



Purpose

The Biblically-Based Experience Record (“Record”) is a worksheet used to help individuals process unwanted, unhealthy, negative experiences from both psychological and spiritual perspectives. The Record combines a common, helpful cognitive-behavioral strategy called The 7-Column Technique with the Apostle Paul’s exhortation to the Philippian church. In Philippians 4:4-8, Paul writes, “*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice! Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.*”

This Record helps a person acknowledge the reality of the unwanted experience while not agreeing with a negative meaning. By introducing Paul’s list of virtues on which we can dwell, the Record helps the person shift perspective, leading to a healthier, more balanced and Biblically-based experience.

Note: This worksheet does not and cannot take the place of counseling. If you are having a difficult time with the worksheet, feel like the worksheet is not helping, or feel like you need further assistance to overcome the situations you are facing, please reach out to a pastor or counselor for help.

Instructions

Step 1

Begin with the Column 1: “Situation/Trigger.” Choose a specific experience that you need to process and understand and through which you want to grow. Ask yourself the following questions: What happened? Where was I? When did this occur? With whom did it occur? How did it all happen? Write the answers in Column 1 or on a separate sheet of paper.

Step 2

Once you’ve answered Column 1, move to Column 2: “Emotions/Body Sensations.” Ask yourself the following questions, “What emotion(s) did I feel at that time? What else did I feel? How intense was the emotion?” As you write each emotion/feeling, rate it from 0 to 100, where 0 is not feeling the particular emotion at all and 100 is the most intense experience of the emotion that you can possibly experience.

Next, ask yourself, “What did I notice in my body? Where did I feel it? How intense was it?” Rate the intensity from 0-100, just like you did with the emotions felt.

Step 3

When Step 2 is complete, move to Column 3: “Unhelpful Thoughts/Images.” Ask yourself, “What went through my mind when I experienced the situation or the trigger? What disturbed me? What did these thoughts and images mean to me? What did they say about me? What is the worst thing about the situation or the worst thing that could happen?”

Write the answers in the column. When done, move to Step 4.

Step 4

In Column 4: “Facts that support the unhelpful thought.” You are asking yourself, “What are the facts? What facts do I have that the unhelpful thoughts or images are *totally* true?”

This step can be tricky. Remember, you are thinking like an attorney here. What *facts* do you have that the unhelpful thoughts are *totally true*. Feeling like the experience is true is not a fact that the experience is true. If the “fact” you think of does not show that the unhelpful thoughts and images are totally true, you cannot write it in this column. Is it possible that this is an opinion, rather than a fact? Take into consideration emotions you may have written down in Step 2 such as shame and guilt, which can present themselves so intensely that they may truly influence us to believe that certain opinions are actually facts. Try to identify and break through these mindsets.

Once you are done, move to Step 5. If you cannot think of anything that meets this criteria, write “None” and move to Step 5.

Step 5

In Column 5, you must consider and write down facts that provide evidence against the unhelpful thought. Ask yourself, “What facts do I have that the unhelpful thoughts are NOT totally true? What have others said about this?”

Now is when you take into account Paul’s list of virtues. Definitions are provided for each to help you out. Think about each of the following. Actually, don’t just think about them. *Dwell* on them. Paul’s use of the word *dwell* means “to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on.” I encourage you to pray through the following, asking God to show you any truths that line up with the list. Write down anything that comes to mind in Column 5.

- True – anything in accordance with fact or reality
- Honorable – anything worthy of high respect or esteem
- Just – based on or behaving according to what is morally right and fair
- Pure – not mixed with anything that is clearly sin
- Lovely – anything that is acceptable, pleasing, beautiful
- Commendable – speaking well of others, behavior worthy of praise
- Excellent – a virtuous course of thought, feeling, and action; moral goodness
- Worthy of Praise – literally, anything worthy of commendation and praise

Be sure to write what comes to mind in Column 5. When complete, move to Step 6.

Step 6

In Column 6, write out an alternative, more realistic, more balanced, Biblical perspective of the situation. Ask yourself, “What would someone else say about this situation? What’s the bigger picture? What does God say about me and about the situation? What did I learn from dwelling on Paul’s list of virtues?”

Write down the healthier, Biblically-based perspective in Column 6. Then move on to Step 7.

Step 7

Column 7 has two parts.

First, re-write each emotion you listed in Column 2, then re-rate its intensity. Hopefully, the intensity of those emotions and body sensations have decreased. If not, please do not give up. Consider seeking help from a trusted friend, pastor, or counselor.

Second, write any positive emotions that you began to feel as you did this exercise (e.g., hope, encouragement, joy, peace, etc.). Rate the strength of these emotions from 0-100%. Keep in mind that low ratings on positive emotions is ok here. The fact that the emotion is present is a win and should be celebrated no matter its strength.

Biblically-Based Experience Record – Example

<p>Column 1: Situation/Trigger</p> <p>What happened? Where? When? With whom? How?</p>	<p>Column 2: Emotions/Body Sensations:</p> <p>Rate each listed below according to level of intensity (0-100%)</p> <p>What emotion did I feel at that time? What else did I feel? How intense was it?</p> <p>What did I notice in my body? Where did I feel it? How intense was it?</p>	<p>Column 3: Unhelpful Thoughts/Images</p> <p>What went through my mind? What disturbed me? What did those thoughts, memories, images mean to me or say about me or the situation? What am I responding to? What “button” is this pressing for me? What would be the worst thing about that or that could happen?</p>	<p>Column 4: Facts that <u>support</u> the unhelpful thought</p> <p>What are the facts? What facts do I have that the unhelpful thoughts are totally true?</p>	<p>Column 5: Facts that provide evidence <u>against</u> the unhelpful thought. Consider Philippians 4. Use Paul’s list to guide your thoughts. Think about whatever is true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, and worthy of praise</p> <p>What facts do I have that the unhelpful thoughts are NOT totally true? Is it possible that this is an opinion, rather than a fact? What have others said about this?</p>	<p>Column 6: Alternative, more realistic and balanced perspective</p> <p>What would someone else say about this situation? What’s the bigger picture? Is there another way of seeing it? What advice would I give someone else? Is my reaction in proportion to the actual event? Is this really as important as it seems?</p>	<p>Column 7: Outcome: Re-rate each emotion, etc., listed in Column 2. Write any positive emotions/thoughts. Rank the positive (0-100%).</p> <p>What am I feeling now? Rate each emotion in terms of intensity (0-100%). What could I do differently? What would be more effective? Do what works! Act wisely. What will be the most helpful for me or the situation?</p>
<p>Walked into church lobby</p> <p>A lot of people were there</p>	<p>Anxiety (70%)</p> <p>Sweating (80%)</p> <p>Heart racing (70%)</p>	<p>“thoughts are racing”</p> <p>People are judging me.</p> <p>I don’t belong here.</p> <p>What if I have another full-blown panic attack? People will make fun of me.</p>	<p>I have had a few people in my life judge me for having anxiety.</p> <p>I have had one person laugh at me during a panic attack.</p>	<p>It’s true that I am learning how to breathe and handle panic.</p> <p>It’s commendable that I came to church despite the anxiety.</p> <p>It’s true and worthy of praise that God loves me.</p> <p>The Bible says that God’s love casts out all fear.</p> <p>While I have had some people judge me and one person laugh, most people are genuinely concerned and do not judge me. They actually pray for me when they know what’s going on.</p> <p>My pastor told me last week that he was glad I am a part of this church.</p>	<p>While I may still feel anxiety, God loves me and is with me. My church loves me. I am learning new skills to help manage anxiety like deep-breathing and prayerful mindfulness.</p> <p>I may not be as comfortable as I would like to be but I can take authority now and overcome anxiety.</p>	<p>Anxiety (30%)</p> <p>Sweating (20%)</p> <p>Heart racing (20%)</p> <p>Hope (50%)</p> <p>Encouraged (50%)</p>

Biblically-Based Experience Record – Example

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