



How an RI Example Should Be Constructed

OUTLINE

Step 1. Report a single situation or event that occurred—an everyday event when you began to work yourself up. Focus on a brief description of what happened: specifically, what triggered temper and symptoms?

Step 2. Report the symptoms you experienced—both physical and mental. (*For instance, angry and fearful thoughts, confusion, palpitations, disturbing impulses, tightness in your chest, lowered feelings, sweaty palms, and so on.*)

Step 3. Report your spotting of fearful and/or angry temper, the Recovery International tools you used to help yourself, and your self-endorsement for your effort.

Step 4. Begin with "Before I had my Recovery training," and describe the temperamental reaction and symptoms you would have experienced in former days. What would have happened then versus what happened now? (*This will help you to note the progress you have made.*)

Learning to give an example simply and clearly in the four-step sequence is an important part of the Recovery International (RI) Method. The best way to learn is to practice constructing and giving a "good average" example. Here are a few basics to work on as you go through each step in turn.

Step 1: When describing the situation or event, be clear but brief. It's tempting to go into a lot of "background" and detail, but this is usually unnecessary and even distracting. Practice focusing on just a few sentences of basic information that will clarify the situation or event that generated your symptoms or discomfort. Notice in the sample examples how the descriptions in Step 1 are both brief and precise.

Step 2: People often skip this step to get to Step 3, "spotting." However, while this step, like the others, should be kept brief, an important part of the RI Method is learning to be objective in recognizing and describing physical and mental responses. This objectivity makes those responses seem less threatening and overwhelming. Avoid diagnosing ("I became paranoid") and spotting (that comes in the next step). Just describe your physical and mental sensations ("I felt flushed and angry, my head hurt," etc.).

Step 3: Here you identify the Recovery tools – the "spots" – that helped you deal with your symptoms. Stay focused on RI language and concepts; avoid mixing in material from other methods. Be clear about how the spots apply to the symptoms and event, but don't worry about using every possible tool. Often just one or a few spots are all that you need for the example.

Step 4: A crucial part of getting well through will training comes when we see how we've improved through our use of the RI Method. This step is important in helping us to see that improvement.

Note: The sample Examples of RI Practice (see reverse side) illustrate how the four steps can be followed briefly but clearly.



EXAMPLES OF RECOVERY PRACTICE

I had an errand to do downtown today. It was something that could not be put off. I thought that I did not want to go and began to work myself up.

I had fearful thoughts about being out in public and not being able to control my outer environment. I wanted to withdraw, had lowered feelings, felt tense and thought of how I could avoid going out today.

I spotted my fearful temper and **made a decision to go out and run the errand**. I felt steadier having made the decision. I **planned and acted** in getting ready to go out and went downtown on the bus. As I traveled and took care of my business downtown, I saw that **anticipation is often worse than realization** because things were going fine. I enjoyed being out on a nice day and people were friendly. Although I could not control my outer environment, I could control my inner environment. Each time I endorsed my efforts, the next step seemed easier.

Before my Recovery training, I might have stayed home, remained fearful and worked myself up into a vicious cycle of lowered feelings and inadequacy. If I had not **decided, planned and acted**, I would not have had this opportunity to see that **anticipation is often worse than realization** and that one self-endorsement can lead to further encouragement and confidence.

Coming through customs at the airport at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, I was asked to go through a different area to be searched. That's when I began to work myself up.

My symptoms were head pressure, palpitations, and dizziness. My racing thoughts were, Why me? There are thousands of people here and they pick me. I had the impulse to work myself up more.

I spotted aggressive temper towards the customs officials. I had fearful temper that I would be unable to cope with the situation and self-pity – Poor me! I used the Recovery spottings that “**helplessness is not hopelessness**” and “**to excuse rather than accuse**” in the interest of my mental health.

In former days, I would have reached for medication. I would have said rude things to the man who searched my luggage. This time I endorsed myself for making the trip and coming to Chicago.

Yesterday I bought a half dozen peaches that were beautiful on the outside but rotten on the inside. My wife and I have different philosophies about buying produce. I buy it at a cheaper store where the goods must be eaten in a few days or they will go bad. She buys at a more expensive store which sells produce with a longer shelf life. We have been engaged in a good-natured debate all summer about which philosophy helped us save more money. Several months ago, we had had the same experience with fruit purchased at my store. My wife returned the items and got our money back. Now it was happening again. I began to work myself up.

I had lowered feelings and some stomach distress. I had the fearful thought that I might have failed in the standard of average efficiency. I had the angry thought that my wife was rubbing in my failure.

I spotted to have the **courage to make mistakes** and that **there is no right or wrong in the trivialities of everyday life**. I **excused and did not accuse** my wife. I spotted that **people say things that irritate us but not necessarily to irritate us**. I resisted the impulse to start keeping records about how much things cost my way as opposed to her way—thus **controlling my muscles to keep from going for a symbolic victory**. I endorsed myself for my practice.

Before Recovery I would have felt that I *must* find out who was right. I would not have realized that I had choices about changing my thoughts and controlling my impulses. Before Recovery I was hospitalized with delusions and clinical depression.



A Sampling of Tools and Terms

A purpose for using a Tool List is to enable newcomers to more easily and rapidly participate in a Recovery meeting. With this in mind Recovery International encourages you to use this list when you initially attend our meetings, until you feel comfortable without it. Your Group Leader may have other guidelines for you regarding the use of this list in meetings. We are glad that you are here and encourage you to participate and endorse for your participation!

These tools are quoted or adapted from Dr. Low's books: Mental Health Through Will Training (MH), Selections from Dr. Low's Works (SEL) and Manage Your Fears, Manage Your Anger (MYF). Citations to Dr. Low's books are listed for each tool. Many other tools can be found in these books.

Some Basic RI Tools

- Treat mental health as a business and not as a game.....MH ch.25
- Humor is our best friend, temper is our worst enemy.....MH p.108
- If you can't change a situation you can change your attitude towards it...MYF p.108, Sel. p.31-32
- Be self-led, not symptom-led.MYF p.114-118, 280-283
- Nervous symptoms and sensations are distressing but not dangerous .SEL p.53, MH p.115, 119
- Temper is, among other things, blindness to the other side of the storyMH p.159
- Comfort is a want, not a need.MH chs.13, 22
- There is no right or wrong in the trivialities of every day life.....SEL p.39, MH p.157, 195-196
- Calm begets calm, temper begets temper.....MYF p.245, SEL p.31
- Don't take our own dear selves too seriously.....MH p.109
- Feelings should be expressed and temper suppressed.....MH p.178
- Helplessness is not hopelessness.....MH ch.7, MYF p.184
- Some people have a passion for self-distrust.....MH ch.29 & MYF Lecture 2
- Temper maintains and intensifies symptoms.....MH p. 219
- Do things in part acts.....MH p.246-249
- Endorse yourself for the effort, not only for the performance.....MYF p.13, SEL p.46, 132
- Have the courage to make a mistake.....MH p.203, ch.30, MYF p.60, SEL p.108
- Feelings are not facts.....MH ch.9, MYF Lecture 14
- Do the things you fear and hate to do.....MH p. 329-330, MYF p.197
- Fear is a belief — beliefs can be changed.....MYF p.266-269
- Every act of self-control leads to a sense of self-respect.....MH p.166
- Decide, plan and act.MH p.42
- Any decision will steady you.....MYF p.5
- Anticipation is often worse than realization.....MH p.114-115, 146
- Replace an insecure thought with a secure thought.....MYF Lecture 1
- Bear the discomfort in order to gain comfort.....MH p.149
- Hurt feelings are just beliefs not shared.....SEL p.21
- Self-appointed expectations lead to self-induced frustrations.....SEL p.35
- People do things *that* annoy us, not necessarily *to* annoy us.....MH ch.48
- Knowledge teaches you what to do, practice tells you how to do it.....SEL p.118
- Muscles can be commanded to do what one fears to do.....SEL p.123
- Tempers are frequently uncontrolled, but not uncontrollable.....MH p.392



Some Basic RI Terms

Angry Temper — *negative judgments* (resentment, impatience, indignation, disgust, hatred) *directed against another person or situation.*

Fearful Temper — *negative judgments* (discouragement, preoccupation, embarrassment, worry, hopelessness, despair, sense of shame, feelings of inadequacy) *directed against oneself.*

Averageness — most of the things we experience, including nervous symptoms are average — most people have experienced them. Only our tendency to work them up makes them seem exceptional to us.

Self-endorsement — self-praise for any effort to practice the RI method. We recognize the value of every effort we make regardless of the result.

Sabotage — when we ignore or choose not to practice what we have learned in RI. When we do not do what is best for our mental health.

Trivialities — the everyday events and irritations of daily life. Compared to our mental health, most events are trivial

Inner Environment — everything *inside* your self: feelings, sensations, thoughts, impulses and muscles.

Outer Environment — everything *outside* your self: places, people, events, and the past.

Spotting — identifying a disturbing feeling, sensation, thought or impulse, previously unseen...then applying the right Recovery tools.

BASIC CONCEPTS

For more than 70 years, thousands of people all over the world have been using the self-help method developed by neuropsychiatrist Abraham Low, M.D., to live more peaceful lives. The Low Self-Help Method is based on these important concepts.

Temper Has Two Faces

<p>Angry Temper: The <i>judgment</i> that the other person is wrong or has wronged me.</p> <p>For example: <i>irritation, resentment, impatience, hatred, disgust, rebellion</i></p>	<p>Fearful Temper: The <i>judgment</i> that I am wrong.</p> <p>For example: <i>worry, feeling of inadequacy, hopelessness, fear of damage to your reputation, sense of shame</i></p>
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Living a more peaceful life starts with learning to recognize signs and symptoms of temper, both angry and fearful.

Environment Has Two Sides

<p>Outer (External) Environment: Everything <i>outside</i> yourself.</p> <p>You <i>can't</i> control any of these: <i>people, events, the past, the future.</i></p>	<p>Inner (Internal) Environment: Everything <i>inside</i> yourself.</p> <p>You <i>can't</i> control these: <i>feelings, sensations</i></p> <p>You <i>can</i> control these: <i>thoughts, impulses</i></p>
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Realize what you **cannot control**. Concentrate on what **you can control**.

Use Your Will

You have the **power to choose**:

- How you are going to **act**.
- What you are going to **think**.

Focus on Everyday Events

Most things that upset us are the routine events in everyday life. Using the Low Self-Help Method helps us deal more positively and peacefully with the frustrations, challenges and upsets of daily living.

Practice Self-Endorsement

Give yourself a mental pat on the back for any effort:

- To spot **and control** your temper.
- To control your thoughts and impulses.



Constructing a RI Example: A Worksheet

1. Report a single *situation or event* that occurred — an everyday event when you began to work yourself up. Focus on a brief description of what happened: specifically, what triggered temper and symptoms?

2. Report the *symptoms* you experienced — both physical and mental.
(For instance, *angry and fearful thoughts, confusion, palpitations, disturbing impulses, tightness in your chest, lowered feelings, sweaty palms, and so on.*)

3. Report your *spotting* of fearful and/or angry temper, the RI tools you used to help yourself, and your self-endorsement for your effort.

4. Begin with "*Before I had my Recovery training*" and describe the temperamental reaction and symptoms you would have experienced before you began practicing the RI Method. What would have happened then versus what happened now? (This will help you to note the progress you have made.)



What You Can Expect at a Recovery Inc. Meeting

- What You Can Expect at a Recovery International (RI) Meeting
- Meetings will start and end on time.
- Please turn off your cell phone, pager or other communication device.
- Meetings are facilitated by volunteer leaders trained to demonstrate the Recovery International Method.
- A Recovery International meeting is a safe place to share. All personal information disclosed during meetings is held in strict confidence.
- All Recovery International meetings follow a standard, structured format.
- Written information will be distributed to help you understand and participate during the meeting. Additional RI literature, membership information and materials will also be available.
- You may take notes on RI tools and principles during any portion of the meeting EXCEPT during the giving of an example.
- We encourage you to sit with the group and to participate. Until you are ready to participate, simply say "I pass".
- We listen quietly and respectfully when others are reading and speaking.
- We do not use offensive language.
- We don't offer advice, criticize, judge, analyze or make negative comments.
- We keep comments and spotting tools brief in order to have time for all to participate.
- You will have an opportunity to ask questions or make comments.
- We don't discuss politics, sex, religion, or legal issues in our meetings.
- We are not mental health experts or trained professionals. We are people who practice the RI self-help techniques. We don't diagnose, comment or advise on diagnoses, treatment plans or your medications.
- Drinking any non-alcoholic beverage is permitted during a meeting but eating is restricted to the Mutual Aid portion of the meeting.

Thanks for coming and we encourage you to come again.
If you have questions, comments or concerns call: