

# The Power of Emotional Healing

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The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines emotion to be “*a conscious **mental** reaction (as anger or fear) subjectively experienced as a strong feeling usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioral changes in the body.*” In her article, “A General Theory of Emotion in Humans and Other Intelligences”, Paula Muran, a Wellness Coach, Master Teacher and Author based in Albuquerque, specializes in healing emotional belief patterns which she believes is the root cause of illness. She states that “*emotions are the root cause of almost every injury and illness. Anger, fear, unworthiness and other emotions get ‘stuffed’ into the body. Over time these **limiting emotions** weaken the physical body creating stiffness, aches, pain and general discomfort, which eventually can cause more serious conditions like tumors and cancer.* One of my favorite authors declares that “*many of the diseases from which men (women) suffer are the result of mental depression. Grief, anxiety, discontent, remorse, guilt, distrust — all tend to break down the life forces and invite decay and death.*” Ellen G. White, Life at its Best, p. 147

## 1. **Recognize the Need for Healing and Express it:**

Before emotional healing can occur one must be *deeply* aware of the need for it. Denial, suppression or depression (internalizing our feelings of despair, resentment, betrayal, unworthiness, inadequacy, guilt and shame) keeps us frustrated, exhausted, self-defeated and confused. We need to admit that we have limiting emotions. For example, it is appropriate to look in the mirror and say, “I feel inadequate” or “I am an angry person.” Then express those words in a safe environment to a patient and professional listener who will not be judgmental, reactionary or try to “fix” us, but will journey with us through a process of discovery, recovery, healing and empowerment. Ask yourself: What emotions have I suppressed or denied? How has this suppression or denial caused me to experience physical, mental, emotional pain or social discomfort?

## 2. **Challenge the Reception and Perception of Messages:**

In counseling individuals I have discovered that shame is at the core of their damaged emotions and the precursor for many of their presenting problems. After exploring their childhood, they realized that they had received negative messages from individuals they loved, admired or respected. Even though through the years they recognized that many of the messages were inaccurate or downright false, it was difficult for them to change their perception or minimize the effects those messages had/have on their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. For emotional healing to occur we need to challenge the messages we have heard and maybe admit that people (even though well-meaning) gave/give us messages from their own dysfunction, prejudices, experiences, circumstances, world view and pain. Not every messenger is emotionally healthy and not every message given about who we are or what we can or cannot do is accurate. The only messages that we can totally rely on for truth, accuracy and emotional freedom come from God. Ask yourself: What were the negative messages I received? Who gave me these negatives messages? What impact have they had on me? What is the truth about me?

### 3. **Forgive and Let Go:**

We often hear many presentations, sermons, and attend seminars on the power of forgiveness and realize that it is easier said than done. But there is power in forgiveness. When we forgive others for what they have done (or have not done) to us, we are not releasing them of the responsibility of their ill treatment towards us, we are simply letting go of the limiting emotions of anger, revenge, and bitterness we have towards them that keep us unhealthy, emotionally stuck, and vulnerable to more pain and hurt. We no longer allow them to have control over our emotions. Eventually everyone must give an account for what he or she has done to us or failed to do for us that has been hurtful and damaging. It is *not always* important to bring to justice or punish people who have hurt us, maligned our character, lied about us or treated us unfairly in various ways. (There are circumstances, however, under which justice must be sought.) But it is *always* imperative for us to live our lives in a Spirit-filled, healthy and fulfilling manner, by letting go of fear, anger, revenge, and leave the consequences to God. “For we know Him who has said, vengeance belongs to Me, I will recompense.” Hebrews 10:30. Ask yourself: Who are the individuals that have hurt me? Is it worth my time and energy to seek revenge? Do I need justice to make me feel better? Can I let go of my anger, bitterness, etc., and trust God to avenge me?

### 4. **Walk Down Another Street**

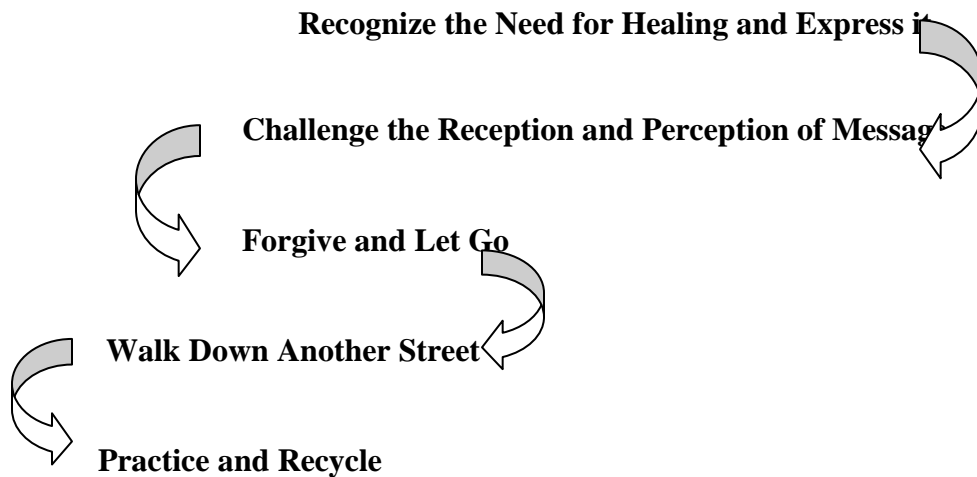
Many years ago I came across a poem that helps to describe the process of making changes that can free us from the bondage of addictions, and heal our damaged emotions. It was written by Portia Nelson and entitled “Autobiography in Five Short Chapters”. Ms. Nelson describes someone walking down a street who continues to fall in a deep hole in the sidewalk until he decides that he needs to take responsibility for his life and make a decision not to make the same mistakes over and over again. He decides that in order to be healed, he needs to walk down another street. There will be times in our journey of emotional healing that we will need to walk down another street, indicative by ending self-destructive behaviors, put aside toxic, manipulative and controlling relationships that shames and blames us, and prevent us from healing and growing. It will take peace with God, courage and wisdom to do this. St. Francis of Assisi succinctly describes this in his prayer, “*Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*” As we walk down another street we need to adhere to the principles of healthful living in the mental, physical, spiritual, and social aspects of our lives. Ask yourself: What is preventing me from changing dysfunctional patterns of thinking, doing, and feeling? Which relationships cause me to feel put down or shameful? What are some of the changes I need to make in order to take care of myself? If I don’t change what will happen to me? What does walking down another street look like for me?

### 5. **Practice and Recycle:**

Anger, fear, confusion, over-functioning, under-functioning, discontent, remorse, blaming, shaming, anxiety, desire for absolute power and control over others, distrust, and guilt contribute to a society that is consumed with damaged emotions. Our hope for the future is to trust in God, pray unceasingly to Him, rehearse and put into practice the positive messages He has given us about who we are, what we can be and do in Him. “*Every human being created in the image of God is endowed with power akin to that of the Creator: individuality, power to think and to do.*” Education, p. 17. As we explore and understand the depth of God’s love and His desire for us to

be changed into His likeness, we will become aware of the negative patterns in our lives that prevent us from growing up into the full stature of Christ (Eph. 4:15). We will understand that emotional healing is a life- long journey, but limitless power is available to us as we recycle the process for our emotional wellness. Ask yourself: What does emotional healing look and feel like? What do I need to do in order to maintain emotional health?

### **THE CYCLE OF EMOTIONAL HEALING**



As a result of sin we all are in need of emotional healing. We all suffer from some form of emotional dysfunction that can prevent us from living the happy, healthy, and holy life God intended for us when He created us. In essence unresolved emotional baggage can cripple and eventually kill us. Emotional abuse is considered by many victims the worst form of abuse because of a lingering internal fear that robs them of their self-worth, self-motivation, and dignity. It gnaws at the core of their being: who they are, what they think or feel and what they do. They exist believing that they are not good enough. It is God's desire that we prosper and be in good health (3 John 2) because He created us in His image. "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being," (Acts 17:28). Therefore if we are to reflect His image we must begin a process of healing our damaged emotions. With His help we can be victorious because "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love (an emotion) and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7.