

Discipline #1 – Bothers Me Log

Injunction [What to do]:

Spend five minutes every day making a record of what you can identify as having bothered you since the last time you did this discipline.

Why do it [Rationale]:

Paying attention to our feelings connects us to ourselves—to what is going on with us. We don't like the feelings of being bothered and there are powerful influences in our lives that tell us not to pay attention. We learn to try very hard to keep things from bothering us. As a consequence we become increasingly disconnected from ourselves. Noticing what is bothering us is a simple but powerful way to reconnect.

What it will get you [Promises]:

While in the short run you will be more aware of being bothered by the events around you, and thus will feel more bothered, in a short time [usually a couple of weeks] you will notice the “bother” subsiding. This is because most of what bothers us are things we already know how to address but haven't simply because we haven't given those things sufficient attention. Over time you will feel more confident and will be better able to anticipate problems rather than having them sneak up on you.

Suggestions:

- Try to do the journal at the same time everyday. Build it into your routine. Most people find that doing it in the evening while looking back over the day works best, but find your own rhythm.
- Don't do an extended narrative about each item. Keeping a diary is fine if you want, but this is something else. Just note each item with enough detail that you can identify it and then ask yourself, “And what else?” Try to find as many items that are bothering you as possible.
- You will likely find the same emotional issues coming up day after day. If you make a chart of these you can just check off the events that happen over and over again. Try to group them into categories.
- Some bothers are easier to identify than others. We can usually identify “when others do things I don't like” as things that bother us. A bit harder to find are the “things they don't do that I wish they would.” Harder still to recognize are the “things I do that I wish I hadn't.” And hardest to identify are the “things I leave undone that I wish I had done.”
- If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed by all of the events that are bothersome, make a second log of all of the things that satisfy you. Do it in a similar manner where the goal is to notice as many items as possible.

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