Module 1: Reframing Obsession - Complete Lesson Plans

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Module 1: Reframing Obsession

Lesson Plans & Reading Materials

Total Module Time: 30-40 minutes of video content + readings

Module Overview:

This foundational module helps participants understand obsession as a redirectable energy rather than a character flaw. We explore grief work, release rituals, pattern mapping, and real-world case studies of individuals who transformed obsessive energy into productive passion. The goal is to shift from shame about obsession to curiosity about how to redirect it.

Research Foundation:

This module draws on connection theory (Hari, 2015, 2018), trauma-informed addiction understanding (Maté, 2008), neuroplasticity (Lewis, 2015), and the dualistic model of passion (Vallerand, 2015).[1]

Unit 1: Facilitator Welcome Message (3-5 min)

Subtitle: Creating sacred space

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Understand the purpose and structure of Legacy Rising

- Feel welcomed into a shame-free, brave space

- Recognize this program as different from traditional recovery models

- Begin building trust with facilitators and tribe members

Core Content

Welcome to Legacy Rising

You're here because something in you refuses to stay stuck. You're here because you've survived things that were meant to break you, and instead of breaking, you're building.

This program is not therapy. It's not traditional recovery. It's not a charity. **This is infrastructure for cycle-breakers.**

We believe:

- Your obsession is not your enemy—it's misdirected energy

- Your past is not a disqualification—it's your expertise

- Your struggle is not a character flaw—it's a pattern you can rewire

- You don't need fixing—you need the right operating system

What This Space Is (And Isn't)

This space IS:

- A brave space (not a safe space—growth requires discomfort)

- A peer-led community (you learn from each other, not just from facilitators)

- An action-oriented program (you will build, launch, and iterate)

- A tribe that holds your momentum when you can't

This space is NOT:

- A place for toxic positivity or spiritual bypassing

- A place where you perform recovery for approval

- A place where shame language is tolerated

- A place where you're alone in your struggle

Creating Sacred Space

Sacred doesn't mean religious. It means:

- What's shared here stays here (confidentiality)

- What's witnessed here is honored (no fixing, just holding)

- What's built here matters (your work has impact)

Research Insight: Porges' Polyvagal Theory (2011) shows that safety is a prerequisite for engagement. When the nervous system detects threat (judgment, shame, rejection), it shuts down access to higher-order thinking and connection. Creating sacred space is about signaling safety.[1]

Facilitator Script

"Welcome. I'm [Name], and I'm a cycle-breaker too. I've been where you are—stuck in patterns I didn't choose, labeled by a system that didn't see me, and wondering if I'd ever build something that mattered.

This program exists because I needed it and it didn't exist. You're not here by accident. You're here because you're ready to redirect the energy that's been running your life.

We're going to do grief work, identity work, nervous system work, and entrepreneurship work. Some of it will be uncomfortable. All of it will be worth it.

You're not broken. You're not too much. You're not a lost cause. You're a builder. And this is your tribe."

Discussion Prompts

- What brought you to Legacy Rising today?

- What's one hope you have for this program?

- What's one fear you have about being here?

Trauma-Informed Considerations

- Some participants may be hypervigilant in new group settings

- Normalize nervousness: "It's okay to be unsure. You don't have to trust us yet."

- Offer multiple ways to participate: video on/off, chat, verbal sharing

- Emphasize choice: "You're in control of how much you share"

Unit 2: Why Grief Work Matters (5-7 min)

Subtitle: Honoring what was, letting go

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Understand grief as a necessary part of transformation

- Identify what they need to grieve in order to move forward

- Distinguish between letting go and giving up

- Prepare for the release ritual in Unit 3

Core Content

Understanding Grief as Transformation

You can't build a new life while clinging to the old one. Not because the old one was all bad—but because you can't hold two identities at once.

Grief is the bridge between who you were and who you're becoming.

What Cycle-Breakers Need to Grieve:

- The identity that kept you safe (even if it hurt)

- The relationships that can't come with you

- The version of family you hoped for but won't get

- The time lost to survival

- The person you were before trauma

- The belief that someone will rescue you

Research Foundation: Maté (2008) writes that addiction (and obsession) is often a response to loss—of connection, of safety, of self. Recovery requires grieving those losses consciously, rather than numbing them.[1]

Why Letting Go Is Necessary

You've survived by holding on—to control, to vigilance, to the familiar. But survival mode and building mode require different nervous system states.

Survival mode:

- Hypervigilance (scanning for threat)

- Rigidity (what worked before must work now)

- Isolation (trust no one)

Building mode:

- Presence (engaging with what's here)

- Flexibility (experimenting with new strategies)

- Connection (asking for help)

You can't access building mode while white-knuckling survival mode.

The Power of Naming What Was Lost

Grief that isn't named doesn't disappear—it goes underground and runs your life from there.

Exercise: What Are You Grieving?

Participants write answers to:

1. What identity am I leaving behind?

2. What relationship am I grieving?

3. What version of my life am I letting go of?

4. What did I lose that I'll never get back?

Then: "This grief is real. It deserves to be witnessed."

Facilitator Note: Some participants will minimize their grief ("Other people have it worse"). Normalize: "Your grief is yours. It doesn't need to be the worst to be

real."

Letting Go vs. Giving Up

Giving up = collapsing into hopelessness, believing nothing will change

Letting go = releasing what you can't control so you can focus on what you can build

Examples:

- Giving up: "My family will never change, so I'll never be okay"

- Letting go: "My family may never change, and I'm building a life anyway"

Research Insight: Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning* (1984) teaches that meaning comes not from eliminating suffering, but from choosing how we respond to it. Letting go is an act of agency.[1]

Workbook Exercise: Grief Inventory

1. List 3 things you're grieving as you begin this program

2. For each one, write: "I'm letting go of [X], and that's hard, and I'm doing it anyway"

3. Choose one to share in your release ritual (Unit 3)

Discussion Prompts

- What makes grief feel unsafe or weak?

- What would it feel like to grieve with witnesses who won't try to fix you?

- What's one thing you're ready to let go of?

Alumni Examples (from past cohorts)

Example 1: "I'm grieving the version of me that believed if I was perfect, my mom would stop using. I'm letting that go."

Example 2: "I'm grieving 10 years lost to survival. I can't get them back, but I can build with what's left."

Example 3: "I'm grieving the belief that someone will save me. I'm learning to save myself."

Unit 3: The Power of Physical Release Rituals (3-5 min)

Subtitle: Release ceremonies

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Understand why physical rituals support psychological release
- Participate in a guided release ceremony
- Create their own personal release rituals
- Experience the power of witnessed letting go

Core Content

Why Physical Rituals Matter

Your body holds what your mind tries to forget. Trauma, shame, and grief live in your nervous system, not just your thoughts.

You can't think your way out of stored emotion. You have to move it through your body.

Research Foundation: Van der Kolk's research (cited in Porges, 2011) shows that trauma is stored somatically. Cognitive insight alone doesn't release it—embodied practices do.[1]

Elements of Effective Release Rituals

1. **Intentionality:** You name what you're releasing
2. **Physicality:** You use your body (writing, burning, tearing, movement)
3. **Witnessing:** Others hold space without fixing
4. **Symbolic completion:** A clear end point (ashes, torn paper, spoken declaration)

Guided Release Ceremony (Facilitator-Led)

Materials needed:

- Paper and pen for each participant

- A bowl or container

- Optional: candle, matches (if in-person and safe to burn)

Steps:

Step 1: Write What You're Releasing (3 min)

"Write down one thing you're letting go of. It can be an identity, a relationship, a belief, a pattern. Be specific."

Step 2: Read It Aloud (Optional)

"If you feel called to, read what you wrote out loud. If not, you can release it silently. Both are valid."

Step 3: Physical Release

- In-person: Tear the paper, burn it (if safe), place it in a bowl

- Virtual: Tear the paper, throw it away, or save it to burn later

Step 4: Witnessing Statement

Facilitator says: "What you released is witnessed. It's honored. You don't have to carry it alone anymore."

Step 5: Closing

"You've made space. In the next unit, we'll explore what wants to grow there."

Creating Personal Release Rituals

Participants can create their own rituals at home:

Examples:

- **Burning bowl:** Write what you're releasing, burn it, scatter the ashes

- **River release:** Write on biodegradable paper, release it into moving water

- **Burial ritual:** Write it down, bury it, plant something on top

- **Movement release:** Dance, run, or move your body while visualizing letting go

Key principle: The ritual doesn't have to be elaborate. It has to be **intentional and embodied**.

Workbook Exercise: Design Your Release Ritual

1. What are you releasing?

2. What physical action represents that release for you?

3. When will you do it? (set a date)

4. Who (if anyone) will witness it?

Discussion Prompts

- What did it feel like to physically release what you wrote?

- How is this different from "just thinking about" letting go?

- What ritual might you repeat when old patterns resurface?

Trauma-Informed Considerations

- Some participants may dissociate during rituals

- Offer grounding: "Feel your feet on the floor. Take a breath."

- Don't force participation: "You can witness without releasing today"

- Normalize tears, silence, or resistance

Unit 4: From Grief to Curiosity (3 min)

Subtitle: Shifting energy

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Recognize the shift from grief to curiosity

- Understand curiosity as the next phase of transformation

- Begin asking "What now?" instead of "Why me?"

- Connect grief work to the obsession mapping that follows

Core Content

The Energy Shift

Grief is heavy. It has to be—it's the weight of what you're leaving behind.

But you can't stay in grief forever. At some point, the question changes:

- From "Why did this happen to me?" to "What do I do with what happened?"

- From "What did I lose?" to "What can I build?"

- From "Who was I?" to "Who am I becoming?"

This shift is called curiosity.

Curiosity as a Bridge

Curiosity doesn't erase grief. It walks alongside it.

Grief says: "I lost so much."

Curiosity says: "What wants to grow in this space?"

Grief says: "I'll never be the same."

Curiosity says: "Who am I now?"

Grief says: "This obsession almost destroyed me."

Curiosity says: "What if this energy is the key to everything?"

The Obsession Question

You've released the old identity. You've grieved what was lost. Now the real work begins:

What if your obsession isn't the problem? What if it's the power source you've been taught to fear?

This question opens the door to the rest of the program:

- Module 1: Mapping your obsessive patterns (Unit 5)

- Module 1.5: Understanding your operating system (Personality & Energy Profile)

- Module 2: Building a new identity (Builder Identity Work)

- Module 3: Regulating your energy (Energy, Frequency & Inner Strategy)

- Module 4: Channeling obsession into entrepreneurship

Research Insight: Vallerand's dualistic model of passion (2015) distinguishes between **harmonious passion** (flexible, integrated, life-giving) and **obsessive passion** (rigid, compulsive, life-draining). The goal isn't to eliminate passion—it's to redirect it.[1]

Reflection Prompts

1. What are you curious about now that you've done grief work?

2. What if your obsession is your greatest asset?

3. What would you build if you weren't afraid of your own power?

Facilitator Script

"You've done hard work in the last few units. You've named what you're grieving. You've witnessed others' grief. You've participated in a release ritual.

Now we shift. Not away from grief—it will come and go—but toward curiosity.

In the next unit, you're going to map your obsessive patterns. Not to shame them. Not to eliminate them. But to understand them so you can redirect them.

Your obsession is not your enemy. It's your unmet need for meaning, connection, and purpose. Let's figure out how to feed it something that builds instead of destroys."

Unit 5: How to Map Your Obsessive Patterns (5 min)

Subtitle: Obsession mapping examples

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- Identify their personal obsessive patterns

- Distinguish between destructive and productive obsession

- Map the triggers, behaviors, and consequences of their patterns

- Begin redirecting obsessive energy intentionally

Core Content

What Is Obsessive Energy?

Obsession is **intense, repetitive focus on something that feels urgent, consuming, and impossible to ignore**.

It can look like:

- Substance use (drugs, alcohol)

- Behavioral compulsions (gambling, shopping, sex, work)

- Relational fixation (codependency, people-pleasing, control)

- Thought loops (rumination, catastrophizing, perfectionism)

The pattern: Trigger → Obsessive thought → Compulsive behavior → Temporary relief → Shame → Repeat

Research Foundation: Hari (2018) argues that addiction is not about the substance or behavior—it's about the disconnection underneath. Obsession is the mind's attempt to solve a problem it doesn't have the tools to solve.[1]

The Obsession Mapping Framework

Step 1: Name the Obsession

What do you obsess over? (Be honest, not performative)

Step 2: Identify the Trigger

What activates the obsession? (Emotion, environment, person, time of day)

Step 3: Track the Thought Pattern

What story runs in your head when the obsession activates?

Step 4: Map the Behavior

What do you do when obsession takes over?

Step 5: Name the Consequence

What happens after? (Relief? Shame? Both?)

Step 6: Find the Unmet Need

What are you really looking for? (Connection? Control? Escape? Meaning?)

Example: Obsession Mapping

Example 1: Substance Use Obsession

- **Obsession:** Drinking to numb

- **Trigger:** Feeling alone at night

- **Thought:** "I can't handle this feeling"

- **Behavior:** Drink until numb

- **Consequence:** Short-term relief, next-day shame, isolation

- **Unmet Need:** Connection, emotional regulation

Redirection: Call a tribe member, use RAIN method (Module 3), go for a walk

Example 2: People-Pleasing Obsession

- **Obsession:** Needing everyone to like me

- **Trigger:** Conflict or perceived rejection

- **Thought:** "If they don't like me, I'm not safe"

- **Behavior:** Over-apologize, over-give, erase my needs

- **Consequence:** Resentment, exhaustion, loss of self

- **Unmet Need:** Safety, belonging, self-worth

Redirection: Practice boundary-setting, Builder's Code reminder, check in with pod

Example 3: Entrepreneurial Obsession (Productive)

- **Obsession:** Building my business

- **Trigger:** Vision of what's possible

- **Thought:** "This matters. I can do this."

- **Behavior:** Work intensely, research, iterate

- **Consequence:** Progress, momentum, sometimes burnout

- **Unmet Need:** Purpose, legacy, financial stability

Redirection (when needed): Rest as part of the build, not a break from it

Harmonious vs. Obsessive Passion (Vallerand, 2015)

Obsessive Passion:

- Rigid ("I must do this or I'm nothing")

- Compulsive ("I can't stop even when it hurts")

- Identity-dependent ("I am this thing")

- Life-draining ("I'm exhausted but can't stop")

Harmonious Passion:

- Flexible ("I love this, and I can step away when needed")

- Integrated ("This is part of my life, not my whole life")

- Identity-enhancing ("This reflects who I am")

- Life-giving ("This energizes me")

The goal: Transform obsessive passion into harmonious passion.

Workbook Exercise: Map Your Obsession

1. Name one obsessive pattern (past or present)

2. Identify the trigger

3. What's the thought pattern?

4. What's the behavior?

5. What's the consequence?

6. What unmet need is underneath?

7. What's one way you could redirect this energy?

Discussion Prompts

- What surprised you about your obsession map?

- Where do you see the line between destructive and productive obsession?

- What would it feel like to redirect your obsessive energy instead of fighting it?

Unit 7: Case Studies (10-12 min)

Subtitle: Sara Blakely (Spanx), alumni stories, entrepreneurs who channeled obsession

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, participants will be able to:

- See real-world examples of obsession redirected into success
- Identify parallels between case study figures and their own patterns
- Understand that obsessive energy is common among entrepreneurs
- Feel hopeful about their own potential

Core Content

Case Study 1: Sara Blakely (Founder, Spanx)

Background:

Sara Blakely grew up in a household where failure was reframed. Her father would ask at dinner, "What did you fail at today?" If she hadn't failed, he'd be disappointed—because it meant she wasn't trying.

This created an obsession: **Try everything. Fail fast. Don't stop.**

The Obsessive Pattern:

- Relentless focus on solving a problem (visible panty lines)
- Refused to accept "no" from manufacturers
- Spent 2 years prototyping in secret
- Sold fax machines door-to-door while building Spanx at night

The Redirection:

- Channeled obsessive persistence into entrepreneurship
- Built a billion-dollar company from $5,000 in savings
- Used rejection as fuel, not proof of failure

Key Lesson: Obsessive persistence, when directed at a meaningful problem, becomes an asset.

Discussion Question: Where in your life have you been obsessively persistent? What if that's not a flaw?

Case Study 2: Legacy Rising Alumni - "Marcus" (Cohort 2)

Background:

Marcus came to Legacy Rising after 3 years in recovery from opioid addiction. His obsessive pattern: **control everything or lose everything**.

The Pattern:

- Obsessive planning (every day scheduled to the minute)
- Panic when plans changed
- Burned out every 6 months from unsustainable rigidity

The Redirection:

- Module 1.5: Discovered he's a High Structure + Low Flexibility Builder Type
- Module 2: Rewrote shame script from "I'm controlling" to "I need structure to thrive"
- Module 4: Launched a meal-prep business that channeled his love of structure into a sustainable service

Outcome:

- Built a business around his wiring, not against it
- Hired a flexibility-oriented partner to handle pivots
- Now mentors other High Structure Builders

Key Lesson: Your wiring isn't wrong—it's a feature, not a bug. Build around it.

Case Study 3: Legacy Rising Alumni - "Tasha" (Cohort 4)

Background:

Tasha's obsession was people-pleasing. She couldn't say no, couldn't set boundaries, and built her identity around being "the one who helps."

The Pattern:

- Obsessively checking if people were mad at her

- Saying yes to everything, even when depleted

- Chronic burnout and resentment

The Redirection:

- Module 1: Grief work around the family role she was forced into as a child

- Module 2: Identity MVP - "I'm a builder who helps *from overflow*, not depletion"

- Module 3: Learned to check her nervous system state before saying yes

- Module 4: Launched a coaching business for women learning to set boundaries

Outcome:

- Her obsession with helping became her business

- But now it's boundaried, sustainable, and paid

- She models the boundary-setting she teaches

Key Lesson: You can keep the care without the depletion.

Case Study 4: Entrepreneurs Who Were "Too Obsessive"

Examples:

- **Elon Musk:** Obsessively focused on impossible problems (Mars colonization, electric cars, neural interfaces)

- **Oprah Winfrey:** Obsessed with storytelling and connection, built an empire around it

- **Steve Jobs:** Obsessively perfectionist, revolutionized multiple industries

Commonality: Their obsession was their competitive advantage—but they also had to learn to manage it (teams, boundaries, regulation).

Key Lesson: The most successful people aren't the ones without obsession—they're the ones who learned to direct it.

Discussion Prompts

- Which case study resonates most with you? Why?

- What patterns do you see between their obsessions and yours?

- What would it look like to channel your obsession the way they did?

Module 1 Integration & Next Steps

What You've Learned

In this module, you:

- Did grief work and participated in a release ritual

- Shifted from grief to curiosity

- Mapped your obsessive patterns

- Learned the difference between obsessive and harmonious passion

- Saw case studies of people who channeled obsession into success

How This Connects to Module 1.5

In Module 1.5 (Personality & Energy Profile), you'll take an assessment that reveals **your Builder Type**. This helps you understand **why** you obsess the way you do, and what operating system you need to thrive. You'll learn whether you're wired for high structure or flexibility, high or low stimulation, internal or external processing—and how to build around your wiring.

Daily Practices to Continue

1. **Notice your obsessive patterns** without judgment

2. **Ask: What unmet need is underneath?**

3. **Redirect energy toward building** (even in small ways)

4. **Stay connected to your tribe** (isolation is a relapse risk)

Research Summary for Module 1

Core Research Citations:

1. **Hari, J. (2015).** *Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the War on Drugs.* Bloomsbury.

   - Application: Addiction is about disconnection; punishment doesn't heal

2. **Hari, J. (2018).** *Lost Connections: Uncovering the Real Causes of Depression.* Bloomsbury.

   - Application: Obsession fills the void left by lost connection

3. **Maté, G. (2008).** *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction.* North Atlantic Books.

   - Application: Trauma drives obsession; healing requires addressing root causes

4. **Lewis, M. (2015).** *The Biology of Desire: Why Addiction Is Not a Disease.* PublicAffairs.

   - Application: The brain can rewire; obsession is not permanent

5. **Vallerand, R. J. (2015).** *The Psychology of Passion: A Dualistic Model.* Oxford University Press.

   - Application: Harmonious vs obsessive passion framework

6. **Frankl, V. E. (1984).** *Man's Search for Meaning.* Beacon Press.

   - Application: Meaning-making transforms suffering

Facilitator Notes

Common Challenges in Module 1

1. **Resistance to grief work** ("I've already dealt with this")

   - Normalize: Grief comes in waves

   - Reframe: This isn't therapy; it's clearing space to build

2. **Shame about obsession** ("I should be over this by now")

   - Normalize: Obsession is human

- Reframe: The goal is redirection, not elimination

3. **Fear of letting go** ("If I let go, who am I?")

   - This is where identity work (Module 2) becomes critical

   - Remind: You're not deleting the past; you're integrating it

Trauma-Informed Considerations

- Grief work can be triggering

- Watch for dissociation, numbness, or hyperarousal

- Offer grounding throughout

- Normalize: "You can pause or pass at any time"

End of Module 1 Lesson Plans