

Guidebooks for Personal and Peer-Group Assisted Growth

Many of the emotional problems we face do not stem from deep-seated psychic conflicts. Sometimes a person is *not aware* of another way. We go through life consciously and unconsciously picking up reactions and interpretations of events from our parents, community, friends, teachers, organizations, culture, or the present spirit of the times — called the Zeitgeist. These attitudes become beliefs that “color” our interpretation of future events so they are consistent with what we learned. We learn because it is easier to live in agreement with our surroundings than to be contrary in our expressed opinions. That is the job of teenagers (*a joke?*), unless, of course, a person is a compulsive contrarian, argumentative, or a devil’s advocate. As adults, unquestioned acceptance become belief.

Depending upon the psychological perspective, these visceral reactions can be considered transference (by psychoanalysts), schemas (by cognitive psychologists), conditioning (by behaviorists). A more easily grasped word is *perceptions*. What we “see” depends upon how we “look at” what is presented. *It’s personal!* Irrational thoughts are called cognitive distortions. Consider, scenes look different through clear, **rose colored**, or **sun** glasses.

Looking upon our “automatic” viewpoints as *learned reactions*, not necessarily facts, allows an optimistic view toward human growth. Most change can be accomplished without the need for professional intervention. Nevertheless, in accordance with a widespread tendency to pathologize normalcy, there is a large market for packaged “cures” that follow a prescribed format and focus on victimization, helplessness and dependency. There are many gurus and their personally “certified” apostles offering packaged one-size-fits-all panaceas. While there are some conditions that can benefit from professional individualized and group therapies governed by one’s personality and difficulty, not all people are ripe for a codified cure or need psychotherapy.

Change can be brought about by being exposed to information on thoughts and feelings and alternative ways of coping with misfortune. In this stand-alone **Guidebook**, the reader is told to personally interpret the written material. It is called a *guidebook* and not a *workbook* because personal interpretations are encouraged. This can be enhanced by gathering with a group of peers in a discussion group that is not committed to consensus of thoughts on all issues. Their purpose is to provide a specific topic and to garner different viewpoints on the subject. It is the diversity of opinion—and not a single right answer—that is the objective. The purpose is to *not* lobby for one’s own point of view

A difficulty is convincing many logically selected group leaders to refrain from lecturing and teaching. The intent is not universal agreement, but acceptance of various individual approaches to living a congruent and healthy life. Of course, it is not expected that pastors, police and fire chiefs, military officers, HR representatives, to abandon the tenets of their religion, profession, or organization. For the most part, the material in the *Guidebooks* are non-threatening to parochial beliefs held by a special-purpose group.

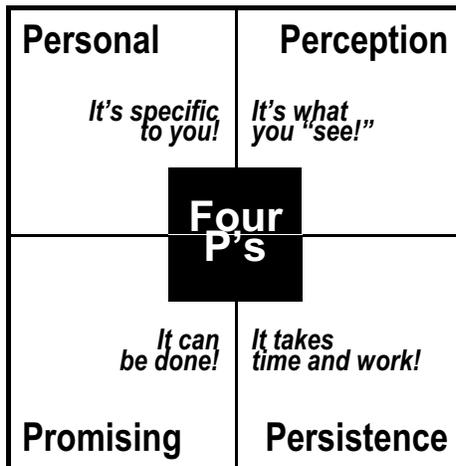
Although the program can be arranged in different ways, a 15-meeting format is offered. Each session’s discussion will revolve around a short preparatory home-reading to set the stage for the meeting’s agenda. This focuses the free-form discussions. The intent is to allow each participant to freely express his or her assessment of the specific material. Help is thereby provided by listening to alternative beliefs and thoughts. The leader is not there to direct discussion, except to keep the comments on topic, help the quiet speak, the loquacious yield the floor, and to not take on the mantle of an expert. Of course they can have their own viewpoints and express them as a humble equal and not an authority. Once a group is formed they may become an ongoing attraction of the sponsoring organization.

The next page lists several items posted on www.HOUD.info that go into more depth on the *Guidebook*. Contact me at rabstajnek@HOUD.info for additional information.

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The Stressor, Stress, and Recovery Complex	Can Do Attitude
System Flow Diagram	Resources
of Social Support for Health & Adjustment	(48-Pages, Including Cover)

A more detailed exposition is at www.HOUD.info/ResilienceDevelopment.pdf



The Four P's Model

The Four P's model is illustrated by the emblem on the left. The "P's" highlight each of four precepts underlying our ability to successfully cope:

- Personal
- Perception
- Persistence
- Promising

The diagram is a memory aid for the Four P's — key elements for successful coping with a critical incident and growth — listed above and explained below.

Four P's is a model in which your uniqueness is recognized. Events that appear insurmountable are the result of learned preconceived internalized viewpoints. By changing thinking and associates you can improve reactions to stimuli. Corrective action, however, takes sustained effort and hard work.