# Compassionate Assumption

1. Bring up a recent, mildly upsetting experience you had with a stranger and notice what you feel in your body.

2. What was your assumption about that experience?

3. Now imagine a scenario that would explain how that person's behavior is not about you. Make a list of situations that would help you to feel compassion toward that person.

4. If you have trouble making up a story that is helpful, imagine a painful childhood that person may have endured that may be influencing their behavior now.

5. Now bring up that recent experience again and notice if anything shifts for you.

# Generational Stories Exercise

First make a list of unexplained behaviors, fears, or patterns that you find yourself experiencing. For example, fear of water, fear of being put in jail, or any other fear you may have that does not appear to have an origin. Or it may be a pattern like trust issues, attraction to unhealthy relationships, or other seemingly inexplicable patterns. Then make up a story about what might have happened in previous generations that may have been passed down to you. Feel free to be as creative as you want to be in this exercise. For a worksheet version of this exercise, see the online tools at http://www.newharbinger.com/54988.

# Finding Your Answer: The Answer Questionnaire

I'd like to invite you to answer these questions without putting a lot of thought into your answers. Write your answers down. Alternatively, or in addition, you can have someone you are close to ask you these questions and you can ask them in return.

1. What are you most proud of?
2. What is difficult for you to do?
3. What do you do under stress?
4. How do you handle extreme pressure?
5. How are you with deadlines?
6. How do you get your way?
7. Is it easy for you to say no?
8. Do you cry easily?
9. What do you do when you are upset?
10. Do you cry in front of others?
11. Would you call yourself a rule follower?
12. How do you deal with conflict?
13. In an emergency situation, what are you likely to do?
14. Is it easy for you to ask for help?
15. Is it difficult for you to accept help?
16. How convincing are you?
17. What are you likely to do when someone tells you no?
18. How do you handle negative feedback or criticism?

As you look at your answers to these questions, what patterns are you noticing?

- How do you regulate your affect, going from upset to calmer?
- Are you good at calming yourself, or better at reaching out to others for comfort?
- How are you with personal power?
- Are you good at making things happen, or better at going with the flow and letting others make decisions?
- How are you with boundaries?
- Are you good at being firm, or good at being flexible and accommodating?
- How are you with verbal expressions?
- Are you good at verbal communication or better at listening? Are you able to easily put words to your emotions?
- How good are you at influencing others?
- Are you good at convincing others or better at noticing what other people want?

# Unspoken Agreements Exercise

Think of a relationship in which you feel there is an imbalance or something that you feel resentful about. Then answer the following questions in your journal.

- Write about the imbalance or the pattern you feel resentful about.
- Fill in the blanks of these sentences:
- I don't like it that _____.
- I am agreeing to _____.
- The unspoken agreement I have made is _____.
- The new agreement I would like to make is _____.
- Take a moment to write about your part of this pattern. How does it reflect your Answer? How is it something that you seem to do a lot in relationships? How is it something you are good at doing?
- If possible, write directly to the part of you who developed this pattern. Write about how that part of you has been helpful and give it appreciation.
- Now tell your Answer about the new agreement you would like to make with the person you're in relationship with, and how that new agreement will be helpful.
- Make a plan to talk to the person who is the other party of the unspoken agreement. If possible, take full responsibility for the pattern without trying to place blame on the other person. It is best to leave that—the matter of their responsibility and whether and how they'll take it—up to them.

# The Memory Under The Answer Exercise

In this section, you will be guided by questions that are intended to light up different parts of your brain. The questions will help highlight the pathway from the present to the unprocessed memories that fuel your problematic anger. This is to give you an idea of what EMDR therapy is like. We always start with present frustrations or events that have been disturbing. In SAFE EMDR, we add in some ways to help you get under the adaptive response of your Answer. These questions will help you get under the anger to find the hurtful experiences that fuel it.

On a piece of paper, or using the worksheet from the online tools at http://www.newharbinger.com/54988, write down the answers to the following questions:

1. What is a current frustration or limitation? You are welcome to choose one from the How Is That a Problem? exercise in chapter 6 or come up with one here.

2. When you experience the above, what is the longing? What do you want in that moment that you are not getting?

3. Identify a recent time when you did have a hope, even a glimmer of hope, of that longing being fulfilled, but it didn't work out.

4. Use one of the bilateral methods as you notice the disturbance of this longing.

Example:

1. What is the current frustration? *I get frustrated because I have to do everything myself.*

2. When you experience the above, what is the relational longing? (This needs to be about what you want from others that you are not getting and not just about you.) *I wish the people close to me would support me. I long for someone to support me.*

3. What is a recent time when you did have a hope of that longing being fulfilled but it didn't work out? *I recently invited my sisters on a trip and thought we would finally get together and they all backed out at the last minute.*

Whatever you put as the recent incident will be the experience that you can use to find the early experience. By asking about the longing, we are looking beneath the surface to the early hurtful experience. This will be much more effective than just going with the frustration or anger that is protecting that experience. You are able to connect and be aware of the sadness, fear, or loss that may be the root of your problematic anger.

# Memories and Lies (chart)

**Date/Time:**

**What was your experience?**

**SUD (0-10):**

**What was the memory or lie?**

**What is New and True?**

**What resources can you use?**

# Filling in the Blanks Exercise

Taking a step in the direction of the life you desire can be a very powerful experience. Review the Dreams List and The Future Movie exercises and see if you are noticing any patterns. For this exercise, I would like you to consider what "baby steps" may look like as you begin the journey to break these patterns and walk a more peaceful path. I encourage you to use your journal to write down the answers to these prompts. I also encourage you to answer these questions quickly, without putting a lot of thought into it. You are not committing to a contract; you are expanding the way you think. (For a worksheet version of this exercise, see the online tools at http://www.newharbinger.com/54988.)

1. A place I feel most at peace is _____.
2. A place I love to go is _____.
3. I feel most like myself when I am _____.
4. When I was a kid, I loved _____.
5. The subject I liked most in school was _____.
6. When I have free time, I like to _____.
7. Something I would love to learn about is _____.
8. My ideal environment is _____.
9. If it were easy, I would _____.
10. My ideal day is _____.
11. Time moves most quickly when I am _____.
12. If it were only up to me, I would _____.
13. If I weren't afraid, I would _____.
14. I feel most safe when I am _____.
15. I feel most loved when I am _____.

Now I would like to invite you to look over the answers to this and the other exercises in this chapter.

Do you see any patterns?

As you look through your responses, do you light up with some of them more than others?

What tiny steps can you take to bring more of what you want into your life? Take a moment to write about this in your journal.

# A Case Example: Joe's EMDR Experience (Chapter 9)

The following is a full account of the EMDR therapy experience of my client Joe, as he navigates phases 3–8 of the EMDR process. As a reminder, the touchstone memory we explore here is from when he was four years old and his older brothers convinced him to get into a toy box that had a lid, and then refused to let him out.

## Phase Three: Assessment

*Therapist:* When you bring up that experience with your brothers, what image represents the worst part?

*Client:* I see myself stuck in the toy box.

*Therapist:* What words go best with that memory that would express a negative belief about yourself now?

*Client:* "I'm stupid, I'm tricked."

*Therapist:* What would you rather believe about yourself right now?

*Client:* "I'm fine. It wasn't my fault."

*Therapist:* When you bring up that memory, how true do the words "I'm fine" feel to you right now on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is completely false and 7 is completely true?

*Client:* Three.

*Therapist:* When you bring up that image and the words "I'm stupid," what emotion do you feel now?

*Client:* Angry.

*Therapist:* On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being no disturbance and 10 being the highest disturbance you can imagine feeling, how disturbing does it feel to you right now?

*Client:* Ten.

*Therapist:* Where do you feel that in your body?

*Client:* My chest and face.

## Phase Four: Desensitization

("EM" is for eye movements. The therapist does the eye movements for approximately one minute or longer, then stops and asks the client what he is noticing.)

*Therapist:* I'd like to invite you to bring up that image, with the words "I'm stupid," then notice where you are feeling it in your body and follow my fingers. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* My stomach feels really tight.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* Now my throat feels tight.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I feel like my voice is weak, like it is difficult to talk.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* Feeling stuck.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm thinking of other times they locked me in places.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* They thought it was funny to trick me into doing things.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm feeling sad. I was just a little kid. They acted like they wanted to play with me and then tricked me.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* It made me not trust people.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm thinking about how this relates to my relationship with my wife. I feel like she tricked me.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm feeling angry.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I can feel my face burning and I feel tense.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* My hands are really tense like I want to punch someone.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm remembering when my brothers finally let me out and I was so mad I threw things at them.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm realizing that they were all hurt just like me. We were all doing the best we could in a bad situation.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm feeling calmer but sad for all of us.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm just thinking of how much I love my wife and I really want to get over this stuff.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm feeling much calmer in my body.

*Therapist:* When you go back to that original memory, what are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm remembering some of the fun things I did with my brothers. We had a lot of fights but some really good times too.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm thinking about my parents. They both had really difficult childhoods.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm feeling peaceful. I haven't felt this peaceful in a long time.

*Therapist:* When you bring up that original memory with your brothers, how disturbing does it feel to you right now on a scale of 0 to 10, 0 being no disturbance and 10 being the highest disturbance you can imagine?

*Client:* Right now it doesn't feel disturbing at all. I'd say a 0.

*Therapist:* Just notice that. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm feeling good. It feels like the disturbance is gone.

## Phase Five: Connecting with the Positive Networks

*Therapist:* Do the words "I'm fine" still fit, or is there another positive statement that feels more appropriate?

*Client:* "I'm fine" does feel true, but I think "I can trust myself" feels even better.

*Therapist:* Okay, great. When you bring up that memory and the words "I can trust myself," how true do those words feel to you on a scale of 1 to 7? One is not at all and 7 is very true.

*Client:* It feels true, a 7.

*Therapist:* Hold those together. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I feel really good. Like I'm able to trust myself and I can allow myself to know who to trust.

*Therapist:* Great. So on a scale of 1 to 7, how true does "I can trust myself" feel to you right now?

*Client:* Seven.

## Phase Six: Body Scan

*Therapist:* Now I'd like to invite you to bring up that memory and the words "I can trust myself." Then scan down your body, starting at the top of your head. Let me know if you are feeling any tension, tightness, or unusual sensations.

*Client:* I feel a little tension in my shoulders, but I'm not sure if it's related.

*Therapist:* Just notice that tension. [EM] What are you noticing now?

*Client:* I'm feeling more relaxed, the tension is gone.

*Therapist:* Would you like to scan down your body one more time and let me know what you are noticing?

*Client:* I just feel relaxed. I'm kind of amazed.

*Therapist:* Is there a movement or gesture that would help you connect with your new feeling of being able to trust yourself?

*Client:* [Putting palms upward on his legs] I feel like it is okay for me to be here.

## Phase Seven: Closure

*Therapist:* You've done some great work. Is there anything you feel you need before we stop?

*Client:* I'm just excited to see how I feel when I go home. I really feel calm.

*Therapist:* Great. So the processing we have done here may continue after you leave. Whatever happens, just notice it. You may notice new insights, dreams, or even other memories. You can write down what you are experiencing in your "Memories and Lies" log if you wish. In our next session, we can review whatever you experienced.

When the client comes back for the next session, Phase Eight: Reevaluation happens. In this phase of EMDR, the therapist is asking the client about what they noticed since the last session. The therapist should also ask specifically about the symptoms the client came into therapy to address. Then together, the client and therapist will look at other associated memories that may need to be the target memory for phases 3–7. Depending on the client's history, there can be just a few or many memories that are targeted in phases 3–7.