



ALCHEMIST *RECOVERY*

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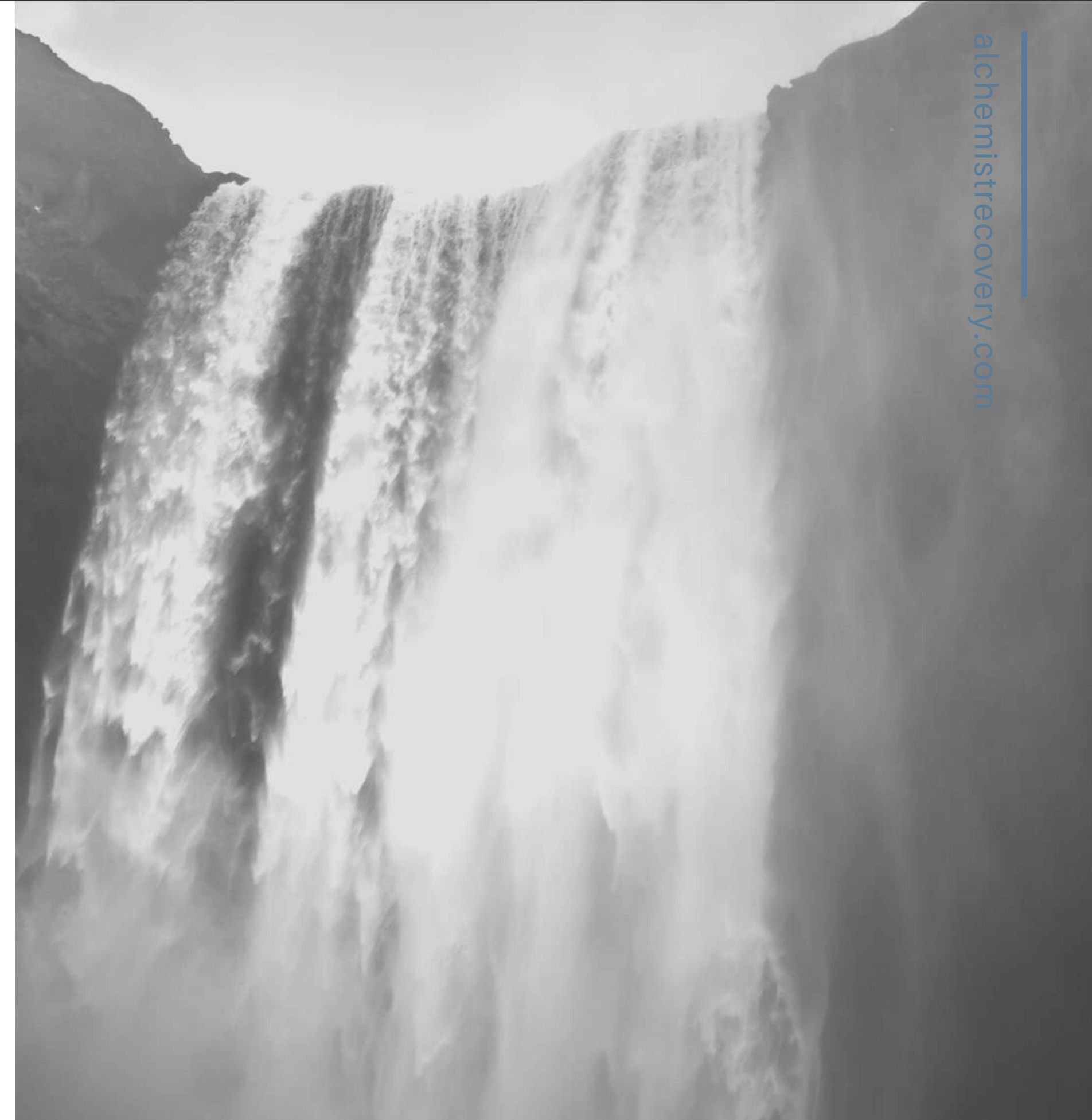
LESSON 8

HOW DID I GET THIS WAY?

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HOW DID I GET THIS WAY?

Identifying Your TAHL



PRINCIPLE 1:

Addiction affects the Whole Person: Mental, Spiritual, Emotional & Physical

Addiction changes the way a person thinks, believes, feels and acts. Treatment must do the same—addressing addiction on all fronts.

Part 2 - The Wound

The first Lessons of Principle 1 explored basic addiction terminology. That work is key for understanding where you are (Point A), where you're headed (Point B), and some ideas of how to get there.

In this next section, made up of Lessons on “Addressing the Wound,” you will gather information about the roots of your addiction and how it came into being.

We begin with the concept of “the Wound.” To address this Wound, you first need to identify it...and then gently bring it into the light of Awareness.

Your particular Wound has tremendous insight to offer and an important story to tell. It is not just a psychological issue to be resolved or an Emotional pain to be fixed. It is a wise Teacher imparting information that can transform your entire life.

Seen this way, it is an archetypal Wound—one charging and defining much of your existence. It has done this by shaping your Beliefs and leading to “I am...” statements that, in turn, have shaped your life.

The following Lessons offer a safe exploration of your Wound(s) from this perspective.

HOW DID I GET THIS WAY?

Identifying Your TAHL

Lesson Goals:

- 1) Introduce the Alchemist Recovery concept of TAHL
- 2) Identify the events in your life that qualify as TAHL
- 3) Revisit past situations where you suffered Heartbreak
- 4) Begin to understand the answers to the question, "How did I get this way?"

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HOW DID I GET THIS WAY?

TAHL is the Alchemist Recovery acronym for Trauma, Abuse, Heartbreak and Loss.

In Traditional Oriental Medicine, these are assaults categorized under the “disease” of Fright.

They are powerful in impact and go straight at the Heart.

TAHL created your Wound.

TAHL are Experiences that have controlled your Beliefs.

TAHL provided the criteria for your “good or bad” judgments.

For these reasons, TAHL are often the most important factor when it comes to your Beliefs, your Wound and your addiction.

Put simply, TAHL are the events of your life that leave a demarcation line: you were one way before and another way after. They change you. They change your Beliefs about the world, others and yourself.

Let's examine each in turn.

Trauma

Trauma is a psychological term referring to a (usually) one time event in which your ability to emotionally respond was overrun and overwhelmed.

It contains an element of danger, with a severe threat to your physical, mental and/or emotional well-being.

It is a serious psychological infliction that, left unaddressed, will always cause problems.

It strikes suddenly and can take many forms, such as:

- **Auto accidents**
- **Violent crime**
- **Severe injury**
- **Rape and sexual assault**
- **Disasters: earthquake, floods, plane crash, etc.**
- **Incidents of war**
- **Kidnapping and torture**
- **An incident of severe mental or emotional abuse**
- **Being witness to any of the above**

Abuse

Abuse is a psychological term referring to violation of your basic rights or dignity. Its perpetrators may be strangers or those closest to you. It can be a singular event or reoccurring. Some forms include:

- **Verbal abuse**
- **Sexual abuse**
- **Physical abuse**
- **Civil rights abuse**
- **Mental abuse**
- **Neglect**

Heartbreak

This is a general term referring to a lost romantic love or the loss of any other type of love.

Some forms include:

- **Betrayal by a friend**
- **Shattered dreams**
- **The breakup of any close relationship**
- **Leaving high school friendships and going off to college**
- **Being told in college that you need to study what you don't love**
- **Watching those you love destroy themselves**

Loss

Loss is another general term that is self-explanatory. The greater the Love, the greater the Loss.

Some forms include:

- **Death of a loved one**
- **Death of a pet**
- **Moving from home and losing friends, acquaintances, structure and regularity**
- **Being fired from a job**
- **Retirement, with the loss of purpose and meaning**
- **Divorce**
- **Suicide of a loved one**
- **Children moving out and “empty nest syndrome”**
- **Death of a great hope, desire or dream**

TAHL and Your Responses

If you’ve made it to adulthood, you have TAHL—there is no escaping it.

For our work, the type of TAHL you’ve Experienced is not as important as your response to it.

Furthermore, you cannot compare your TAHL to that of another.

Your reactions to these life-changing events are your own and individual. There are so many different components to each person’s Experience, and all of the decisions that followed, that it’s impossible to use one person’s path as a point of comparison or an exact roadmap for your recovery.

You must accept it for what it is, and what you have done as a result.

IDENTIFYING YOUR TAHL

We'll now take a couple different approaches to identifying your TAHL.

To begin, construct a list of incidents in your life that may have been Trauma or Abuse.

Do your best to not judge them. And if you come across an incident where there's a possibility that it could be Trauma or Abuse but you're not sure, just list it—we'll examine everything later.

Trauma

What incidents in your life could possibly be categorized as Trauma?

When you were young?

When you were a teenager?

When you were a young adult?

When you were an adult?

Describe the incident(s) as best you can remember. Don't worry about chronological order or even "making sense."

Trauma (cont.)

For each incident, list these basic facts:

Where were you?

What was the situation?

What were the general circumstances?

Who was involved?

What happened to you?

What did you witness?

Trauma Questions

Have you talked about this before?

When and with whom?

What came about as a result of discussing it?

What are your feelings about this incident today?

Do you think it had a lasting effect?

If so, how?

If not, how did you express and heal it?

Abuse

What incidents in your life could possibly be categorized as Abuse?

When you were young?

When you were a teenager?

When you were a young adult?

When you were an adult?

Describe the incident(s) as best you can remember. Don't worry about chronological order or even "making sense."

For each incident, list these basic facts:

Where were you?

What was the situation?

What were the general circumstances?

Who was involved?

What happened to you?

What did you witness?

Abuse

Abuse Questions

Have you talked about this before?

When and with whom?

What came about as a result of discussing it?

What are your feelings about this incident today?

Do you think it had a lasting effect?

If so, how?

If not, how did you express and heal it

This is just an initial approach to these issues. We will investigate them more deeply as needed.

I'm not sure if I remember this right...

Sometimes, you just may not remember.

It's completely normal for parts of yourself to protect other parts and "stash away" unpleasant memories such as these. It allows you to go about your life "as if" everything is fine and you're whole.

But you're not.

Don't worry, there are plenty of ways to dig out this information as you need it.

This next technique makes use of the Journey method. It offers another way of gathering information.

EXERCISE

Journey to Your Broken Heart

- 1) Relax. Find a comfortable place to sit or lie down in (but don't get so comfortable so that you fall asleep).
- 2) Slow your breathing and breathe into your belly, expanding it fully upon inhalation.
- 3) One-by-one, bring your focus to each part of your body and relax it. Go from the top of your head all the way down to the tips of your toes.
- 4) If you receive acupuncture, now would be a great time to have auricular acupuncture performed (this is what generally happens in an Alchemist Recovery group at an addiction treatment center). If not, no worries; just continue with the next steps.
- 5) Breathing in, consciously feel the chest open up to the rear between the shoulder blades, to the sides, under the arms, and smooth and easy to the front. Expand evenly, like a balloon filling up in all four directions at the same time.
- 6) In the center of this balloon, the center of your chest, at your center, is your Heart. Breathe into this place and see your Heart.

Journey to Your Broken Heart (cont.)

- 7) From this place, call upon, see or imagine your Higher Power (HP) or Representative (Rep) for today.
- 8) Ask to be shown, to be taken to by your HP/Heart, Your Broken Heart.
- 9) What does this Broken Heart look like? What kind of shape is it in?
- 10) What do the broken parts look like?
- 11) How does this affect the Heart?
- 12) Who is associated with these broken parts? How so? Ask your HP/Rep if you do not know.
- 13) Is there anything that needs to be done about this? Ask your HP/Rep to help you do this and then go ahead and do it.
- 14) What did you need to do?
- 15) What changes as a result?
- 16) What needs to be done back in OR to support this?
- 17) Send thanks.
- 18) Return and report.

QUESTIONS

What did your Broken Heart look like?

What kind of shape was it in?

How did the broken parts or wounds appear?

How did they affect the Heart?

Who is attached to these broken parts?

How so?

Did anything need to be done about your Broken Heart?

If so, what?

What changed as a result?

What needs to be done back in OR?

Does this make sense to you now, back here in OR?

Do you know how to do this?

Heartbreak

Continuing the process of identifying your TAHL, we'll now explore Heartbreaks and Losses. Use the imagery of the last journey as well as your logical thinking mind to answer the following questions:

What incidents in your life could possibly be categorized as Heartbreak?

When you were young?

When you were a teenager?

When you were a young adult?

When you were an adult?

Describe the incident(s) as best you can remember. Don't worry about chronological order or even "making sense."

For each incident, list these basic facts:

Where were you?

What was the situation?

What were the general circumstances?

Who was involved?

What happened to you?

What did you witness?

Heartbreak Questions

Have you talked about this before?

When and with whom?

What came about as a result of discussing it?

What are your feelings about this incident today?

Do you think it had a lasting effect?

If so, how?

If not, how did you express and heal it?

Loss

What incidents in your life could possibly be categorized as Loss?

When you were young?

When you were a teenager?

When you were a young adult?

When you were an adult?

Describe the incident(s) as best you can remember. Don't worry about chronological order or even "making sense."

Loss

Where were you?

What was the situation?

What were the general circumstances?

Who was involved?

What happened to you?

What did you witness?

Loss Questions

Have you talked about this before?

When and with whom?

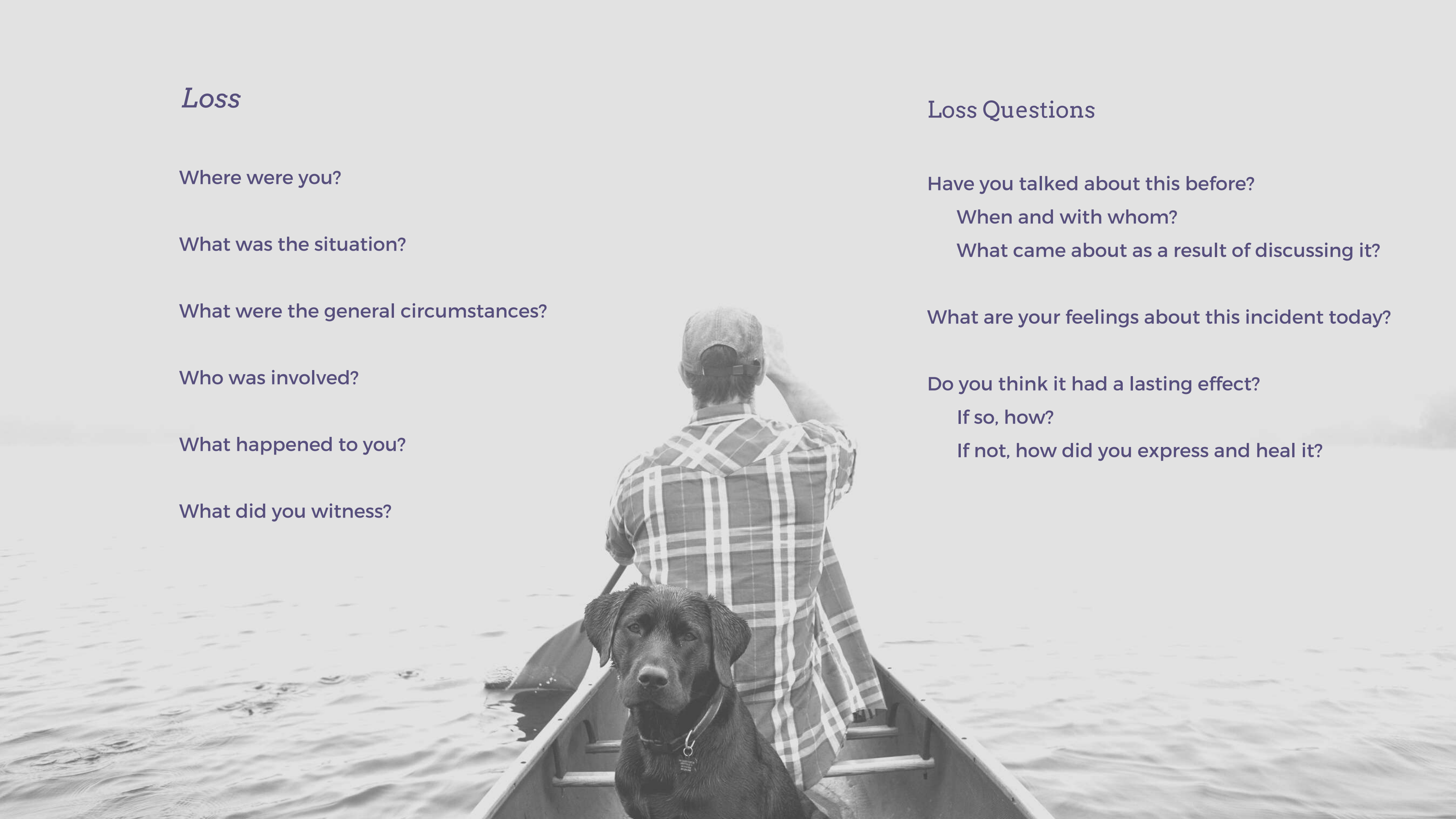
What came about as a result of discussing it?

What are your feelings about this incident today?

Do you think it had a lasting effect?

If so, how?

If not, how did you express and heal it?



Last Words...for now, on TAHL

For better or worse, Experiences of TAHL in your life have shaped your Beliefs.

In addition, some of these Beliefs lie at the core of your problem.

By identifying the TAHL, you begin the process of determining exactly what those messages are and how they've been driving your Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviors through the Cycle of Addiction.

This is a pivotal point for Alchemist Recovery work. And because this information is often hidden from the everyday thinking mind, all 3 Alchemist Recovery Principles will use a different model and a different approach to get at the roots.

So if, for any reason, you can't recall everything there is to know about your TAHL, don't worry--we'll be returning to them again and again. There are many layers to the Awareness and healing that needs to take place...and layers can be viewed in different ways...



SHREK: FOR YOUR INFORMATION, THERE'S A LOT MORE TO OGRES THAN PEOPLE THINK.

DONKEY: EXAMPLE?

SHREK: EXAMPLE... UH... OGRES ARE LIKE ONIONS! [HOLDS UP AN ONION, WHICH DONKEY SNIFFS]

DONKEY: THEY STINK?

SHREK: YES... NO!

DONKEY: OH, THEY MAKE YOU CRY?

SHREK: NO!

DONKEY: OH, YOU LEAVE 'EM OUT IN THE SUN, THEY GET ALL BROWN, START SPROUTIN' LITTLE WHITE HAIRS...

SHREK: [PEELS AN ONION] NO! LAYERS. ONIONS HAVE LAYERS. OGRES HAVE LAYERS... YOU GET IT? WE BOTH HAVE LAYERS.

[WALKS OFF]

DONKEY: OH, YOU BOTH HAVE LAYERS. OH. YOU KNOW, NOT EVERYBODY LIKE ONIONS. CAKE! EVERYBODY LOVES CAKE!

CAKES HAVE LAYERS!

SHREK: I DON'T CARE WHAT EVERYONE LIKES! OGRES ARE NOT LIKE CAKES.

DONKEY: YOU KNOW WHAT ELSE EVERYBODY LIKES? PARFAITS! HAVE YOU EVER MET A PERSON, YOU SAY, "LET'S GET SOME PARFAIT," THEY SAY, "HELL NO, I DON'T LIKE NO PARFAIT."? PARFAITS ARE DELICIOUS!

SHREK: NO! YOU DENSE, IRRITATING, MINIATURE BEAST OF BURDEN! OGRES ARE LIKE ONIONS! END OF STORY! BYE-BYE! SEE YA LATER.

DONKEY: PARFAIT'S GOTTA BE THE MOST DELICIOUS THING ON THE WHOLE DAMN PLANET!

HOMework FOR THE WEEK

Apply the information you've gained from this Lesson to

Principle 1's Four Medicines:

Awareness

What new Awareness does this Lesson provide about your addiction?

Experience

What new Experience did you have or can you bring in to help with this particular information with regard to your addiction?

Connection

How can this Lesson's information lead to a Connection with others, nature, or your spirituality?

Practice

How can this Lesson's information help you in your daily Practice?

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

DOC	Drug of Choice
TOM	Traditional Oriental Medicine
TAHL	Trauma, Abuse, Heartbreak & Loss
COM	Cycle of Manifestation
COA	Cycle of Addiction
COL	Cycle of Liberation
OR/NOR	Ordinary Reality/Non-Ordinary Reality (from Michael Harner www.shamanism.org)

*"A hurt is at the center of all addictive behavior."
- Gabor Mate*

Why are so many words capitalized?

When medicinal and philosophical theories are translated from the ancient texts of Traditional Oriental Medicine, certain terms are capitalization to convey "a bigger meaning".

For example, "Heart" also contains all of the metaphoric and symbolic imagery, meaning and healing power of love, imagination and spirit. All of this is intertwined with, and inseparable from, the important physiological functioning.

This is one very important component of holistic medicine and Alchemist Recovery takes liberty to include other words where this theory applies.

