

Worksheet for: Acknowledging That You're Committed To Your Problem

Finding Your Payoff, Owning It, and Making a Conscious Choice

I've found that when it comes to changing your relationship with fear, there is either one big payoff or maybe a bunch of payoffs, that will absolutely prevent you from doing that. Here is where we acknowledge them.

Below is a short checklist of so many things that you may be getting as a payoff, for having your problem in your life. It's important to acknowledge these payoffs, so you can make a conscious decision on whether to start your new fear practice, or not.

Step 1. Check all the boxes that apply to you, even if they only resonate a little bit. Put a star next to the ones that scream at you

- My problem is my identity. I wouldn't even know who I was without this problem.
- Happy people annoy me. I don't want to be annoying.
- Without this problem I wouldn't feel as special. My suffering makes me feel special.
- I get a lot of attention from people in my life, because I have this problem. It may be negative attention but at least it's attention.
- I am the most _____(put your problem description here) person I know, and that makes me unique. I couldn't stand it if I was the same as other people.
- Working on my problem, makes me look like I'm hard at work. If I was all blissed out and didn't have this problem anymore, that may be interpreted as my not working hard enough or trying enough.
- I struggle therefore I am. Struggle makes me aware of my existence.
- I get financial assistance from a loved one because I'm too troubled or somehow 'disabled' to work harder or even work at all.
- I get empathy and love from a loved one. They show me how much they care about and consider me by putting up with me and my problem.
- I don't have to engage in the world (relationships? work? hobbies?) because I have this problem. My problem is my safety, protective resource.
- I don't like (or trust, or feel comfortable around) other people, and my problem makes it so I don't have to be around them.

- 'I can't get better' keeps me from having to do scary things / take any risks.
- 'I can't get better' keeps me from having to engage in the world at a higher level.
- I don't want to have to do any work to solve my problem, it sounds exhausting. I just want to live my life.
- I like feeling like a victim because then I don't have to take responsibility for my life. I can blame my problem for holding me back, rather than having to blame myself.
- I can blame fear, my ex-wife, my colleagues, or even life itself for this problem, rather than blaming myself.
- Sadness is a companion.
- Anger makes me feel powerful and self-righteous.
- Poor self-esteem is my identity. It feels awful but at least it's familiar.
- If I didn't have this problem, then I may have to admit that my marriage, job, being a parent, etc. is not for me. I'd have to admit the truth, or make a serious change, or move on.
- I don't like change.
- The devil I know is better than the devil I don't know.
- My problem is my teddy bear.
- Keeping my problem around makes me feel like a child. I don't want to have to grow up.
- Keeping my problem around, I can justify my behavior.
- I want to WANT to solve this problem, and isn't that enough?
- In having this problem, I don't have to take responsibility for my life.
- I have an excuse to not do things I don't want to do, without having to explain myself.
- If I get rid of my problem, I may alienate friends and family, who at this point expect me to behave a certain way.
- If I own my problem, I'll have to admit that I've been a jerk or loser all these years.
- If I own my problem, that means my friends and family may be smug about it. Like- "I told you so."
- I feel protected in my current state. Anything else seems threatening.
- Without the drama of my problem, life would be boring.
- Without the drama of my problem, I wouldn't know how to spend my days.

Note are as many payoffs as there are people in the world, so be sure to come up with a few more on your own.

Step 2. Meditation. 5-10 minutes

I want you to shift and sit as in the voice of "The One Who is Committed to My Problem." This is how you own it. Notice whatever you notice.

Step 3. Make a Conscious Choice

Now make a conscious choice, to keep your problem around and continue receiving the payoff, or do the work toward resolving it.

How you can decide is this:

On a scale of 1-10, 1 being low 10 being high, ask yourself two questions:

How big are the payoffs for keeping your problem around: (enter a number from 1-10 here)

How big are the costs for keeping your problem around: (enter a number from 1-10 here)

If the costs of having your problem, exceed the payoffs, that's when you'll get to work.

Bonus: Language Guide

Add this to your new fear dictionary.

If you ask yourself, or get asked by a friend or family member: Hey, why is your stress (or anxiety or _____ fill in the blank what your problem is here), so bad?

If you decide to keep your problem around, you say:

"Because I refuse to deal with it"

"Because I'm getting something out of keeping it in my life."

If you decide you *are* going to get to work, which we're about to do, you say:

"Because I haven't been dealing with my fear."

"Because I've gotten something out of it, for a long time, but now all that is about to change."