



HOW AN EXAMPLE SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED

Learning to give an example simply and clearly in the four-step sequence is an important part of the Recovery Intl. (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.

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 Inc. 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.*)

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.

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Examples of Recovery International Practice

As I approached the pump at the gas station, another car was pulling up to the same pump in the opposite direction. The other driver was irritated and raised his fist at me--he obviously thought he had the right to be there, not me. This is when I began to work myself up.

I had head pressure, palpitations, confusion and felt like crying. I thought, "Who does he think he is?"

Immediately I began to spot. Actually, I intuitively used the insincere gesture of friendliness instead of the sincere gesture of hostility. I waved the gentleman in, as I drove to another pump. I spotted my angry temper and excused rather than accused. This situation was a triviality and I had an average original response. I could not control outer environment, but I could control my inner environment.

As I was pumping gas into my car I found myself smiling as I recalled how I would have reacted before my Recovery training. I would have driven over to another pump but I would have berated myself for being a coward and not "standing up for myself." I may not have expressed my temper outwardly but would have kept a vicious cycle of fear and anger alive inside of me. I would have continued to judge the man wrong and myself wrong. This would have led to lowered feelings, low self-esteem and withdrawing from everyone and everything.

This example happened last Friday. I had to go downtown to an appointment on the 5th floor of a public building. Elevators are a strong link with me and even though I was uncomfortable, I got on the elevator and rode up to the fifth floor. Several other people were in the room, and while I was waiting for my appointment, I endorsed myself for my will to effort and control. Then a woman announced that we would all have to go up to the 20th floor. This is when I began to work myself up.

Immediately I had chest pressure, air-hunger, panicky feelings, racing thoughts, confusion and began to sweat. I had the impulse to tell them that I couldn't go to the 20th floor and ask if they would interview me just where I was. I was having gastrointestinal upset and lowered feelings.

I told myself to spot my fearful and angry temper. I could do what I feared and hated to do. I could command my muscles to move and to be average. Everybody else stood up and got on the elevator. I spotted my angry temper against the other people who looked so comfortable and the woman for telling us we had to go to the 20th floor. I spotted there was no right or wrong, and remembered one of my favorite Recovery principles: "the way to shed your fears is to give firm direction to your muscles." I kept repeating, "distressing but not dangerous" and used part-acts. First I went to the 7th floor, then the 15th, and finally got off on the 20th floor. I really endorsed myself several times and had a feeling of self-respect and accomplishment. I was self-led, not symptom-led. This was the first time I ever rode in an elevator for twenty floors.

Before Recovery I would not have gone to the 5th floor on an elevator, let alone to the 20th. Because of my symptoms, I was convinced I could not ride in elevators. I didn't know that comfort was a want and not a need, and I didn't have the will to bear discomfort.

Last week I made plans to meet someone for dinner on Wednesday evening. On Tuesday as I thought about my plans, I felt like I didn't want to go out and started to work myself up.

I felt sick, tense, nervous, shaky, and was trembling inside. I thought if I did go out, the other person would notice the way I felt and reject me. I thought it would be better if I just stayed home.

I spotted that I could do the thing I feared to do, and not give outer expression to my inner experiences. If I happen to be nervous, so what? It's average, and I'm not wrong. So I moved my muscles against my fear and went out on the date. It turned out to be one of the nicest evenings I've had in a long time. By the time the evening was over, I was completely unaware of any symptoms because they were gone. My muscles re-educated my brain that there was no danger.

Before I attended Recovery, I would have given in to the symptoms, called and asked for a rain check. I would have stayed home and sabotaged by wallowing in self-pity and the philosophy of "I can't!" I would have had fearful anticipation about ever collecting the rain check, and felt that I was hopeless.