



Finding Healthy Boundaries by Breaking the Cycle of Codependency

This 28-day deep dive into the life of YOU experiential exercise is designed to help create awareness around your everyday thoughts, feelings and default responses. I've provided an example to help articulate how this exercise is designed to flow.

There are three parts to this experiential exercise:

Part 1 - The Observer: consists of 14 days of simple observation of your thoughts, feelings and default responses.

Part 2 - The Detective: consists of 7 days of simple observation however from the perspective of the role of detective.

Part 3 - The Reflection: consists of the final 7 days where you will review your observations and your insights from the previous 21 days and reflect upon what you've learned. Each day you will select one of your beliefs and dive deeper into the story behind that belief by answering a series of questions.

Part 1 - The Role of Observer

In these 14 days I want you to actively journal three areas of YOU: your thoughts, your feelings and your physiological state.

Your thoughts consist of the internal dialogue and/or images you come up with in your mind.

Your feelings are the labels you use to describe how those thoughts and/or images made you feel.

Notes:

→ While others may affect your feelings, I want you to consider how YOUR thoughts make you feel.

→ Even if someone says something negative, what thoughts did you create, and how did those thoughts make you feel.

Your physiology consists of the subtle and intense sensations you have in your body.

For example, note any sensations in your cheeks, throat, neck, shoulders, chest, stomach and low back.

Notes:

→ And even your posture as sometimes we are “numb” to how our body feels but can be more aware of how we are posturing in a conversation.

For example, when conversing with someone, what position have you taken? Have you crossed your arms, have you stepped back with one leg (with “one foot out of the conversation”), are you leaning in or leaning away, are you squaring off to the person, are you angling your shoulders (again with that position of “checking out” of the conversation).

Example Entry:

Thoughts: (Internal dialogue and/or images you come up with in your mind)	Feelings: (Describe how those thoughts and/or images made you feel)	Physiology: (The subtle and intense sensations you have in your body AND your posture in those moments)	
Day: 1	Day of the Week: Monday, Jan 1 2023		
	First Thing Scenario: Woke up feeling nervous. Want the New Year to be meaningful. But not sure what that even means.		
	T: What do I want to do today? Don't know what I want.	F: Discouraged, a little anxious, maybe nervous, or restless?	P: Tightness in my throat, nervous energy in my body, almost hyper, but tired
	Day Time Scenario: It's 3PM and I haven't done much. I cleaned up around the house a bit, drank some water, which is good. But basically, lazed around all day.		
	T: Why can't I get started? What do I even want to do?	F: Restless, confused, frustrated, disappointed	P: Body fatigue. Just want to sleep. Mind is racing.
	Evening Scenario: I managed to go for a walk. That wasn't super enjoyable if I fully admit it, but I still went. Which is good I guess.		
	T: Can't seem to enjoy the simple things. What is wrong with me?	F: Depressed. Sad. Alone.	P: Body fatigue. Numb. Slight buzzing in chest and throat.
	Bedtime/Can't Sleep Scenario: I can't fall asleep. I think I did, but it lasted a few minutes when I woke up having an anxiety attack.		
	T: WTF is going on with me? Is it because I was so lazy that I am restless? Why am I so unhappy?	F: Frustrated. Angry. Irritated. Annoyed. Pissed off. Depressed. Resentful.	P: Agitated, heat in chest and throat, restlessness in whole body. Huge tingling sensations in chest, mid/upper back, and throat. Almost like I'm Hyper.

Part 2 - the Role of Detective (Days 15 – 21)

Part 2 is a bit tricky in that you need to play out two roles. The Observer, who continues to take stalk of their thoughts, feelings, and physiology as you have begun to master, AND the role of Detective. Now, playing the role of Detective can be challenging, as you need to take a step back from being involved in the situation and ‘review the experience from someone else’s point of view’ - the view of the Detective.

The Detective is merely someone who sees the whole picture and is able to connect the dots and notice trends in thoughts, feelings and behaviours.

It’s important that when you take on the role of Detective you do so the next day. This means that on Day 15 you are acting as the Observer only, and on Day 16 you go back and ‘review’ day 15 as the Detective.

The ‘space’ in time, gives you, the Observer, a chance to change roles so that you can review the previous day with less emotional attachment so that the Detective in you can find any underlying themes and clues.

Here are the three roles found within a codependent triangle:

1. Persecutor: “It’s all your fault.” The Persecutor is controlling, blaming, critical, authoritarian, rigid, and superior. They deflect and dismiss responsibility.
2. Rescuer (Martyr/Saviour): “Let me help you.” The rescuer is the person with the white knight complex, healer complex, or savior complex. They take on all responsibilities.
3. Victim: “Poor me!” The Victim feels victimized, oppressed, helpless, hopeless, powerless, and ashamed, and finds it difficult to make decisions, solve problems, or take pleasure in life. They deflect responsibility.

Resource: PDF Worksheets

Example Entry:

Thoughts: (Internal dialogue and/or images you come up with in your mind)	Feelings: (Describe how those thoughts and/or images made you feel)	Physiology: (The subtle and intense sensations you have in your body AND your posture in those moments)	
Day: 15	Day of the Week: Monday, Jan 15 2023		
	First Thing Scenario: Woke up to my alarm and turned it off and went back to bed, instead of getting up to go to the gym.		
	T: I'm too tired. I deserve a break. Then I was angry with myself. I'm being lazy and I'm weak.	F: Lazy. Upset with myself. Disappointed.	P: Numb. Some buzzing in my throat and chest. Sense of hyperness but no motivation at the same time.
	What role is being played out? Perpetrator I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Victim I Martyr What is the <u>main</u> belief? That I am not able to take control of my decision to make my health a priority. That I cannot seem to do "hard things."		
	Day Time Scenario: In a meeting and got agitated because I had a good idea but don't feel like anyone really listened or took my perspective into consideration.		
	T: They don't know what they are talking about. They don't care about my point of view. They are idiots.	F: Demotivated, Angry, Resentful, Frustrated, Dismissed, Unappreciated	P: Heat in cheeks, tight chest, breathy like I must take some deep breaths to catch my breath. Noticed in the meeting I started to lean back in my chair. Almost tilting the chair away from the table.
	Completed the next day (day 16)... What role is being played out? Perpetrator I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Victim I Martyr What is the <u>main</u> belief? That my thoughts and feelings don't matter. But I recognize I never followed up with them to confirm if my perceptions were accurate or how they came to their decision.		

<p>Evening Scenario: I blew up at the kids because they wouldn't listen to me. I also got angry at my husband because he wasn't helping to get the kids organized with their homework while I made dinner. Instead, he was playing with them, and I had to play bad cop again.</p>		
<p>T: I have no support. I'm the only adult in this family and no one listens to me. Why do I even try?</p>	<p>F: Frustrated, Angry, Dismissed.</p>	<p>P: Heat in cheeks, tightness in throat and chest, sore neck, and low back</p>
<p>Completed the next day (day 16) ...</p> <p>What role is being played out? Perpetrator I ✓ Victim I ✓ Martyr</p> <p>What is the <u>main</u> belief? That I must do it all myself and that no one respects me enough to listen or recognize the work I must put in to keep everyone else organized.</p>		
<p>Bedtime/Can't Sleep Scenario: My husband wanted sex, but I wasn't interested. I haven't been interested in a while. I feel guilty but I honestly am too tired and not really attracted to him in that way anymore.</p>		
<p>T: I may not be attracted to my husband anymore. I don't like how I look. I don't feel sexy anymore.</p>	<p>F: Ashamed. Guilty. Self-conscious. Disappointed. Resentful. Tired.</p>	<p>P: Hyper and tired at the same time. Restless - Would like an orgasm but not interested in being touched by my husband.</p>
<p>Completed the next day (day 16) ...</p> <p>What role is being played out? Perpetrator I ✓ Victim I Martyr</p> <p>What is the <u>main</u> belief? That I'm not in control of my circumstances. That how I feel about my body is a direct reflection of my connection with my husband - that he too must think of me as unattractive.</p>		

Part 3 - the Reflection

Step 1: Review the last 21 days and highlight trending thoughts, experiences, feelings and behaviours.

Step 2: Identify the main beliefs that surround these experiences.

Step 3: Pick one belief per day* and ask yourself the following questions:

1. Where do I think this belief originated?
 - a. How old was I?
 - b. Was this taught to me?
 - c. What happened where I thought this belief were necessary to be loved, feel safe or belong?

2. Who am I being in most of these situations?
 - a. And what roles are those around me fulfilling?
 - b. How are they enabling me?
 - c. How have I trained them to enable me?

3. What beliefs am I ready to rid immediately?

4. What beliefs am I afraid to let go of, and why?

5. What do I need to do, say, think or feel in order to let go of those beliefs I am afraid to release?

6. What action steps can I take, starting today, to help me release myself of those beliefs I'm afraid to let go of?

- a. What old thoughts can I replace with new thoughts?
- b. What old behaviours (default responses) can I replace with healthier alternatives?

*if you have less than 7 different main beliefs, go back and dissect any of your main beliefs even further to see if you can unravel any additional clues and clarity around how and why that belief was formed and how and why that belief may no longer be serving you.

In addition, if you have other beliefs that start coming to mind that you never identified in the 21 days, you can always dissect those as part of this Phase 3 process.

Blank 1 Day Template for printing.

Day:	Day of the Week:		
	First Thing Scenario:		
	T:	F:	P:
	PHASE 2: What role is being played out? Perpetrator Victim Martyr What is the <u>main</u> belief?		
	Day Time Scenario:		

T:	F:	P:
PHASE 2: What role is being played out? Perpetrator Victim Martyr What is the <u>main</u> belief?		
Evening Scenario:		
T:	F:	P:
PHASE 2: What role is being played out? Perpetrator Victim Martyr What is the <u>main</u> belief?		

	Bedtime/Can't Sleep Scenario:		
T:	F:	P:	
PHASE 2: What role is being played out? Perpetrator Victim Martyr What is the <u>main</u> belief?			