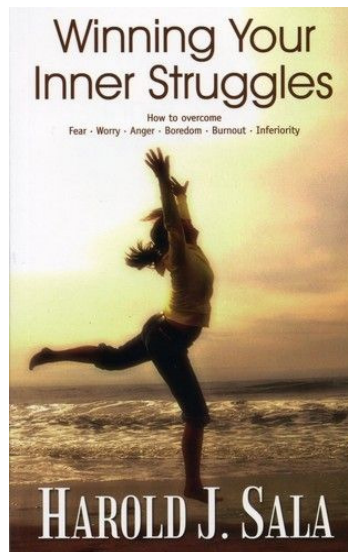


Winning Your Inner Struggles

How to Overcome Fear, Worry, Anger, Boredom, Burnout, Inferiority



Author: Harold J. Sala
Publisher: OMF Literature
Date of Publication: 2007
ISBN: 978-971-511-119-5
185 Pages

■ The Big Idea

The greatest battles in life are not fought on the world's battlefields; they are fought in our own hearts. Men and women today face conflicts and pressures within themselves, and often succumb to them. The real enemies these days are forces such as fear, worry, inadequacy, inferiority, anger, frustration, and the inability to cope.

Dr. Harold Sala, a friend to readers and listeners alike through his many books and radio broadcasts worldwide, draws on years of counselling experience – showing us the way to “overcome the threat of ourselves.”

■ Why You Need This Book

This book will help strengthen you and help you to realize that sometimes, we can be our own deadliest enemies; that we can learn to overcome ourselves and be our own champions; and that you can be a victor rather than a victim of life.

■ Learning to Accept Yourself

The first step is learning not to put yourself down, realizing that you are never unimportant. When you minimize your importance...

1. **You depreciate your worth before God.** If the apostle Paul says it is wrong to have too high an opinion of ourselves, it is just as wrong to have too low an opinion of ourselves.
2. **You come to have a negative self-image.** No one can make you feel inferior unless you allow him to do so.
3. **You are buffered by undeserved guilt.** The individual who minimizes the importance of self is constantly harassed by guilt feelings.
4. **Personal appearance becomes neglected.** A negative self-image causes you to neglect yourself that you don't even bother to keep your hair and nails groomed properly anymore. You not only suffer from feelings of negative self-image, you rapidly become inferior.

■ Making Emotions Work for You

Since your emotions follow the line of your intellect, there is a very definite sense in which you direct your emotional responses. It is how you do it that makes the difference.

1. **Emotions can be repressed.** To constantly repress your emotions by bottling them up inside is harmful emotionally, physically, and spiritually. The longer you repress your emotions, especially negative ones, the more volcanic will be their display when they finally boil up to the surface.
2. **Emotions can be ignored.** This differs from repression in that the person who ignores emotions refuses to come to grips with issues that call for emotional responses of any kind. But just as you can't keep a new pair of shoes without any scuffs, you can't ignore emotions indefinitely. Attempting to ignore your emotions by saying, "Let's just not talk about it," or "Well, it was your fault as much as it was mine so let us forget it," doesn't resolve the problem.

3. **Emotions can be externalized in a positive way.** How do you constructively get those emotions out of your system? First, relieve those bottled-up emotions by talking about them with someone who cares about you. Second, part of this tremendous relief from emotional stress and strain is to bring your burden and emotional fatigue to God in prayer.
4. **Emotions can be beautiful.** Far too many people are driven by negative emotions instead of letting positive emotions become an enriching pigment to the landscape of life and beauty, part of the skyscape of the future.

■ Healing for Troubled Emotions

No matter what happened which burned you, there are certain guidelines which you must follow to realize and experience healing of the emotions.

1. **Understand the nature of forgiveness.** When it comes to harmonious living, no other quality, with the possible exception of love, is more needed than forgiveness. It is in our daily routines that the irritations of our human faults and imperfections take their toll. In oysters, abrasiveness may produce a pearl, but in people it produces an ulcer.
2. **Be sure you have sought God's forgiveness.** There are four things which need to be said about this:
 - a.) God's forgiveness is unconditional. No self-improvement plan has to be effected before you are good enough to come to God and seek His help.
 - b.) God's forgiveness is unlimited in scope. Recognize that there is no sin which God cannot forgive when you come to Him.
 - c.) God's forgiveness is absolute. Unlike us, with our human memories, God wipes the slate clean as though it had never happened.
 - d.) God's forgiveness is redemptive. Once you have squared things with God, take a look at your relationships with others, especially if you need to take the next step of asking forgiveness from someone, or of forgiving someone.
3. **Extend forgiveness to the one who has hurt you.** When you think, "I can't forgive someone," try to remember that forgiveness is first a matter of the will, then a matter of the emotions. You can say, "Yes, I will forgive – I make the decision in my head," and then you will find that your heart follows.

4. **Forgive yourself.** Forgiveness is like a three-cornered hat in that there are three aspects involved, and when any one of them is missing, forgiveness is incomplete. Those three parts are:
 - a.) in relationship to God,
 - b.) in relationship to the offended person, and
 - c.) in relationship to yourself.
5. **Give the bitterness of that memory to Jesus.** Why should you carry the burden of a memory which scars, when Jesus already died for the very burden you are trying to carry? It simply is not your responsibility.
6. **Refuse to let your mind dwell on the memory that burns.** If God has forgiven you, and you have forgiven yourself, and forgiven those who may have hurt you, refuse to let your mind dwell on the matter. We are often defeated by bringing to our minds things which have been forgiven and must be forgotten.
7. **Replace the memory that burns with the Word of God.** Dave Wilkerson, author of the book *The Cross and the Switchblade*, says the most effective therapy for a person who has burned out his mind with drugs is to begin to program his mind with God's Word, the Bible, which brings psychological and spiritual healing.
8. **Cooperate with the Holy Spirit in your healing.** Simply put, bitterness is not from the Lord, and your cooperating with the Holy Spirit in allowing God to touch your life is very important.
9. **Begin praising God for bringing restoration and healing to your life.** Many people consider life to consist of disorganized moves of fate. The Christian, however, knows that God's purpose and design is behind every event, though perhaps he cannot see the pattern at that time.

■ Learning to Cope with Anger

The following are five strategies useful in learning to cope with anger so that it takes its rightful place in your life:

1. **Avoid situations which cause stress.** Organize yourself so you eliminate stressful situations – pressured situations that evoke anger. Plan ahead and eliminate some of those situations that are apt to trigger your temper.

2. **Putting the circumstances into perspective.** The problem with too many people today is that they are temperamental – too much “temper” and not enough “mental”!
3. **Learn to discipline your emotions.** There are times when the Kingdom of God is better served by your learning to discipline your speech and keeping your temper under control.
4. **Vent your emotions so anger doesn’t breed in your heart.** Physical exercise is a great way – you literally run the stress out of your system by jogging, swimming, callisthenics, walking, or whatever exercise works best for you.
5. **Act where you can to change the stress-causing situations.** This guideline, of necessity, will not apply to everything that disturbs you, but if there is a situation which constantly irritates you and you can do something about it, do it.

■ When You Worry

God never intended you to be a prisoner of fear or worry. You can stop the little foxes from spoiling the vines and the big ones from stealing your peace of mind, and here’s how to do it:

Acknowledge that worry has become a problem. Ask yourself if it’s wise for you to carry the burden of worry when God says the solution is to entrust that concern to Him.

Ask God in faith to deal with your problem. God’s psychiatry begins with trust, so ask Him specifically to deal with the problem that kept you turning and tossing last night.

Act in obedience to the word of God in this matter. To put God’s psychiatry into action requires something fundamental and very difficult – it requires commitment.

Refuse to worry again about your problem. Once you have finally committed your worry to the Lord, you’ve got to make to decision that you are going to leave the problem with Him and not continue worrying the next morning where you left off the night before.

■ The Malady that is Boredom

Boredom is not only one of the major causes of fatigue, that listless feeling that leaves you tired out constantly, it is also one of the contributing factors to broken homes. It is one of the reasons that men and women walk out the door and never come back. So here are some ways to overcome it:

Discover God's will for you. The realization that God has a will for you gives life a sense of purpose because there is an ultimate destiny to life – no more endless wandering.

Set some realistic goals for your life and home. Remain in your little castle of gloom and boredom will set in; but you can break out of it with new objectives and goals.

Inject enthusiasm into your work by doing everything for the Lord. Always remember the greatness of the truth that in the economy of God, there is no such thing as an unimportant task.

Be sensitive and give some of your time and talent to help someone less fortunate than you. Nobody is really quite as bored as the one who has only selfish interests for company. If you can sense the fact that there is a spiritual purpose in washing dishes, or polishing the floor, or changing the linen on beds, or standing at the lathe and grinding out the same thing day after day, boredom will give way to meaning and purpose.

■ How to Avoid Burnout

Burnout is what happens when a person works too hard under too much stress, for too long a period of time, which causes him to lose his equilibrium. It can happen to anybody. Especially vulnerable, however, are people who work with people in professions where constant demands are made on them. So how do you avoid it and accomplish your goals in life?

Get your perspective right. Obviously, you can't manage the burdens of the entire world, maybe even your own city. When you take more upon your shoulders than God ever intended you to do, some of the tasks that you want done will not be done. But they could have been if you had not spread yourself quite so thin.

Take time off. To avoid burnout, you must learn to take time off for rest and recuperation, which naturally includes spiritual recuperation as well.

Take care of yourself physically. This doesn't mean stand longer in front of the mirror to apply your make-up, or take more care in combing your thinning hair. Just stop neglecting your body physically.

Learn to say 'no'. Life is a matter of choices, weighing and evaluating good things, and choosing the best. Sometimes those choices become difficult. The needs are real but we can only do so much.

Delegate responsibility. This means that you yield authority to the person to whom you have delegated responsibilities, so he or she can get the job done. Once you've delegated something, get your hands off it.

Learn the secret of spiritual renewal. Daily renewal involves quiet time with God (preferably at the beginning of the day) when you read His Word and open your heart to Him in prayer.

■ Motivating People the Right Way

There are three guidelines that you can follow:

1. **Confrontation without condemnation.**

If you are to motivate people – whether it is your husband or son, or the people who work for you, you must learn to confront them without condemning them. That is hard because condemnation comes easy. Condemnation, though, usually drives a person away instead of bringing him close to you.

2. **Acceptance without endorsement.**

There comes a time in the experience of almost every parent of a teenager when Mom or Dad has to differentiate between acceptance and approval. The father whose son is drinking does not approve of what the boy is doing to himself, but he loves his boy. The mother whose daughter is living with a man to whom she is not married is broken-hearted. Yet her daughter is her own flesh and blood, and to reject her as a person will hinder her from helping her daughter put things back together again.

3. **Forgiveness without license.**

A good motivator has to put past failures aside without giving a person license to turn around and repeat the failure. You put confidence in the person so he will not turn around and ruin it again.

Real love demands confrontation. It leads to acceptance, and will result in forgiveness, and when real love is applied to the wounds of bad relationship, there is tremendous motivation for someone to move in another direction.

Do not sell yourself short as a motivator. You can touch the lives of several people more closely than can anyone else – a friend, a mate, a child, an elderly parent, a neighbour. You will serve as a motivator for good or for evil. It is how you do that makes you effective or just “so-so.”

May the guidelines set out here be helpful to you and to your friends as you have a part in their lives, and may God empower you to live daily using the spiritual resources only He supplies.

~///~