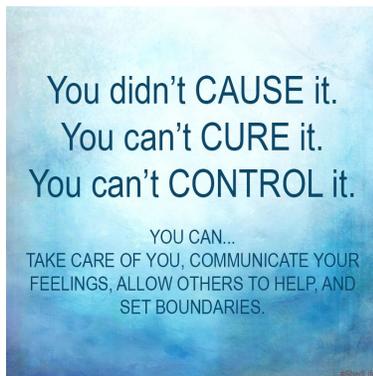




**Nice Guys Anonymous:  
A Guide to Finishing First in  
Love & Life**

The ***Guide to Finishing First in Love & Life*** is the culmination of my lifelong journey as a nice guy, my recovery work as a nice guy, and my commitment to assisting other nice guys in living a better life. A life that is limitless and free from the pain and difficulty experienced from being a nice guy. After completing the system, you too will be finishing first in love and life! ~ Jude Sandvall



### **Goal #1**

*Admitted that we were powerless over others and reclaimed both our willpower & personal power*

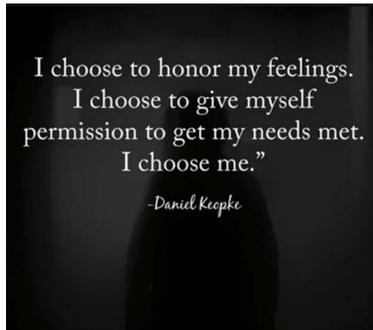
Many nice guys attempt to manipulate their environment through controlling themselves, others, and situations with sheer willpower. The philosophy is if I just work harder, try harder, (fill in the blank) harder that eventually I will get my needs met. However, this does not work and in fact gives away our personal power.

Instead, we need to claim responsibility for ourselves and let others be responsible for their own lives. This step lets us start to learn to detach and become aware of our willpower. We start to identify boundaries, limits, and what is our responsibility and what is not. In turn we are lead to reclaiming our personal power.

### **Action Step**

Pick one area of your life in which you are frustrated or are feeling stuck. Take a look at the situation as if you were looking at it from the point of view of a stranger. Is the challenge you are having the result of you projecting your reality or desires onto the situation? If you had no

other choice but to accept the situation, how would you change your response? Now each time this situation comes to mind envision yourself responding in this manner. By doing so you are utilizing your willpower to change your thought response and in turn reclaim your personal power from the person or situation.



## **Goal #2**

*Came to believe in our self-worth and claimed responsibility for honoring our needs and pleasing ourselves*

Once we admitted that we were powerless to control others or situations we were able to then utilize our willpower to create positive habits that lead to personal empowerment. In Step 2 we begin the work of rediscovering our self-worth. We claim responsibility for taking care of our own needs and ensuring that we please ourselves. For nice guys this is often very difficult.

### **Action Step**

Make a decision to put yourself first for one entire weekend. Tell the people around you what you are doing and ask someone close to you to support you in this activity. Pay attention to your desire to revert to an old habit or pattern. When the weekend is over ask the people around you what it was like when you put yourself first.



## **Goal #3**

*Made a decision to reclaim our masculinity*

Avoiding relationships with men and seeking the approval of woman are two common characteristics of nice guys that don't allow them to have what they want in love and life. The process of learning to be comfortable with and embracing our masculinity is necessary to undo the decades of negative programming experienced by nice guys. There are four main areas through which we can begin this journey: 1. Connect with other men. 2. Get our bodies and minds strong. 3. Identify positive male role models. 4. Examine our relationship with our father.

### Action Step

Write down three ways in which you neglect your body. Now, write down three ways that you will change those behaviors and implement them one at a time until they become a habit.



### Goal #4

*Made a searching moral inventory of ourselves*

Often nice guys blame everyone else for their problems. This does not resolve our problems. We may find that we are repeating the same scenarios over and over and eventually need to look within to see why we keep ending up in the same place. This step is not about blaming ourselves, it is about discovering ourselves. It is about self-responsibility. We tend to blame everyone else for how we feel. This step is about looking inward for those answers. We are responsible for our feelings. It is natural to fear this step, but it is not in our best interest. It is time to clean house and get things in order.

### Action Step

Take three separate sheets of paper and list at the top of each one of the following categories: "Anger," "Fear," and "Shame." This is a chance to dump all the bad stuff. Write about anything that bothers you within the context of each heading on each separate sheet of paper. If we are honest about how we feel, not taking blame, it will help us heal. It may help us see the root of the problem. But until we identify these beliefs, through this step, we cannot change them. It is a good idea to include your childhood issues. Often times there are feelings there that we need to feel in order to heal.



### Goal #5

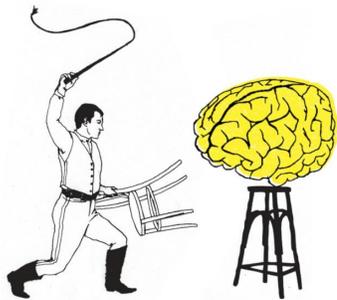
*Admitted to ourselves and another human being the exact nature of our anger, fear, and shame*

It is imperative that we begin this process by unloading all the anger, shame, fear and other bad things that are weighing us down. We need to reconnect to ourselves and we do that by being

honest. The fourth step enables us to identify these things about ourselves and as we are going through this step these things may begin to surface and weigh us down. We get to be open, honest and take responsibility in this step. This may be the first time we have done this in our lives.

### **Action Step**

Each morning for the next week, when you wake up, take a moment to notice what you are feeling. Often, we are at our most vulnerable in those quiet moments before we begin the activity of the day. Check in with yourself emotionally. Within the next four hours, tell someone else what you are feeling. You don't have to make a "feelings group" out of it just disclose honestly what you are feeling. Do this same activity once more during the day - either at the end of the workday, after dinner, or during a quiet time in the evening.



### **Goal #6**

*Became entirely ready to tame our mind & reign in our thoughts*

Dr. Bruce Lipton explains that there are two separate minds that create what he calls the body's controlling voice. There is a conscious mind that can think freely and create new ideas 'out of the box'. Then there is the subconscious mind, which is basically a super computer loaded with a database of programmed behaviors, most of which we acquired before we reached the age of six.

The subconscious mind cannot move outside its fixed programs – it automatically reacts to situations with its previously stored behavior responses. AND (here's the rub), it works without the knowledge or control of the conscious mind. This is why we are generally unaware of our behavior, in fact most of the time we are not even aware that we are acting unconsciously.

Scientists show that most of our decisions, actions, emotions and behavior depend on the 95% of brain activity that is beyond our conscious awareness, which means that 95 – 99% of our life comes from the programming in our subconscious mind. And in fact, in the parallel field of neuroscience, a number of experiments with Buddhist meditators have shown that people can actually change their brain structure (regardless of their age) by creating new neural pathways

just by conscious thinking.

So... how to get out of this endless cycle of old programs and start to be more in the conscious mind? Because of the power of the unconscious mind (one million times more powerful than the conscious mind), and the amount of time it is running us (95 – 99%), Lipton says it takes a lot more than positive thinking to get out of it. Because as soon as you forget to be conscious, the unconscious is back in charge again. Sound familiar? He suggests meditation, hypnotherapy or other reprogramming approaches. In this step we begin the process of learning to be consciously aware of our thoughts.

### **Action Step**

Basic Meditation - The principles of meditation vary from tradition to tradition but generally include the following:

1. Sit in a balanced, stable, comfortable posture with your spine straight and your shoulders relaxed. Recommended postures range from a variety of cross-legged postures, to sitting on the knees, to sitting on a chair or even laying down.
2. Keep your eyes closed or half-open. Experiment to find what works best for you.
3. Relax and breath with your belly.
4. Choose an object of attention. It may be the audio of a mantra or chant. The act of counting. Focusing on your breath. Or in the practice of mindfulness, noticing whatever sensations, emotions, images, or thoughts arise spontaneously in your field of awareness.
5. There are different views on how long to sit. Experiment as you would with any new practice. Start with 3-5 minutes or as long as you feel comfortable and are capable of staying in the practice. You can set a timer if you wish and work your way up to 15-20 minutes.



### **Goal #7**

*Humbly illuminated our shadow side &  
embraced our duality*

In Jungian psychology, the "shadow", "Id", or "shadow aspect/archetype" may refer to an unconscious aspect of the personality which the conscious ego does not identify in itself. In the reality of life there is both light and dark. In the absence of light there is dark and so is it with

ourselves. And each of our personal relationships reflects back to us aspects of both. Not convinced of this? Take a moment and think back to relationships both romantic and professional. Is there a pattern that arises in one or both. Did you attract the same “type” of woman into your life over and over. Perhaps this is the reason that lead you to this program.

When we learn to understand and accept that we have a shadow side that we attempt to hide out of fear or shame we then consciously begin to accept ourselves. Identifying these feelings, traits, habits, etc. will allow us to be consciously aware that we attract relationships that are exactly what we need whether we like it or not. We finally approach ourselves with an open and loving understanding and in return can work toward attracting more healthy relationships into our lives.

### **Action Step**

Take out a sheet of paper. In one column list at the top a person that you admire. Write down at least ten things about that person that you like. Now write next to those ten traits at least three things that you don’t like. (There have to be a few. Nobody is perfect!) In the second column write down somebody that you dislike. If you can’t think of anybody in your life you can list somebody from history or that is famous. List at least ten things that you dislike about this person. Now list at least three things that you like about this person. (C’mon even the most distasteful people have positive qualities. For example, Hitler was a great orator.)

Look over the list of positive qualities and circle any that you identify as possessing yourself. Now look at the negative qualities and put a checkmark next to any that you feel you do not identify with or possess. Review the positive list again and select the top three qualities from the list and write them on the back of the paper. Look at the checkmarked negative qualities and identify three that absolutely do not apply to you and write those under the three positive qualities on the back of the paper. You are all of these qualities and traits. The ones that are negative are likely the ones that cause you the most turbulence, distress, and difficulty in your life. Embrace them and make yourself consciously aware of them.



### **Goal #8**

*Identified our emotions & feelings and became willing to embrace and express them*

Emotions are lower level responses occurring in the subcortical regions of the brain, the amygdala and the ventromedial prefrontal cortices, creating biochemical reactions in your body altering your physical state. They originally helped our species survive by producing quick reactions to threat, reward, and everything in between in their environments.

Feelings originate in the neocortical regions of the brain, are mental associations and reactions to emotions, and are subjective being influenced by personal experience, beliefs, and memories. A feeling is the mental portrayal of what is going on in your body when you have an emotion and is the byproduct of your brain perceiving and assigning meaning to the emotion. Feelings are the next thing that happens after having an emotion, involve cognitive input, usually subconscious, and cannot be measured precisely.

By understanding the difference between and becoming aware of your emotions and feelings, determining which is which and their root causes, and then inserting conscious thought followed by deliberate action, you can choose how you navigate and experience the world. Being able to do this means responding or reacting which can make the difference in a calm or chaotic life.

### **Action Step**

Practice Non Violent Communication as developed by Marshall Rosenberg.

There will always be circumstances that happen throughout our day that elicit our emotions and feelings. Learning how to respond and communicate effectively will change your life.

Steps:

1. Separate Observation from Evaluation - state very specifically and deliberately what has happened. For example: "I saw you talking to that man at the party for an hour." Instead of "I saw you flirting with that man at the party for an hour."
2. Define Your Feelings - stop and tune into yourself and your body and ask yourself what was or am I feeling? Then describe your feelings by utilizing I statements and words that reflect only the feelings that you are responsible for. Avoid using words that require another person to "make" you feel a certain way. For example: "I am feeling helpless and frightened." Instead of "I feel that you are trying to take advantage of me."
3. State Your Needs Clearly - ask yourself "What do I need in this situation?" You may not know and need to work your way down to it by continually asking "Why?" For example, "I need to feel loved?" Why? "I feel lonely - I need to feel less alone." Why? "I don't have close friends - I need to find some friends and develop relationships."
4. Ask, Don't Demand - you are more likely to get what you want if you ask instead of demand and have a specific request. For example: "Can we go to the park this afternoon?" instead of "Can we spend more time together?"



## **Goal #9**

*Awakened our hearts & received the love we wanted*

Whether or not we are aware of it, our lives are a subconscious effort to move closer to love. From the time that we are babies throughout our childhood and into our adult life we move toward those things from which we derive pleasure and away from those that cause pain in this quest for love. For nice guys many of the behaviors that we learned in our childhood in an attempt to gain love are distorted and when applied to our adult life and relationships lead to pain rather than pleasure. In this step we are becoming aware and focusing in on our heart center. Modern science has discovered that the heart has an electromagnetic field 60 times greater than that of the brain and that it acts as a sophisticated information encoding and processing center.

### **Action Step**

**Step 1:** Settle into a comfortable position with your eyes closed, and begin to take a few slow deep breaths. With each exhalation, let yourself release tension from your body, release any thoughts or concerns that were occupying your mind, and release any feelings, fears or desires that were occupying your heart. Gently relax into this moment – letting go, getting calm, and preparing to turn your attention inward.

**Step 2:** Focus your attention in the area of the heart. Imagine your breath is flowing in and out of your heart or chest area, breathing a little slower and deeper than usual.

**Suggestion:** Inhale 5 seconds, exhale 5 seconds (or whatever rhythm is comfortable)

**Step 3:** Make a sincere attempt to experience a regenerative feeling such as appreciation or care for someone or something in your life.

**Suggestion:** Try to re-experience the feeling you have for someone you love, a pet, a special place, an accomplishment, etc. or focus on a feeling of calm or ease.



## **Goal #10**

*Embraced our sexuality & got the sex we wanted*

Sex and having sex is natural. We see it happening without reservation by animals in nature all of the time. At its root it is a release of energy from our body. As we learned in step 9 our heart contains and emits an energy field. The same is true with all of our body. When we have sex it is the release of stored sexual energy. Containing and bottling it up leads to a damming effect that results in health and emotional issues. For nice guys sex is surrounded with shame and fear because at some time in our lives we experience the following that ingrained the shame and fear.

- Memories of childhood experiences that made us feel like we were bad.
- The pain of not getting our needs met in a timely, healthy manner.
- The effects of growing up with sexually wounded parents.
- The sexual distortions and illusions of a really screwed up society.
- The absence of accurate sexual information when it was needed.
- The sexual guilt and shame associated with centuries of religious influence.
- The effects of covert sexual bonds created by our mother.
- The trauma of sexual violations.
- The memories of early sexual experiences wrapped in secrecy.
- The distorted and unrealistic images of bodies and sex in pornography.
- The shame of hidden, compulsive behaviors.
- The memories of previous sexual failures or rejections.

### **Action Step**

Find a safe place (close male friend, therapist, sex addicts anonymous) to talk about the following issues:

Your sexual history : Earliest sexual memory, childhood experiences, sexual violation and trauma, sexual issues in your family, first sexual experience, adult sexual history.

Ways in which you have acted out sexually : Affairs, prostitution, peep shows, 900 numbers, use of pornography, exhibitionism, fetishes, etc.

Your dark side : Those things that even you have a hard time looking at in yourself — fantasies, rage, offending behavior.



## **Goal #11**

Sought through prayer & meditation to relinquish control & detach from outcomes

Each of us is free to have our own Higher Power of our choosing. We can talk to this Higher Power by praying and this can look like anything we want at anytime we want. We can do it kneeling, walking, standing in line, out loud, through letters or journaling, or any other way we see fit.

As with praying, meditating is specific to the individual and can be done many different ways. We may read meditation books, listen to meditation music, get therapeutic massage, and some may practice more traditional methods of sitting by themselves in quiet as was introduced in the step 6 action step.

Prayer is how we talk to our Higher Power. Meditation is how our Higher Power talks to us.

As nice guys many of us stress and worry about things from our past and future. Things we cannot change or that have not even happened yet. Prayer gives us the opportunity to talk with our Higher Power and ask for guidance. It helps us trust that things are as they should be. It helps us go with the flow. It enables us to let go. It can take time and practice, the results are not immediate, but if we trust the process we will see the results. Taking time to talk with our Higher Power and listen for guidance will help us see our next steps, whether it be taking action or doing nothing. It helps us listen to ourselves and keep our goals of self-love forefront and quiet the chaos we sometimes create with stress and worry.

This step tells us that we have a path, and no one can interfere with it. We don't have to hold on so tightly. Others do not hold the key to our happiness, nor do they hold the key to our lives.

### **Action Step**

The next time you get stressed, worried or are experiencing chaos, instead of pushing harder or finding an escape, walk away from what you are doing and find a way to get quiet and centered. Find a quiet place, sit down and breath deeply. Let go of your thoughts, worries, and chaos. If they enter your mind allow them to flow through and instead think of a feeling of peace and healing. Stay with this as long as you can or as long as you need.



### **Goal #12**

Continued to take personal inventory & became the hero of our lives

This step allows us to stay anchored in our continued practice of looking inward instead of outward. Sometimes this step brings new issues to light that we need to work on. It lets us see the imperfections in ourselves and others and accept them. We will find that when we need to practice this step, and do not, we become unbalanced. Be patient, as we practice these new behaviors they become easier. We do not need to control the process, we need to trust in it and let it take its course. As time goes by, this practice can become as natural to us as our survival skills were.

### **Action Step**

Either daily or weekly, force yourself to find one thing in your life and one idea about yourself that is good. Affirm that good until it sinks in and feels real. Strive to find one thing that you lie about someone who is important to you, then take the risk of telling that person.

### **Join a Nice Guys Anonymous online meeting!**

Visit [www.niceguysanonymous](http://www.niceguysanonymous.com) to register.

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