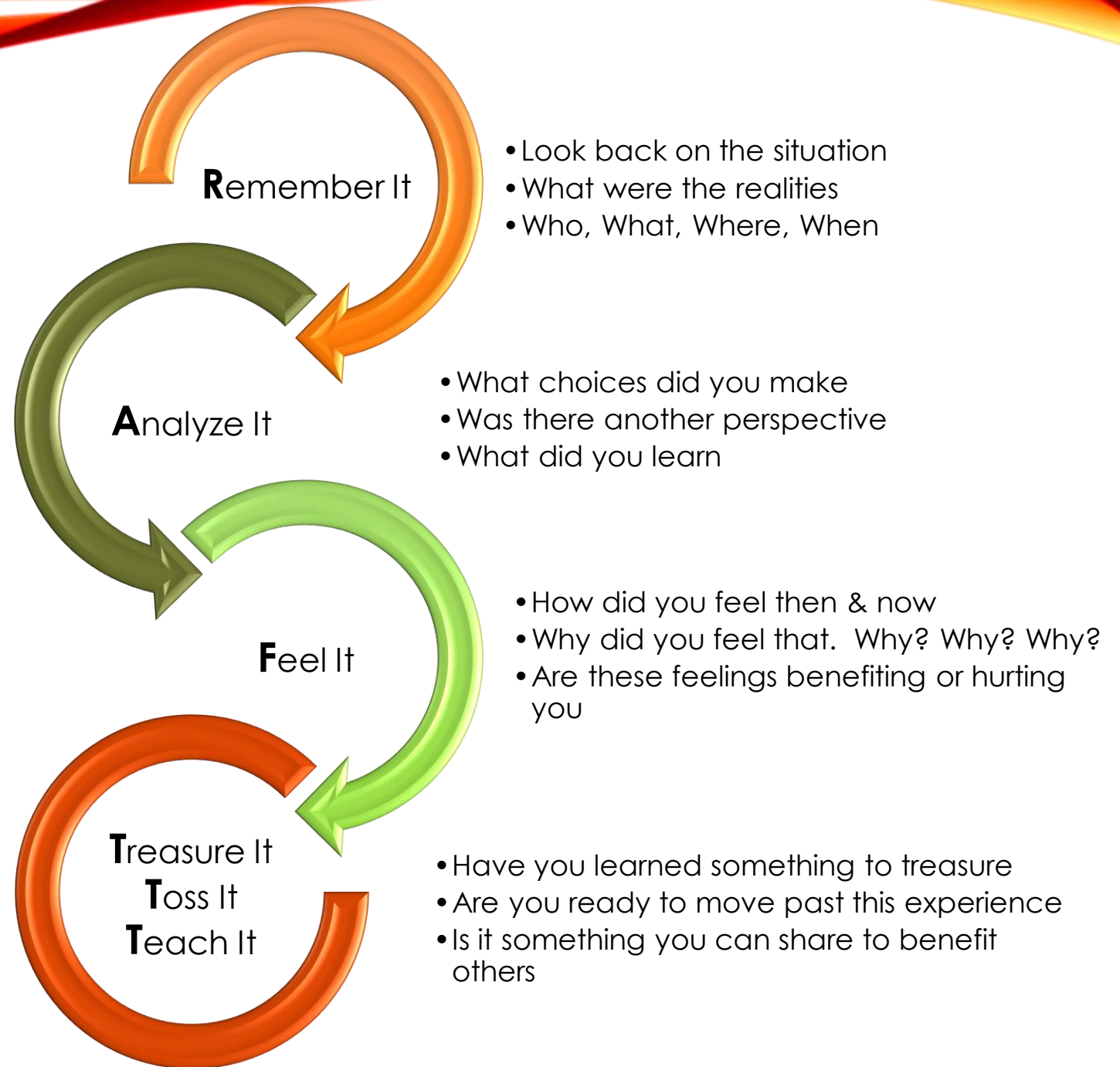


USE THE R.A.F.T. METHOD To Work Through Life's Hardships



“All of life’s experiences have value, and sometimes the ones with the most significance, meaning, and benefit come in the form of hardship”.

Nancy Latimer

These are the life events that are worth exploring on a deeper, more emotional level. We don’t always need to understand why something happened but we should accept that it happened for a reason, and look for the lesson or message that we should have received from it.



🔄 Step 1 – REMEMBER IT

Everyone experiences hardship in their lifetime. Think of a time in your life when you were affected by an emotional loss or hardship. It could be a relationship or marriage that ended, a physical illness or diagnosis, financial hardship, the death of a loved one, an abuse, accident, or other traumatic experience.

- Start writing about that time in your life.
 - First write the facts as you remember them. How old were you, what were the circumstances surrounding that time in your life (economical, social, physical). Answer the who, what, where and when questions at this time.
 - Then use free style writing to record your memories about that time. Free style writing is where you write or type for at least 10-20 minutes without editing or trying to make grammatical sense of what you are writing. Just write whatever pops into your head and take as long as you need.

↻ Step 2 – ANALYZE IT

- Review what you have written so far.
 - Look for words that evoke emotion.
 - Are you looking at all sides of the event or is there another perspective that you can explore?
 - What choices did you make during this time and how do you think it impacted the situation?
 - Have you been completely honest? These exercises are for your benefit only so make sure you aren't trying to justify your actions, behaviour, or feelings.
 - Can you see any benefits to what happened?
 - Did you learn anything about yourself? Did it make you stronger, more understanding, less judgmental?

🔄 Step 3 – FEEL IT

Working through the emotions of hardship can sometimes make you feel worse in the short-term but the long term benefits are physical and emotional healing, increased confidence, and feeling more content or at peace!

- Write about how you felt then and now
 - As you write, ask yourself why you felt that way. This is a great tool to uncover deeper feelings.
 - Have your feelings changed? How?
 - Are your current feelings about the hardship helping you or hurting you?
 - Do you need to learn to forgive someone for their part in the hardship?
Sometimes forgiving ourselves is the hardest but most beneficial step we take.
 - Are you hanging on to negative emotions that are no longer reality based?

↻ Step 4 – DECIDE IF YOU NEED TO TREASURE IT, TOSS IT, OR TEACH IT

You've reviewed the facts, you've analyzed how it impacted your life, you've explored your feelings and what you've learned from this experience. Now you need to decide how you'll file it in your memories going forward.

- Was it an experience that helped you grow? Did it make you stronger, more understanding and empathetic or less judgmental? Did it help you to align your life to your values? Hardship is often a great reminder of what it is that you truly value. If yes, **THEN TREASURE IT.**
- Have you learned that were hanging on to feelings from the past that are no longer based on your current reality? Are these feelings impacting you negatively and it's time to let it go? Was this experience stopping you from doing something that you are passionate about? Were your emotions causing fear? If yes, **THEN TOSS IT.**
- Do you feel that your experience can help someone else? Would sharing your story help someone else feel less alone? Do you think that what you've learned might help someone who is going through the same type of thing feel less afraid? **THEN TEACH IT.**



SUMMARY

Emotional writing has been studied around the world since the 1980s, and although researchers don't yet understand why, there has been conclusive proof that writing about how you feel, especially during times of hardship, can have both physical and psychological benefits.

This type of writing can help you:

- overcome feelings of being a victim
- heal relationships
- move past your fears
- live a more joyful and fulfilling life