

Reframing Traumatic Memory

A JOURNALING PROMPT FOR REFLECTION & HEALING

1) Describe a situation when a painful memory was triggered. Take note of what caused it to arise.

2) Write down the thoughts that came up and how much you believed those thoughts on a scale from 1 (did not believe at all) to 10 (believed completely). Then identify the emotions that accompanied those thoughts. Thoughts have words, like “I’m a bad person,” while emotions are wordless, like feeling inadequate or ashamed. Rate the intensity of your emotions from 1 (barely felt it) to 10 (completely overwhelming).

3) Describe what you feared was the worst-case scenario for this situation. Note how likely it was on a scale from 1 (not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely).

4) Get creative and challenge the idea that the worst-case scenario was the only possible outcome. Write down a best-case scenario. Then come up with a realistic scenario. Rate the likelihood of the realistic scenario on a scale from 1 (not at all likely) to 10 (extremely likely).

5) Afterwards, think about the outcome of the situation. How does challenging your thoughts, feelings, and expectations make you feel? Do you still believe the worst possible outcome was the only possible outcome? Think about how you felt before and how you feel now. Re-rate the intensity of your thoughts and feelings and the likelihood of different outcomes. What differences do you notice?

