

A B C ' s

For Inner Strength

&

Trauma Recovery

(excerpts - A to D)

Robin Inwald, Ph.D.

**Hilson Press, a Division of Hilson Research, Inc.,
Kew Gardens, NY**

This book is dedicated to those who have suffered due to the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York City. It also is dedicated to the police, fire, and other emergency services personnel with whom I've had the pleasure of working for over 20 years. Special thanks to my friend Bill Garrison, who taught me A, D, M, N, S, T, U, & Y.

Text copyright © 2001 by Robin Inwald, Ph.D. All Rights Reserved. Printed in the U.S.A. by Hilson Press, a division of Hilson Research, Inc., P.O. Box 150239, Kew Gardens, New York 11415. Phone: 800-926-2258 or 718-805-0063. No part of this book may be reproduced or copied in any form without the written permission of the publisher (www.HilsonResearch.com). Publisher is granting permission for downloading this book as part of the World Trade Center trauma recovery effort.

Draft Copy.

Publication Date: November, 2001

Inwald, Robin.

ABC's for Inner Strength & Trauma Recovery / by Robin Inwald, Ph.D.

Summary: Using the letters of the alphabet, adults are provided with an easy reminder of how to create a balanced life and maintain inner strength during a crisis.

ISBN 1-885738-18-8

1. How to lead a balanced life - Adult literature.
2. Self-help.
3. Life crisis ABC's.
4. Trauma Recovery.

Introduction

“To every thing there is a season..
A time to be born.. a time to die;
A time to plant; a time to heal;
A time to break down,
and a time to build up..”

-Ecclesiastes. The Holy Scriptures.

..and it is while we are living that we must work hard to solve our problems and deal with the good and bad of daily life.

Traumatic events, resulting in illness, injury, the loss of loved ones, and/or the loss of faith in our own safety in the world, are especially difficult to adjust to or to accept. It may take a long time to recover from events that happen quickly, causing problems that don't go away nearly quickly enough. Although the recovery process can be slow, sometimes taking months or even years, people do eventually recover from very traumatic situations to lead happy and fulfilled lives again.

The following ABC's are intended to provide an easy reminder about how to create a balanced life for yourself and how to maintain your inner strength. The messages associated with each letter may be particularly helpful during a life crisis, when you and everything around you seem to be falling apart.

You also may use this book as a journal by writing your ideas, experiences, personal goals or favorite sayings in the empty spaces on each page.

ABC's

Ask for What You Need
Balance Bad Thoughts with Good
Cultivate Friends
Dissociate from Pain
Exercise and Eat Well
Follow Your Dreams with Goals
Grow from Faith or Fear, but Grow
Help Comes from Many Sources
Ignore Insensitive Comments
Justify the Bad by Making Good
Kindness to Others Will be Returned
Look at the Scenery
Make Positive Changes Now
Necessary Effort is the Effort to Use
One Thing at a Time
Positive People to Surround You
Quit Bad Habits for a Healthier Life
Reduce Fears to Nothing
Stay Connected to the Outside World
Trust Only Those Who Are Safe
Use Rescue Missions for Old Problems
Visualize White Light
Who Goes Slowly Arrives Surely
X-plore Reasons for Family Actions
You Have All the Resources You Need
Zest for Life Gives Us Power

Ask for What You Need

“Ask for the present” in both
your life and dreams

When a traumatic event is experienced, different people have different responses. Some develop stress symptoms, such as headaches, stomachaches, or overwhelming feelings of anxiety, while others may have terrible nightmares. Nightmares from trauma can be stopped by using a special technique. This technique comes from an Indian tribe that was known for the good mental health of its members. It was discovered that when children in this tribe had nightmares, their parents told them to turn to the monster or bad guy and “ask for the present or gift”. This shift in the bad dream may refocus the plot and put control back on the dreamer’s side. No matter how scary the “bad guy” or “bad things” in a nightmare may be, asking for the present will change the process and reduce the negative outcome of the dream. Once used, this technique may have the effect of stopping trauma-related nightmares entirely.

Likewise, asking for what you need or want in life is very important. If you do not express yourself clearly, or are too shy or afraid to let your wishes be known, those who can help you will not know exactly what to do. Monsters can be eliminated (or at least their impact reduced) when you take control over your own life and dreams.

For those ill or injured:

Tell those caring for you what is going on inside. Letting them know what you think will make you feel better. Then you will have a chance to make a positive change in your treatment and recovery.

Balance Bad Thoughts with Good

Balance work with play, grief with joy

Thoughts, as well as real situations in life, have a significant effect on a person's general outlook. Although there are times when it seems as if nothing is right, you always have some good memories within you that can cheer you and motivate you if you let them.

When you find yourself brooding, make yourself think of three good things in your life that you still have and that still are important to you. Focus on these things until the bad thoughts have diminished, even if only for a few minutes. If possible, reward yourself everyday with an activity or treat that you enjoy. You deserve it!

For those ill or injured:

Think hard about three times in the past when you were happy and push that feeling into a view of yourself in the future when you will be better and recovering from your current situation.

Cultivate Friends

Friendships grow when
time is put into them

Making friends and keeping them is a lifelong pursuit. For adults, time pressures often keep old friends apart and make it more difficult to develop new relationships. If you make it your business to keep in touch with friends, to call them and to make appointments to see them (even if these appointments may be broken at the last minute due to other responsibilities), you will reap the benefits of your efforts.

Sometimes family members are too close to you in a crisis and you may need a way to get a better perspective on what is happening in your life. Good friends can help you to see where you can improve and can give you a fresh view of things from a more independent vantage point. However, if you do not have friends when times are good, it is unlikely that they will appear on the scene when you are in trouble. Try to call or get together with a friend every week. Better yet, call a friend right now.

For those ill or injured:

Some of your friends may suddenly disappear or may not do what you think they should do to help you. This may be due to their fears and past traumatic events of their own. Before you judge old friends harshly, think about their past experiences to increase your understanding of their behavior.

Dissociate From Pain

Delve into details of ordinary things to
find the extraordinary in life

When pain (either physical or mental) is too great, you need a way to reduce your focus on it. This does not mean that you should ignore symptoms, but that once you have done everything reasonable and possible, it is all right to switch gears.

By becoming “fascinated” with the details of something outside of your pain, you can dissociate from its intensity. To move away from obsessive thoughts about yourself and your distress, make the effort to become engrossed in a good novel, movie, the details of a blooming flower or a well-built house. Anything that interests you can be made more important and can assist you in deflecting your pain.

Of course, the main problem usually will not go away just because you are thinking about something else. However, by asking questions of a family member or friend, and then focusing on his/her situation, you can pull your mind away from your own problems.

About the Author:

After being critically ill with pneumonia for four weeks (three of which were spent on a hospital respirator), Dr. Robin Inwald was told she had a tumor in her back that would lead to paralysis without prompt treatment. The trauma resulting from this experience and her recovery from these events prompted the writing of the first version of this book. The destruction of the World Trade Center four years later prompted the writing of this second version.

Dr. Inwald has been a practicing psychologist for over 20 years. She has written over 75 professional articles and/or book chapters and is the author of several psychological tests now used to screen police officers and other security personnel throughout the U.S. and abroad. She is the author of *How to Have it All & Keep Your Sanity: ABC's for Success in Business, Management, & Life* (ISBN 1-885738-17-X) and the children's book *Cap It Off with a Smile: A Guide for Making Friends* (ISBN 1-885738-01-3).

A forensic diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology and a founding member of the American Board of Assessment Psychology, Dr. Inwald received the 2000 David C. McClelland Award for "meritorious achievement" in psychology from the New York State Psychological Association.

Dr. Inwald has appeared on national and local TV shows to discuss psychological issues related to current events. Since 1976, she has been a police psychologist, therapist, and specialist in the treatment of phobias. Dr. Inwald received her Ph.D. from Columbia University and lives in New York City.

To obtain full copies of the paperback book, *ABC's For Inner Strength & Trauma Recovery*, call: **800-926-2258** or **718-805-0063** or visit the website: www.HilsonResearch.com.