

## Emotional Character Sketch<sup>©</sup>

The main reason we don't develop our life and character is because we never become deliberate about it. We never decide what kind of person we want to be. We just assume the way we relate to others is good. Yet, the way we relate to others, which is a reflection of how we feel about ourselves, is the source of all relational conflict, hence the source of our greatest stress.

Our first reaction in relational conflict is to point at the other person; then we try to control them through force: arguments, punishment, manipulation or rejection. This never brings the joy and happiness we desire. First of all, any forced response is not love; therefore, it doesn't meet our deep longing to be loved. Second, no one can have peace in their heart while using force of any kind to control others.

When we decide what kind of person we want to be, everything in our mental and emotional being comes together to make it happen. Plus, if we trust God to help us, He does! He can take us into new dimensions of transformation that move us beyond the mere attempt to change!

I have found that by observing some universal laws we can see transformation in our life quicker than we may have ever imagined. Before explaining the process I will share just a few of these universal laws.

1. You must want this transformation for yourself. Even though you know this can benefit your relationship, no other persona can be the reason you do this. Changing for someone one causes you to despise them. You feel controlled! Plus, if they are your motivation, you will be up and down emotionally based on their response at any given time.
2. Identify your own motivation. "What benefit will this bring to my life?" We are highly motivated by pleasure. A better relationship with another person is a benefit which seems paradoxical to the previous statement. The difference is understood in the following statement:

I'm doing this for me... I need this... this is who I want to be!

When you are absolute in these motives you will use the following suggestions to write your Emotional Character Sketch<sup>©</sup>

Your Emotional Character Sketch<sup>©</sup> is a description of the person you want to be. It will describe the emotions and the character you desire to experience and express in daily life. The following are the rules for writing this Character Sketch. You will observe these universal laws of meditation and transformation.

1. You will write your character sketch as if you were writing a story or a novel, with you as the main character.
2. Even though you may not currently possess or express the traits you will write them in the present tense, as if it was all real and happening now.
3. You will write them as personal statement, no second or third party references: he, her, they, we, them. **Always use "I"**.
4. You will only write from a positive perspective, as if it is real right now.
5. You will express how you feel doing the things you do, that is, how you intend to feel as you put on this new being.
6. You will always express gratitude that this transformation has already taken place. Gratitude brings the future into the present.
7. Your story will begin with waking up all the way through the end of the day, describing each event being encountered in the manner you choose with the healthy, positive emotions you choose.

Many people struggle with exactly what to include in their character sketch; they aren't sure what events are relevant. My recommendation is to start by making a list of all the behaviors and feelings that you know to be counterproductive for the life and relationships you desire, starting with how you feel and think when you awaken.

For example:

1. I wake up with a feeling of dread
2. I'm always racing to meet a deadline
3. I don't keep good priorities
4. When confronted, I deflect, get angry, etc.
5. I have a need to be right
6. I neglect my relationships
7. I don't take care of my health
8. I eat poorly
9. I feel stressed all the time

You can make your list as long as you like. I also recommend adding to your list those things that others say you do that makes them feel unloved, undervalued, unappreciated or rejected.

When you make your list of negative behaviors and emotions you are now ready to make a list of what types of behaviors and emotions you want to feel and express when you encounter these same situations. Remember, make it personal, positive and present tense. Example:

1. I wake up every morning with a feeling of hope and optimism, I feel loved and accepted by God.
2. Although I have deadlines, I abide in peace, I live a stress free life, I'm confident that I can and will accomplish all my goals. No matter what comes my way I remain patient and relaxed.
3. I always keep my priorities straight. I make and enjoy time for myself, my walk with God, my family and my health. I know all these things make me better at everything else I do.
4. When I face conflict or confrontation, even from those who are unfair or judgmental, I listen to their complaint. I am confident in who I am. I care about people, so I am always respectful, kind and attentive to others.
5. Being right isn't nearly as important as living in peace. I really enjoy finding a great outcome no matter who is right and even when I am wrong.
6. I love God, my family, friends and even myself. I know relationships are the only things that are eternal; therefore, I always put relationships first. I know the fulfillment I get from the love I share with my family will contribute to every other area of my life.
7. I value my health; I know my quality of life depends on me being healthy. I pay attention to what's happening in my body. Since I live in peace I sense the slightest disturbance in my health. I love to exercise and move. I desire healthy foods that contribute to my energy.
8. Covered in #7
9. Because I value peace, I immediately recognize the slightest stress or tension, and I immediately release stress and return the place of peace.

So if I was dealing with these issues, having chosen how I intend to feel and respond I would use these responses as part of my character sketch. Now I would simply add the components of gratitude and writing it as a story. So here is a sample:

### **Sample Emotional Character Sketch**

Father, I am so thankful for your peace. I am grateful that every night I sleep deep and sound, cycling through all the phases of sleep that bringing healing to my entire being, and I wake up every morning with a feeling of hope and optimism; I feel loved and accepted by God. I fully expect to have a great, productive, enjoyable day every day.

I choose to be productive and stress free today. Although I have deadlines, I abide in peace. I thank you for the wisdom and grace to live a stress free life and the confidence that I can and will accomplish all my goals without succumbing to stress. No matter what comes my way, I remain patient and relaxed.

I thank you that I feel Your love and I treat my body with respect. I always keep my priorities straight. I make and enjoy time for myself and my walk with you, Father. I make time for my family, allowing nothing to steal our love, peace and connection. I make time for my health. I know all these things make me better at everything else I do.

When I face conflict or confrontation, even from those who are unfair or judgmental, I listen to their complaint. Even when they are unkind, I know you love them; therefore I choose to love them. Because I know I am Your child, I am confident in who I am. I care about people, so I am always respectful, kind and attentive to others.

Father, I am so thankful that you have delivered me from the need to be right. When I am wrong it is an opportunity to learn and grow. Being right isn't nearly as important as being in peace.

Father, I love You, my family, friends and even myself. I know relationships are the only things that are eternal; therefore I always put relationships first. I know the fulfillment I get from the love I share with my family will contribute to every other area of my life.

I value my health; I know my quality of life depends on me being healthy. I pay attention to what's happening in my body. Since I live in peace I sense the slightest disturbance in my health. I love to exercise and move. I desire

healthy foods that contribute to my energy. This body is your temple and I treat it with respect.

I thank you for teaching me to live in peace. I am a peacemaker. I value peace. I immediately recognize the slightest stress or tension in me and I immediately release stress and return to the place of peace. I am sensitive to others and I always put forth every effort to bring peace to every situation.

At the end of the day, I am ready to relax, spend time with my family and enjoy life to its fullest. I know tonight I will lay down in peace, sleep deeply and awaken refreshed tomorrow morning.

### **The Final Step**

1. Now simply commit this to the grace of God. Let God know that you choose to be the person you have described and you are relying on Him for the grace and power to bring it to pass.
2. Every morning, as soon as possible after awakening, within 10 minutes; slowly, read your character sketch, aloud when possible. As you read it, create pictures and concepts of this being you in the situations you will face today. Always commit this to the grace of God when you finish reading.
3. Every night when you realize you are about ready to go to sleep, read this silently and reflectively. Acknowledge that this is your true identity. If possible, as you go to sleep, imagine yourself exhibiting these traits in real life situations.
4. There may be times when you realize you need to make slight adjustments in your Emotional Character Sketch<sup>©</sup>.
5. Do this for 90 days, with intention. In 90 days, evaluate how many of these traits are actually beginning to grow in your life.
6. At this point, you may want to adjust your ECS and resume.

Now you gather the information you need and write your character sketch. Remember, it doesn't matter if any of the traits you choose are actually in your life today. What matters is if you choose them for your life.