

Tame the Dragons from the Past Exercise

Are you feeling anxious, hopeless, traumatized, angry, insignificant, or grief-stricken? Do you feel like there's no way out of the emotional anguish that has haunted you for years or even decades? You may have "Dragons from the Past" running wild in your brain. And they could be stealing your happiness.

What are Dragons from the past?

Since the beginning of time, we have communicated with each other through stories. They help us understand our place in the world and teach us how to act or not act. They shape our perceptions and pass down knowledge and morals. Personal stories guide and direct our lives. How we interpret our experiences is one of the major driving forces behind happiness or depression, exhilaration or disappointment, rage, or peace.

We call the stories that interfere with our lives "Dragons from the Past."

It is a concept Dr. Amen learned from his friend Dr. Sharon May, a world-renowned psychologist. These inner dragons are still breathing fire on our amygdala (the almond-shaped structure on the inside of your temporal lobes involved in emotional reactions), driving anxiety, anger, irrational behavior, and automatic negative reactions.

Unless you recognize and tame your inner "Dragons from the Past," they will haunt your unconscious mind and drive emotional pain for the rest of your life.

Discover Your Dragons from the Past

Over time Dr. Amen identified 13 Dragons from the Past, including their origins, triggers that make them overpowering, and how they cause us to react. Knowing which dragons are driving your actions and emotions is the first step to taming them.

How to Tame Your Dragons

If your inner dragons have taken control of your brain and are driving anxiety, depression, and other problems, take heart. It doesn't have to be this way. You can learn to tame your dragons and transform your life, so you can feel happier, more positive, and more in control of your own emotions. When you tame your dragons, you can break bad habits, stop self-defeating thinking patterns, and shore up your ability to cope with uncertainty.

In fact, taming your dragons is essential for emotional well-being and good mental health. To help you do it, we have included an exercise below to help you identify your dragons. Also, we have included some strategies to help you tame them.

To learn more and take greater control of your dragons and transform your life consider purchasing Dr. Amens book, *Your Brain Is Always Listening*. He has taken the most effective dragon-taming strategies (the same science backed ones he uses with his patients) and put them in his book.

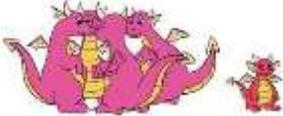
In this book, Dr. Amen equips you with powerful weapons to battle the inner dragons that are breathing fire on your brain, driving unhealthy behaviors, and robbing you of your joy and contentment. Order your copy at yourbrainisalwayslistening.com.

Exercise: Take the free quiz to discover what Dragons from the Past are stealing your happiness at knowyourdragons.com. Email the results to your Licensed Brain Trainer and discuss in one of your meetings.

We have identified 13 Dragons from the Past, and all of us have more than one type driving our behavior. Take note, our Dragons from the Past are always interacting with the Dragons from the Past of others, causing both internal and external battles, a modern-day Game of Thrones.

The following chart introduces you to the following:

- The 13 Dragon types
- The origins of how they develop
- The things that trigger them
- The kinds of reactions they cause
- The ANTs they are associated with
- Strategies to tame them

Types	Origins	Triggers	Reactions	ANTs	Taming
Abandoned, Invisible or Insignificant 	Abandoned, not seen, lonely, unavailable or incompetent parents, siblings or children of high achievers	Others ignore or belittle you	Loneliness, worthlessness, feeling small, abandonment or commitment issues	Less than	Know your purpose Become part of group Make a difference for others Volunteer
Flawed or Inferior 	Felt less than others in ability, looks, money, relationships	Comparing self to others, looking in mirror	Inferiority, jealousy, BDD, perfectionism, helplessness, depression	Less than	Work hard to stop comparing yourself to others
Anxious 	Often afraid, world was scary and unpredictable	Anything that vaguely reminds of past anxieties	Panic attacks, feel powerless, sense of impending doom, physical stress symptoms	Fortune Telling	Breathing Hypnosis Meditation 5 senses
Wounded 	Past physical, emotional, or sexual trauma	Anything at all vaguely reminds of past trauma	Flashbacks, nightmares, feeling numb, survival guilt	Mind Reading	EMDR Bridging Journaling from adult perspective

<p>Should and Shaming</p> 	<p>Raised in culture of guilt, past humiliation, embarrassed, belittled, judged, or criticized by yourself or others</p>	<p>Dis-approval from self, others, or perceived higher power</p>	<p>Feel guilty, foolish, distressed, exposed, wanting to hide or withdraw, self-harmful behaviors in secret, such as addictions, pornography, overeating</p>	<p>Guilt Beating</p>	<p>Replace "I should" with "I want"</p> <p>Know when these are helpful and when they are not</p>
<p>Responsible</p> 	<p>Felt powerless to help someone you cared about, such as a parent or sibling</p>	<p>Perceive others in need</p>	<p>Fixer, caretaker, codependent, causing you to do too much for others, can breed entitlement</p>	<p>Guilt Beating</p>	<p>Doing too much can create dependency</p>
<p>Special, Spoiled, or Entitled</p> 	<p>Golden child, favored one, may be oldest, youngest, or only child. Parents wanted you so much that they could never tell you no.</p> <p>POP STARS</p>	<p>When you don't get your way or feel as though you are not treated as special</p>	<p>Tantrums, anger, rudeness, needing attention, a sense of injustice and outrage, you often say, "You owe me ..." "I deserve ..." or "It's their fault ..."</p>	<p>Blame</p>	<p>Promote the success of others</p> <p>Catch self-justifying spoiled actions</p>
<p>Angry</p> 	<p>Hurt, shamed, or disappointed by others, others modeled angry behavior</p>	<p>When anything reminds you of the hurts, shame, or disappointments in the past</p>	<p>Irrational rage, irritability, easily frustrated, rude, and inconsiderate</p>	<p>Blame</p>	<p>Don't allow blood sugar to get low</p> <p>Breathe before you blow</p> <p>Notice signs of stress and take a time out</p>

<p>Judgmental</p> 	<p>Grew up where you perceived there was a lack of fairness; people played favorites, inconsistent in how rules were applied</p>	<p>Whenever you feel injustice to yourself or others</p>	<p>Condescending, critical, moralizing, telling people what they should and should not think or do</p>	<p>Guilt Beating Blame</p>	<p>Ask yourself if you are judging in the present or fixing something in the past</p> <p>Easy to judge, harder to ask why</p>
<p>Grief and Loss</p> 	<p>Loss of loved one, job, reputation, friends, peer-group</p>	<p>Anything that reminds you of the loss</p>	<p>Sadness, anxiety, loneliness, physical stress symptoms</p>	<p>Just-the-bad</p>	<p>Balanced view</p> <p>ANT Therapy Brain health strategies</p>
<p>Death</p> 	<p>Fear of death</p>	<p>When you see your mortality, such as in a near miss accident, illness, or when someone you care about dies</p>	<p>Fear, pervading sense of doom, denial</p>	<p>Fortune Telling</p>	<p>Cherish each day</p> <p>Life with end in mind</p> <p>Regularly review the meaning of your life</p>
<p>Hopeless or Helpless</p> 	<p>Overwhelmed by stress or conflict, inability to change your circumstances despite trying</p>	<p>Situations that remind you of feeling overwhelmed or powerless</p>	<p>Depression, social withdrawal, gives up easily, a high negativity bias</p>	<p>Blame (self and others)</p>	<p>Positivity bias training</p> <p>Gratitude Write down accomplishments and strengths</p>