

the
STAR System Interview
Instruction Manual

SSI STAR Chart



Greetings Family and Friends. May GOD's Blessings and Favor be with you! This is Kyle Gardner from Happy Life Ministries. This short print-out, is a manual to teach you how to use a couple of the tools mentioned in my book, *"the ABC's to a Happy Life!"*

Those tools are:

- the STAR System Interview STAR Chart
- the STAR System Interview Worksheet
- the STAR System Self-Interview Worksheet

This System is my adaptation of the principles and practices of almost every Life Coach, Counselor, and/or Cognitive Behavioral Therapist working today. It is also used, in some form, by some of the most successful companies in the world including Chevron, General Electric and others. It Basically consists of

- **Setting a Goal or dealing with, a ... SITUATION**
- **Thinking about or examining ...THOUGHTS**, regarding a goal or situation
- **Acting upon or taking ... ACTION**, based on those thoughts
- **Reviewing the consequences or ... RESULTS** of those actions.

This system is extremely effective in the business world, as well as the coaching and counseling world. For our purpose of achieving and experiencing a Happy Life, I believe this is the

most effective system, applied in all it's various forms by a wide diversity of coaches, in practice today.

The best things about the SSI system, is that it's:

- Simple to learn
- Easy to apply and ...
- It gets results.

Initially when you first start implementing the SSI it may feel a little awkward, but like anything else the more you practice it, the easier it gets. Eventually the SSI will just become second nature. It will become your go to method for properly processing challenging Situations, in yours, a friends, a loved ones, or a clients life.

The reason that the SSI is so effective, is because it is based on the premise, advanced by Cognitive Behavioral Psychology that:

- Psychological problems are based, in part, on faulty or unhelpful ways of thinking.
- Psychological problems are based, in part, on learned patterns of unhelpful behavior.
- People suffering from psychological problems can learn better ways of coping with them, thereby relieving their symptoms and becoming more effective (Happier) in their lives.

CBT treatment involves efforts to change thinking patterns.

So essentially most Situations that we deal with in this life can be effectively processed by thoughtfully examining them, and if necessary, adjusting the way we think about them.

Let's see what this looks like in the STAR Chart

At the top of the Chart is the “abc swoosh”. The ABC’s are the foundation of a Happy Life. Ultimately if you’re not happy, if you’re not experiencing your best life it’s because you’re stuck somewhere in one of the ABC’s. If you haven’t read the book and you’re truly looking for answers as to why you’re not happy, and you truly want to learn what you need to do to have a Happy Life, then please order the paperback or download the e-book today. When you’re conducting an Interview, or a Self-Interview, everything, at some point comes back to the ABC’s ... but more about that later.

The first line of an SSI Interview sheet is the “S” line or the SITUATION line corresponding to the S point of our STAR Chart.

| | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Situations (Circumstances and Triggers) | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | Situation Circumstances Triggers |
|---|-------------------|---|

A Situation is defined as a circumstance or a set of circumstances, in which one finds ones self.


Likewise, a circumstance is defined as a fact ,or condition, connected with, or relevant to, an event or action.

SITUATIONS and circumstances are facts. Donald Trump was the 45th President of the United States. Joe Biden is the 46th President of the United States. Their elections to the office are events in history that are facts. You may care less about those facts. You may feel very angry about those facts. You may feel very elated about those facts ... but whatever you feel *about* them you can't *change* them. So SITUATIONS in our lives will *birth* THOUGHTS and sometimes *trigger*, feelings and emotions; which drive our ACTIONS, which create our RESULTS. I want to make a point here, that I used to equate feelings and emotions on the same level as thoughts; but, there is an important distinction between them. When certain situations arise we usually have an opportunity to think about them, consider them, mull them over in our head. These types of situations and circumstances, *birth* thoughts whether positive or negative. However some situations arise that can *trigger* feelings and emotions instantaneously and drive an action in seconds; sometimes creating catastrophic results in your life. Most of these types of situations usually involve other people. As we just learned, Facts are facts and we have no control over them. So too, people are people and we have no control over them. We have no control over facts and we have no control over other people ... and do we really want to ... have control? Over someone else's life? GOD created us all with free will.

Why would we want to try to usurp his authority, his will for each one of us? By trying to control other people we're not going to cause them to change, we're just going to cause bitterness and resentment.

So ... can't change people, and can't change facts.

The next line of an SSI Interview sheet is the T" line or the THOUGHT line corresponding to the T point of our STAR Chart

| | | |
|--|-------|---|
| Thoughts (Feelings and Emotions) | _____ |  |
| | _____ | |
| | _____ | |

Under the T line is the sub-set of “feelings and emotions.” As we already learned, Thoughts, feelings and emotions, are *birthed* and/or *triggered* by Situations and circumstances which are essentially just facts.

Without getting into a lot of philosophy and academic discussion, thoughts can be defined as conscious, cognitive processes that take place in our minds. Thoughts can occur with or without any external stimulation. Standard forms of thought are reasoning, forming judgements and concepts, problem solving, deliberation and meditation. Other mental processes such as considerations of memories, ideas and imaginations, while a bit more abstract are also forms of thought. So there are essentially two components to thoughts and thinking.

1. The processes that are taking place at any given moment related to deliberations, considerations, imaginations and ...
2. The mental states or systems of beliefs brought about or manifested as a result of the processes.

My desire of course, is to help you learn how to achieve and live a Happy Life. I want to teach you how to “process” Situations and circumstances, in such a way, that will cause you to form, systems of beliefs, that will *bring about in you*;

“A state of mental and spiritual well-being that is not affected by SITUATIONS or things but is anchored in the firm knowledge and belief that:

I’m exactly where I’m supposed to be, right here, right now.

The CREATOR of the Universe, will always work all “Situations and Things” out for my good.

The CREATOR of the Universe, will always bring any extreme situation back to Balance in my life.” ”

(Excerpt From: Kyle Gardner. “the ABC's to a Happy Life!”)

So let's do a couple of exercises to see how this is put into practical application.

Let's start with a SITUATION that we have all gone through or will go through at sometime in our lives ... the loss of a job.

And by the way loss of a job or being fired ranks at number 8 on the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory.

On the first line, the S line of the SSI lets write this:

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| Situations (Circumstances and Triggers) | <u>I lost my job</u> |
| | |

So that is a fact. Presumably, there is nothing you can do about it, you've been out of work for a little while and there is no chance of getting your job back.

Next we move to the T line.

The initial wave of emotions and feelings have subsided. The shock, hurt, anger, embarrassment. Hopefully you weren't *triggered* into taking some irrational action or revenge.

Let's fill in the T line like this.

| | |
|--|---|
| Thoughts (Feelings and Emotions) | <u>What if I can't get another job?</u> |
| | <u>I feel inadequate</u> |
| | <u>Fear</u> |

These are the Thoughts you're having about a Situation that has occurred in your life. Granted, losing one's job is a major event. There are a lot of intense feelings and emotions that accompany

a Situation of this magnitude ... especially in the beginning when we are dealing with the unchangeable fact of losing our job. However, after the initial event and now considering our present SITUATION;

We are only causing and prolonging our own grief when we don't manage our THOUGHTS and EMOTIONS in a mature rational manner.

The people and/or the SITUATIONS that hurt us initially, cannot continue to hurt us unless we allow them to. It is solely our *perceptions* of those SITUATIONS and our THOUGHTS about them that bring us hurt or pain. It is solely our feelings and emotions surrounding those SITUATIONS that cause us to become depressed, or to lash out at those we care about, to respond im-properly, to take destructive ACTIONS with sometimes devastating, deadly RESULTS. These create *different*, more *difficult* SITUATIONS; which unless we learn to properly process, will only begin and extend the cycle all over again.

So how do we Accept and properly process those situations, so that we can park them in a positive place and move forward?

Initially, on purpose, we have to think deeply about the SITUATION. If THOUGHTS and emotions arise that make us uncomfortable that's ok. We don't run from them, don't deny them ... we let them happen. Feel them. Take as long as we need

to. This will shorten the duration of the hurt, the fear, shame, regret, or whatever. When we try to deny our emotions, try to run away from them, they just chase us around, scream at us, threaten us and eventually catch up with us and beat us up real good.

Denying or running away from our emotions does nothing to resolve the issues at the root of the painful SITUATIONS we all, at some point encounter. When we allow our-selves to fully feel and experience our emotions, something amazing happens. After a period of time the hurt, the fear, shame or regret begins to subside. This is because our Minds, our Bodies, our Spirits will not let this type of extreme experience go on indefinitely. At some point, something has to give. Why? Because one of the foundational truths of our existence is,

*“... the CREATOR of the Universe ... will always,
bring any extreme SITUATION back to Balance in our lives.”*

What happens next however, is *critical*, in dealing with traumatic, painful SITUATIONS in ways that you can Accept them, properly process them, park them in positive places and move on. Again, our Minds, Bodies and Spirits *will not*, allow this type of extreme SITUATION to go on indefinitely.

So, what happens is, the extreme emotions begin to subside. We get to a point where we don't feel the hurt, fear, shame or regret

anymore, we just feel numb. We're not back to Balance yet, but we *are* in a state of mind that is much more manageable than the dark, desperate place, of negative emotions. Granted, comfortably numb is a much better state to be in than darkness and despair. However it's not a place we want to stay in.

So, sooner, rather than later, we need to move forward to the next step.

The next step is simply to breathe ... deeply ... become mindful, aware of where we are, in the now ... our setting, our environment. Breathe in ... breathe out ... breathe in ... breathe out. Find something, *anything*, that you can *immediately* focus on and be grateful for. If you're in bed, think about how good the sheets feel on your body. Think about how blessed you are to have a nice bed to sleep in. Even if you don't think your bed is that nice, at least it's a bed; some don't even have that. If you're outside, stop and take a look around. Breathe slow, deep breaths; the kind of deep breaths that take you from a downcast slump, to an invigorating, erect posture. Breathe in deeply and hold your breath in your lungs for a bit ... feel your blood cells exchanging Oxygen for Carbon Dioxide. Then, exhale slowly, feel all the muscles in your body relax. If the Sun is out, feel its warmth on your face. Kneel down and take a look at a plant or a flower and see how beautifully and wonderfully it's made. Meditate on the positive mood change as you begin to feel

better. Appreciate and be fully aware as the heaviness begins to lift. Facing our past painful SITUATIONS and fully experiencing our emotions came ... and went ... and we survived.

You will learn that you never have to run from your past, or deny your emotions again.

This *particular*, painful SITUATION, no longer has power over you. You never have to fear it again. It took its best shot at you and came up short. It may have even knocked you down, but it didn't knock you out. You got back up and knocked *it* out! You took away its power over you. This is how you properly process a painful SITUATION. You turn it into a learning experience, a growing experience. You park it in a positive place in your mind and you move forward. You exchange positive empowering THOUGHTS for negative, destructive or paralyzing thoughts.

(Excerpt From: Kyle Gardner. "the ABC's to a Happy Life!")

That brings us to the A line which is the ACTION line. Sometimes this line is the first line you fill in. Let's say before all of this self examination started, you lost your job and then you punched your boss. So you punched your boss, security had to come forcefully remove you, he filed a police report, your spouse is furious with you, yada, yada, yada. Now not only have you lost your job, you're also in big trouble. This is the kind of thing that can happen when you act now and think later... but luckily we are thinking now, before we act.

Let's go to the A line and after careful THOUGHT let's consider the ACTION we can take. It might look like this:

Actions

(Physical, Verbal, Social)

I'm going to update my resume

I'm going to join Linked-In

I'll accept a lower paying job, but keep looking

I'll call my mortgage company re: my situation

Now you've made the choice to move forward, rather than backwards or even worse, just get stuck. This is a much better scenario than the one you were in before. The SITUATION didn't change but your THOUGHTS about it did.

So let's move on to the R line, the RESULTS line and a possible outcome there.

Results

(Immediate, Short term, Long term)

Reconnected with a former co-worker on Linked-In.

He liked my (updated) Resume. I have an Interview scheduled. A little less pay but room to advance.

For any SITUATION that you plug into the SSI or SSSI, you will always circle back up to the top of your STAR Chart, the ABC's, and start the process over based on your RESULTS.

Results which created a new SITUATION.
This is what Successful corporations and Happy people do to achieve success and maintain Happiness. It's a system of continuous observation and improvement and it always starts and works *with*, the ABC's.



- Am I having difficulty **A**ccepting something or someone?
- Am I having difficulty **B**elieving properly?
- Am I having difficulty **C**onnecting in any area of my life?
-

That is the STAR System Interview in a nutshell. If you always return to the ABC's and if you stick to the SSI process, you will be able to effectively coach yourself, a friend, a loved one or a client through almost any SITUATION you or they present with.

The "Job Loss" scenario I showed you today was a very short, very abbreviated example. In reality, it may take days or weeks of Coaching or Self Coaching, to get to a point where you can properly manage your THOUGHTS and EMOTIONS in a mature rational manner, and achieve and enjoy your Happy Life.

Every Situation you will ever encounter from now on will be framed in the context of the question,

“What will I do to properly process this Situation, park it in a positive place and maintain the balance of my Happy Life?”

I’ve given you the tools to do exactly that. There are many more resources here that you can take advantage of to learn and master the tools that much quicker.

I’m also attaching a copy of the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory and the therapistaid.com list of Emotions and Emotions Signs and Behaviors Identifier.



The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark down the point value of each of these life events that has happened to you during the previous year. Total these associated pointed.

| Life Event | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Death of spouse | 100 |
| 2. Divorce | 73 |
| 3. Marital Separation from mate | 65 |
| 4. Detention in jail or other institution | 63 |
| 5. Death of a close family member | 63 |
| 6. Major personal injury or illness | 53 |
| 7. Marriage | 50 |
| 8. Being fired at work | 47 |
| 9. Marital reconciliation with mate | 45 |
| 10. Retirement from work | 45 |
| 11. Major change in the health or behavior of a family member | 44 |
| 12. Pregnancy | 40 |
| 13. Sexual Difficulties | 39 |
| 14. Gaining a new family member (i.e. birth, adoption, older adult moving in, etc.) | 39 |
| 15. Major business adjustment | 39 |
| 16. Major change in financial state (i.e. a lot worse or better than usual) | 38 |
| 17. Death of a close friend | 37 |
| 18. Changing to a different line of work | 36 |
| 19. Major change in number of arguments with spouse (i.e. a lot more or less) | 35 |
| 20. Taking on a mortgage (for home, business, etc.) | 31 |
| 21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan | 30 |
| 22. Major change in responsibilities at work (i.e. promotion, demotion, etc.) | 29 |
| 23. Son or daughter leaving home (marriage, college, military, etc.) | 29 |
| 24. In-law troubles | 29 |
| 25. Outstanding personal achievement | 28 |
| 26. Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home | 26 |
| 27. Beginning or ceasing formal schooling | 26 |
| 28. Major change in living condition (i.e. new home, remodeling, deterioration, etc.) | 25 |
| 29. Revision of personal habits (i.e. dress, associations, quit smoking, etc.) | 24 |
| 30. Troubles with the boss | 23 |
| 31. Major changes in working hours or conditions | 20 |
| 32. Changes in residence | 20 |
| 33. Changing to a new school | 20 |
| 34. Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation | 19 |
| 35. Major change in church activity (i.e. a lot more or less) | 19 |
| 36. Major change in social activities (i.e. clubs, movies, visiting, etc.) | 18 |
| 37. Taking on a loan (i.e. car, tv, freezer, etc.) | 17 |
| 38. Major change in sleeping habits (i.e. a lot more or less) | 16 |
| 39. Major change in number of family get-togethers (i.e. a lot more or less) | 15 |
| 40. Major change in eating habits (i.e. a lot more or less, eating hours, surroundings, etc) | 15 |
| 41. Vacation | 13 |
| 42. Major holidays | 12 |
| 43. Minor violations of the law (i.e. traffic tickets, jaywalking, etc.) | 11 |

Now, add up all the points you have to find your score.

150pts or less means a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-induce health problems.

150 to 300pts implies about a 50% chance of a major stress-induced health problem in the next 2 years.

300pts or more raises the odds to about 80%, according to the Holmes-Rahe prediction model.

List of Emotions

| | | |
|-------------|------------|----------------|
| Amazed | Foolish | Overwhelmed |
| Angry | Frustrated | Peaceful |
| Annoyed | Furious | Proud |
| Anxious | Grievous | Relieved |
| Ashamed | Happy | Resentful |
| Bitter | Hopeful | Sad |
| Bored | Hurt | Satisfied |
| Comfortable | Inadequate | Scared |
| Confused | Insecure | Self-conscious |
| Content | Inspired | Shocked |
| Depressed | Irritated | Silly |
| Determined | Jealous | Stupid |
| Disdain | Joy | Suspicious |
| Disgusted | Lonely | Tense |
| Eager | Lost | Terrified |
| Embarrassed | Loving | Trapped |
| Energetic | Miserable | Uncomfortable |
| Envious | Motivated | Worried |
| Excited | Nervous | Worthless |

Anger

Related Emotions

Annoyed
Enraged
Frustrated
Irate
Irritated
Mad

Signs & Behaviors

Aggression
Arguing
Blaming
Clenching Fists
Feeling Hot
Increased Heart Rate
Raising Voice / Yelling
Staring
Stern / Harsh Tone
Trembling
Using Insults

Anxiety

Related Emotions

Dread
Fear
Jittery
Nervous
Scared
Stressed
Timid
Uneasy
Worried

Signs & Behaviors

Avoidance
Catastrophizing
Crying
Difficulty Concentrating
Digestive Issues
Headache
Irritability
Muscle Tension
Nail Biting
Pacing
Racing Heart
Racing Thoughts
Rumination
Shortness of Breath
Sweating
Tapping Foot
Trembling

Happiness

Related Emotions

Cheerful
Content
Excited
Glad
Joyful
Pleased
Satisfied

Signs & Behaviors

Creative Thinking
Engage in Self-Care
Feeling Sociable
Helpful
Increased Energy
Increased Motivation
Laughing
More Active
Optimism
Playful
Smiling

Jealousy

Related Emotions

Bitter
Contempt
Envious
Spiteful

Signs & Behaviors

Acting Possessive
Controlling
Distrust
Fear of Abandonment
Feelings of Inadequacy
Frustration
Insecurity
Making Hurtful Comments
Making Threats
Negative Thinking

Love

Related Emotions

Affection
Attachment
Closeness
Compassion
Desire
Endearment
Fondness
Tenderness

Signs & Behaviors

Caring for Another Person
Commitment
Desire for Connection
Drive to Protect
Empathy
Enjoying Time Together
Feeling Vulnerable
Gestures of Appreciation
Kindness
Physical Affection
Selflessness
Thinking Often of the Subject

Sadness

Related Emotions

Depressed
Despair
Disappointment
Down
Emptiness
Grief
Guilt
Hopelessness
Lonely
Shame

Signs & Behaviors

Apathy
Changes in Eating
Crying
Difficulty Concentrating
Fatigue
Inactivity
Irritability
Loss of Interest in Activities
Negative Thoughts
Neglecting Self-Care
Poor Self-Esteem
Rumination
Sleep Problems
Sluggishness
Social Isolation

