



# THE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES OF NORTH TEXAS

*"helping achieve small miracles!"*

IHF Newsletter, Vol. 5, No. 7

July 2013

## **BOTHERED BY BAD AND UGLY THOUGHTS?**

*Get Rid of Stinking Thinking!*

*By Dr. Sandra W. Froese, LPC-S, ©2013. All rights reserved.*

Ask yourself? Are you happy? No? Then change something—primarily negative thoughts about yourself, others, situations and events. *Bad things that happen are temporary.* When we hold onto bad thoughts way too long, they keep us from living happy and healthy lives. It is not the bad and ugly situation that makes us sick. It is the negative thought and all the “baggage” that comes with it that makes us sick. The following ideas are excerpts from the work of Byron Katie called “The Work.” Her ideas have been adapted to relieve suffering.

### **Step One: Think of something that has been bothering you for several days or weeks.**

- Examine the thought and turn it into a statement.
- Is it true?
- Is it absolutely true 100 percent of the time? (*Chances are you cannot say it is true 100 percent!*)

### **Step Two: Belief or Fact?**

- Facts are observable information that cannot be altered or changed
- Beliefs are emotional feelings that we attach to a person, situation, event or place that can be altered by our perception and interpretation.
- Is your statement primarily a belief or a fact? (*Chances are your statement is based on a belief.*)

### **Step Three: Turn it Around**

- Restate your statement by turning it around so that you are reframing a negative into a positive. Examples: *"My adult kids are driving me crazy—they borrow money and don't pay me back."* Turn around the statement. *"My adult kids did not plan on borrowing money from me—they want to repay."*
- The “turn it around” is not easy to do and it takes practice.

### **Step Four: Practice the New Strategy of Reframing**

- We can only think one thought at a time. (*Aha! Did you think you could multi-task your thoughts?*)
- Meet negative thoughts at the door of your thought processes and shut the door in their face!
- Whenever possible, replace a negative thought, situation, event or a rude person encounter with a positive thought or action with a “turn around statement.” This is known as reframing your thoughts.
- Unless you are suffering from major depression, you should start feeling better within a few weeks. If not, make an appointment with your medical doctor for a depression screening and medication.

### **Step Five: Homework Assignment**

- Between the time you get up in the morning and before you go to work or school, think of at least five positive people, situations, events or actions that have influenced you. Try this while getting dressed.
- Between the time you eat dinner and before you retire for the evening, think of at least five people, situations, events or actions that made your day positive and fruitful. Write them down in a diary.
- Take some time each day to do something positive for someone else, whether it is a "How are you?" phone call, a hand-written note or e-mail to someone whom you care about, or making a special meal or running an errand for someone who needs help. Doing something for others is therapeutic!

The Institute of Healthy Families of North Texas offers a 30-minute consultation at no charge so you can determine if we are the right counselors for you and so we can determine if we have the resources to assist you. *For information and to learn more about our counseling services go to our website at [www.texasicounselors.com](http://www.texasicounselors.com) or e-mail Dr. Sandra Froese at [swfroese@sbcglobal.net](mailto:swfroese@sbcglobal.net).*