

Strategies for Change

A time may come when you see a chance to identify your core issues and deal with them as a gift of the growth process. By bringing them out into the world, the issues lose their ability to send you diving straight into anger, depression, or grief. Recognizing your core issues allows you to deal with and resolve them. There are several key strategies for letting go of your issues:

1. Identifying the trigger.

Once you can find out what triggers your issues, you are halfway to resolution. Make a list of the last five times you felt extremely angry, sad or depressed. Can you begin to see a pattern? Is there a certain solution or type of person who sets you off? Once you think you have identified a trigger, watch out for it next time it appears and see how you react.

2. A sense of distance.

Identifying the trigger gives you the chance to see the situation coming. At first, expect to be plunged right into anger or depression as usual. But in time, you will make the connection and see the situation coming. Giving yourself a few seconds to notice the familiarity offers you the chance to react differently.

3. This is your issue and yours alone – it's up to you to deal with it.

Your issues are unresolved pain rooted in the past. To let go of them is to let go of the past that has formed you into who you are today – and that is hard. It can feel as though letting go of the past is letting go of your own identity. Because of our fear, we often wait for the other person to change. However, forgiveness teaches us that we are the only people who can change.

4. Don't blame anyone else for how you react to your issues now.

Being aware is the first step in change. Recognizing our issues gives you enough distance to look at the message rather than to shoot the messenger. People who press your particular issue buttons often don't even know they are doing it. Most people would never *choose* to press your buttons.

5. If this was not an issue for you, how would you react?

It's always surprising to see another person over-react to their issues. You can see that the person who is losing control is doing so completely out of proportion and out of context. That's because the person is not reacting to the present situation at all but to a very strong trigger from the past. We can see this in others, but it is really difficult to recognize this in our own reaction. Eventually, it will be wonderful when you can say to yourself: "Look at that person pressing buttons for me."

6. What would happen if you did it differently?

Imagine not reacting in the way you usually do. This may still be impossible in the real situation when you are being triggered. So it is worth visualizing situation you have been in the past and rewriting the script in your head. How would you rather react? The next time you are feeling drawn into the same situation, remember that you have already rewritten the script one and try it out in real life. You are taking the important step of saying: "I can do this differently."