

## REWRITING YOUR “MONSTER” ISSUE STORIES

1. **List three recurring issues you would like to change about your life.** These can be anything from persistent emotions like fear, grief or anxiety, to personal situations like addiction, pain or illness or even feelings surrounding conflicts, disappointments or lack of connection with others. Go for the first things that come to your mind. If you're having trouble thinking of them ask yourself:

What is draining my energy?

What is dragging me down?

What is “eating” me?

What incident has disturbed me recently?

2. **Now write a one sentence statement of why that's an issue in your life.** Don't censor or rationalize. Write what is arising in your thoughts about that issue.

### EXAMPLES:

I'm unlovable because I have been unable to find a fulfilling relationship after my divorce.

I'm anxious about growing older and not having retirement money.

I have a chronic illness because I'm lazy and undisciplined.

These are your “monsters” or “demons.” Now instead of trying to ignore or hide them, we are going to describe, examine listen and then RECREATE them by simply rewriting the story we have told ourselves about them.

3. **Pick one “issue monster” and do the following:**
  - a. Take a moment to tune into your body. Close your eyes, take conscious deep breaths, then locate where in your body you feel that issue monster. Where are you holding that shame, that anxiety, that fear, that pain? Be aware of qualities of the sensation. Is it hot, cold, sharp, smooth, etc.?
  - b. Now mentally move that monster outside of your body and allow it to materialize for your mind's eye so you can fully describe it. Write the words or draw the images, whichever works best for you.

What color is it?

What shape does it have?

Does it have a texture?

What is its temperature?

If it emitted a sound, what would it be?

If it had a smell, what would it be?

Is it large or small, male or female, have arms, legs, eyes, mouth, teeth?

What kind of personality does this monster have? Goofy, scary, mean, shy?

Again, do not censor the image even if it seems silly. Let it materialize.

- c. Now write a short paragraph as if you were speaking to your “embodied” monster issue. Tell it exactly how it makes you feel when it shows up and what its presence in your life has done to you. Be specific and allow your emotions to flow into the writing.

This is the story you’ve told yourself about your monster issue.

- d. After you’ve described the monster and told it how it makes you feel when it shows up, sit for a few minutes visualizing the embodied issue and let it talk back to you. Ask it a few questions:

Where and when did you become my monster?

Why did you show up?

What are you trying to tell me?

What do you WANT from me?

What do you actually NEED from me?

If I give you what you need, what will happen?

What can I learn from you?

Be sure to differentiate between want and need in this conversation and try to let the monster talk.

EXAMPLE:

Your fear monster may WANT you to run away screaming from a situation, but all it really needs is for you to slow down and recognize your strength and true abilities.

- e. Now free write a short paragraph about what the monster has told you and how what it has said might change the way you look at the issue it represents.

How will facing it help you grow?

How will it help you have more empathy, compassion, courage, awareness, etc.?

What does knowing its characteristics teach you about being more patient, kind and accepting of its presence in your life?

How might “making friends” with this issue change the story you’ve been telling about your life?

4. Now compare what you told your monster, what it told you and how you weaved the two into the final paragraph. Repeat the exercise for this issue and others several times until you begin to naturally see and tell the story of your monster as if it were an ally in your journey rather than a hurdle.