

#UNHARMABLE

Module 2 Exercises: Impact of Core False Beliefs

"I am whole and perfect in every way." From a spiritual perspective, life's journey can be seen as an attempt to reclaim this truth. Addictive behavior is categorically a response to the felt sense that something is out of balance, that we have forgotten our essential self, forgotten the truth of who and what we are. In our addictive behavior, we are usually looking for something outside of ourselves to help us manage something that feels disturbed or broken within. It's a solution to the problem of the fragmented self. In his book *The Four Agreements*, Don Miguel Ruiz introduces us to the concept of "the domestication of the human"—the process whereby we receive messages about, in his words, "who we should be, what we shouldn't be, who we (are), and who we (are) not." That's what I'm talking about here as spiritual disconnection. It's the separation from our essential nature.

Releasing Statement

I release all ideas of fear and separation.

Affirming Statement

I am worthy of love and connection.

Simple Meditation Practice

This section's meditation is a nature walk. This meditation is quite simple. Find a nature trail, beach, or other quiet place where you can spend 30 minutes walking. (Please modify as needed.) Do this practice alone and in silence. Simply notice what emerges as you spend time in nature. What are you aware of? What are you thinking? Feeling? As always, once you have finished the meditation, write about the experience.

1. Attachment Theory Process: *"The most important precept of attachment theory is that a baby needs to develop a loving relationship with at least one primary caregiver for the child's successful emotional development, and for learning how to effectively normalize their emotions. When this doesn't happen, we develop into one of these three different unhealthy attachment styles: avoidant, anxious, or anxious-avoidant."*

"Adults with avoidant attachment desire a high level of independence, often appearing to avoid attachment altogether. They view themselves as self-reliant, invulnerable to attachment feelings and not needing close relationships. They tend to suppress their feelings, dealing with rejection by distancing themselves from partners of whom they often have a poor opinion."

- Do you relate to this attachment style? If so, in what way?

"Adults with anxious attachment seek elevated levels of intimacy, approval and receptiveness from partners, and can easily become overly dependent. They tend to be less trusting, have less positive views about themselves than the people in their lives, and may display high levels of emotional self-expression, worry and impulsiveness in their relationships."

- Do you relate to this attachment style? If so, in what way?

“Adults with anxious-avoidant attachment have mixed feelings about close relationships, simultaneously desiring and feeling uncomfortable with emotional closeness. They tend to mistrust their partners and can often view themselves as unworthy. Similar to avoidant attached adults, anxious-avoidant adults tend to seek less intimacy, and suppress their feelings.”

- Do you relate to this attachment style? If so, in what way?

- In what way has your attachment style contributed to your addiction?

“Authentically attached adults foster positive views of themselves, their companions and their relationships. They feel comfortable with intimacy and independence, and have an easy time balancing the two.”

- What are some ways you can move toward authentic attachment?

2. Core False Beliefs Exercise: As a result of disconnection, we often develop core false beliefs about ourselves and the world. These core false beliefs are often at the root of addictive tendencies. Circle any of these beliefs that you are, on some level, holding or believing about yourself. (Feel free to add your own.)

I'm not good enough

The world is an unsafe place

I don't deserve to be _____ (e.g., happy)

I'll never succeed

I'm all alone in the world

No one understands me

No one loves me /I'm unlovable

People are against me

There isn't enough time, money, energy, etc.

Life is hard, life is a struggle

I have to be perfect

I'll never amount to anything

I'll never be happy

I'll never heal from my trauma

I have to win at all costs

I am a loser

I am stupid

I am not worthy

I am not lovable

There's something wrong with me

I never get it right

The world/life is unfair

Now, try rewording the beliefs in a more realistic or positive way (e.g., "I'll never succeed" could be reworded to acknowledge successes you've already had; such as, "I've been successful many times before.") Use the space to the right of each statement to write your new version. Ask someone for help if you have trouble with this. Read the new versions of what you wrote, then notice if the rewording changes the beliefs. Notice your energy level when you read the two versions.

3. Strategies Exploration: *"Our core false beliefs, which frequently stem from generalized unresolved trauma and spiritual disconnection, may leave us feeling broken. In response, we might look for things to make that feeling go away. That is often the foundational malady of addictive behavior. What is most often at the core of addictive behavior is this sense of brokenness within and the search for something outside ourselves to help us manage the resulting discomfort. Looked at in this way, addictive behavior can be seen as a strategy, even a brilliant strategy, for survival."* With this in mind, please write out your answers to the following questions:

- At what point did you forget the truth of your perfection and wholeness?

- When did you start to seek outside of yourself for comfort or love?

- What coping strategies have you used that are no longer working for you?

- In what ways can you acknowledge the brilliance they once were?

Now, read through what you wrote. Set a timer for four minutes. Meditate for the four minutes on your answers. Sit with how they *feel* in your body. Notice any thoughts, physical sensations, and emotions that show up. Once the timer sounds, spend a few minutes writing what came up for you during the silence.

4. Inner Resources Activity: This can be written out if you are alone or shared with a partner if you're in a group.

- Think of a time when someone said or did something that hurt or upset you. Now, name your emotional response to that.

- How did the situation change the relationship?

See if you can identify three *inner* resources that would help resolve the situation. Some examples of inner resources are: compassion, acceptance, trust, openheartedness, etc.

Write the three inner resources on an index card and place it somewhere you will see it multiple times per day (on a mirror, your computer screen, etc.).

Note: We often look outside ourselves for solutions to situations, e.g., "If she would only..." or "If he would just stop..." The purpose of this exercise is to start focusing on what we can change *within ourselves* and see what happens, rather than believing something or someone else needs to change in order for us to be happy or free. Now, rewrite the "story" from a more empowered position, naming the three inner resources. Once you rewrite it, notice the energy you are feeling. Sit in contemplation.

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5. Shifting Consciousness Method: *"When the strategy of your addiction is no longer working, when your addictive behaviors have become maladaptive and no longer function to bring you a sense of relief, then they become what we might call a dis-ease. Or rather, they become a side-effect, as it were, of your underlying spiritual disconnection."*

- What does this quote mean to you?

- In what ways do you relate to it?

- What are some examples of the "side-effects" of your spiritual disconnection?

“Not only do your addictive behaviors stop working, they begin to cause more problems, more separation. So, the very thing you’ve been using to try to get more connection, or at least to relieve your sense of disconnection, is now causing more separation. Now you’ve got a different problem on your hands, one that requires a new solution, a new way of living.”

- Do you relate to *“the thing you’ve been using to try to get more connection is now causing more separation”* in this quote? What are some examples of this?

- What might be some ways you can create more authentic connections?

- What does *“a new way of living”* in this quote mean to you?

Questions for journaling and further reflection:

1. What is the main strategy that you have been using to try to feel more connected?
2. Or to feel less pain?
3. In what ways is that strategy still working? Not working?
4. Are you ready to make a conscious choice to move on?
5. In what ways has your addiction been a "brilliant strategy?"
6. Is the strategy still brilliant?
7. Is it still working as a solution?
8. What new strategy could you employ to address feelings of brokenness?
9. What would it take to implement that?
10. Who or what have you blamed for your addiction or other problems?

[illegible]

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