

Reflection: Triggers & Warning Signs



Your reflection

Although it can feel as though sometimes our negative emotions and feelings can come out of nowhere, there are always events that build up to them, and often a series of events.

In seeking to feel more positive emotions, it's helpful to work out what the triggers and warning signs are for the negative emotional states you experience. Sometimes this can mean thinking all the way back to our childhood.

A trigger is a thought about a particular situation, that can lead us to an inappropriate response to that situation. For example, if you think somebody is staring at you, and that triggers negative thinking about them and about whether they are judging you, you may confront them. In reality they may have been staring off into the distance. Triggers can cause negative self talk and we can then 'act out' in response. We can also 'act in' – in that we withdraw from people and the world.

There may have been a traumatic event that may have internalised serious negative emotions, which are triggered by events in your current life. It could also be that you use your negative emotions and feelings as a kind of unhealthy coping mechanism, as sometime in the past these emotions have benefitted you in some way.

An example here is a lady who I used to coach who had chronic fatigue. On the face of it she was trying every possible technique to feel better – she was doing lots of holistic health and other remedies to relieve her tiredness.

During one coaching session we used timeline therapy, and she had an “a-ha!” moment where she realised that when she was a child, the only time she ever felt loved by her mother was when she was off school due to sickness. In her adult life, this translated to her always feeling unwell, as on some level she believed that if she was unwell, she would be loved.

Warning signs can include physical signs such as tension in the body, a “gut feeling” that something isn't right, tightness in the shoulders and jaw, increased heart rate and a panicky feeling, rapid/shallow breathing, redness in the face, getting the shakes etc.

There are also behavioural signs like becoming irritable and cranky, being argumentative, wanting to avoid being around others, losing your train of thought during a conversation, being forgetful, becoming obsessive about certain issues and so on.

Give consideration to the questions below and take your time with them.

When you recognise what your warning signs and triggers are, then you'll be able to catch them out as they are happening. In later lessons in this module you'll be tracking your emotions daily which will give you more of an idea as to what your triggers and warning signs are – so don't worry if you don't find it easy to answer the questions below, it's just to get you to start thinking.

In later modules I'll show you how to then focus on improving your emotional state from this place.

Coach Carly xx

Reflection: Triggers & Warning Signs



Questionnaire

Thinking about your current problem, what stressors occurred in your life leading up to it?

How did this affect your sleep and self care?

How did this affect your emotional state and your behaviour?

What things, people or situations worsen your negative emotional state, and how?

What things, people or situations improve your emotional state, and how?

Reflection: Triggers & Warning Signs



What foods or drinks worsen your emotional state, and which improve it?

What do you feel physically in your body when you feel negative emotions?

How do you behave when you feel negative emotions?

How do those around you respond in return?

Thinking back to the time before your problem began, are you aware of any of the above signs and symptoms occurring that perhaps you didn't pay attention to?

Reflection: Triggers & Warning Signs



Would you say you have a strong gut feeling?

Did your gut feeling try warning you before the problem began, or while it was happening?

What was your point of focus before, and during, the problem occurring - were you thinking positively about the situation, or negatively?

What makes you happy?

What makes you sad?

Reflection: Triggers & Warning Signs



Complete this sentence with whatever comes to mind.
"Whenever ____ happens, I feel ____ and then I ____."

**Whenever ____
happens**

I feel ____

and then I ____