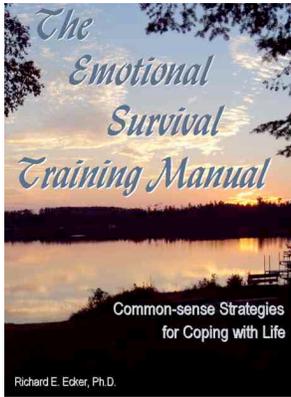


*The
Emotional
Survival
Training Manual*

Common-sense Strategies
for Coping with Life

Richard E. Ecker, Ph.D.



Very often, when people have difficulty coping with reality, their primary problem is simply that they never had the opportunity to learn practical coping skills. Their emotional development was missing the acquisition of tools needed to deal effectively with the events of their lives.

It is the purpose of Emotional Survival Training to fill in the missing elements of that education. Following a course of instruction outlined in this practical training manual, these individuals can develop an understanding of what they have missed and how they can begin to build the skills needed to face reality with greater confidence and greater assurance of success.

The Emotional Survival Training Manual

by Richard Ecker

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Emotional Survival Training Manual

Richard E. Ecker, Ph.D.

Annotated Table of Contents

Introduction

Emotional Survival

What it means to be an emotional survivor. How the ability to cope is acquired and how the acquisition of coping capability will be undertaken.

The Origins of Personality

How personality comes into being and how the attributes of personality invest an individual with the capacity (or the lack of capacity) to deal emotionally with the everyday realities of life.

An Introduction to Behavior Analysis

How personality translates into behavior, given the particular collection of attributes that characterize the personality. How an understanding of these dynamics can be used to assess emotional capacity.

A Visit to an Emotional Survival Class in Session

A session with the wife of a practicing alcoholic.

The Emotional Gender Gap

How men and women in our society tend to differ in the way they deal emotionally with the events of life.

Another Visit to an Emotional Survival Class in Session

A session with the adult daughter of a woman whose tendency to control is a source of perpetual conflict between them.

The Stress Factor

Confrontation with the “Stress Myth”—the common, but inaccurate, perception that unwanted stress is caused by our circumstances and that we are powerless to prevent it. Discussion of some effective strategies for stress prevention.

One More Visit to an Emotional Survival Class in Session

A session with a man whose life is dominated by unwanted stress.

Faith Issues

Discussions on using personal faith as a resource for dealing with troubling issues.

Appendix

On being a participant in a group

Introduction

When I published my book *The Stress Myth* (InterVarsity Press, 1984), it was based on training I had been conducting over the preceding several years. However, as my perspective on that training progressed after the book was published, I had to acknowledge that stress was only one facet of the many issues that people dealt with as they attempted to cope with the emotional challenges in their lives. As a result, I concluded that stress management training alone was insufficient to meet the needs of individuals facing those issues, and that the training I was then conducting had to be adapted to a broader utility.

Over the subsequent years, the philosophy of the training took on added dimensions until it became a life management learning experience that was geared specifically to help individuals survive emotionally in the face of the challenges that confronted them. For this reason, I began to identify the experience as Emotional Survival Training. Recently, as I have continued to evaluate the need for such training, I became more and more convinced that a training manual for individuals would be of substantial benefit and should be produced. This volume, then, is the result of that evolution—a resource manual to help individuals better understand how to survive emotionally when they deal with challenging life circumstances.

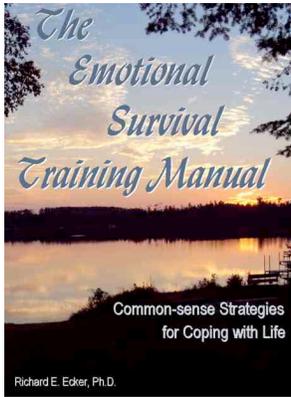
Although it was conceived initially for use in support of an organized group experience, I have written this training manual to be used by individuals that do not have the opportunity to become a participant in such a group. To assist them in tackling these dynamics on their own, I have included in the material the dialogues of three mock group sessions that demonstrate how the dynamics might typically play out in that setting. Yet, if you would like to assemble a group for a more real-life experience—and have a qualified leader available—I have included in the Appendix at the end of this manual some suggestions for making the most of your participation in such a group. Now, with this brief introduction, let's take a look at what we will be dealing with in the chapters that follow.

Irrespective of the setting, all survival training involves basically two essential aspects: 1) an understanding of the challenging environment; and 2) acquisition of the skills necessary to overcome that environment. For example, prospective jungle fighters must first learn what it's like living and working in the jungle. Mountain rescue workers must first learn how to deal with the elements at higher altitudes and freezing temperatures. Then, they can begin to acquire the skills needed to survive in the environment. In the case of emotional survival, however, you are a significant part of the environment. So, this training must necessarily begin with a look at the way you got to be the way you are—how did your personality develop into what it is today and how does that personality contribute to your difficulty dealing with the emotional challenges in your life?

Then you can begin to work on the skills you need in order to confront and overcome those challenges, beginning with the most fundamental of those skills—behavior analysis. Along the way you will learn how the experience of stress fits into the picture and also how men and women differ in the ways they typically deal with emotional challenges. Interspersed with these topics you will find the three visits to typical class sessions. The main purpose of these visits is to allow you to participate as an observer in an educational experience intended to apply and reinforce the fundamental principles offered in the training.

It is my ardent hope that you will find those principles appealing to your common sense

and the class visits beneficial in helping you put them into practice in your own lives.



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