



## The Cycle of Over-functioning, Guilt, and Resentment – Link to video introduction: <https://youtu.be/z2zvEjGJoAc>

**Intro:** Not everyone will be able to fully identify with the cycle of emotions, behaviors and reactions presented here, however there are people who will fully understand this common pattern for certain personality types. Review and discuss the cycle below as a group. Start with Over-functioning and then go around clockwise reviewing each stage. **Group members should openly discuss what they can identify with at each stage:**



**Have you ever experienced all or part of this repetitive life cycle?**



## **Breaking the Cycle of Over-functioning, Guilt, and Resentment**

Below are some things to work on in the process of self-improvement to break this stressful and often painful cycle. Many of these areas can be addressed in therapy or in support groups:

**Set boundaries and limits** – Identify and learn when to say when. Helping others, selflessness, generosity, and giving are all good qualities but it can be important to know when we are doing more than we handle or giving more than we have to give. Prevent feeling resentment by learning where to draw the line, before resentment kicks in. It can be important to recognize when we are being used by others or taken advantage of.

**Assertive communication** – Learn how to effectively protect your boundaries and limits by saying “no” respectfully and honestly. It is essential to learn how to communicate our own feelings, needs, and our own limitations. This can be done calmly and respectfully through the use of assertive communication skills.

**Self Esteem** – Working on self-esteem and self-worth can be very important in preventing people-pleasing. Part of this process can be to learn to use coping skills to avoid faulty thinking such as: “I have to do for people so they will like me” or “When I say no, I feel like a bad person” or “I need people’s constant approval and appreciation to feel loved.”

**Inappropriate Guilt** – There are times when it is okay to say no without feeling guilty. Feelings of inappropriate guilt can fuel the negative cycle being discussed in this exercise.

**Break the “Addiction” to Appreciation** – Sometimes the need to feel appreciated can be like a drug which can become compulsive. Helping others because we care about them is admirable but helping others primarily so that people will like and appreciate us can become unhealthy. Like with any addiction, things can spiral out of control. When people fail to show appreciation, this can fuel resentment as discussed in this cycle.

**Healthy Outlets and Coping Skills and Self Care**– When we develop our set of useful coping skills, supports, and positive ways to channel emotions and to care for our own physical, emotional and spiritual needs, then it becomes easier to cope with do the other things on this list like building self-esteem, setting limits, communicating assertively and coping with guilt.

**Reevaluate Relationships** – It can be important and helpful to self-reflect and ask oneself if various individuals in our lives may be exploiting, taking advantage, or being a “user”. There can be “one-way” relationships with some people where one person is the taker, and the other person is primarily a giver which is simply not fair. It can be helpful to evaluate which relationships are not worth maintaining any longer for the sake of our own mental health. Some relationships we may elect to hold on too (like family) but then focusing on setting limits and assertiveness becomes even more important in changing the negative dynamics of these types of relationships.

**What do you need to work on? DISCUSS – (Keep in mind all of these issues are good to discuss with a therapist if that is available)**

Daring to set boundaries is about having the courage to love ourselves even when we risk disappointing others. *Brene Brown*