

# THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

## Worksheet for Todd Kashdan | The Bright Truth about Your Dark Side (Episode 60)

Most of us listening to this podcast are lucky enough to live in a time and place where soothing ourselves with distraction as an alternative to feeling uncomfortable in any way is easier than ever. It might sound like a utopian dream come true, but is it healthy?

[The Upside of Your Dark Side: Why Being Your Whole Self -- Not Just Your "Good" Self -- Drives Success and Fulfillment](#)

co-author and clinical psychologist Todd Kashdan joins us for [episode 60](#) to explain why we're doing ourselves a disservice by not only avoiding uncomfortable situations but neglecting the development of a useful toolbox in the process.

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## Wholeness

Todd suggests many of us prematurely rule out valuable emotional tools at our disposal because they make us uncomfortable. No one enjoys feeling pain or anger -- but that avoidance strategy puts us at a disadvantage to overcome the obstacles we face as part of the human experience.

Learning to psychologically and physiologically withstand the trials of life make us stronger, and their absence makes us weaker. If we are only trying to focus on and surround ourselves with positive emotions, we weaken our ability to deal with distress.

**Create a list of at least five tasks or situations that cause you discomfort. We will come back to this list after the next section.**

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## Reading Emotional Cues

Our emotions offer internal cues for behaviors that works best in challenging situations. For example, anger can function as a courage enhancer. Think of a time when frustration or anger with your cellular network or Internet service provider motivated you to find a more reliable solution.

Anxiety might be telling us that a particular issue needs more attention than we are currently giving it. The flexibility created by believing anxiety is useful allows us to tap into an intuitive mindset about what could go wrong. We then seek information to resolve the anxiety rather than popping a pill to avoid it.

**Using our previously created list, assign each item an emotion that the situation causes. As a sub-section for each item, write a positive outcome for leveraging the emotion. Remember, you can harness uncomfortable situations and outperform “optimistic” people who refuse to pay attention to the negatives of life.**

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## Conditioning Our Emotions

In many ways we can draw parallels to exercise and conditioning our body. Change is based on exposing your body to extreme tolerances, rest, then repeating the exercise with an added load to stretch the previous capabilities.

In turn, mentally being able to tolerate anxiety or stress requires exposure to the stressor. In doing so, we afford ourselves the capacity to respond positively the next time we are in a difficult situation. The key is in separating your performance from the outcome. Often, we view the world through a binary lens of “wins and losses,” but life is more complex. We don’t know what invisible variables might be affecting the outcome in ways beyond our control.

**Going back to the list, select two tasks or situation that you are going to “white knuckle” your way through. Before you take on the situation, predict how you behave. Afterward return to your prediction, compare your actual performance, and note if/how you outperformed your expectations.**

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## Three Key Benefits of Enduring Negative Emotions

Todd lists three key benefits from enduring situations that create negative emotions.

- The altered belief that the emotion is useful changes your behavior.
- The belief that the emotion is manageable.
- The belief that the emotion is going to be a tool you can use for the situation at hand.

**Have you enjoyed any of these benefits from enduring so-called "negative" emotions, or do you avoid them too much to notice?**

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## Leveraging Uncommon Emotional Deviation

The majority of people think that anger is never useful, but Todd uses the example of a coach giving a halftime pep-talk. He states that positive and uplifting speeches are measured as having almost no effect on performance. Anger and dismay have a tremendous effect, but only if the coach isn't always angry -- that is, *if it's an uncommon deviation*.

Additionally, he states that anger makes people more creative. Think of all of the creative ways you have considered to get back at an ex who has wronged you!

Jordan then suggested creating a disclaimer for a negative emotion that reframes it in a way that separates it from your identity. (e.g., "I'm not typically an angry person.") Sometimes being optimistic and positive is the exact opposite of what you need to get the best possible outcome.

**Using our previous list, could one of these situations benefit from an uncommon emotional deviation? Storyboard a way that you could leverage a negative emotion such as anger or frustration, while framing it in discussion as out of character to enhance the effect while maintaining personal integrity.**

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## Beneficial Negativity

We as a culture need to question if it is beneficial to label emotions as “unhealthy.” If you play sports, a healthy emotion is pure adrenalized disdain for your opponent. Think of the approach Michael Jordan took to winning six NBA championships. He openly viewed his opponents as his enemy, but it was contextualized within the game. In a similar way, we need to find that negative emotion that motivates us to achieve similar levels of greatness.

*Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here](#).*

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## About



Join Jordan Harbinger (critically acclaimed host, formerly of The Art of Charm) as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary musicians to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth -- and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these insights into your own life and live what you listen.



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