

Which Permission Distortions do you use?

One of the keys to understanding self-defeating behavior patterns is to become aware of the self-talk message you are giving yourself just prior to engaging in self-defeating behavior. You will probably notice that you told yourself something that in some way gave yourself permission to do what you did. We label this type of thought a *Permission Distortion*. These are very powerful. It's almost as if the permission distortion functions as a lock on your behavior habit. Fortunately, when you change your thought, it unlocks the behavior habit and makes it is easy to change.

4 steps to change a thought habit

Step one: Calm yourself down – breath deep – become curiously aware of your thoughts

Step two: Calmly acknowledgment of urge – “Right now I want . . .”

Step three: Identify the permission distortion and challenge it by rehearse the truth that sets you free

Step four: Do what you have already made a firm decision to do.

Your homework is to candidly analyze the 2 or 3 most persistent permission distortions you tend to use over and over again. Dispassionately evaluate these and come up with the “bigger truth” that will set you free from your self-defeating behavior. To help you with this, please complete the following steps.

Step One: In the first column, list which specific patterns of behavior either gave you trouble during the week, or based upon your past history, are likely to give you trouble in the future.

Self-defeating behavior patterns:	Permission Distortions:	Truths that set you free:
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Step Two: In the middle column, list the thoughts that you use to give yourself permission to engage in the self-defeating behavior patterns. Attempt to recognize the distortion that obscures the truth about the genuine consequences or gives permission to engage in the self-defeating behavior patterns.

Step Three: For each permission distortion, use the last column to state what is more true instead. These should focus your mind on the truth about the actual consequences, on your responsibility for your own decisions, and on what you really want instead.