

## Eliminating Self-Defeating Behaviors - Session Five

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### Avoidance of Mythical Fears

You were born into the world as a sweet, pure, and innocent infant without self-defeating behavior patterns. From early childhood, you responded to your world as an integrated whole self. You had no fears but two: the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. All other fears were learned.

You were raised by imperfect parents and grew up in an imperfect world that was often harsh, unloving, and cruel. As you matured, you experienced love, caring, and nurturing as well as abuse, rejection, and betrayals. You did the best you could to cope with all the pitfalls of mortality. Not only were you abused, rejected, and betrayed but, being the mortal that you are, you also were the abuser, the rejector, and the betrayer.

You did not escape from your upbringing without suffering some of the painful challenges of life. You did the best you could in coping with sorrows and disappointments, but you also developed some behaviors that may have worked well in the past, but they are no longer serving you well today. The fears you hold onto are no longer valid, and you need to let them go. You need to see these fears as mythical, and they are getting in the way of living free of defeating behaviors--behaviors that prevent you from living a happy, healthy, and productive life.

When we are not emotionally whole, we feel fractured and broken. We feel vulnerable, exposed, weak, unvalued, unappreciated, and mis-understood. We learned that we have to be on guard to protect us from others who may want to hurt us or take advantage of us. Yet, we also want desperately to be loved but wonder if it is safe to risk, to put ourselves out there, and wonder if we are even lovable. This is when and why and how we put into action behaviors that are self-defeating.

When we feel we have it all together, we feel integrated and well-connected to the significant people in our lives. We feel emotionally honest, real, and safe. We feel we can be transparent and allow people to know us and to love us just as we are, warts and all. If somebody doesn't like us, it is probably because they don't know us well enough. When we are emotionally healthy, we feel that to know us is to like us because we are coming to believe we are likable people.

The fears we create and use in a new moment to continue our SDB patterns come directly out of the original experiences we had which caused us to forsake our integrated self system in the first place. For instance, if ridicule or the fear of it, caused us to initially abandon our true and integrated selves and do our SDB to cope with that fear. We will likely fear ridicule today when we try to reclaim ourselves when past rejections led us to abandon ourselves. Our fears of rejection will cripple us today, if we try to act confident and self-assured. We fear we will look phony and stupid. If one concluded he must be a terrible person because of the messages he received earlier in life, he fears finding a terrible person within and, consequently, will be unable to see the creative and lovable person he really is.

There are many causes for the creation of SDB patterns. Once they are learned, however, there is only one reason they are kept going. That is the fear of not being able to use them. The fear always boils down to this: What is it I would be afraid to face if I could not use this SDB pattern to respond to my world at this particular moment?

The fears of being without SDB patterns are rooted in our memory banks. What happens when we come to a new moment of living is that we trigger the stored fears from the past and project them down the non-SDB road. We close off the non-SDB road with fears, so that it seems too difficult to attempt. We also are certain of the results going down our SDB road because we can count on receiving the consequences and we are familiar paying the prices. The non-SDB road seems uncertain and we scare ourselves with that uncertainty.

Before they eliminate their defeating patterns, most people are convinced that the fears are real, not a myth. They assume that if they follow their whole, integrated selves, what they fear will really happen: more rejection, more abuse, more pain. This is understandable because in the past, these experiences were real, and this is what is stored in the memory. As soon as a person owns up to the fact that he is using these old fears to keep from following the integrated self, he can begin to see that the fears are mythical. But he may not be convinced until he goes down the road and meets the fears and works through them. You will find the acceptance, the love, and the approval you have always wanted.

There are three categories of fears which people use to keep their SDB patterns going.

**Category 1** What people fear they will find out about their whole, integrated self if they let the SDBs go.

1. I will find a person I couldn't like.
2. I will find a person unpleasant to be around.

3. I will be dumb and incompetent.
4. I won't have warmth to communicate.
5. I will be weak and vulnerable
6. I will not be up to the task of coping with life.
7. I will be inadequate - verbally, intellectually, emotionally and physically.
8. I will find I have no inner self. I am afraid I will find my entire self is just full of SDBs.
9. I will find a person full of hate.
10. I will find an untrustworthy person.
11. I will be unattractive.
12. I will be unable to control my emotions, anger, sadness, loneliness.
13. I will find a sex maniac within myself.
14. I will find a person lacking in common sense.
15. I will find a person unable to handle responsibility.
16. I will find a person unable to change.
17. I will find out I am a hideous person.
18. I will find a mentally ill person.
19. I will be frigid.
20. I will be incompatible with the rest of society.
21. I will be lazy.
22. I will be a conformist.
23. I will find a person who likes being bad.
24. Etc.

**Category 2.** What people fear will happen to them if they do not use their SDB.

1. Others will lose respect, disapprove, and reject me.
2. I fear if I drop my SDBs, I will hurt so much over the past junk I have done that I won't be able to handle it.
3. I fear I will lose the security I now have.
4. Demands will be put on me I can't handle.
5. If others do not want me around, I will be so lonely that I will not be able to cope with it.
6. I will be terribly hurt if I do not hold myself back.
7. Someone will see my true feelings and take advantage of me.
8. Responsible living will be too heavy and I will not like it or be able to cope with it satisfactorily.
9. I will do things to drive people away who are important to me.
10. I will be stuck with who I find and be unable to change.
11. God will condemn me.
12. I will screw up the future.
13. I will be caught forever in deep depressions with no way to get out.
14. I will look foolish.
15. I won't be able to control my own time.
16. I will say the wrong things with no control over this.
17. People will laugh and ridicule me and I will have no satisfactory way to handle this.
18. I fear I will die a horrible death.
19. I will be lost forever.
20. I will be shut away in an institution.
21. I do not know what will happen, but I fear it will be bad.
22. Unknowingly I will damage others.
23. Etc.

**Category 3.** Generalized fears about the healthy non-SDB road.

1. The non-SDB route is more difficult than the self-defeating one.
2. The non-SDB route is more risky than the self-defeating one.

To eliminate SDB patterns this concept of holding on to mythical fears needs to be understood, and applied. Identify the fears used to block off the non-SDB route, and as you become aware of these feelings, make choices not to use them. Or, if the fears are projected down the non-SDB road, check them out to prove to yourself they are a myth.

Fears are lessened when people realize that the fears they have of being without the SDB patterns are the very fears they have lived with for some time. For instance, if one looks at the outcome of defeating behavior patterns, one sees inadequacy, spoiled relationships, unhappiness, loneliness, rigidity, frigidity, irresponsibility, vulnerability, hurt, and the like. In reality, the fears one has in letting go of SDB patterns become true as one practices the negative behaviors.

Past workshop participants have reported life-giving results as they opened up to their own interests, talents, choices, ideas, needs, feelings, limitations, and so on. Likewise, opening up to other people's opinions, thoughts and perceptions, will help you. Opening your heart to nature, history, positive futuristic forecasts, great music and so forth, adds brilliance to your life. Be smart and adventurous; try it out!

### **Homework**

Identify your fears in your journal entries and email them to [DrDavidCoombs@gmail.com](mailto:DrDavidCoombs@gmail.com). I don't need to know your name so there is no need to sign your email. You may remain anonymous. But the more open and transparent you are the more benefit you'll receive from taking this workshop.