

OBSERVING UNWANTED BEHAVIOR AND PATTERNS

Many people come to therapy to rid themselves of behavior that is problematic in their lives. Often, unwanted behavior is easy to observe in oneself, but noticing destructive or negative patterns of behavior may be more difficult to see. This task is designed to assist you in recognizing unwanted behavior and behavior patterns. Recognition is the first step in reducing these behaviors and the negative results they produce.

During this week you are to log at least two or more instances of behavior that you perceive as negative, self-destructive, or counter-productive in your life.

Here's how:

1. List the specific behavior
2. Describe the circumstances or the context of the behavior
3. Describe the events leading to the behavior
4. Describe your thinking process leading to the behavior
5. Describe your feelings before, during and after the behavior

Here's an example:

1. I lost my temper with my children with very little reason.
2. The kids were playing loudly and disturbing my relaxing time
3. I came home from work as usual – feeling very tired and wanting and thinking that I deserved some peace and quiet
 - a. I sat down on the couch and turned on the TV
 - b. My son and daughter were playing video games in the next room and started arguing about taking turns
 - c. I started feeling a little irritated, but thought I could ignore it
 - d. The kids got louder and I got angrier, but stayed put in my chair trying to watch the TV, thinking that I shouldn't have to put up with this
 - e. The kids came out of the other room crying and arguing and demanding that I resolve the problem
 - f. I blew up at the kids, yelled at them for a long time about how immature and childish they were and how insensitive to me they were and how I was going to throw that “damn thing” away. I felt out of control, and thought that I was totally justified and chased them up to their room where they stayed until supper

- g. As I was yelling and feeling enraged I began to realize how unreasonable my behavior was, but it was too late – I couldn't stop
- h. I sat down on the couch again and felt miserable, guilty and I thought about how terrible a father I am

Bring your log to the next therapy session to discuss with your therapist and to develop a plan to incorporate new, healthier behavior patterns.

Act For Today
Paul C. Seishas, MFT #25829
916-616-1800 – seishasp@jhssac.org