

RELATIONAL NEEDS

WORKBOOK

by **MAGGIE BROWN, PhD.**



8 RELATIONAL NEEDS

An Introduction and
self-reflection

ABOUT THE WORKBOOK

This short workbook introduces you to 8 relational needs. The descriptions and questions can help you to identify where your current relationships may be meeting those needs, and where there may be gaps.

Remember, we ALL have gaps. Once we become aware of those gaps we can begin filling them. It may take a single action or decision. We may need more time with some people and less with others. And we also may decide to make requests of the people in our lives.

Sometimes, we need to check in with our old habits - what we have learned to tell ourselves, or where we avoid taking risks to be in relationship. With a bit of self-reflection, it might also become clear that we have some work to do, perhaps with the guidance and support of a therapist.

Structure

In this workbook, each relational need is briefly described, followed by a few questions to help you reflect on how well that need is currently being met in your life.

You're then prompted to identify one change you can make, if there is room for improvement (and really, when isn't there room for improvement?).

I hope you find the workbook useful. I encourage you to use it in creative ways to help build mutually rewarding and satisfying relationships - now and in the future.

Maggie

ONE: SECURITY

The need to for security in relationship means the need to be safe to be yourself, and to show all of yourself.

You don't feel in danger of being attacked, engulfed or abandoned.

Relational security is feeling free from threats of humiliation and shame.



Are there times when your need for security in relationship is met?

Who are you with?

Where are you?

How do you know you are secure?

What are you doing? NOT doing?

What do you feel or NOT feel?

Think about times when your need for security is NOT being met.

Who are you with?

Where?

What's happening?

What do you feel or NOT feel?

What is one action that you might take to improve things?

It could be a decision or something you say

Something you do, or stop doing

Or something you stop telling yourself

TWO: VALIDATION

This is the need to be appreciated, cared for and respected, not only for what you DO but also for who you ARE.

The relational need is to be recognized and understood by others.

In relationship, your needs are seen as legitimate. There is a sense of being OK in your own way.



Are there times when your need for validation in relationship is met?

Who are you with?

Where are you?

How do you know you are understood?

What are you doing? NOT doing?

What do you feel or NOT feel?

Think about times when your need for validation is NOT being met.

Who are you with?

Where?

What's happening?

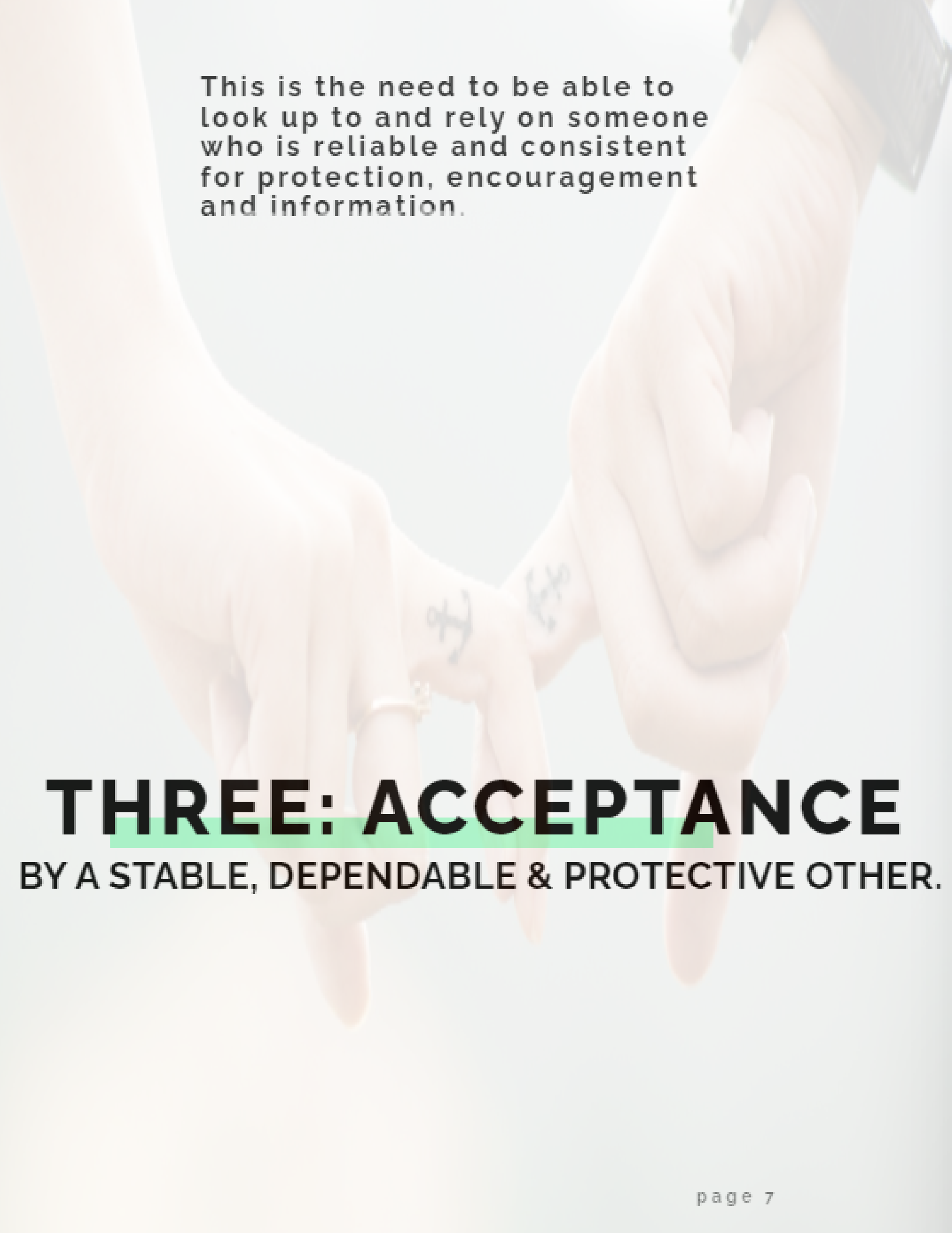
What do you feel or NOT feel?

What is one small change you might make to improve things?

It could be a decision
or something you say

Something you do, or
stop doing

Or something you
stop telling yourself

A close-up photograph of two hands clasped together. The hand on the left is a woman's hand, wearing a gold ring on her ring finger and has a tattoo of an anchor on her wrist. The hand on the right is a man's hand, wearing a dark watch. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue and white.

This is the need to be able to look up to and rely on someone who is reliable and consistent for protection, encouragement and information.

THREE: ACCEPTANCE

BY A STABLE, DEPENDABLE & PROTECTIVE OTHER.

Are there times when your need for acceptance in relationship is met?

Who are you with?

Where are you?

How do you know someone is reliable?

What are you doing? NOT doing?

What do you feel or NOT feel?

Think about times when your need for acceptance is NOT being met.

Who are you with?

What's happening?

What do you feel or NOT feel?

Is there one thing you can think of to take action on to improve things?

**It could be a decision
or something you say**

**Perhaps you might
request something**

**Can you add someone
to your life?**

FOUR: MUTUALITY

AND CONFIRMATION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

This is like a twinship. It is the need to be in the presence of someone who is similar to you - someone who affirms your experience because they have been there as well.



Are there times when your need for mutuality in relationship is met?

Who are you with?
Where are you?

How do you know your experience is affirmed?
What do you feel or NOT feel?

Think about times when your need for mutuality and confirmation is NOT met.

Who are you with? What's happening?
What are you sharing or not sharing?

What is one small change you can make right now?



FIVE: SELF DEFINITION

The opposite of our need for
twinship is our need to know and
express our uniqueness. To be true
to ourselves. To be able to show who
we really are

This is the need to express, within
relationship, our identity via
preferences, interests and ideas,
without humiliation or rejection.



Are there times when your need for self-definition is met in relationship?

With whom?? Where? What's happening?

How do you know you can express your uniqueness safely?

Think about times when you don't believe you can truly be yourself in relationship.

Who is there? Who is NOT there? How do you know you can't express your uniqueness?

What do you feel and NOT feel?

be
YOU

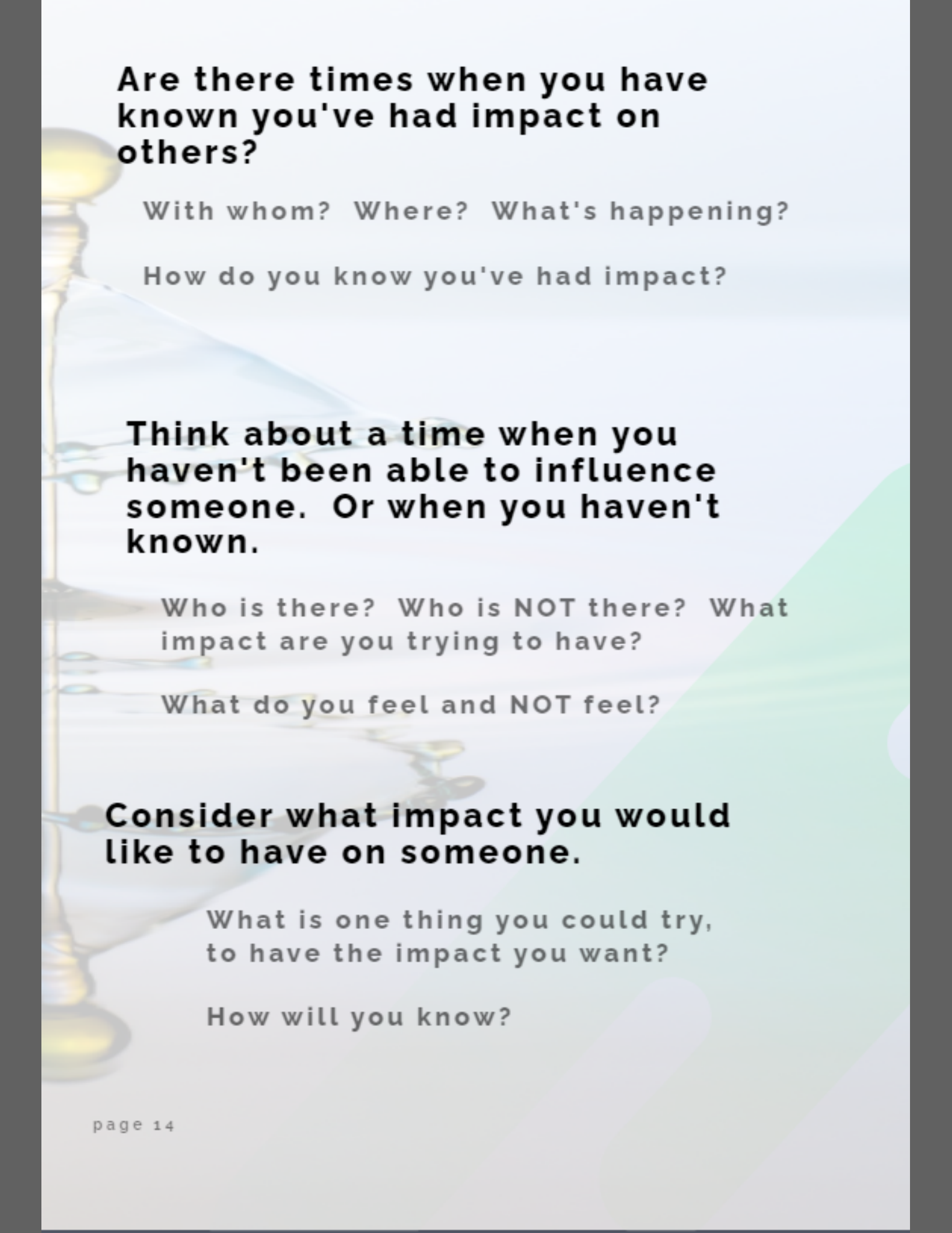
Decide to do or say or believe one new thing:

SIX: TO IMPACT OTHERS

This is AGENCY. The need to influence another person in some way.

That may be to change their way of thinking or behaving, or to elicit an emotional response from them.

It isn't enough to have an impact on someone - there is also the need to KNOW!



Are there times when you have known you've had impact on others?

With whom? Where? What's happening?

How do you know you've had impact?

Think about a time when you haven't been able to influence someone. Or when you haven't known.

Who is there? Who is NOT there? What impact are you trying to have?

What do you feel and NOT feel?

Consider what impact you would like to have on someone.

What is one thing you could try, to have the impact you want?

How will you know?



THIS IS THE NEED TO HAVE THE
OTHER PERSON REACH OUT AND
INITIATE



SEVEN: INITIATION BY OTHER

Are there times when someone has reached out to you and initiated contact?

Who? What were the circumstances? How did you respond?

What did you feel and NOT feel?

Think about times when no one reached out to you . . . when no one initiated.

Was there someone you wanted to hear from? How do you make sense of it?

What is your usual response when someone doesn't initiate?

What do you feel and NOT feel?

Is there one person you can ask to reach out more, and to initiate? How might you start the conversation?



EIGHT: TO EXPRESS AND RECEIVE LOVE

THE NEED TO EXPRESS LOVE AND CARING TOWARD ANOTHER. TO HAVE THIS ACCEPTED AND VALUED.

AND

THE NEED TO RECEIVE LOVE AND CARING. TO BE GIVEN (OR LEARN TO TAKE) THE OPPORTUNITY TO FULLY ACCEPT AND EXPRESS THE VALUE OF THAT LOVE AND CARING.

Do you express love and caring toward another person?

Who?

How??

What do you feel and NOT feel?

Is your love and caring accepted? Valued?

Who? How?

How do you know that your caring is accepted?

What is your usual response when someone expresses love or caring?

Do you allow yourself to accept and express the value of your love, and of the love you receive?

References

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Erskine, R.G., Moursund, J.P. & Trautmann, R.L. (1999). *Beyond empathy: A therapy of contact-in-representation*. Brunner/Mazel.

The RELATIONAL NEEDS WORKBOOK is written by Maggie Brown, PhD. with acknowledgement and thanks to the important work of Dr. Richard Erskine and colleagues.

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