



VERBAL REDUCTION AND EXPANSION

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Taking responsibility for and tending to our inner state is the source of our freedom.

~ Melanie McGhee, L.C.S.W.

Instructions:

Gather your materials – journal, pen, instructions.

Identify and write down the self-limiting thought or narrative that has you entangled.

As you are reducing and expanding with the number of sentences you use to describe your PRESENT state, at some point, the energy will likely lift and you will feel lighter. At that point, pause and focus on that lighter feeling, letting it expand inside.

Verbal Reduction:

Don't elaborate or return to the starting problem throughout the process. Instead –

- 1. Describe** your PRESENT state. How do you feel about the situation in **FOUR** short concise sentences? If the depression feels strong or it is a very STRONG self-limiting thought, start with 5 or 6 sentences. Write these sentences down, one after the other. Remember to allow your breath to flow.
 - a. Read the sentences aloud quietly to yourself as if being read to you by someone who treasures you, a beloved grandmother type archetype.
 - b. Close your eyes.
 - c. Notice the thoughts, images emotions and sensations (TIES) present. Record these elements.

- 2. Describe** your present state (or situation), how you feel about the situation in **THREE** short concise sentences. Write these sentences down.
 - a. Read the sentences aloud quietly to yourself as if being read to you by someone who treasures you, a beloved grandmother type archetype.
 - b. Close your eyes.
 - c. Notice the thoughts, images emotions and sensations present. Record these elements.

- 3. Describe** your present state (or situation), how you feel about the situation, in **TWO** short, concise sentences. Write these sentences down.
 - a. Read the sentences aloud quietly to yourself as if being read to you by someone who treasures you, a beloved grandmother type archetype.
 - b. Close your eyes.

- c. Notice the thoughts, images emotions and sensations present. Record these elements.

4. **Describe** your present state (or situation, how you feel about the situation, in **ONE** short, concise sentence. Write this sentence down.
 - a. Read the sentence aloud quietly to yourself as if being read to you by someone who treasures you, a beloved grandmother type archetype.
 - b. Close your eyes.
 - c. Notice the thoughts, images emotions and sensations present. Record these elements.

5. **Describe** how you feel in only **ONE WORD**, or one concept. Write this word or concept down.
 - a. Read the word aloud quietly to yourself as if being read to you by someone who treasures you, a beloved grandmother type archetype.
 - b. Close your eyes.
 - c. Notice the thoughts, images emotions and sensations present. Record these elements.

Verbal Expansion:

Repeat the sequence above moving from one word, to one sentence, two sentences, etcetera. During verbal expansion, if there is a charge with any element (thought, image, emotion, sensation), record the elements and remind yourself to simply accept them as a part of life. These elements may disappear as the process progresses.

Remember to stop at the point you have a positive state. Focus on that state as you take easy breaths. Sometimes, it can feel more stable if you feel three positive sentences in a row. However, be careful. You can overreach and you will pop back into a negative state. VRE can be a strategic journaling approach to untangling from charged situations.