

5 Stages to Identify and Eliminate the Spiritual Flub in Your Life

When you begin to feel hopeless in an area of your life, that's most likely an indication that something is controlling that area. Like so many others who struggle with those extra 10-plus pounds, I've tried everything. I eat less, I eat better and I eat early in the day. I exercise regularly, irregularly do aerobic weights, swim and bike, and still there it is staring me in the face—that extra weight I affectionately call the flub.

I feel hopeless about the flub. Many of us have some flub in our life. For some it's real obvious, food, alcohol, work or entertainment. I knew a man who was very controlled by sports. Something had better be very important for him to miss ESPN. Those of you who struggle with the outward obvious flubs in your life typically go through stages like those I've listed below.

1. Denial

First you deny that there is any flub. That's easy in my case. I'll binge and then not weigh myself. You see, as long as there is no measure, truth or fact, I can live very comfortably with my flub. Actually I can even deceive myself that flub is getting better when I don't measure it.

Denial is the first sign that something has control of you. I know it sounds silly, but denial usually exists in an area of your life that is out of control. Nobody wants to admit that they are out of control, and so you just don't believe it.

2. Anger

Anger is another stage to address that can help you identify if there is an area in your life that's out of control. When you or I have an area like this, our response when someone addresses the issue is often anger.

Someone suggests to you that you are less than perfect and wonderful in an area of your life, and your reaction is anger at the messenger of the truth. That's why prophets in the Old Testament had a tough job. They were to tell the king the truth, and if the king didn't like it, he could kill them.

So it is with us. If you are out of control with jealousy, your best friend in the world smilingly states, "It sounds like you could be jealous of them." Then whammo! It digs into the core of your being. You think, "Off with their head." This could be a sign that your friend may have touched on an out-of-control area.

Now, we are all intelligent adults here, right? None of us would actually want to hurt anyone who somehow learned our area of weakness. Oh, by the way, if you are married to this person, you might have several of these conversations where you respond in anger.

3. Rationalization

Let's go back to being intelligent adults for a minute, because this leads us to the next step in identifying the out-of-control area in your life. After you are done being angry, you will probably move into rationalization.

You are most likely familiar with rationalizing. I don't think I have met an adult who doesn't know how to rationalize. You know, it when you make up reasons as to why you do the things you do.

"Everyone does it." "It's not a problem." "I can stop anytime." "I only do it when I am tired." "It helps me relax." "I've worked hard so I'm entitled to it." "My whole family

does it." "I can afford it." "At least I don't ..."

There are hundreds of rationalizations for out-of-control areas of your life. Suppose your area is pride. Someone points it out, and you just think they're jealous. You rationalize the other person's perceptions so you don't have to look at the pride others see.

But rationalizing your flub or out-of-control behaviors isn't the last stage of identifying it. The next stage of identifying out-of-control behavior is sadness. When I can't beat the flub, I can get down about it. Can you think of behavior you tried to stop, but you ended up with "Here I go again"?

I knew a man who struggled with being rude. He grew up thinking being rude was funny, and he was not corrected for it. For years, he had alienated people from his life, including his adult children. When he came in, he was truly sad about how rude he was to people. He was sad not just because of how he hurt those he loved but also because he couldn't seem to stop being rude. Even when he tried, he failed.

4. Sadness

Many of you had moments of sadness about an out-of-control area. Sometimes this sadness occurs deeply one time. My experience is that this sadness hits again and again. Sometimes this sadness moves you to the last stage of this cycle. Sometimes it just stays there for years.

We wish we could be different, but somehow we can't get there. If we get there, we can't seem to stay there long enough to maintain victory in this area and so sadness may return.

5. Motivation

The last stage of identifying an area of your life that is out

of control is motivation. You know that feeling when you are to fight again with the new diet, revelation or plan that might work this time. When you are in motivation mode, you fully accept that you have an out-of-control area of your life.

You're not hopeless, angry, rationalizing or even sad. You are upbeat about your newest attempt. You are armed with new strategies or information, and you are going to nail this area of your life for good.

What I like about this stage is the honesty. You can clearly articulate, "I'm overweight, lazy, envious, greedy, rude, addicted or proud." You don't have issues with being honest in this stage of having an out-of-control area.

After all, in your mind this area is dead. It might as well leave now because you are on a crusade to kill this varmint. Well, at least that's the way you feel. Now if you successfully defeat your enemy you feel great, especially if it stays dead for years and years.

Unfortunately, many of us are just in another chapter of the saga of being defeated once more by this area that is out of control. If you have been through this cycle, you know exactly where this failure takes you back to—yes, right back where we started—hopelessness. Recognizing this cycle can be helpful if you are identifying where you are in an out-of-control area of your life.

It's amazing how we can be motivated in one area, sad in another, angry about a third and so on. Recognizing the cycle can bring up feelings for people who are stuck in this cycle. I hope that recognizing these cycles will help you identify where you are and how to move forward.

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