

Tools for Maintaining a Healthy Perspective

By Elona K. Shelley

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*Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy,
and keep choosing it every day. —Henri Nouwen*

Tool # 1: Immerse the World in Love

- We all live in fear of being judged by others, while the empty space between us is waiting to be filled by a simple gesture of honest caring. —Kent Nerburn
- Cease to make others wrong and you cease to make yourself wrong.
- It's amazing how good others look when you look for the good in others.
- At the center of our humanity is the incredible capacity to give and receive love.
—Henri Nouwen

Tool # 2: Embrace Reality

- You will always lose when you argue with reality, but only 100% of the time. —Byron Katie
- My purpose is not to judge my path, but to walk my path with purpose.
- Every football play begins where the ball is, not where it coulda, shoulda, woulda been.

Tool # 3: Establish and Maintain a Relationship of Trust with God

- Don't expect people to do what only God can do.
- It is not requisite for a woman to run faster than she has strength. (King Benjamin)
- O wretched woman that I am — nevertheless I know in whom I have trusted! (Nephi)
- For any relationship to thrive it must be continually nurtured.

Tool # 4: Live in the Present

- There is no time like the present. Carpe Diem! Seize the day!
- Don't let the pain of the past or the fear of the future steal the joy of the present.
- Physical activities hold us in the present.
- Daily water bowl ritual (Rachel Remen in *My Grandfather's Blessings*, pg. 217).

Tool # 5: No Secrets!

- Be authentic.
- Healing happens in the light. Deceit and pain grow in darkness.
- How can anyone love you for who you are when you become someone else when you are with them?

Tool # 6: Manage Thoughts

- We are disturbed not by what happens to us, but by our thoughts about what happens to us.
—Epictetus as quoted in *Loving What Is* by Byron Katie
- You are not your thoughts.
 - Thoughts are just thoughts. It's what you do with them that matters.
- You can't keep a bird from flying over your head, but you can keep it from building a nest in your hair.
- Change the channel.
 - Switch from the reruns on the grievance channel to the peace and joy of the gratitude channel. Keep the remote handy and click back repeatedly as needed.

- “Purpose may point you, but passion propels you.” —Adapted from Travis Ashan
 - “I can do this!”
- Use good books, audio books, and music to attract positive, creative, uplifting thoughts.

Tool # 7: The Law of Attraction

- What we focus on increases.
- Abundance is not something we acquire. It is something we tune in to. —Wayne Dyer

Tool # 8: Maintain a Sense of Humor

- Humor holds you in the present.
- A perfectionist is one who takes great pains . . . and passes them on to others.
- Anything worth doing is worth doing badly! —Julie de Azevedo Hanks
- As long as you can laugh at yourself, you will never cease to be amused!
- You don’t stop laughing because you grow old. You grow old because you stop laughing.

Tool # 9: Gratitude — Feel it! Express it!

- The tool of first resort.
- Gratitude journals.
- Express gratitude physically—humbly, joyfully, playfully.

Tool # 10: Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is the gift you give yourself. You give yourself freedom.
- Not forgiving is like drinking poison and then waiting for the other person to die.
- Forgiveness frees us of the power that a wrongful action from the past still has over us.
- Everyone is doing the best they can, given what they know and feel at the time.

Tool # 11: Set Appropriate Boundaries

- Value yourself. Your needs are just as important as the needs of anyone else.
- Taking care of your own needs does not mean you are selfish.
- Practice saying no without making excuses.
 - “That doesn’t work for me.” (Add “I’m sorry,” only if you really mean it.)
 - “Thanks for asking, but I’m going to have to pass this time.”
- I can never meet the needs of all the people to whom my heart responds.
(Ann Morrow Lindbergh)

Tool # 12: Be a Self-Observer, Ask Empowering Questions

- Be the scientist and the subject. Create a plan, implement the plan, observe the results, make changes based on what worked and what didn’t, repeat until you like the results.
(Concept from *Change Anything*)
- Don’t be a why-ner! (Why did this have to happen to me?)
- Ask questions that invite solutions. (What can I do about this? Who can help me solve this problem? Will doing this get the result I’m looking for? Is this any of my business?)

People often don’t recognize their innate ability to solve their own problems. A problem may simply be an opportunity to discover untapped potential.

The most crucial predictor of recovery is a persistent willingness to exert some effort to help yourself.—David Burns in *Feeling Good*

Recommended Reading

Reading or listening to audio books brings joyful, creative thoughts to my mind. I invite you to experience some of my favorite books for healing mal-adaptive perfectionism.

1. Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal by Rachel Remen.

I call this book “soul food.” Anyone interested in genuine mind and body healing will find a wealth of insight and inspiration in Rachel Remen’s short story/commentaries. She has also written a similar book called My Grandfather’s Blessings which is equally lovely.

2. Loving What Is: Four Questions That Can Change Your Life by Byron Katie.

Reading this book was a beautiful, eye-opening adventure that led to a fun new way of exploring my thoughts.

3. He Did Deliver Me from Bondage by Colleen Harrison.

Here is the book that taught me how to continually return to that wonderful place of love. It is a 12 Step Program based on the Book of Mormon and other scriptures.

4. Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy by David D. Burns.

This is a fat little book, and I have to admit that I have not read it from cover to cover; but I love everything I have read from it! My close friend’s therapist gave it to her after she had been on depression medication for 20 years. After studying and implementing its suggestions, she was able to quit using depression medication and has not returned to it in the 15 years since.

5. Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend.

This book tells about the new life which appropriate boundaries can breathe into a dying relationship. I am passionate about this book because of the marriage-saving change it created for a young family that I particularly care about.

6. Change Anything: The New Science of Personal Success by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan and Al Switzler.

When I read this book I gained a lot of insight into why my eating disorder ended so painlessly after all the years of unrewarded struggle.

7. The Tools: 5 tools to help you find courage, creativity, and willpower—and inspire you to live life in forward motion by Phil Stutz and Barry Michels.

I read this book with my husband while we were on a road trip. We laughed and pondered together as we explored the authors’ suggestion that you can create immediate change if you are willing to step into your courage zone. I’ve share it with friends who have felt stuck and they have also found it fun and helpful.

8. What to Say When You Talk to Yourself by Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D.

Straight talk about negative self-talk, along with effective methods for creating joyful self-talk.

9. The 4:8 Principle: The Secret to a Joy-Filled Life by Tommy Newberry

This delightful little book is my latest discovery in joy reading. The author shows us how to exchange old negative patterns of thinking for joyful, productive new patterns by applying scriptural teachings.

10. Confessions of a Molly Mormon: Trading Perfectionism for Peace, Fear for Faith, Judging for Joy by Elona K. Shelley.

Of course I love and recommend this little book—it’s my heart on paper! My secret battle with my beloved Mormon religion has ended and I now live openly and joyfully!



What can you do when you're facing a dragon?
The perfectionism dragon, that is.



You may try to attack it.



You may try to run from it.



But it's far more fun to embrace it
and harness its energy.

