

CHAPTER 8

Your New Life Story

The stress of trauma has presented you with some challenges in living but also forced you to consider what your life will be like going forward. In this workbook, you have learned strategies to manage the emotional distress that comes with this disruption in your life. You have also learned that one of the most difficult challenges is that you must consider or reconsider what you believe about the most fundamental aspects of living life well: what kind of person you are, what kind of world you live in, what makes sense and is meaningful to you, and what your future will be. In chapter 7, you focused on finding ways to live a life of importance. You developed some principles that will sustain you into the future and some missions that will benefit others as well as yourself.

In this chapter, you will integrate all of this change into a coherent story of your life. What you have been going through may have been quite profound and represents a new pathway and new principles. It is important to see how this came about and how it relates to your previous ways of living, the traumatic stress you have encountered, and the struggle with this stress that you have engaged in. If you think that such changes and your future happen by magic, are simply random, or are even destined to be, it will be harder to sustain these positive changes. But if you understand the logic of what has been happening in your life, these changes will be integrated into a life story that makes more sense and will be easier to sustain. You will have the sense of knowing that you are making things happen rather than having things just happening to you.

Seeing New Possibilities

Making plans is something most people like to do. Children often have a sense of what they will be when they grow up, although their plans usually change over time. Most

adults also make plans about what they wish to accomplish, and sometimes this works well. However, events can insert surprising twists into the story that you think you are living. You can think that you are constructing a life story that makes sense and is important, but somewhere you find that it lacks meaning. As a result, your life story may change in surprising ways. This change often occurs after a period of struggle, uncertainty, and sometimes experimentation. Traumatic events are particularly powerful in knocking you off the trajectory you have set for yourself.

With such change come opportunities for reconsidering how to live: new priorities, principles, and goals. Being able to see new possibilities is an aspect of posttraumatic growth. How do new possibilities arise? Sometimes they arise because of things that make the old way of living impossible. Sometimes survivors of trauma have to do something novel just to manage their situation. Sometimes a change in core beliefs forces a change in behavior. Again and again, in the lives of people we've known, we have seen how the story can change. Here is how a thirty-one-year-old man named Barry described his life story and how it altered.

Barry's Life Story

"I was working in a paper bag factory. I was a young guy, enjoying life, drinking a lot, and pretty much carefree. There was this old guy, about fifty-five or sixty, I guess, doing the same crummy job I was, and I came in real hungover one day. He hadn't ever said much to me. I'd been working there almost a year, and he more or less grunted at me. Wasn't the friendly type. Seemed like a loner or something. So anyway, I came in hungover one day—and it wasn't the first time.

"So I was eating something out of my lunch box, and next thing I know, he's standing over me. He says, 'Barry, right?' I tell him, 'Yeah, I'm Barry.' I was surprised he knew my name. He says, 'I've been watching you.' I didn't know what he meant, but it didn't sound good. So he says, 'I've been watching you, and you're in trouble.' I'm figuring maybe I screwed up something on the job, and I can't figure out what, but he goes on. He says, 'You're screwing up your life, son. What are you doing here? You go out drinking at night with your buddies, come back here in the morning all hungover, day after day, and getting nowhere. You'd better get it together before you find yourself as old as me and have nothin'. Better look at yourself and where you are. That's where you're headed.' Then he turned and walked away.

"First I thought, *Screw him, what does he know?* And I went back to eating my crummy sandwich. Then I looked at that sandwich, some bologna and white bread and mustard, and I looked around at the factory, dirty and loud, and I thought about how I felt coming to work and what I was going to do after. And I looked at him walking away, kind of hunched over and alone. I wondered what his story was, and started to think, *What if that is me in another twenty or thirty years? I don't want that to be my story, but right now, maybe it is.*

"So I finished my shift and went out with the guys later like usual. Had my usual beer. Talked about the usual stuff. But I was kind of detached, sort of observing myself doing all this, and it was like I was in a movie and I was acting out this movie or something. And when I was looking at it that way, it was a pretty pathetic story. It all seemed pointless. Kind of embarrassing. I started thinking about what my parents raised me for—*Was it this?* I couldn't enjoy myself. I went home early. I felt depressed and tried to put the day out of my mind. I was pissed off with that guy at work—he was messing me up. But I couldn't ignore what he'd said. I had trouble sleeping."

What is perhaps most striking about what Barry said is that he thought of this encounter in terms of stories: the man's, his own, and the fact that stories can change. It is also striking that this man, virtually a stranger, took ten seconds to say something that had an impact. It started Barry thinking, rethinking his own life story that he was writing. He became aware that he was writing this life story by living it the way he was. He also became aware that it was not a good story, and he did not want it to continue in the way the old man's story had. Somehow, the man had taken him by surprise, and this kind of surprise is what people sometimes need to make them take notice of things they have previously missed. When you start noticing things, and when you start to question the story you are living out, and when you notice what has happened in another life story, all kinds of new possibilities can arise.

Another striking thing about Barry's story is that once these questions were triggered, he couldn't stop thinking about them. This is an example of intrusive rumination, where you have something on your mind that you can't get away from. This was starting to happen to Barry, and it was pretty unpleasant. But it was also the indication that change was starting. Soon Barry started thinking about his life in a more deliberate way. Doing a life story review is often a useful way to examine your situation, and a very productive way to start thinking about change.

Here is what happened when Barry started to review his life story:

"I started thinking about how I had gotten to this place. I started thinking about the paper bag job. I took it because it was easy for me, and I wanted something easy because I had screwed up things so bad. I had dropped out of college because I didn't want to study. I got an IT job that I screwed up in the same way, and then after my girlfriend dumped me and I had to move out, I had to get a job to make ends meet. My parents wouldn't let me move back in, so here I was in the paper bag place. Pretty pathetic story. And I was making it more pathetic."

Although there is no single event in Barry's story that most people would view as traumatic, there was a series of events that were traumatic in the sense that they challenged his ideas about himself, his future, and what kind of world he was living in—in other words, his core beliefs.

Although questioning your core beliefs can be painful, it is a necessary step in rewriting your life story. You may want to refer back to chapter 2 if you need to review how core beliefs can be affected by trauma. Here is an exercise that will help you understand how Barry began to question his core beliefs.

EXERCISE: Noticing the Examination of Core Beliefs

Play psychologist for a moment as you consider what Barry said about his experiences. Then answer these questions in the space provided.

What event or events in Barry's story represent times when his core beliefs were challenged? At what point did he start to question himself?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What core beliefs do you think Barry began to question?

If you had difficulty answering these questions, don't worry. The point is just to get you thinking about how core beliefs can be affected by trauma. You may want to come back to this exercise after reading more of Barry's story, which we will return to shortly.

You may have noticed in Barry's story that he had gotten messages from various people that he was on a self-destructive path. The university had told him he was failing, his IT employer had told him he was failing, his girlfriend told him he was failing, and even his parents might have given a similar message by telling him he could not come back to live with them. However, it took a stranger in the factory to get the message across.

You might wonder why. Sometimes it is hard to predict what event will have the biggest impact on someone's life, and certainly it would seem unlikely that a single encounter with a coworker at lunch would provide the main motivation for change. Perhaps it was the pileup of events in Barry's life. Maybe it was the shock of how this man at work had approached him. For some reason, this was the final episode in a series of shocks to his core beliefs that occurred in his tumultuous twenties. He was prompted to rethink these beliefs because they were being contradicted by the life story he was creating. Here is how Barry described it.

"I started thinking back to what I had been doing over the past ten years and how things seemed to have gotten offtrack. I thought I was a smart guy who was going to be successful, meaning make a lot of money. I thought it would

come pretty easy because I was smart, attractive, and had a good personality. *Life was going to be fun.* So I did college like it was a done deal and flunked out. But I figured, *No problem, I know enough to get a good job without a degree.* In IT, *who cares as long as you can do it?* And I was right about that, but I still didn't work, so I got fired from that. Then my girlfriend told me to get out because I was a lazy bum, when I thought that wouldn't happen, because I was such a great guy. Then I figured my parents would help me out—they've got money—but my dad said I was turning into a lazy bum and I had better learn to take care of myself. It was starting to add up—I think I was starting to worry about where all this was going—but I still had my friends to drink with. They liked me—job or no job—and the paper bag place helped me get by. And my buddies thought it was kind of funny, me working there, and it was a joke. So I could get by like that. Then, somehow that guy at the plant showed me it was no joke. This was life. My life. It was turning into his, however he got there. Somehow that unnerved me. I really started to think about all this. I couldn't ignore stuff anymore. It just didn't work."

This story is one example of how people begin to see new possibilities. You can see that a number of events could have been a turning point in Barry's life story, but they didn't have that impact. With each crisis, he was still able to convince himself that things were all right. But the encounter at work started a new process for him. Barry came to a new understanding of his core beliefs and the life story that is based on them. It is important to pay attention to this relationship between what Barry came to believe and the new direction of his life story.

"It is funny how I started to rethink everything once this all got started. First I started thinking I needed a better job. Then I started thinking I needed to drink less. Then I started to think that my friends were putting up with me being a screwup, and I started thinking, *Is that true friendship or not? Maybe good friends don't just accept everything you do.* I had the very weird thought—now this is very weird—that the guy at the factory was a true friend because he called me on it. Now that is weird thinking, right? This guy who seems to want nothing to do with me, just tells me I'm a screwup and walks away, may be a better friend than my drinking buddies?

"And then I started thinking of my ex-girlfriend and my parents, that instead of being angry with them for rejecting me, maybe they were right. Then I started thinking that, no, they were just concerned I wasn't making money—me making money was all they cared about. But maybe not. Then I

started thinking, *Maybe I shouldn't care so much about making money.* And actually I hadn't been caring that much. Otherwise, I wouldn't be working in a paper bag factory! So, then, what *should* I care about? Whatever that is, it is going to motivate me going forward. I have to figure out what to care about enough, to do something besides drink and party and just get by. So that's where I am, trying to figure that out and make sure I don't end up with the same story as the old guy in the factory."

Barry's story is a wonderful example of how a challenge to your core beliefs can force you to see new possibilities. The last part—where Barry says he has to figure out what to care about enough, so he can do something different—is very accurate. He's looking for a sense of meaning and purpose.

Can you relate to aspects of Barry's story? Who you are and the events in your life may be very different. But the impact of trauma on your core beliefs, the need to find new meaning and purpose, is something that you probably have experienced too. It is this search for new meaning that shapes your new life story.

Putting It All Together

By now, you are probably ready to put together what you have been working on in this book so far. You can look at the story of your life up to this point, where you have gotten to, and where you seem to be headed into your future. Of course, none of us can guarantee a particular future. Life circumstances can change in ways that are out of our control, and there may very well be more difficulties and traumas ahead that will challenge you. But your task is not only to develop principles, beliefs, and ways of living that will motivate you in a more satisfying future but also to create a path for yourself that can help you to endure future challenges. Some aspects of the story will change, but the basic stuff—your principles and beliefs about what is important—will be sustainable. This can help you meet the challenges ahead.

The first step is to examine your current principles and beliefs about living, the core beliefs we talked about in chapter 2.

EXERCISE: Your Fundamental Principles of Living

First review your responses to the exercise in chapter 2 entitled "A Self-Assessment of the Challenge to Your Core Beliefs." Then in the space provided, write what you have

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come to believe about these central life issues. If you need more space, you can write in your journal.

1. *The degree to which I believe things that happen to people are fair:*

2. *The degree to which I believe things that happen to people are controllable:*

3. *My beliefs about why other people think and behave the way that they do:*

4. *My beliefs about my relationships with other people:*

5. *My beliefs about my own abilities, strengths, and weaknesses:*

6. *My expectations for my future:*

7. *My beliefs about the meaning of my life:*

8. *My spiritual or religious beliefs:*

9. *My beliefs about my own value or worth as a person:*

Writing about your beliefs may be difficult to do in a few words. You may be still in the process of formulating them. Traumatic life events often confront people with the need to take a hard look at such beliefs for the first time. And since posttraumatic growth is a process, you should not expect to have all this figured out. What is important is that you pay attention to these things. Each of us is a philosopher in a way, trying to figure out how to live well.

Now we want you to consider how these beliefs figure into the way you have lived your life in the past, how you are living now, and how you may live in the future. The next exercise will prompt you to consider the life story you have been living up to now and a possible future that would be consistent with your evolving core beliefs. This exercise will help you start thinking along these lines. Unless you do something differently, where will your story take you?

EXERCISE: Your Developing Life Story

Use the space provided to summarize your story before and after the trauma (writing it out, or drawing it, or using any other format). We understand that the story could go on for many pages, but we're only asking for the overview. If your story involved more than one trauma, focus on the events that triggered you to question your core values. After you've completed these summaries, write out a new post-trauma story. How would you like things to be different? What direction would your life take if you were in control?

Life before the trauma(s): What was the story of your life before the trauma or traumas? What was it like before the interruption of the difficulties you experienced? What did you assume about your life and where you were headed?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page.

Again, you might notice how this story leads to good things in your life or to bad things. There may be things that you find valuable and important, and there may be things that could lead to some unfortunate places. If this story scares you a little, it's a warning that you need to make some changes. If it's looking like you have some good possibilities in the future, you may already have started on the path toward posttraumatic growth. You might want to include some of these positive things in the story you will be writing next.

Your new story: Summarize the new story of your life. In doing this you can assume for the moment that you are in complete control of how things will turn out. What core beliefs would you wish to express through your life story? How would you like things to be different? How would you incorporate any of these aspects of posttraumatic growth into your story: personal strength, improved relationships, appreciation of life, new possibilities, and spiritual change? Describe below what your story would look like.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The purpose of this exercise is to help you become more aware of how life can be different. Your life can be an expression of new core beliefs and other elements of post-traumatic growth. We want to get you thinking about the possibilities. Maybe you are starting to see that there are a variety of possible post-trauma outcomes that can lead to a more enjoyable and rewarding life. The life story you wrote isn't the only one. The future that you have described for yourself may be only one of the possibilities that might be fulfilling for you. If you can imagine others, you can write about them as well.

We also hope that the difference between your current story and your future story is clear and promising. As the author of your life, are you writing a miserable tale with a horrible ending, or are you constructing a meaningful and purposeful life filled with new possibilities and hope? We believe that the latter is possible. You may have trouble believing in a bright future for yourself right now, but if you keep using the principles you have been practicing while reading this workbook, the possibilities will become clearer.

A Final Story and Some Concluding Thoughts

We want to introduce you to Ryan. He is thirty-two years old with a face permanently scarred from the fire that burned down his house six months ago. With shame and embarrassment, he tells his story.

Ryan's Life Story

"I have always been a drinker. Well, not always. But pretty much since I started, when I was fifteen. See this face? Well, that's where it's got me. Worse than that, though. Before the fire, I never had got in real trouble with drinking. My buddies, we'd go after work and have a few. I liked to have some beer working out in the yard. I got a DUI once, but it didn't get in the way of my work or anything.

"My wife, Tricia, never liked it though, since I would come home after work late being at the bar. She'd say I was getting to be an alcoholic, which seemed ridiculous. I was taking care of business, working and all. But now I can see it was true, that except for being at work, I was pretty much always drinking. Tricia would complain about what the kids were learning from this.

Like, 'Do you want them to grow up to be drunks?' Or she would tell me I always smelled like alcohol. She'd say, 'I'm not interested in having sex with someone whose skin smells like a bar.' She'd worry a lot if she had to go out of town on a business trip. She'd get on my case and say, 'Can I trust you to be sober and take care of the kids?' Beer was getting between us a lot, and I thought she was just being, well, I would say lots of stuff under my breath about her, and I guess I just drank to show her that she was crazy and that I didn't need to stop.

"So, back in May, Tricia was going on a business trip, and we went through this again, and it was a bad one, and I was really fed up with her when she left. I was in a real sour mood. I was nasty to the kids, got them to bed that night early, because I didn't want to deal with them and was feeling real sorry for myself. Thinking *I don't deserve this crap. I'm a grown man and can do what I want. I'm not hurting anybody. No wonder I drink, having to put up with this.* I started thinking about getting divorced. I had thought of that before, but I didn't want to put my kids through that. Never thought of stopping drinking as an option though. So I'm thinking, *I'm trapped. This is my life in this miserable marriage. Just let me have my beer, my friends, enjoy myself a little.* So I'm thinking about all this, and how nice it is my wife is on her trip, and *I've got some peace and can do what I want. So I will take advantage of it and drink what I want. The kids are in bed, and I don't have to worry.*

"I guess I passed out. I don't know, but I'm on the sofa in the living room, and I wake up hearing screaming, and there is smoke all over, and I'm, like, completely out of it, and I can't figure out what is going on. And I get up and stumble and immediately start coughing like crazy from the smoke. I try to get through the kitchen to the kids upstairs, but the kitchen's full of fire. I dive in there trying to get through it, and I get fire on me, and I just run out into the garage.

"I just couldn't do it. I'm so sorry. I tried, but it was too much, and I was still messed up, and I couldn't think straight. And then I heard the sirens. Someone had called. And when they got there, I remember, it was out in the front yard, and I had rolled around to put out the fire, and I was still coughing. They were asking me about anyone else, and I said my kids. Turns out Jack had jumped out the window and was around back with broken legs, but Evie was inside. My God, this was bad. They got in there and got her out unconscious. It's all a blur, my stupid drunk self out there and the firefighters doing their work. They were giving me oxygen and probably had no idea I was

still drunk. Neighbors around, concerned for me, trying to comfort me. They got a couple ambulances there and took us all to the hospital.

“So, anyway, the rest of it is that they called Tricia. I couldn’t talk to her. I mean, physically I could have, but I was afraid. I knew she would end up furious with me when it all came out. Evie was still not doing well. Tricia got back the next day. I can imagine what hell she went through, trying to get back and worried to death. They kept me in the hospital because of the burns, but I was breathing okay. Jack was going to be okay with his legs, but he was traumatized and so scared. And we talked with the doctors about what is happening with Evie. It’s all because of the smoke, no fire was up there, thank God, but she’s got some brain damage. Because she’s so young, they think she may recover, but they don’t know everything about how much. But she’s a little fighter, and she’s getting better. She’s getting a lot of care, rehab therapy, occupational therapy, and those things.

“So, the rest of it is, we got no house right now, but the insurance is getting it rebuilt. I am with my folks and Tricia and the kids are with hers. She can’t stand to look at me or talk to me. They did an investigation, and it was some kind of electrical short in the kitchen that started it, but she blames me. She should, because of course, if I wasn’t passed out like that, I could have handled the whole thing, and the kids would be okay. I don’t care at all about myself and the burns. I feel like I deserve them. I don’t know if I’m going to get plastic surgery. We got enough bills, and that’s the last thing. I haven’t had anything to drink since that night. Beer disgusts me. Makes me think of all this and how I have ruined things.”

Six months later, a little over a year after the fire, Ryan is beginning to write a different life story. As you hear this part of Ryan’s story, be a good listener, and be thinking of what you have learned about the posttraumatic growth process.

“I’m feeling better. I was suicidal for a while, didn’t think I deserved to live after all this. Tricia still thinks of me as a horrible guy who ruined our lives and made my daughter’s life into something...well, we don’t know what it will be, but it didn’t have to be this. So the house is done and up for sale. We’re not going back. We’re renting a place for her and the kids. I’m still with my folks. Our marriage is over, but at least she is starting to trust me with the kids. Stopping drinking is the big thing. Huge.

“It’s strange. They say it is so hard to do and all. But you know, I just have not wanted any. Not at all. I want to leave all that behind. I go to AA

meetings every so often, not to make sure I don't drink or anything but just to see some people. And the thing that makes most sense to me is when we talk about living honest and about taking the drinking away so you can see the rest of it, everything else that's messed up. That's what I have been concentrating on—the rest of it. And I think of it, the big thing with me is being selfish. I just think of how I have been selfish and immature. I think that is what Tricia has always had trouble with me. I don't resent her, even though she treats me like crap. I figure I deserve it. I just take it. It helps to be like that because I don't fight her anymore. It is starting to confuse her, in a good way. She can see I haven't been drinking or getting together with my drinking buddies. I don't argue or complain about stuff. So she sees I'm different, but she is still so angry about the kids and everything. I don't know if she will ever forgive me for that, and I don't ask for it. I don't know if I will ever forgive myself.

"Things with the kids are different. I am absolutely all in on everything I can do to be a good father. And I don't mean the Disney World stuff. I mean just every time I get with them, paying attention to them. Listening to them and interested in what they are interested in. And correcting them, too. I actually think I have become a pretty good father. That's the thing that means the most to me. I take pride in that. I have a lot to do for them now. Evie has her exercises to do. Jack is messed up from the fire, scared to go to sleep, and having nightmares. I'm real patient about that because that is my doing. I never get upset with him for it. I'm pretty amazed, really, that I can so easily get through all that at night with him. Before I would have been so frustrated. I was selfish that way but not anymore...a hell of a way to become a better man. If I was this guy before, me and Tricia would be good. But like they say in AA, just focus on what you can change. That's maybe the biggest thing I got from AA.

"You know, I go to church with my folks. They tried for years to get me to go. Then they gave up. Then one day, I said, 'I'm going with you.' I just go. I don't know what to believe about it all yet, but it seems like a good thing. I guess I'm waiting to see what happens, but it seems like it fits with the new me. I've gotten involved with some of the mission stuff, the volunteering for things. I like being with these church guys, and a couple of them have really been good to me and have spent time with me. Maybe it's because they know my folks, but they have been very encouraging, and one guy I met at AA, too. I don't think I have had friends like that for a long time, maybe not since high

school or maybe never, actually. I have never talked with anyone like that, so it has helped to talk some things out and get straight on what I'm really doing.

"But the strangest thing, maybe, is that I've been volunteering at a homeless shelter some nights. I don't want to sound great or anything, because I always thought those people were kind of a drag on society and whatnot, but I am much more understanding than I was before. It's strange. I guess I've started seeing things differently. The fire and all, I am so ashamed about it, I just can't get on my high horse anymore. I think of myself as undeserving, and it's not a bad thing. Makes it so I appreciate more and am more grateful, I guess. So I treat people better. Isn't it weird I am going to the homeless shelter rather than hanging out at the pub with the guys? Those guys aren't bad guys, but they just don't fit for me now.

"So, that's what's happening—a mess but with some good parts. There is a financial mess, a divorce for sure, Evie and Jack and all that they will need to get better. The hell I have put Tricia through and the hell I get back from her. But I am really more at peace than I have been before. I haven't gotten the plastic surgery. It's not a punishment or anything. I think it's just a reminder. I want to make sure I have this reminder. Maybe some day I won't need it, but right now, I'm not going to risk it.

"Sometimes I wonder where I would be if all this hadn't happened. Maybe I would have figured these things out. Maybe not. I don't know. But this has humbled me. I think that is what this did. Made me think different about myself. I just could not think the old selfish ways again. This put a big block to that. I just find it impossible to go back to that. I can't be grateful for that fire and what it did to my kids. I'm just grateful that I'm thinking right, got the right people around me, and doing right. I figure if I keep that up, my life will be all right."

Now that you have read this workbook, engaged in the exercises, and learned about posttraumatic growth, we hope you can not only find inspiration in this story but also go back through it and see the different kinds of growth Ryan describes and how this growth may have happened in his situation. You will notice core belief change, expert companionship, and a sense of mission now in his life. Applying these things to your own life is a challenge, but the pathway is there, and the rewards are great.

Congratulations on working your way through this workbook. You can now see that you have been living out your own compelling story with trauma as a turning point for changes in your life. You have reconsidered what you were like before trauma

and what you have been becoming in its aftermath. Most importantly, you have now considered the possibility of who you may become. Your story is unfolding, and you are guiding the direction of it, although events can change this narrative quickly. But events do not need to dislodge the core beliefs and new identities that you've been establishing. Since these changes are built on principles of living that are growth-oriented responses to the greatest of challenges—pain, fear, and loss—you will be able to face future seismic events with greater resilience.

We also hope that by following the path laid out in this workbook, you will forge stronger interpersonal connections. We have encouraged you to accept assistance from expert companions, and you may also find meaning and sense of purpose in making it one of your missions to become an expert companion yourself.

We wish you the best on your path toward posttraumatic growth and invite you to make use of the resources available to you on our website: <http://www.traumaandgrowth.com>.

Suggested Reading

Resources for Trauma Survivors and Expert Companions

Mind-Body Workbook for PTSD: A 10-Week Program for Healing After Trauma, by S. H. Block and C. Bryant Block, 2010. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.

The Mindfulness-Based Emotional Balance Workbook: An Eight-Week Program for Improved Emotion Regulation and Resilience, by M. Cullen and G. Brito Pons, 2015. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.

Retelling the Stories of Our Lives: Everyday Narrative Therapy to Draw Inspiration and Transform Experience, by D. Denborough, 2014. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion: Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions, by C. K. Germer, 2009. New York: Guilford Press.

Surviving Survival: The Art and Science of Resilience, by L. Gonzales, 2012. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.

Bouncing Forward: Transforming Bad Breaks into Breakthroughs, by M. Haas, 2015. New York: Atria/Enliven Books.

What Doesn't Kill Us: The New Psychology of Posttraumatic Growth, by S. Joseph. 2011. New York: Basic Books.

Taking Control of Anxiety: Small Steps for Getting the Best of Worry, Stress, and Fear, by B. A. Moore, 2014. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Wheels Down: Adjusting to Life After Deployment, by B. A. Moore and C. H. Kennedy, 2011. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

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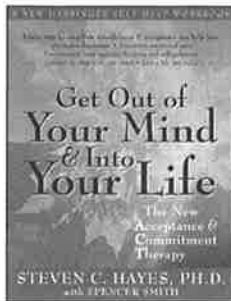
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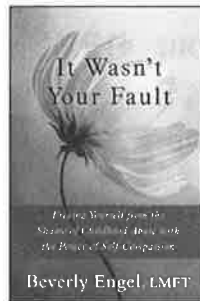
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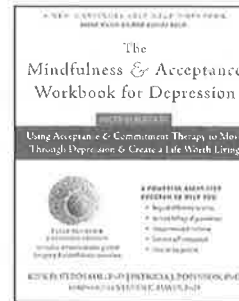
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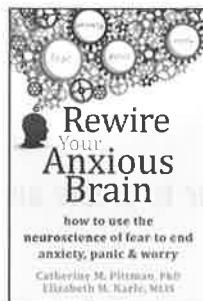
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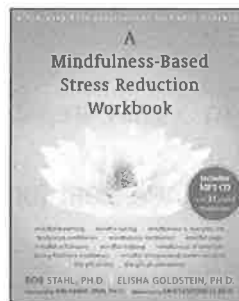
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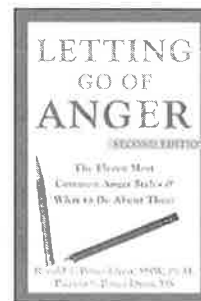
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