

152 STAIRS TOWARD CONTENTMENT

CHAPTER 3 | TEACHING SEGMENT 1

(PLEASE WATCH THE STORY SEGMENTS CONNECTED TO THIS CHAPTER)

OUTLINE

**WHEN OUR MEMORIES ARE GIVEN PURPOSE,
WE CAN OVERCOME ANY CHALLENGE**

PREMISE:

- Choose to give our memories **PURPOSE**
- Our **PERCEPTION** determines if we hold pain or release resilience

1. MEMORIES CONNECT OUR PAST AND FUTURE

A. Integrating our past into our present

- Memory is the process of maintaining information our brain allows to enter our mind.
- Our minds register information, then store it in short- or long-term compartments, depending on the value we give it.
- We constantly store or retrieve information from our past.
- Our decisions are based on previous experience, or memory.
- By age 7, 70 percent of our behavior and beliefs have been formed.
- If we don't interpret our memories correctly (fear, anger, etc.), we will interpret them as negative.

B. Our memories are like stairs, representing challenge and victory; pain and problems

- First set of stairs (cracked, uneven): represent our broken yet real selves, with both joyful memories and painful ones.
- Second set (concrete): represent memories that we sugarcoat to impress others; hurtful times we hide under veneer of cement.
- Third set (shiny granite): represent the face we portray to the world to cause others to admire our lives.

C. Choosing to give our memories purpose

- Christ can heal the pain of the memory, but the memory itself is still stored within us.
- We must choose to integrate the memory into our present, without shame or fear of the past.
- When we choose to give the memory purpose to live in the present and feed our future, we experience healing and freedom.
- Our memories, like stairs, can't provide permanent shelter for our souls; it's important that we don't live only in the past or the future, but in the present.

2. MEMORIES CREATE A STAIRWAY TO SAFETY

A. How we perceive adversity

- Research by psychologist George Bonanno reveals that successfully dealing with adversity lies in the person's perception of the event rather than the event itself.
- Perception has the magnetic power to simultaneously create two opposite views in our minds.

- How we choose to respond will either hold pain within the memory or release resilience by focusing attention on an answer to overcome trauma, thus creating a positive stored memory.