

# Introduction

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## Charting A New Course

Over 110 hours of motivating, original, group-tested exercises for reinforcing cognitive processes for responsible decision-making and genuine responsible lifestyles.

*Charting A New Course* is designed for use with adolescents and adults in any setting and teachers and facilitators who want help implementing the Corrective Thinking process. Included for the busy facilitator and teacher are:

- summaries of the Time-bomb Tactics and Barriers in Thinking,
- an objective for each exercise that you can share aloud with your group,
- tips for how much of the exercise you can expect group members to spend working independently and quietly and how much time you can expect to spend interactively, and
- specific directions for each of the 110 exercises.

The 9 Thinking Barriers and corresponding 9 Steps to Responsible Thinking are excellent tools for evaluating and reinforcing pro-social, cognitive processes and behavior. Utilizing the interactive exercises as you track the basics of Corrective Thinking says to your students and clients that you really care about the way they learn naturally – within the realm of genuine, individual choice, and mutual respect.

The exercises are provided to maximize learning and as a way for an astute teacher or facilitator to help students and clients progress in choosing thought processes for better lifestyles. Rather than being ‘time-fillers,’ these exercises make important contributions to the learning environment. At the beginning of each chapter is a brief overview. Following are a series of exercises that can be utilized in any order or combination in a classroom, group setting, or one-on-one session where ‘time-on-task’ is highly valued.

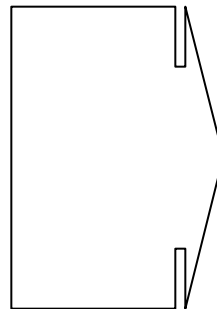
*Charting A New Course* exercises are most effective when used for evaluating one or more of the Barriers in Thinking while reinforcing the Corresponding Correctives for thinking after they have already been thoroughly explained and taught by you. The overview at the beginning of each chapter should provide the framework you need to develop a thorough presentation explaining each Thinking Barrier and corresponding Thinking Corrective to your group members.

**Only the exercise pages carrying this symbol,**

### ✦ **EXERCISE**

may be photocopied and then only for use as handout material for use with clients or students served by the purchasing agency, organization, or individual. It may not be photocopied for use outside of the purchasing entity. Overviews, narratives, instructions and any other text or graphic contained within *Charting A New Course*, or its supplemental volumes, may not be photocopied whether in part or in whole.

**Exercises are separated by instructions contained within an ‘arrow box’ that looks like this:**



Many exercises are more than one page in length. Look for arrow boxes to signal the beginning and end of exercises.

(continued next page)

Inside each arrow box set of instructions you will find:

- the approximate time required for the exercise.
- Next, you will see an estimate of group involvement that measures how much of the exercise time could be dedicated to individual independent work and how much time could be dedicated to group interactive work. Both of these are estimates. Facilitators should make adjustments according to their needs and the needs of their group.
- You will also find selected quotes interspersed throughout. Some of these quotes you may find appropriate to share with your group members. Most of them, however, are included simply to encourage and spur your thinking as a facilitator.

For more specific guidelines on facilitating a Corrective Thinking group see the Facilitator's Guide, *Blueprint for Change* and *Corrective Thinking Sessions from Start to Finish*.

Our intent is that your experience with these exercises will result in effective, cognitive benefits for your students, clients, and other group participants.

**A harmful truth  
is better than a  
useful lie.**

# Time-Bomb Tactics

## To Avoid Responsibility and Accountability

Time-bomb tactics are the irresponsible person's closest ally. As long as their tactics are successful irresponsible individuals are able to dodge accountability and justify their behavior.

To irresponsible minds tactics serve as substitutes for right and wrong -- where 'right' is defined by them as 'getting by,' and 'wrong' means getting caught.

Time-bomb tactics prevent progress and reinforce regress or relapse into deeper levels of irresponsibility, crime, and substance abuse. They block change and nurture harmful and destructive lifestyles while promoting continuance in barriers in thinking.

Like a drug, tactics produce false feelings of self-satisfaction, and escalating levels of excitement, aggression, and power. These combinations serve to override any fear of doing the forbidden or experiencing consequences. They also make it difficult, if not impossible most of the time, to reason with individuals who are using tactics.

While thinking barriers function generally in pairs or triplicate, time-bomb tactics are different in that all 19 of them may be launched together as fearsome weapons from a well-kept arsenal.

When tactics go unchecked irresponsible minds interpret it as the 'silent approval' of others and fail to recognize their fault, the harm they have caused, and their need to change. On the other hand, when tactics are challenged it is often a signal to irresponsible persons that they should spar more vigorously with the 'agent of change.' They often shift their minds into battle gear thinking,

“How dare you question me. You're nothing but an enemy to me. You're not helping me at all; you're only in my way. You asked for it, this means war, and I'm going to win at all costs.”

Part of this 'self-talk' is their strategy for maintaining an all-powerful view of themselves and of building themselves up in order to gain control and put distance

## **Charting A New Course**

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between themselves, the prospect of change, and improving relationships with others.

It is the facilitator's responsibility to disarm irresponsible individuals and not allow their tactics to wear them down, burn them out, or rally other irresponsible individuals to their side. This is not as easy to do as it is to understand because time-bomb tactics are the essence of survival to irresponsible individuals. They will not lay down their only means of combat without a struggle.

The ability to effectively interrupt tactics takes time and practice to build, but it is one skill that the 'agent of change' cannot afford to be without.

A skillful, seasoned facilitator can interrupt tactics repeatedly until irresponsible individuals are worn down and at a point where they would rather give up their negative tactic patterns and pursue positive patterns of change.

### **Identifying Time-bomb Tactics**

Time-bomb tactics can be broken into 3 categories that make them easier to recognize and identify as follows:

#### **SHIFTS BLAME OR FOCUS**

1. Attempts to confuse
2. Points out others' faults
3. Builds self up by putting others down
4. Makes a big scene over minor issues
5. Accuses others of misunderstanding
6. Uses anger as a weapon to control others
7. Argues over 'words' to avoid the real issue
8. Introduces irrelevant material (racial/gender issues)
9. Puts others on the defense by degrading/ embarrassing

#### **LIES AND DECEIVES**

10. Deliberately vague
11. Avoids duties and obligations (by saying "I forgot")
12. Tells others what they want to hear, not the whole truth
13. Omits facts, distorts truth, and reveals only what pleases self
14. Agrees without commitment (says 'yes' without meaning it)

## IGNORES OBLIGATIONS

15. Does not pay attention
16. Chooses only what is self-gratifying
17. Refuses to communicate or participate – silence
18. Minimizes behavior (“I just got into a little trouble”)
19. Claims to be ‘changed’ after doing the right thing only once

Tactics indicate a selfish motive and a choice to be non-compliant. Let’s review each of the time-bomb tactics and some of their common traits in the order they are listed above.

## SHIFTS BLAME OR FOCUS

1. **Attempts to confuse:** A variety of methods may be used in an attempt to confuse others and avoid the real issue. They may try to cover the truth by emphasizing other information or reinterpreting an event. Or, they may try to focus in on a specific minor situation to avoid looking at the more incriminating big picture or visa versa. Attempts to confuse also come in the forms of creating a sense of urgency or busyness, changing the subject, or speaking fast or slow. Regardless of the method employed, you know this tactic is in operation when you begin to sense a bit of ‘confusion’ regarding whether or not you are discussing the same matter or the matter you initially began to discuss.
2. **Points out others faults:** Tactics generally begin with attempts to point out the inadequacies of those in authority. This way the irresponsible person also learns to recognize the various vulnerabilities of those in charge so that they can take advantage of them and use this knowledge to gain the upper hand in the future. It is also a means whereby irresponsible persons avoid personal analysis and the analysis of others.
3. **Builds self up by putting others down:** Putting others down builds the irresponsible persons’ image of themselves as superior and unique. When working with authorities, irresponsible persons often subtly cushion their mockery and put-downs in order to avoid being too offensive or causing more problems for themselves. So, you may want to watch for this initial tactic carefully.

4. **Makes a big scene over minor issues:** When an individual makes a big scene over minor issues it is an attempt to change the focus to something other than the situation at hand. Above all it is an attempt to remove the pressure from oneself and place it somewhere else. It can be observed in many ways but some of the more common ways are discrediting exercises or programs, belittling others, or pitting authorities against one another.
5. **Accuses others of misunderstanding:** One of the quickest ways for an irresponsible individual to avert attention from himself is to accuse the one holding him responsible of ‘not understanding.’ This tactic immediately shifts the focus to those in authority and puts them on the defense and in a position of having to justify themselves. This tactic may be accompanied by a reinforcement tactic whereby the irresponsible person points to others who *do understand* and who *do agree* with him. Again, this puts the confronting person further on the defense. There are many ways irresponsible individuals can try to build a case for being ‘misunderstood’ but some of the more typical ways are by claiming you don’t understand my race, my gender, my generation, my background, etc.
6. **Uses anger as a weapon to control others:** An irresponsible individual may use anger as a show of force and to intimidate others. When it works it is a quick and easy way to avoid accountability or uncomfortable situations.
7. **Argues over ‘words’ to avoid the real issue:** Irresponsible persons often quibble over words and their meaning or use in an attempt to avoid the real issue or to win an argument. They attach definitions of their own making to words and change these definitions as a suits them, often in mid-argument.
8. **Introduces irrelevant material (racial/gender issues):** Interjecting irrelevant points or issues is a common tactic that comes in many forms and is sometimes accompanied by tactic # 5, accusations of misunderstanding. Rather than claiming to be misunderstood this tactic may be used as an excuse or attempt to gain sympathy rather than be held accountable.
9. **Puts others on the defense by degrading/embarrassing:** This tactic is used to get others off the irresponsible person’s back by embarrassing or humiliating them.

## LIES AND DECEIVES

- 10. Deliberately vague:** Maintaining a level of ambiguity is the irresponsible person's way of putting distance between himself and the facts. By being vague they are buying time while they gather information about the reactions of others so they can edit and build their story accordingly. By being vague they can misrepresent their involvement and conceal activities.
- 11. Avoids duties and obligations (by saying, "I forgot"):** An easy way to avoid obligations is simply to say, "I forgot." Irresponsible individuals are quick to remember others' obligations to them but quicker to forget their own obligations to others. This is because they are not interested in maintaining true relationships only those relationships that serve their selfish wants. Most of their relationships center on dominating and controlling others for their own interests. They do not understand cooperative relationships.
- 12. Tells others what they want to hear not the whole truth:** It's easy for irresponsible individuals to quickly determine what others want to hear and then tell them just that. This way they do not have to explain themselves, they do not have to face up to reality, they do not have to be accountable, and they do not have to meet obligations.
- 13. Omits facts, distorts truth, and reveals only what pleases self:** Irresponsible individuals whittle at the truth and mold it according to their advantage. They believe they know what's important and that is only what makes them look good and anything else should be downplayed, eliminated, or transformed to their favor. They may lie and later deny lying as a way to avoid consequences and convey a truthful impression. Confusing others is a big part of this game and it helps irresponsible thinkers feel superior and successful.
- 14. Agrees without commitment (says 'yes' without meaning it):** One of the easiest ways for irresponsible people to remove themselves from uncomfortable situations is to agree without meaning it. It is also a convenient way of appearing compliant and 'getting in good' with authorities. This tactic is difficult to interrupt because it is not easy to tell whether a person who agrees is being deceitful. It is one tactic that usually must develop a pattern before it can be interrupted.

### Ignores Obligations

**15. Does not pay attention:** Acting preoccupied or being inattentive is a means to avoid dealing with situations or issues the irresponsible person considers boring. Often these individuals are totally uninterested in what others have to say because they would rather think about their 'more exciting' selfish interests. They will display some evidence of outward interest such as nodding or intermittently saying "Uh-huh" or they may pretend not to understand when being held accountable.

**16. Chooses only what is self-gratifying:** Irresponsible individuals tend to direct conversations toward their interests and try to rally others around similar interests. This is a means of gaining control and establishing some leadership besides just getting what they want. This way irresponsible individuals gain the benefit of the doubt while ignoring anything unrelated to their own personal interests.

**17. Refuses to communicate or participate – silence:** Silence is a means of control and is used to maintain privacy or secrecy. Silence is often an inverted display of anger and a way of wearing others out. Irresponsible people avoid disclosure and are able to control situations without making commitments simply by maintaining levels of silence. Common phrases that accompany the silent tactic are "No comment" "I don't know, don't ask me," "I can't explain it, it just happened," "Nothing happened," "I've drawn a blank."

**18. Minimizes behavior ("I just got into a little trouble"):** This tactic is one that irresponsible persons first use to convince themselves before employing it with others. They begin by downplaying the situation as far less serious than reality using such statements as, "I just got into a little trouble," "I was just sowing some wild oats," "everyone does it," "it was a mistake," "it was just a joke," "I didn't mean anything by it."

When irresponsible persons begin to use this tactic with others they may say things like, "haven't you ever pulled a prank on someone?" Or, "don't tell me you've never broken the speed limit." Or, "come on, you were a kid once."

**19. Claims to be 'changed' after doing the right thing only once:** Irresponsible persons are poor judges of their own progress or lack of progress. They often convince themselves that they have changed simply because they have done something right once. They also may refer to their 'one-time' example of doing something right over and over again in order to convince others they have changed. This tactic is used to avoid daily effort and restrictions.

## Are You a Tactics Addict?

Time: 60 Minutes

Involvement: Independent 30% Interactive 70%

Objective: Today we will begin learning about our tactics and how much we rely on them to get our way without considering the damage they bring on ourselves and others.

### Instructions:

1. Ask group members to circle the number of each statement that applies to them.
2. Ask them to write the circled numbers on the back of their handout and write a description of an incident where they were using this thinking and tactic.
3. Have each group member share their answers with the group. The group should think of corrective alternatives that each person could have applied rather than the tactic.

◆ **Exercise**

**Are You a Tactics Addict?**  
(Circle the numbers that apply to you)

1. Others don't understand, they're missing the whole point.
2. I'm a good person, better than most. They're the ones that need to change.
3. I make decisions based on my gut-feelings.
4. I can out argue anyone just to get others off my back
5. I stick to the "criminal code" of covering for others so they'll return the favor.
6. I trust those I can use. My connections help me get my way.
7. I'm silent because it's my right; I've got secrets that are nobody's business; I lie because I don't want you to know my intentions.
8. I'll cooperate and work only with those who give me what I want.
9. I'm unpredictable, moody, and often late. I call the shots.
10. I hold grudges, staying angry for a long time and my anger is intense and daily so others learn fast that they better look out.
11. I have no spiritual interests, only my own.
12. I blame others for situations I created.
13. I over-react and intimidate others in order to be sure I get my way.
14. I have little or no difficulty—on my job, in my relationships, at home, or with my moods—I make them all work to my advantage.
15. I have no qualms with myself. I like me just the way I am.
16. I have no feeling or concern for others, it's too time consuming and takes too much energy. It's enough watching out for #1, and that's me.
17. I don't reflect on my mistakes or others' opinions of me.
18. I only remember what I already believe. That's all that's important anyway.
19. I proved it to you once already. I'm a good person. Can't you see?

My Tactics

Time: **120 Minutes 2 Group Sessions**

Involvement: Independent 50% Interactive 50%

Objective: Today we will identify our tactics and work toward correctives to eliminate them.

Instructions:

1. Allow approximately ½ an hour for group members to independently complete exercise #1.
2. Have the group individuals complete exercises 2 and 3 then discuss them as a group. Keep a record of their responses on a flip chart or the board.
3. Repeat the same procedure with exercises 4, 5 and 6.

◆ **Exercise**

My Tactics

1. Look over the Time Bomb Tactics. List the number of each tactic below and the time when you last used that tactic and on whom.

Tactic

When Last Used?

On Whom?





# Fear of 'Losing Face'

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## Thinking Barrier 6

"Fear of losing face" is a thinking pattern that seeks to protect a false image a person has created for himself. This is a thinking error that stems from pride. Pride and fear may at first appear at odds, but pride is actually seeing oneself dishonestly or "not as you really are." It creates a fear that others will see through you and realize that you are not all you have led them to believe.

Irresponsible thinkers fear being "found out" or being thought of as less than perfect. When this thinking barrier is operating, fear becomes a negative four-letter word. Any emotion of fear that occurs is considered potentially humiliating and must be hidden or eliminated. Feeling doubt, concern, apprehension, embarrassment, anxiety, or dread cannot be tolerated or admitted by those engaged in fear of 'losing face.'

Irresponsible thinkers fear many things, but they are usually inappropriate, imagined, or unhealthy things. They fear not getting what they want, not getting their own way, they fear being insulted or embarrassed, they fear being caught or losing their 'connections' that reinforce their destructive behavior, and they fear facing up to the harm and injury they have caused. They fear the prospects of change but, above all, they fear their fear the most.

Admitting fear is viewed as a weakness and runs contrary to the irresponsible thinkers' desire to have control and power. They don't want to admit their fear (unless it will serve to help them avoid accountability).

Oddly enough, those involved in fear of 'losing face' often battle their fears by trying to intimidate or make others afraid of them. It is manifest in behavior like boasting, bragging, covering for others, and use of abrasive aggression and anger. It is a base method of intimidation designed to spark fear and subservience in others.

Those engaged in these methods mistakenly refer to it as gaining "respect." It is another way of raising the value of themselves in their own eyes so they don't feel so ordinary and afraid.

Filled with their own sense of paranoia, these people trust no one. They are suspicious and afraid that others are 'out to get' them. Yet, irresponsible thinkers are offended when others don't trust them.

In their refusal to admit fear or acknowledge guilt those involved in this thinking barrier eventually develop a callus, hard, and inoperable conscience. Tactics that lead to a callus, inoperable conscience are minimizing, justifying or rationalizing of behavior. But the strongest conscience destroyer is repetitious patterns of deviant behavior. The more irresponsible behavior is repeated the more callous one becomes to hearing their conscience and the conscience gradually becomes hard and inoperable.

Once the conscience is hardened, little remains to deter hurtful behavior. This point is referred to as cut-off because the irresponsible thinker has literally cut himself off from his conscience. Once this has occurred it is a tedious uphill process to soften and rebuild one's conscience.

Indicators of Fear of 'losing face'

1. Fears insult, fears getting caught, and fears being held accountable.
2. Admits fears only when using them to avoid consequences.
3. Does not utilize healthy fears or conscience as guides.
4. Is fearful of change.
5. Uses intimidation to maintain power, to excuse negative behavior, and to avoid being ordinary.
6. Views things in extremes, i.e. (right or wrong, black or white; no middle ground.)
7. Feels worthless when not getting their way.
8. Lives a life of avoidance. (Avoiding responsibility, change, effort, and conformity.)
9. Points out fear in others, makes fun of it, and takes advantage of it.
10. Fails to consider the harm and injury done to others.
11. Is suspicious of others.

**Corrective Thinking: COURAGE OVER FEAR**

Fear, in its proper perspective, can be a natural, healthy, and good emotion. There are healthy fears like fear of danger, fear of hurting others, fear of going to jail, or fear of other negative consequences.

Fear plays an important and positive role in decision-making and responsible living. The key to whether a fear is healthy or unhealthy is to know what is stimulating the fear, whether or not it real or imagined, and how to respond.

Once irresponsible thinkers begin moving toward positive lifestyles, it is natural for them to have a healthy fear; such as the fear of returning to their past lifestyle of irresponsibility and the fear of hurting others.

In other words, those moving away from irresponsible thinking and toward responsible thinking:

1. Ask for input,
2. Expect to be held accountable,
3. Do not feel “put-down” by feedback or accountability,
4. Have realistic expectations of themselves and others,
5. Trusts others for help,
6. Live without intimidating others
7. Rebuild their conscience and respond to it.

### **“Fear of Fear”**

Time: 60 minutes

Involvement: Independent 20% Interactive 80%

Objective: Irresponsible Thinkers fit into one of two categories:

1) Fear of admitting any fear, and 2) Using fear as an excuse for not changing. They lack the understanding of how to use fear as a healthy motivation for change.

Today we will begin to admit and face our fears and turn them into motivators for change.

#### Instructions:

1. Ask individuals to consider the Fear of Fear Columns and place themselves in one of the two columns that best describe them. Have them check which statements are true of them in their particular column.
2. Ask individuals to give specific personal examples regarding each of the statements they chose explaining who, where, what, when, and how?
3. Ask them to list their current thoughts about each personal example on the back of their handout. Next, have them write the direct opposite of each of those thoughts.
4. Discuss their thoughts and what it would take to follow through with the opposite thoughts they listed. Have them commit to follow through with one of those opposite thoughts and report back their results in the next group meeting.

◆ **EXERCISE**

**Fear of Fear**

**Column 1--No Fear:**

- deny any fear
- make no new decisions
- corrode away all deterrents and conscience
- minimize - "hey I'm only doing what a real man would do"
- rationalize - "I'm not going to be one of those boring people"
- justify - "I must be #1"
- super-optimistic - "I can do whatever I want"
- nobody tells me what to do
- nobody puts me down
- I'm nobodies dummy

**Column 2--Disabled by Fear:**

- allow unhealthy fears to keep you from doing anything
- make no new decisions
- feel powerless
- feel sorry for myself
- can't do it
- Things will never change
- don't have a choice
- don't have a chance, they will put me down

### **Change**

Time: 60 minutes

Involvement: Independent 20% Interactive 80%

Objective: In this meeting we will explore what it takes to establish a plan for change.

Instructions:

1. Ask individuals to share their answers to the first question and record those answers on a flip chart or the board. Whenever you hear a negative statement about 'change' ask the individual if he/she is open to another way of looking at it. Then ask him/her to state the opposite of the negative statement and include that on the list.
2. Repeat the above procedure with questions 2 and 3.
3. Have them independently develop a plan for changing their thinking using the guidelines on the second handout sheet. Then discuss their answers as a group.





## **Fears and Other Hindrances**

Time: 60 minutes

Involvement: Independent 30% Interactive 70%

Objective: Today we will learn how to tell the difference between healthy and unhealthy fears and how to identify our own fears.

Instructions:

1. List your fears according the instructions and discuss the difference between healthy and unhealthy fears.
2. In the section titled 'Other Hindrances,' write beneath each statement the opposite of what it means. Discuss.



◆ **Exercise**

**Other Hindrances**

1. I think I'm better than others are. I am not like ordinary people.
  
2. I brag about myself to build myself up in others' eyes.
  
3. I say and do whatever it takes to make others believe I have good reasons for what I do. I believe if a situation turns out the way that I want, it doesn't really matter what I did to make it happen.
  
4. I refuse to back down from a challenge or to apologize.
  
5. I don't like to be wrong and I like others to think I know everything.
  
6. I control others as much as possible. I need to be in control. I don't want people to know I'm vulnerable or that I'm less than perfect.