

Insights Into My Behavioral Change

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This article is accompanied by a chart designed to enhance your understanding. The chart is on the last page of this document.

My irrational thinking caused a chain of destructive emotions and sinful behavior. Beginning with Eve in the Garden, thoughts of not having or being enough, or of missing out on something important, caused the first couple to hide from God in fear, guilt and shame, with feelings of rejection.

Emotions are simply feelings on the inside, caused by pain or pleasure, moving us in a positive or negative direction. When I examined where my fears and sense of inferiority originated, I found what thoughts and feelings caused them to create character defects in my life. I discovered the causative and contributing factors that triggered my criminal behavior, how to address them and create a new life plan. It took a little help from Jesse and others in recovery, so I thought it might help you too.

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

Roots

My inability to handle fear and anxiety stemming from academic, parental and peer pressure created learned behaviors and ingrained beliefs. My anxiety formed the foundation of my destructive feelings. Dr. Charles Stanley wrote, "For us to overcome our fears, it is crucial we unearth where they [fears] originated from, which then shows us what thoughts triggered them [emotions]." ¹

Triggers

Triggers are stimulations, both internal and external, from events that cause thoughts, feelings, reactions, and responses, resulting in positive or negative consequences. In school, I thought I had to be perfect in order to be accepted. I felt my significance was based upon my performance, triggering stress, anxiety, and other weaknesses. My insecure worldview caused wrong choices and decisions. My choices became actions, then habits, that became automatic, creating my self-identity, character and destiny.

Character Defects

These defects are rooted internally in the core of fallen man. Fear and anxiety generated in my soul (psyche) over a period of time, until I subconsciously attempted to numb their effects. I tried to escape or medicate the pain with addictive behaviors, but it simply festered

within my soul, causing other character defects, destructive coping mechanisms, hidden scars and layers of paralyzing anxiety.

Causative Factors

These factors are negative influences from those with similar character defects, which enhanced their effect when I developed unified perceptions, ideas, attitudes, beliefs and decisions to rationalize deadly actions. This, coupled with isolating myself with a group, taking drugs and having weapons, was a recipe for violent behavior. But ultimately, my own desires enticed me and drug me away. These desires gave birth to my sinful actions. ²

Contributing Factors

These are a combination of character defects and causative factors that were involved at the time of the crime. It is also important to consider specific triggers contributing to the crime. For me, delusional beliefs, a favor owed, drugs (speed), fear of rejection, negative self-talk and anger behind the weapons were regretfully the driving force.

Addressing Character Defects and Causative Factors

Thinking the holistic way helped to formulate my recovery strategies. Since I was born again in 1975, my core power is Spirit. I have a soul (thoughts, choices and emotions), and I live in a body. ³ I'm not what I do, but who I am spiritually, empowering me to think, choose, feel and act. By applying healthy spiritual, mental, emotional, social and physical coping skills, I have learned to harness my emotions by taking authority over every thought through renewing my mind with God's Word. Spirit-born feelings mobilize my actions, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit. ⁴

Who I Am Today

My identity is based upon my trust in the Lord, that is, who I am, what I have, and what I can do in Christ to benefit society. For me, my past doesn't define who I am! Rather, it brought me to my knees, where I believed to receive God's power, ability and tools to change through intimacy with Him. In the past, my emotions ruled my life, but today, God's power is ruling my emotions. *"God is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we ask or think."* ⁵



Maintenance Plan

It is most important to be accountable by creating new coping skills (such as the ones I've listed). These developed along the way in my recovery, but faith in God's love and grace empowers me to succeed daily, while carrying out His plan and purpose for my life. "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. *"They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."* ⁶

RECOVERY BROCHURES

Why the Crimes?
Spirit, Soul & Body
Empowering Youth
Ten Times Higher
California Dreamin'
Christian 12 Steps
Christian Toolbox
Defining Moments
Miracle of Forgiveness
A-Z Identity System

- 1) Emotions, by C. F. Stanley, Howard Books
- 2) James 1:14,15, NLT
- 3) 1 Thessalonians 5:23
- 4) Galatians 5:22,23
- 5) Ephesians 3:20, NLT
- 6) Jeremiah 29:11, NLT

<i>Roots</i>	<i>Triggers</i>	<i>Character Defects</i>	<i>Causative Factors</i>	<i>Contributing Factors</i>	<i>Addressing Character Defects & Causative Factors</i>	<i>Who I Am Today</i>	<i>Maintenance Plans</i>
<p>Academic Pressure (My inability to handle fear and anxiety...)</p> <p>Learned Behaviors & Ingrained Beliefs</p>	<p>Stimulations (Internal/External) from events that cause thoughts, emotions, reactions and consequences.</p> <p>Choices and Decisions People, places, things, desires, ideas and situations.</p>	<p>Internal: Psychological, unseen make-up of the person, with a Spiritual void.</p> <p>Seven Deadly Sins: Pride, Greed, Lust, Envy, Fear, Anger and Laziness.</p>	<p>External: People (wrong crowd), Places (clubs) & Things (alcohol & sex)</p> <p>Lack of Pro-social Skills</p>	<p>Combination of character defects & causative factors that were involved at the time of the crime.</p> <p>Disobedience Rebellion Addictions Unhealthy need for acceptance</p>	<p>SPRITUALLY Born-Again Spirit Renewing the Mind Christian 12 Steps</p> <p>MENTALLY Substance Abuse & Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) Replacement Thoughts Positive Self-talk Behavioral Chain Decisional Balance Consequences +/-</p> <p>EMOTIONALLY Emotional Skills: Controlling my Emotions Recognizing my Feelings Using Self-Control Dealing with Urges Managing Anger, Stress, Anxiety & Sadness Dealing with Rejection, Failure & Grief</p> <p>SOCIALLY Social Skills: Understanding the feelings of others Deciding to say "NO" Communicating my Needs Finding Support Asserting Myself Responding to criticism Dealing with Peer Pressure Getting Involved in Good Activities</p> <p>PHYSICALLY Stretching & Exercise Working Hard</p>	<p>I AM accepted, blessed, confident, delivered & forgiven. healed, joyful, knowledgeable, loved & merciful. openminded, peaceful, redeemed, secure & significant. thankful, unique, victorious, youthful, & zealous.</p> <p>I HAVE an intimate relationship with God; humility. solid core beliefs, identity & values. a strong foundation in God's Word. a family who loves & supports me. a group of friends who care for me. a toolbox of recovery tools. a college BS degree. a ministry with an attitude of gratitude.</p> <p>I CAN do all things through Christ. communicate in a positive way. empathize with the pain of others. overcome all my fears and anxiety. confront lying thoughts. conquer with Truth & definitely succeed on parole in Christ.</p>	<p>Daily Devotions Inventory Conscious Contact with God Reading Books Various Studies Sharing with healthy friends Work/Exercise</p> <p>Weekly Church Services, Studies & Groups Christian 12 Steps Meeting with accountability partner Sharing Recovery with Others</p> <p>Monthly Communion at Church Monthly View writing Family Visits Quarterly</p> <p>Yearly Family Reunions on holidays Retreats with the church Birthday & Christmas Cards</p>
<p>Parental Pressure HURTS (Unmet needs) 1-18 yrs.</p>	<p>School Work Stress/Anxiety Driving/music Sports Beer (14) Sex (16) Self-talk Criticism</p>	<p>Fear of Failure Anger (pent-up) Sexual Misuse Perfectionism Powerlessness Self-deception</p>	<p>Wrong Peers/Girls Sports/Car Alcohol/Sex</p>	<p>Peers/Girls Sports/Car Fear/Anger Alcohol/Sex Perfectionism</p>	<p>Emotional Skills: Controlling my Emotions Recognizing my Feelings Using Self-Control Dealing with Urges Managing Anger, Stress, Anxiety & Sadness Dealing with Rejection, Failure & Grief</p>	<p>an intimate relationship with God; humility. solid core beliefs, identity & values. a strong foundation in God's Word. a family who loves & supports me. a group of friends who care for me. a toolbox of recovery tools. a college BS degree. a ministry with an attitude of gratitude.</p>	<p>Church Services, Studies & Groups Christian 12 Steps Meeting with accountability partner Sharing Recovery with Others</p>
<p>Peer Pressure FRUSTRATIONS (Unmet expectations) 18-21 yrs.</p>	<p>College/Tests Stress/Anxiety Driving/Clubs Music/Sex Drinking Fraternity Brothers Self-talk Loneliness</p>	<p>Fear of Unknown Anger (pent-up) Sexual Misuse Approval Seeking Guilt & Shame Discontentment</p>	<p>Fraternity Brothers Alcohol/Women Parties/Bars Cars</p>	<p>Fraternity Fear/Anger/Car Alcohol/Sex Approval Seeking Guilt & Shame</p>	<p>Emotional Skills: Controlling my Emotions Recognizing my Feelings Using Self-Control Dealing with Urges Managing Anger, Stress, Anxiety & Sadness Dealing with Rejection, Failure & Grief</p>	<p>a family who loves & supports me. a group of friends who care for me. a toolbox of recovery tools. a college BS degree. a ministry with an attitude of gratitude.</p>	<p>Communion at Church Monthly View writing Family Visits Quarterly</p>
<p>Unbelief (Insecurities) California Separation from God</p> 	<p>College & Work Stress/Anxiety Pot/LSD (21) Music/Sex Concerts/Clubs Cultists Self-talk Failure Grief</p>	<p>Fear of Rejection Resentment Approval Seeking Anger (pent-up) Sexual Misuse Rationalization Self-centeredness Insecurities Laziness Denial</p>	<p>Cultists Isolated Place Drugs/Weapons</p>	<p>Cultists Fear of Rejection Resentment/Anger Approval Seeking Drugs/Weapons Rationalization Self-centeredness</p> <p>Specific Triggers of the Crime: Delusional beliefs A Favor Owed Drugs (speed, 23) Fear of Rejection Negative Self-talk Misplaced Anger</p>	<p>Emotional Skills: Controlling my Emotions Recognizing my Feelings Using Self-Control Dealing with Urges Managing Anger, Stress, Anxiety & Sadness Dealing with Rejection, Failure & Grief</p>	<p>a family who loves & supports me. a group of friends who care for me. a toolbox of recovery tools. a college BS degree. a ministry with an attitude of gratitude.</p>	<p>Family Reunions on holidays Retreats with the church Birthday & Christmas Cards</p> 
<p><i>"I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried out, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles."</i> (Psa. 34:4-6).</p>							