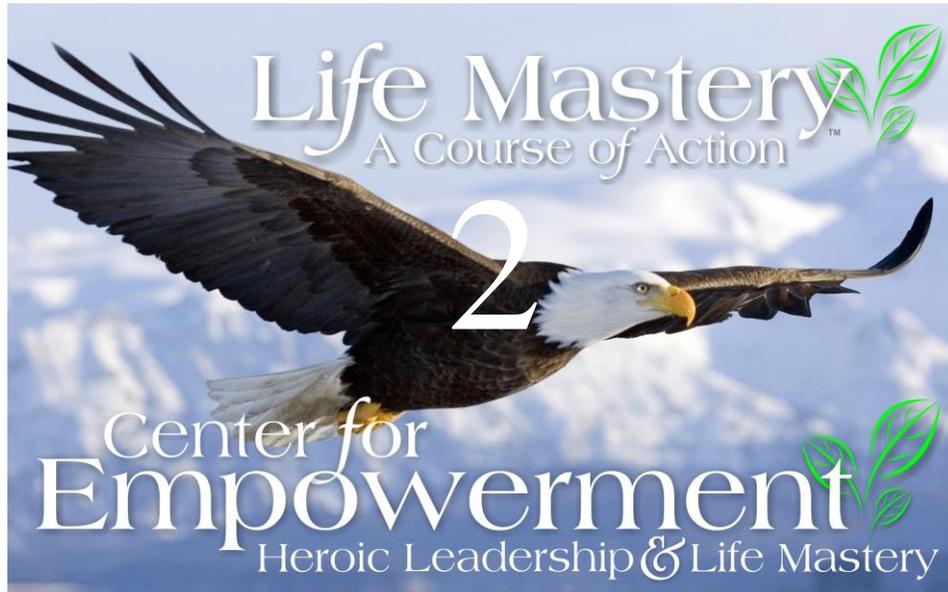


# Life Mastery 2



## Session 9 ABC's of CBT

By Mark Fournier

- ABC's of CBT
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# ABC's of CBT

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## Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

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Although our last Shift 'Observation' may have sounded like it would be easy to do, for most folks it's anything but. And even when you get there, it's nearly impossible to *stay* there. None the less, for the times when you accomplish it, it's well worth knowing.

This next Shift is more or less the opposite...when you recall that it comes from a process used by professional psychologists and highly trained PhD's, it can seem a bit intimidating. But in truth, this is one of the simplest Shifts you will ever use, and one of the easiest to apply. As such, you may find it to be one of your favorites.

As we briefly shared in LM-1, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is a form of therapy that uses conversational interaction, and a great deal of common sense to treat the patient. It is widely considered to be the fastest growing form of psychology and may now be the #1 therapy in the world.

CBT is effective with anxiety and mood disorders, insomnia and a host of other ailments.

CBT uses an array of approaches to assist clients in creating better mental health, but one of these approaches in particular is so easy to use that I've decided to teach it as a Shift. When properly executed, it can cause you to shift your state as quickly as any other Shift we've covered in this program.

As you may recall, this Shift is based on the knowledge that our experience of life comes down to the following three things:

- #1 What happens
- #2 How we *interpret* 'what happens'
- #3 How we *respond* to our interpretations of what happens

We have been teaching this same general premise since the beginning of the course, so it should come rather easily by now.

But the problem we all face is that we still keep *thinking* we are responding to '**what happens**' (#1), rather than to our *interpretation* of what happens; we keep forgetting about step #2. This may not seem like a great distinction, be in reality, it's everything!

As we've covered earlier, 'what happens' is just a *thing*, it may or may not be a *problem*, it may or may not even effect us. However, our *interpretation* of it can greatly affect us, in addition to determining whether or not it is a problem, an opportunity or inconsequential... which consequently then determines how we feel and respond.

The moment we become aware of step #2 and begin to live as though we are responding to our *interpretation* (our perceptions... our self-made reality), and not to the thing itself, is the moment we gain control over our life and circumstances, for although we may have very little power over ‘what happens’, we have tremendous influence over our interpretation of what happens.

So how do you wish to see *your* world? What do you wish to focus on? How do you wish to interpret that which has no meaning (until you assign it one)? Do you want to keep living the lie that tells you things really are the way they seem to be, or do you want to see them as they really are, and decide from there how to feel and respond?

The ‘ABC’ Shift is for those who want their life to reflect as closely as possible how things really are, so they can feel and respond as appropriately as possible to each situation.

This Shift doesn’t always put them on the Bright Train, but it can get them off the Dark Train quickly and effectively.

As mentioned in LM-1, in CBT, this Shift is called the ‘ABC’ Model. Whereas ‘A’ is the same as #1 listed earlier and it means ‘what happened’. The letter ‘A’ actually stands for ‘Activating event’, which is sometimes referred to as a ‘trigger’.

The ‘B’ is the same as #2 listed earlier and it means ‘how we *interpret* ‘what happens’’. The letter ‘B’ stands for ‘Beliefs’, because it’s about what we ‘believe’ to be true about the event.

The ‘C’ is the same as #3 listed earlier and it means ‘how we *respond* to our interpretations of what happens’. The ‘C’ stands for ‘Consequences’, because it’s about the consequence of our beliefs... and there are ALWAYS consequences (even if those consequences are as simple as making us feel a certain way). ‘C’ usually manifests in *two* ways, how ‘B’ makes us *feel* (emotions) and then how those feelings make us behave (actions).

#### EXAMPLE 1:

‘A’: (Activating event / what happened): *I was reprimanded by my boss today.*

‘B’: (My Belief): *I wrote the Story that he hates me and is going to fire me.*

‘C’: (Consequence): *I became very upset, then decided to quit before he **can** fire me.*

- *Emotions*: I became upset, indignant, angry
- *Actions*: I decided to quit my job

As you can see, this ‘ABC’ Shift is incredibly simple and like many other Shifts, comes back to the ‘Stories’ we write. So the purpose of it is to help us identify the Story and then remove it, which then alters how we feel and behave. This ultimately removes part #2 (‘B’) from the equation so we can go straight from ‘A’ (what happens) to ‘C’ how we respond to what happens. And what is ‘A’? ‘A’ is just the bare facts.

EXAMPLE 2:

We now go back and do it again without the ‘B’:

A (Activating event / what happened): *I was reprimanded by my boss today.*

C (Consequence): *I made note of her concerns and looked for ways to address them.*

- *Emotions:* I was grateful for my bosses input
- *Actions:* I found a solution and fixed the problem

As you can see, this Shift doesn’t necessarily put you on the Bright Train (unless you spend time writing new stories), but it certainly addresses the issue, eliminates the negative feelings, and keeps you from ‘quitting your job’ for the ‘wrong reason’.

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## The Shift

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### The ABC’s of CBT

**This Shift is primarily used for helping yourself and others to:**

- Overcome Stress, Fear, Anxiety and Overwhelm
- Get off the ‘Dark Train’
- Problem Solve
- Eliminate Stories

This Shift requires an equal amount of sharing between both parties.

**Vocal style:** Calm

**Music:** Calm

#### Set Up

As a reminder, one of the first things you need to do when you begin is to find out what State you (or your subject) are in ‘now’ and where you wish to go. And you do this by asking the following simple questions:

- 1) How are you feeling today (mentally and emotionally)?
- 2) How would you *like* to be feeling?

If you decide on the ‘ABC’ Shift you will move to Step #1 below, however, if your subject is highly agitated, distracted or unable to fully relax for some reason, you may wish to combine this with another ‘calming’ Shift such as *Focused Breathing*.

#### Step #1 ‘A’

##### ‘Activating Event’ (What Happened)?

Ask your subject to tell you ‘what happened’. Explain to them that in this particular exercise it is imperative that they only tell you the most bare and basic facts. Ask them to try keeping their explanation of what happened down to one very short sentence. If they make it a longer sentence or even a paragraph, help them tighten it up by removing the ‘Story’ portion from their statement.

Remove anything that isn't a 'fact'. Remove their feelings, opinions, narratives and if possible even the adjectives. When they are finished it should sound like this: "My mom died today."; "I was fired yesterday."; "It is raining."

Make sure you both agree on the 'facts' before moving on.

Once you believe you understand the facts regarding 'what happened' move on to step #2 below:

**Step #2 'B'**  
**Belief (Interpretation)**

Ask them how they interpreted what happened...what 'Stories' did they tell themselves about what happened? Ask if they can keep their answer down to just a minute or two so you will have more time to focus on the solution.

Once you believe you understand what their interpretation is, repeat it back to them to make certain that you fully understand it. Paraphrase if possible.

After they confirm that you fully understand what their interpretation is, move on to Step #3 below:

**Step #3 'C'**  
**Consequence (Feelings & Actions)**

Ask your subject how the 'Beliefs' / 'Stories' / 'Interpretations' he or she has shared with you regarding 'what happened' make them feel and behave (or want to behave).

Once they explain, ask them if this might change if the 'Story' they have written didn't exist... if they eliminated item 'B' completely (where they interpreted 'what happened') and just looked at what they originally told you about 'what happened' with no Story or Interpretation at all... as if they had no opinion whatsoever...as if they are just *aware* of what happened.

Once they respond, ask them to describe feelings and actions that might be more appropriate and perhaps more positive when based on only facts (#1 / what happened).

In some cases you will see a significant Shift at this point, in other cases they may still have negative feelings but at least they will be more appropriately based. For instance, the difference between 'My mom died today.' and 'My mom died today and its all my fault.' are astronomical. They may still be sad either way but 'sad' isn't nearly as dark as 'sad and suffocating with guilt'.

Once they have shifted their state to this level, you might then consider employing an additional shift to see how much further you can take them toward entering the Bright Train or moving into Observation.

#### **Step #4 (Client Assignments)**

Before releasing your subject, recommend that in order to sustain and build upon the positive feelings you've created together, that they do the following:

- When they notice themselves writing negative Stories, stop and practice going straight from 'A' (what happened) to 'C' (feelings and actions) and skipping the interpretation in between.
- Ask them to get others in their life practicing this as well.

#### **Summary:**

All we need to do to reduce the 'drama' in our lives is to reduce the *interpretations* we make of the facts, and the *Stories* we write around them. And the more often we do this, (going straight from 'A' to 'C') the easier it becomes.

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## Assignments

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Take on as many of these assignments as possible (remember, it isn't what you *learn* that will help you master this process, it's what you *DO*).

#### **Continuing Assignments:**

Continue enrolling others into your Support Community.

#### **Continuing Assignments:**

Continue sharing the lessons you've learned thus far with as many members of your Support Community as possible.

#### **Continuing Assignments:**

Practice applying the 'Loving What Is' Shift to your own life throughout the week

#### **Continuing Assignments:**

Do the 'Loving What Is' *assignments* for yourself (as listed above under Client Assignments).

#### **Continuing Assignments:**

Practice applying the 'Loving What Is' Shift with members of your Support Community throughout the week

#### **Continuing Assignments:**

Continue applying the 'Focused Breathing' Shift to your own life throughout the week

#### **Continuing Assignments:**

Continue applying the 'Focused Breathing' Shift with members of your Support Community throughout the week

#### **Continuing Assignments:**

Practice applying the 'S.W.A.P.' Shift to your own life throughout the week

**Continuing Assignments:**

Do the ‘S.W.A.P.’ *assignments* for yourself (as listed above under **Step #5** Client Assignments).

**Continuing Assignments:**

Practice applying the ‘S.W.A.P.’ Shift with members of your Support Community throughout the week

**Continuing Assignments:**

Create your own EAWO Journal, use it not only for yourself but to show your clients what to create for themselves.

**Continuing Assignments:**

Practice Focused Breathing while using the phrase ‘Everything Always Works Out’ as you inhale, and ‘Letting Go, Letting Go, Letting Go’ as you exhale.

**Continuing Assignments:**

Practice applying the E.A.W.O Shift with members of your Support Community throughout the week.

**Continuing Assignments:**

- All week long ask yourself... What is GREAT about this?
- Share it with others all week long and help them find ‘what’s GREAT’ too!

**Continuing Assignments:**

Any time you find yourself (or others) looking at the worst case scenario do two things:

- 1) Keep going... once you get to the worst case scenario, ask what would be GREAT if that happened... and keep asking until you don’t care if the worst case occurs because the outcome will still be GREAT.
- 2) Once you’ve figured out what would be GREAT about the worst case scenario, ask what would be the *best* case scenario... what if the worst case never happened?

**Continuing Assignments:**

- All week long pay attention to whether you or others are on the Dark Train.
- When you see someone on the Dark Train (including yourself), practice helping them off.

**Continuing Assignments:**

Share the steps with your Support Community for getting YOU off the Dark Train so they can help YOU off the Dark Train in the future.

**Continuing Assignments:**

All week long pay attention to whether you or others are on the Dark Train or the Bright Train while seeing if you can then move onto the Observation Platform using these tools.

**Continuing Assignments:**

Share the steps with your Support Community for moving onto the Observation Platform.

**Assignment #1:**

All week long pay attention to whether you or others are responding to the facts ('A') or to your interpretation of the facts ('B'), and whenever possible, go back to the facts and toss the interpretations aside.

**Assignment #2:**

Teach Assignment #1 to others.

**Optional Assignment:**

'Think about your Thinking': For the next week, pay attention to your *conscious* 'thoughts, Stories and Self Talk', notice throughout the day the kind of things you *tell yourself, think about* and *focus on*, then experiment by replacing any *negative* 'Focus, Thought, Self Talk or Stories' with more *positive* ones and see how differently this makes you feel and behave.

**Optional Assignment:**

'Pay Attention to what you Pay Attention to ... Notice what you're Noticing': For the next week, be aware of what you are 'looking for' in your circumstances and in others, next, experiment by *looking for* new more positive things in each of these scenarios and see how this changes what you 'see' and consequently how you feel and behave.

**Optional Assignment:**

For the next week, pay attention to the difference between 'what is happening' and your *interpretation* of what is happening. See if you can remove your interpretations from the equation and see things for what they 'really' are. This is nearly an impossible feat, but just see how close you can come to pulling it off.

**Optional Assignment:**

For the next week, pretend that it's all just a game... and view each challenge that comes along as you would if it were only Hide-N-Seek, and would all work out in the end.

**Optional Assignment:**

For the next week, begin figuring out how you can eliminate the things in your life that wouldn't really matter if you knew you had only a year to live, and begin focusing more on the ones that *would* still matter.

**Optional Assignment:**

For the next week, refuse to look at anything negative that happens as being a catastrophe, see it instead as nothing more than an inconvenience... or better still as a catalyst for something wonderful.

**Optional Assignment:**

For the next week, do everything in your power to keep from judging others... accept that their behavior is appropriate for their perceptions and programs. And whenever you get

the opportunity, ASK them to describe ‘what they see and how they feel’ so you can too can see inside of *their* Glass Box. Make sure you paraphrase what you’ve heard.

**Optional Assignment:**

For the next week, any time you feel yourself slipping into fear or self-pity, pretend that you are a ‘wild animal’... then go about your day as they would and just refuse to give it another thought.

**Optional Assignment:**

For the next week, take every single dark or negative thought as it occurs and immediately replace it with a better, more positive one, and then act upon it.

**Optional Assignment:**

For the next week, practice replacing your vacation-hells with vacation-heavens. Then once you’ve affectively climbed aboard the Bright Train, practice returning to NOW and appreciating the moment.