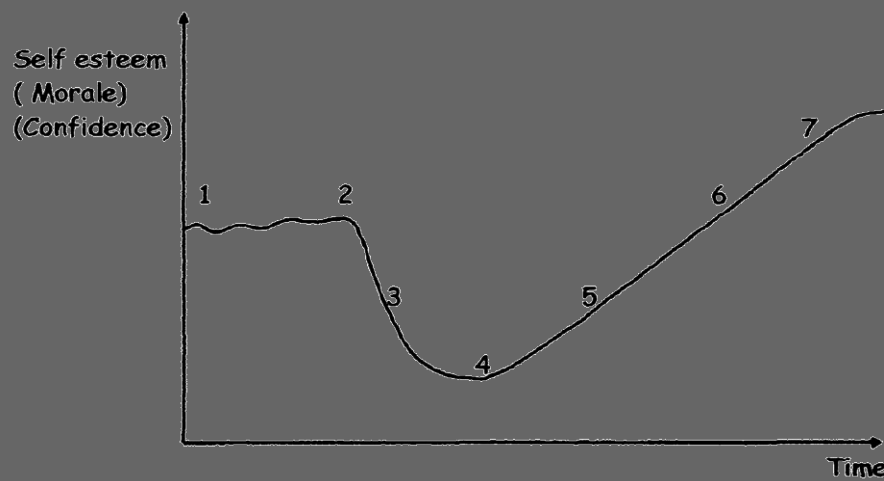


Chapter 2

PREPARING TO START



INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, we talked about what we think the possibilities of the Lifestyle Management course are.

In this chapter, we look at what you might be experiencing at this point in your life and how you can increase the possibilities of change happening during this course.

THE TRANSITION CURVE

Most people coming on these courses are dealing with life-changing events.

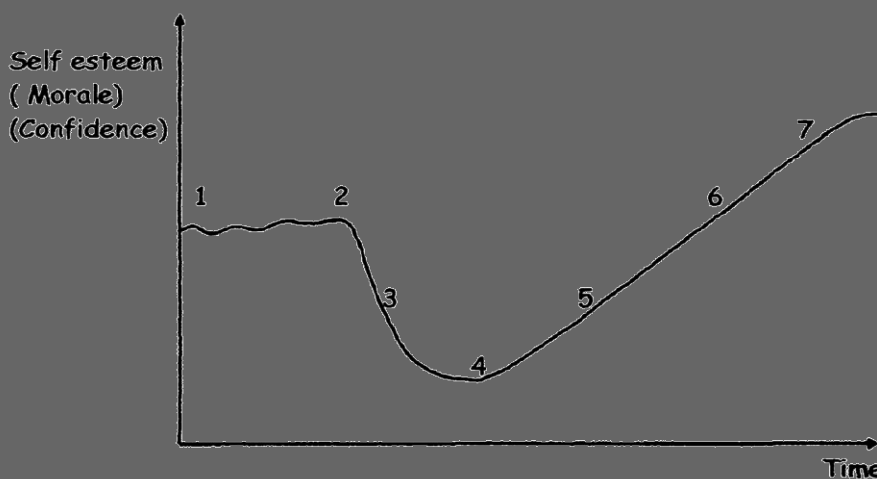
The word "**Transition**" is used to describe life changes.

When these events happen there seem to be seven stages of transition that people may go through.

This curve is of course just a model - sometimes a stage may be missed or revisited.

Whatever happens, any of these stages are a completely normal way for human beings to react to a change in their lives or circumstances - good or bad.

The following diagram describes these changes



THE 7 STAGES OF TRANSITION

1. Shock

Feeling overwhelmed or blocked and unable to plan or act.

Having no feeling or feeling numb.

(Even if an event is expected or seen as a positive, there may still be a sense of shock.)

2. Denial

Denying the change or even trivialising it.

Denial is sometimes seen as an undesirable or unhealthy reaction.

It is, however, important to recognise it as a normal and necessary phase in the process of adjustment.

3. Depression

An increasing awareness of the reality of the situation.

Anger!!

Facing up to the change and its consequences.

Feeling really low and not knowing how to cope with the new situation is common at this time.

4. Acceptance

Accepting reality and letting go of the past.

Accepting change.

This may be a very difficult time as people can experience a deep feeling of despair and loss.

Not knowing how to move forward.

5. Finding out ways to cope

Gradually trying out new things and new ways of coping.

6. Making sense of things

Trying to understand how and why things are different.

Standing back from the experience and attempting to make sense of it all.

7. Moving on...

Each person on this course
will be starting from a different place
and it is important to acknowledge this.

It is reasonable to assume, then, that each person could
take something different from the course.

For example:-
some people at the stage of acceptance
may be ready to make definite changes in their life
which are obvious to see,
while others may make equally significant changes inside - they may
make subtle but incredibly powerful changes
in their belief about the possibilities of change.

QUESTIONING UNHELPFUL IDEAS OR BELIEFS WE HAVE ABOUT OUR SITUATIONS

Sometimes we can believe our situation is hopeless - impossible to
change and it's only going to get worse. This might be true and it
might not.

But, beliefs and attitudes we may have about our situation may not
be "written in stone".

Beliefs can and do change. (How many of us believed in Santa and
the tooth fairies at some time!)

While there are many ways to look at a situation, sometimes we can
slip into only seeing "one way" of looking.

For instance,
we may only see the old woman or the young woman
in the drawing on the following page.



GETTING TO THE FACTS

One way of questioning what we believe is to
separate beliefs from facts.

Here's an example:-

Belief

"Exercise is unhelpful for me. "

Fact

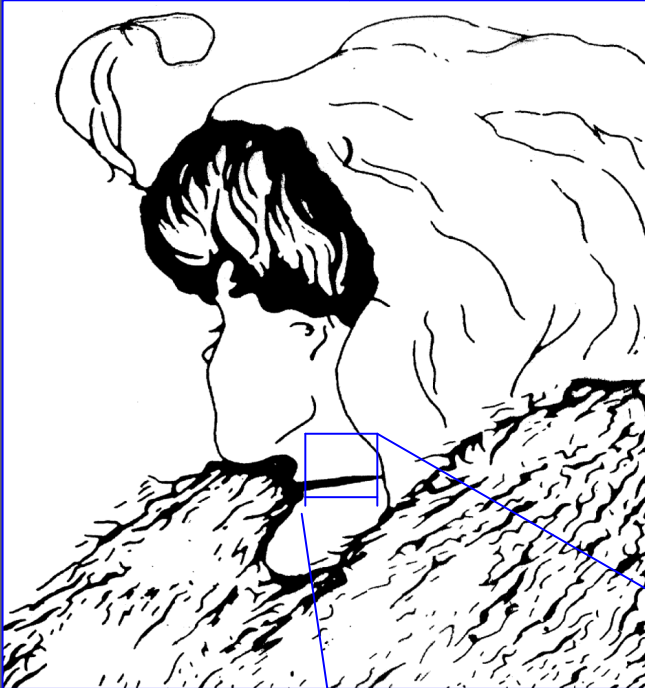
"Every time I exercise I get exhausted, feel ill
and have to go to bed. "

Alternative Belief

(which fits the facts equally well)

"I haven't found a way of exercising
that helps me yet."

And just for fun
How would you describe what you see in the small box?



Belief

This is the old lady's
Mouth.

or

It's the young lady's
Necklace.

Fact

This is a black line which
angles up from bottom left
to top right.

It is wider at the
left and thinner at the right.



We can look at some beliefs we have
about our situation
and ask ourselves
if they are really helpful.

If they aren't, we can
try on other
more helpful ideas for size.



Examples...

Unhelpful beliefs	Helpful beliefs
Avoiding physical activity is the best way to cope with my situation	Managing my activity levels and staying active and involved helps me cope with my situation.
Complete rest is the best way to cope with my situation	Staying rested by taking appropriate rest breaks throughout the day helps me cope with my daily activities
It's not safe for a person with a condition such as mine to be physically active	By knowing my safe limits, I can plan an appropriate level of activity
I can't do the things normal people do because...	With some thought and planning I could because...
My situation is a medical problem and there's nothing I can do about it	There's lots I can do to manage my situation

Summary

This chapter is about
knowing where you are in your recovery.

Knowing where you are will help you to know
what you can get from this course.

While it is important to respect and hold to your beliefs
about your situation (they may be true),
we invite you to open the door to alternative
possibilities.

Being willing to explore the ideas on this course,
in a way that makes you feel safe,
could open the door to a
more helpful way of managing your life/situation.