Tackling
The Tactics
Workbook

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We gratefully acknowledge the groundbreaking work and research of Dr. Yochelson and Dr. Stanton E. Samenow which spurred the research and development of the nineteen tactics addressed in this workbook.

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How to Use Your Tackling The Tactics Workbook

Your Tackling The Tactics Workbook offers relevant exercises to help you stop using tactics and to stimulate responsible thinking. In addition, this workbook includes journal pages so you can keep a record of your thinking and behavior which will help you tackle your tactics and stop them.

How you use this workbook and whether you STOP YOUR USE OF TACTICS is up to you--it’s your choice. You may want to set aside a regular time for working with your Tackling The Tactics workbook. After all, a large part of tackling the tactics means having a routine that you follow regularly. Your chances of success are much greater when you choose to open this workbook at least three times each week and complete one of the exercises or journal pages.

Inside your workbook you will find more than enough exercises and journal pages for an entire year of weekly use. You can do the exercises and fill-in your journal pages in any order and at your own pace. You could complete one exercise and two journal pages per week or you could complete two exercises and one journal page per week or any combination you like. The important thing is to stick with a weekly routine.

You might want to start by looking over the Table of Contents on the previous pages to see what topics interest you most. You can also check the Table of Contents when you are having difficulty and want to find an exercise that may help you sort things out.

The main thing to remember is to USE your workbook! It will give you an extra edge to TACKLING YOUR TACTICS, especially when things get tough.

How to Keep Your Tackling My Tactics Thinking Journal

Journaling is one of the most useful tools for Tackling Your Tactics. It keeps you aware of your thoughts and what direction your thinking is heading. Keeping your journal will give you a daily record of your progress. It will help you avoid winding up back where you started, scratching your head, asking yourself, “How did I end up in a situation like this again?” If you do go back to your old thinking and using tactics, your journal will show how you made your choices, but even more important, it will help you get back on track. When you keep an honest journal regularly, chances are you won’t go back again. Instead you will continue moving forward and you will Stop the Tactics that have kept you from moving forward.

When using your journal, write honestly about your thinking and behavior. A key to success is never to go more than a few days without recording in your journal or completing one of the exercises. On most of the right hand pages of this book you’ll find your journal. The next pages explain how to use your journal.
The first item you record in your Tackling My Tactics Journal is how open or closed you are that day to tackling your tactics and stopping them forever.

**Tackling My Tactics**

On a scale of 1 to 10 mark how open or closed you are to tackling your tactics and stopping them today.

1 = completely closed  10 = wide open.

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Next, explain what thinking you are experiencing that day that leads you to be open or closed to tackling your tactics and stopping them forever.

In your thinking journal below, explain your mark on the scale above.

**Thinking Journal**  
**Date**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Next, record any tactics you used that day. You will leave this portion of your journal blank when you do not use any tactics at all that day.

List any tactics you used today and the situation. In the second column write what you will do different to stop the tactics next time.

**Tactics I Used Today**  
**Next Time I Will**

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
The last section of your Tackling My Tactics Journal is for keeping a record of any positive actions you put forth that day. Did you stop yourself from using tactics at some point? Did you help someone else or give others a reason to feel good about themselves? Make a note of any of your positive actions in this part of your journal.

Write about your positive action today. Did you stop yourself from using tactics? Did you help someone?

**My Positive Actions Today**

________________________________________

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Are You A Tactic Addict?

The concept of “addictions” used to be reserved only for chronic users of alcohol or drugs, but in a culture that promotes self-indulgence the list has grown to include any number of desires that one has developed an inordinate affection for or illegitimate use of.

Any one of us can be overcome and ruled by anything we desire too strongly. From caffeine to nose drops, weightlifting to gambling, watching TV to sleeping disorders, the list of potential addictions is limited only by our imagination and personal desires. We have all had experience with unruly desires that take extra effort to tame and keep under control. Only when those unruly desires go unchecked, and become a way of life, do we call it an addiction.

Even though the list of addictions continues to grow, the symptoms that indicate addictive behavior remain the same.

The common denominator of most addictions is that they stimulate a change in our immediate experience and they usually do so quickly, working within seconds or minutes rather than days or weeks. The sought after result is an immediate change in our experience. We may feel rewarded, satisfied, more successful, more powerful, less timid, more alert, less pressured, more calm, more content, smarter, sexier, or just plain better.

This workbook focuses on 19 tactics we call “Time-Bomb” Tactics because when they become a way of life they lead to explosive situations that cause harm to others and ourselves. Regardless of the circumstances and reasons, the goal of tactic users is always the same--to bring about a change of experience quickly. When tactics are operating successfully they stimulate a mild to strong bodily experience--usually some sense of satisfaction and/or an adrenaline increase. Using tactics can make us feel more on top of our circumstances, more satisfied, or more powerful, but most important to the tactic user is that tactics steer things in the direction they want them to go and quickly.

Using tactics is common to all of us at times and in varying degrees; it is simply part of human experience. The problems are brought on by continued “use.” As with any form of use or misuse, as the “using” progresses, the trouble it brings starts out as minor and gradually expands to very serious problems.

Although voluntary, tactic users are bent toward getting a desire met and using tactics helps them achieve quick results. Notice how a pattern of progression emerges below.

Use--Misuse--Abuse--A Way of Life

Tactics are used as:
- a way of getting what we want
- a way to avoid getting what we don’t want
- a way to get by with as little effort as possible
- a way to get others to do things for us
- a way to put forward a better image of ourselves than what is real
- a way of life--an addiction

What “feels like” a harmless way to gain our desires, gradually becomes a way of life that seems to be “working for us,” moving us closer to our goals. But as the pounding wave of each tactic pushes us closer to the shores of our selfish desires, the undertow eventually catches us, dragging us deeper and deeper back into a sea of problems. We end up drowning in the consequences of our own troubles and taking others down with us.
The only way to avoid the danger is to discipline ourselves to STOP using tactics.

As with any addiction, users of tactics perceive their “using” as a more or less harmless means of “making life work for them.” In reality, their “using” is only dragging them further and further away from reality and further and further into a lifestyle of ongoing negative patterns and problems.

Blinded by Tactics

In this workbook as we consider how to diminish the use of tactics we must be careful not to compartmentalize. We will not be working simply to change in one area of life, we are dealing with an entire way of living. It is vain to think, “I will quit using tactics at home with my family, but I will continue to use tactics on the job or at school.” Use of tactics is progressive. Even if you are only a mild user of tactics, if not halted completely it is likely your using will progress to a lifestyle that hurts others and yourself more and more.

One of the dangers of using tactics is that we become blinded and begin believing our own tactic propaganda. REAL responsible change and using tactics are incompatible. Like oil and water repel each other, positive change can NOT take place while tactics are in use. Hence, the tactic user who continues to learn about the effects of “using” while bypassing the steps necessary to STOP, will grow in knowledge but will not make progress in actual change.

Blinded by their own technique, tactic users may think they are in the process of change when, in reality, they are only moving further and further away from it. When they “use tactics” they not only deceive others, they deceive themselves.

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 choice. 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
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
Before doing the exercises beginning on page 17, you will need to become familiar with the tactics associated with *Shifts Blame or Focus* listed below. If you have recently read these already in the preceding introduction you may skip this part and go to the exercises on page 17.

**SHIFTS BLAME OR FOCUS**

1. **Attempts to confuse:** Confusing others is one way tactic users avoid facing the real issue. Tactic users may try to cover the truth by emphasizing other information or reinterpreting an event. Or, they may try to focus on a minor side-issue to avoid looking at the more incriminating big picture. 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, 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. Confusing others is a big part of the tactic user’s game and it helps them feel superior and successful.

When being questioned or held accountable the tactics user may start talking about last night’s news or sport or anything other than the initial topic because changing the subject changes the focus and takes the pressure off.

2. **Points out others faults:** Tactics often emerge with pointing out the inadequacies of those in authority. In the process the tactic user learns to recognize the vulnerabilities of those in charge so that they can take advantage of them at a later date. It is also a means to divert scrutiny and analysis away from the tactic user and onto those in charge.

Pointing out other’s faults is a desperate tactic. It is an attempt to hide from being exposed for who and what the tactic user really is by drawing attention to a mistake or flaw of another.

Being critical of others and putting them down for the way they look or dress, how they walk or talk or even how they teach is simply another way to divert attention from the tactic users own faults or to engage others in forming a coalition against an authority.

3. **Builds self up by putting others down:** Putting others down builds the tactic users’ image of themselves as superior and unique. When working with authorities, tactic users often subtly cushion their mockery and put-downs in order to avoid being too offensive or causing more problems for themselves.

Sometimes tactics users use this tactic to make themselves look good or to take credit away from someone who deserves it because they don’t want others to look better than themselves.

4. **Makes a big scene over minor issues:** When tactic users make a big scene over minor issues 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 tactic user 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 tactic user 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.

Sometimes the accusation of misunderstanding is reversed and the tactics user claims to be the one who misunderstood. “Oh, you wanted me to do THAT, I thought you wanted this. You mean you wanted it TODAY?” It’s easy for tactics users to claim they got “mixed-up” about something when they really just wanted to avoid it.

6. Uses anger as a weapon to control others: A tactics user may use anger as a show of force to intimidate others. It is a quick and easy way to avoid accountability or uncomfortable situations. Plus, the rise in anger that climaxes in victory produces a “rush”, a sense of power and victory, that the tactic user may enjoy and seek to achieve again and again.

7. Argues over ‘words’ to avoid the real issue: Tactic users 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 it 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 tactic user’s back by embarrassing or humiliating them.
Matching

Review the list of 9 tactics under *Shifts Blame or Focus* on the previous pages. See if you can match the tactics to each situation below. Place the number(s) of the tactics that fit the situation after each description. There may be more than one tactic per situation.

1. When Chuck is late for work for the fourth day in a row he says, “Well at least I don’t break the law and drive over the speed limit.

2. Martin is late turning in his assignment again. When the teacher marks his paper down for being late, Martin reminds her that teachers don’t always get everything done on time and nobody marks them down.

3. When Sam’s brother tries to keep him from doing something he shouldn’t do, Sam says, “You just want me to be perfect like you.”

4. Because Ulysses is the editor of the school paper he thinks he should not have to do any work. He says, “I’m the boss. I can do what I want.”
Use--Misuse--Abuse--
A Way of Life--Shifts Blame or Focus

1. Next to the tactics listed below, write the number of each of the irresponsible excuses you use to keep using each tactic. You may list more than one excuse for each tactic.

My Irresponsible Excuses for Using Tactics:

1. a way of getting what I want
2. a way to avoid getting what I don’t want
3. a way to get by with as little effort as possible
4. a way to get others to do things for me
5. a way to put forward a better image of myself
6. a way of life

Shifts Blame or Focus

______ Attempts to confuse
______ Points out others’ faults
______ Builds self up by putting others down
______ Makes a big scene over minor issues
______ Accuses others of misunderstanding
______ Uses anger as a weapon to control others
______ Argues over ‘words’ to avoid the real issue
______ Introduces irrelevant material (racial/gender issues)
______ Puts others on the defense by degrading/embarrassing

2. Next to each tactic above write a new responsible reason to stop using it.
Tackling My Tactics

On a scale of 1 to 10 mark how open or closed you are to tackling your tactics and stopping them today. 1 = completely closed 10 = wide open.

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List any tactics you used today and the situation. In the second column write what you will do different to stop the tactics next time.

**Tactics I Used Today**

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Write about your positive action today. Did you stop yourself from using tactics? Did you help someone?

**My Positive Actions Today**

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Sample

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Who’s to Blame?

1. Are you usually to blame for your problems or is someone else the cause of your problems? Explain.

2. List the 2 main problems you have been faced with this week.
   
   1.
   
   2.

3. Whose fault were your problems? Explain.
Tackling My Tactics

On a scale of 1 to 10 mark how open or closed you are to tackling your tactics and stopping them today.
1 = completely closed  10 = wide open.

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In your thinking journal below, explain your mark on the scale above.

**Thinking Journal**

**Date**


List any tactics you used today and the situation. In the second column write what you will do different to stop the tactics next time.

**Tactics I Used Today**

**Next Time I Will**


Write about your positive action today. Did you stop yourself from using tactics? Did you help someone?

**My Positive Actions Today**


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Have You Ever Been Wrong?

1. Give 3 examples of when you've admitted you were wrong.
   1.

   2.

   3.

2. What did you gain when you admitted you were wrong? How was it different when you
   admitted you were wrong than when you blamed others?
Tackling The Tactics Workbook

Tackling My Tactics

On a scale of 1 to 10 mark how open or closed you are to tackling your tactics and stopping them today. 
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List any tactics you used today and the situation. In the second column write what you will do different to stop the tactics next time.

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The Heart of the Matter

1. Explain what this statement means: At the heart of every tactic is a selfish heart.

2. List three people you have used tactics on recently. Next to their names describe how your tactics put them at a disadvantage and harmed them.
   1. 
   2. 
   3. 
**Tackling My Tactics**

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Who Me?

1. Check the categories that are true about you:

   _____ I created the situation I am in.

   _____ I see others who have similar situations but do not turn to similar negative choices or irresponsible behavior.

   _____ I realize I am more of a tactic-user than I am a victim; I blame others for my problems.

   _____ I realize that using tactics has stopped my growth in responsibility and maturity.

   _____ I must not make excuses for myself. Instead I will focus on controlling my thoughts and behavior.

2. Review the categories you checked. Put an “R” next to each one that is responsible. Put a “W” next to each one you need to work on. Write how you will work on the ones that need it.
Tackling The Tactics Workbook

Tackling My Tactics

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Tactics I Used Today               Next Time I Will

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My Positive Actions Today

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Putting Power in Its Place

1. How do you define power?

2. Do you use any tactics that make you feel powerful? List them.

3. Explain how there is power in each category below:
   1. Being honest
   2. Accepting others as they are
   3. Being who you are (not putting on a front)
   4. Working to improve and change yourself
In your thinking journal below, explain your mark on the scale above.

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Tactics I Used Today

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How to Have Positive Power
For each category below, make a list of all the positive ways in which you can gain power in that area.

1. Physical power is having a healthy and strong body that we use to do positive and helpful things, never harmful things. Positive ways I can gain physical power:

2. Mental power means having the ability to make positive responsible decisions that are considerate of others. Positive ways I can gain mental power:

3. Emotional power means having the ability to control our emotions and not react irrationally to unpleasant circumstances or things we don’t like. Positive ways I can gain emotional power:

4. Spiritual power is understanding there is a Power greater and more important than we are to whom we owe respect and gratitude. It also means offering that respect and gratitude by how we live. Positive ways I can gain spiritual power:

5. Social power means getting along with others by considering their wants and needs, and their likes and dislikes, as important as our own. Positive ways I can gain social power:
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Try on Some New Shoes

One way to stop using tactics on someone is to put yourself in their shoes. Think of someone you have used tactics on this past week. Answer the following:

1. Who is the person you used tactics on?

2. What was the situation and what tactics did you use?

3. What affect did you have on the person?

4. How would you have felt if you were the other person?

5. Write a commitment of what you will do different next time.

Next time _________________________________________________ happens, I will do
whatever it takes to NOT use tactics. Instead I will do whatever it takes to _________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________.
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A “BIG” Deal

Think of a time recently when you made a big deal out of something small.

1. What was it?

2. What were you thinking that led you to make a big deal out of something small?

3. What tactic is it when you make a big deal out of something small?

4. What will you do instead the next time?
Tackling My Tactics

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Anger and Using Tactics

1. Anything we use to avoid taking responsibility is a tactic. When we are using tactics and they are not working on someone, it can make us angry. The harder we try without succeeding the angrier we can become. When this is happening it is good because someone is holding us accountable and not letting us get by with using tactics, but it can be a problem if we are growing more and more angry and do not know how to handle our anger.

   When you are angry you can choose to do any of three things:
   • Stay angry, but keep it inside
   • Get angrier, and take it out in a way that is harmful to others and ourselves or
   • Give up the anger and learn to change.

2. Think of ways you could learn to give up anger and change. Check ways that would work for you from the list below. Then add some of your own ideas.

   ___ Compromise
   ___ Share responsibility
   ___ Talk it out calmly
   ___ Trust the other person
   ___ Look for a solution
   ___ See the other person’s point of view
   ___ Agree to disagree on a friendly level showing respect for the other person’s viewpoint
   ___ Take one thing at a time
   ___ Admit when you are wrong

My own ideas to help me let go of anger:
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Big Problems

1. List the two biggest problems facing you right now.

   1.

2. List the tactics you have used to try to handle these two problems or the tactics you used that eventually led to these problems. Write your list under each problem above.

3. What would it take for you to stop using tactics and face your problems honestly?

4. Write your commitment for facing your problems honestly.

   I will do whatever it takes to face my problems honestly by _______________________
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   
   I will do whatever it takes to face my problems honestly by _______________________
   
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