or member of the family, prevent anger, or maintain homeostasis. People feel like they are “walking on eggshells” in dysfunctional families, feel generalized fear, and aren’t accepted for who they really are, particularly when it doesn’t support the family lie. There is typically a cycle of chaos in operation in dysfunctional families in which the members are always entering a state of chaos (or “excitement”) or recovering from it. A dysfunctional family system includes a “perpetrator” or source, a “victim” or medium, and a supporting cast of perfectionists and scapegoats.

EMPATHY

A state of vulnerable and humble sharing of another person’s state of being without judgment or caretaking, advice-giving, or minimizing. Empathy is judgment-free, fixing-free, and a quiet state of being *with* another person as they feel what they feel. We empathize when we enter the state or perspective of another person and connect with their experience.

FORGIVENESS

The act of choosing to release a resentment, fear, or troubling energy you’ve held tight and associated with a person or occurrence. When we forgive, we alter our relationship to our pain; we let go of the effect a situation had on us and recalibrate our perspective. To forgive is not to absolve another person for their actions, and forgiveness can occur independent of whether or not a person or entity related to your hurt has acknowledged their actions.



GRATITUDE

Reflecting on and acknowledging goodness in one's life and in living life. The mind frame of appreciation, awe, and love.

GRIEF

A state of mourning the absence of a person, animal, or experience—such as a certain kind of childhood—in which a deep sense of loss and profound separateness from the Other is felt. It differs from depression in its specificity to the loss of the Other and also in its phases, some of which take longer than others: denial and isolation; anger; bargaining; depression (worry, longing, and emptiness); and acceptance. Often the term “waves” is used to describe the behavior of grief in how it comes and goes and washes over a person.

HONESTY

Living in honesty extends far beyond *not lying* as it involves forthrightness, being responsible, proactive, respectful, and kind with regard to your feelings, needs, and wants. Being honest includes expressing how you actually feel, without blame or requirements, as well as living in vulnerability, trusting in life, and extending the benefit of the doubt. Living in honesty is a means of trusting yourself and the Universe as an expression of self-care and love, one that fortifies self-esteem.

HUMILITY

The embodiment of knowing you are equal to all others and living life in learner or “student” mode, embracing that you have much to learn no matter your current wisdom, and knowing that lessons may come from any source or person, without regard to their place or position in society. Humility is living from a place of self-esteem and calm while also being curious and teachable.



INNER CHILD

Your original and truest self, the Self you were born as, the Self beneath the armor, manipulation, anxiety, masks, and coping shell. Your inner child is the key to finding your way in life by uncloaking and befriending that curious, playful, and energetic being eagerly awaiting your permission to thrive.

INQUIRY

The process by which we ask ourselves questions in order to understand our motivations, feelings, and true desires. When feeling intense emotion or, in contrast, *no* emotion or emotional “numbness,” inquiry can be the road to release, understanding, and transformation. Questions to ask during an inquiry process can include: What happened just before I got upset? How does my body feel right now? What would I say if I had a powerful voice right now? Am I overwhelmed? What do I want? What do I secretly desire? What does my Inner Child have to say about this? What assumptions are supporting how I think about this? Why am I upset?

INTIMACY

There are a great number of types of intimacy: emotional, intellectual, physical, personal, and of course, sexual. The common thread is closeness, presence, quiet vulnerability, being honest, and sharing one’s Self—all in an unhurried, calm, and focused way.

“I” STATEMENTS

Sometimes called I-Messages, “I” statements are a communication tool that allows us to be heard and hear others without being distracted by blame. “I” statements assist us in being able to hear how another person feels, why, and what they need by reducing the distractions of defensiveness, blame, and victimhood. For example, “Why can’t you be on time for me!?” conveys anger and blame but not much actionable information. However, reworded into an “I” statement, the message can be productive and convey feelings, needs, and wants. “I feel like a low priority when you’re late to my house. Can I ask you to make



an effort to be on time?” “I” statements have a general blueprint of, “I feel when and I’d prefer that”

KINDNESS

The embodiment of having genuine concern about someone, whether yourself or another person or animal. It is humbly showing concern without expectation of the kindness being reciprocated, and doing it for the sake of the kindness itself.

MANIPULATION

Attempting to influence or control the actions, decisions, thoughts, or feelings of another person through the use of criticism, compliments, bribes, praise, or with emotional or physical displays. Alternatively, it is being affected by the disingenuous actions of another person. Often terms like “or else” and “if” are used or are implied in an attempt at manipulation. When someone is struggling with self-acceptance or personal power, they’ll use manipulation to fake those things and to feel in control.

MINDFULNESS

The art and practice of noticing that you are alive, paying attention to this very moment of aliveness without judging it or making meaning of it.

NARCISSIST

A narcissist sees their own self reflected when looking at others, rather than actually seeing the other. Narcissists crave acknowledgment and approval from others in order to maintain a sense of self, special-ness, and superiority. They are unable to cultivate deep, long-term intimate relationships and tend to be superficial and limited, serving the narcissist’s needs; this is underscored by the narcissist’s inability to relate to the feelings of others, have empathy, or foster understanding of the validity of other perspectives.



NEEDS

The things necessary not only for your ability to survive—such as physical safety—but in order to thrive in life. Physiological needs include air, water, food, clothing, and shelter; safety needs include job security, savings, and healthcare; needs for love and belonging include a connection to people, friends, community, and intimacy; the need for esteem includes respect, self-esteem, and a sense of competence and achievement; and the need for self-actualization includes deriving meaning from life and contributing to the greater good. (*See also* “Fundamental Self-Esteem,” page 157.)

PANIC ATTACK

In reaction to anxious thoughts, a state of physiological distress that sets in and seems to paralyze a person internally. This panic state can involve a racing heart; a sense of barely surviving; enduring a blotted-out, fuzzy, or spacey mind; or living in the past and future simultaneously, as if being pulled into a “what-if” black hole. During a panic attack, some people fear they are having, or are on the verge of having, a stroke or heart attack.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

When you or someone else acts with physical aggression upon someone and imposes their will upon another person (child, adult, or elderly). Physical abuse typically occurs in a cycle: the peaceful honeymoon period > tension and buildup > chaos and incident > regret and apology > amnesia or forgetting > and then moves into the honeymoon period once again. Physical abuse includes slapping, punching, hair pulling, hard pinching, neck grabbing, throwing objects, preventing sleep, kicking, excessive cold or heat exposure, withholding food or medication, or exposure to excessive loud noises or music. (*See also* Domestic Violence.)

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

The state of having been psychologically altered and haunted by a disturbing experience. Some people with PTSD experience panic or physiological distress when recalling a



traumatic event or re-experiencing a similar event, which may be characterized by nightmares and insomnia or by living “cocked,” ready for a fight or conflict in a heightened fight, flight, or freeze response. Treatment for PTSD exists and includes choosing a therapist you thoroughly trust, telling your story so that it can be witnessed and discovering a way to make meaning of it, and reintegrating new life skills and practicing them over time.

RECOVERY

Actively healing wounds. When someone says they’re in recovery, it often means they’ve made a commitment to a 12-step group process, whether Codependents Anonymous (CoDA), Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA), or a similar group. It more broadly refers to a commitment to forging new emotional and physical pathways and habits in order to promote healing and enjoy an addiction-free life.

RESILIENCE

An ability to navigate, deal with, and bounce back from change and adversity. Resilience can be learned; it can also be practiced by placing focus on identifying possibilities and positive, alternative outcomes when faced with adversity.

RESPONSIBLE

Being true to one’s word, committing to doing what you say you’ll do for yourself and others, and owning your own actions with honesty, even when others cannot. It characterizes a person with an ability to think for one’s self and choose a course of action consistent with agreements made with others or one’s self, regardless of what others’ choices are, as well as a person who operates with an inner mechanism of honor, purpose, or greater good.



SELF-DENIAL

A state of mind or action that involves convincing yourself that everything is fine, minimizing evidence and signs of problems, or being in a state of unwillingness to look at your life closely, openly, or from all angles. It involves avoiding outside opinion that might alter your “self-protective” thinking, which could include your own behavior, choices, or agreements, personal contracts, potential addiction to a substance, activity, or another person.

SELF-ESTEEM

Self-esteem is a direct pathway between your values, beliefs, and personal code and is manifested by your actions. It is the compass that guides your life choices and decisions and that fortifies your spirit.

SELF-MEDICATING

Ingesting sugar or other substances to alter your body’s chemistry specifically as a means of alleviating stress, anxiety, depression, or of otherwise regulating your mood, which usually overlaps with addiction to the chief substance used.

SELF-PARENTING

Being engaged in an ongoing dialogue with yourself and your inner child about what you need and how you feel, and practicing acceptance of those things while encouraging yourself with kindness to take care of your physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and sensual needs as you participate in life. It involves being a champion of yourself and taking care of yourself independent of how you were raised, bringing together self-esteem, self-care, and independence.

SELF-SABOTAGE

A belief that we have an inner desire to fail. When we stop moving forward because we don’t know the next step in a project or don’t truly want to be where we are, we call it “self-sabotage.”



SENSUALITY

The slow savoring and enjoyment of experiences involving touch, sight, smell, sound, and taste as a celebration of being alive.

SHAME

A deep, burning feeling of distress about one's actions and self-worth. Healthy shame is a form of humility, vulnerability, and honesty—such as realizing you weren't the top choice or rear-ending someone on the road—as reminders of your fallibility as a human (we still love ourselves and know our worth). But unhealthy shame hits with a toxicity that delivers a deep sense of unworthiness, as if we ourselves are a mistake, which can alienate us from our true self.

SOBRIETY

Being aware, tuned in, present, and free of alteration from substances. For alcoholics, sobriety means a lack of intoxication, or being alcohol-free. More generally, sobriety means being substance-free from alcohol, pain medication, sugar, marijuana, etc. When people talk about emotional sobriety, they're talking about living drama- and chaos-free, living a life in which feelings are felt, not avoided, and in which one is aware, present, responsible, and denial-free.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

An action taken to connect to one's humanity and the Universe as a part of a greater whole. This can be a daily meditation or it can be achieved through daily acts such as gardening, taking a walk, or swimming. A "practice" is doing something regularly and with commitment, but not with the goal of being perfect at it or reaching an endpoint.



SURVIVAL MODE

Living in reaction to things—such as to the past or to what others do, say, or expect—rather than taking independent action. Survival mode is living tied to the past, to what has just occurred, and to frustration with what one cannot control. When living life in survival mode, everyday tasks and responsibilities are fraught with difficulty, one's life becomes insular, and one finds him/herself navigating one interpersonal or work drama after another, as if a victim of those situations, rather than as a participant on some level.

THRIVING

One is thriving when he or she is grateful for opportunity, love, and life and is choosing to feel good things are possible. It is feeling pride in actively taking care of one's self and in choosing healing and responsibility for one's self. In avoiding situations and people that would chip away at your self-esteem, and living with humor, being in the here and now, and experiencing vulnerability as openness not as prey, you act from a place of compassion for yourself and for those you deem safe.

TRAUMA

A single or recurring upsetting event that so damages the body, mind, and spirit that, if left unresolved, can deeply influence one's life and ability to thrive. Trauma can persist in a painful and haunting way, often unseen to the outside world despite one's efforts to deny, ignore, or "pretend it away" over a lifetime. (*See also* PTSD.)

TRUTH

Your personal truth is your way of living in the world and doing what's right for you; it's your calling, your path. Your truth is an undeniable knowing, sense, or inkling—an often small, quiet, and patient inner sense. It is what's true for you no matter what others might wish, want, or attempt to recommend for you; it is a part of who you are and what you're capable of—a guiding feeling or understanding for living in a way that complements and



enables you to identify, find, and act on your bliss. Your truth is what you believe, feel, and know without dispute.

VALUES

Your values are the deeply important, fixed beliefs that guide your life and actions. What you value may be a natural outgrowth or something you adopted from family or others, such as creativity, personal growth, friendships, excitement, financial success or security, privacy, pleasure, good food, knowledge, sobriety, competition, physical fitness, democracy, safety, etc. What you value can be discovered by examining your choices and action. If you value knowledge, but not competition as much, you'll spend your time at a party getting to know others' ideas as opposed to finding out how your achievements stack up against theirs. Similarly, if you value helping others but wealth not nearly as much, you may work teaching or rescuing animals; while you may wish you had more money, you nonetheless feel quite satisfied. Some of our values are complementary to those of people we love; when they're not, it may be an opportunity for compassion.

VERBAL ABUSE

Verbal abuse is communication empty of respect, compassion, and humility, reflecting an inability to regulate one's emotions, fear, or insecurity. One form of verbal abuse is passive-aggression and sarcasm; another is the "silent" treatment or stonewalling. Other forms of verbal abuse include conditional bargaining, such as "If you love me," or the minimization of another person or their feelings, such as "Don't be an idiot" or "You're making such a big deal out of this." Belittling and shaming would be, "You're no smarter than me," while blaming and blasting would sound like, "Why must you push my buttons?!" (*See also* "I" Statements.)

VICTIMHOOD

Victimhood is viewing one's self at the center of mishap and circumstances and as the one most harmed by circumstances, as if things happen "to" you rather than independently of



you. A person is in victimhood when he or she identifies the source of hardships, problems, or pain as other people, groups, or inanimate objects, such as by saying, “This car has it out for me,” “She doesn’t want me to succeed,” or “I bet this company would be happy to see me go.” In victim mode, one forgets their personal power and ability to act on their own behalf, losing sight of their self-worth and accountability for their influence on their own life and the lives of others.

WANTS

After needs are met, wants are the icing on the cake—the activities, experiences, or engagements that you’d like to have for reasons that add to your sense of thriving as You. Wants characterize being alive, furthering your personal truth, and maximizing your bliss. You might need job security but *want* to help animals for a living or own your own business; you might need a place to live, but *want* to live closer to the center of town to be part of things. Wants reflect an intersection of your personal values, bliss, and self-esteem.

