

# STOP PULLING YOUR HAIR OUT: TAKE THESE STEPS INSTEAD

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There's nothing like intimate relationships to pull the worst from us. Remember the worst thing you ever did? It was in an important relationship. There is also no greater way to grow our best self than to learn how to manage and express ourselves when we are frustrated, disappointed, or otherwise disenchanted in our relationships. It is when things get tough, not when things are hunky-dory, that we have the choice: grow, stagnate or regress.

The series of questions below was designed to support you in the self growth choice. Answering the questions will help you sort out the nature of your distress, clarify your needs and help you make requests for change.

The process helps us take responsibility (not blame) for our experience. Then we have the power to change things. And isn't it funny how those close to us are much more co-operative when we are not making *them* responsible for our experience?

## Step 1: The Components of the Frustrating Event

### The Situation:

1. The **trigger** for my frustration was...
2. When that happens, I start **imagining**...
3. And I start **feeling**...
4. And then I find myself (state **behaviors**)...
5. What I am really **afraid of** is...

## Step 2: The History Connection

6. And all this reminds me of...

**7. When that happened, I felt...**

**8. I learned to cope and protect myself by...**

**9. And so I developed a deep need to be with someone who would...**

### **Step 3: Non-Demand Behavior Change Requests**

**I have some requests for you. They are not demands or requirements or shoulds or musts. I will be very grateful if you are willing to do some of these requests.**

**10. It would be helpful and healing if you would...**

**11. It would be helpful and healing if you would...**

**12. It would be helpful and healing if you would...**

### **Step 4: Self-Growth Worksheet- My Responsibility in all of this.**

**13. I want you to know that I know that you are not responsible for all of the intensity of my feelings about the trigger. My childhood experience makes me particularly sensitive to the trigger. My sensitivity to the trigger behavior comes from....**

**14. My immediate interpretation or automatic thoughts about you when the "trigger" occurred were negative. I imagined... When I reflect again about my initial interpretations, there are clearly some examples that would suggest evidence to the contrary. For Example:**

**15. So far I have been sharing with you the impact the trigger has had on me and why and what I would like to be different. When I try to see the trigger behavior "through your eyes" and history and sensitivities, another explanation for your doing the "trigger" behavior might be...**

**16. When the trigger happened, I reacted by ... Should this happen again, I'm intending to respond differently by...**

**17. In case you are unable or unwilling or just forget to do the Non-Demand Behavior Change Requests, I will do what I can to take care of myself. Some of my ideas about this are:**

*Dr. Jane Bolton, a marriage and family therapist, master results coach and contemporary psychoanalyst is dedicated to supporting people in the fullest expression of their Authentic Selves. This includes Discovery, Understanding, Acceptance, Expression, and Empowerment of the Self. Call 310.838.6363 or visit [www.Dr-Jane-Bolton.com](http://www.Dr-Jane-Bolton.com)*