

Can This Marriage Be Saved? Self-management of Destructive Inners

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A case history is described in which the author uses Precision Teaching to replace his destructive inner thoughts and feelings with more positive ones. Maintenance was assessed four months after the intervention with positive inners remaining high and destructive ones, low.

By September 1990, many inner thoughts and feelings about my wife, children, and mother-in-law (i.e., my family) did not contribute to a good marriage. These problem thoughts and feelings persisted into February 1991. I became concerned about my marriage and the love of my wife. I did not want to let these thoughts and feelings to worsen or end 25 years of a loving and wonderful family arrangement. I knew the self-management projects of Precision Teachers such as Calkin (1981), Duncan (1971) and McCrudden (1990) and used their methods to change my destructive thoughts and feelings.

How I Managed My Problem

The Problem Defined

I used a wrist counter (Lindsley, 1968) for recording the Inners that were very negative/destructive or very positive/loving about my family. There were three main classes of destructive thoughts and feelings: (1) I engaged in self-pity. The self-pity focused on events such as cooking, general house cleaning (i.e., washing clothes, dishes, floors), and serving as taxi driver for the children. (2) I was agitated by my mother-in-law. (3) I developed strong thoughts and feelings for sexual activity with women other than my wife.

What I Did Before

Often, self-recording is sufficient to change problem behaviors (Hughes & Boyle, 1991). For one month beginning on February 16, 1991, I counted and charted the destructive and loving inners on the Standard Celeration Chart. There was no improvement. The learning picture on the Chart shows the destructive thoughts and feelings occurred consistently more frequently than the loving inners.

What I Did After

I counted daily all the loving thoughts and feelings

about my wife and family that I could produce in one minute (i.e., think/count positives). Loving thoughts and feelings were of events from the first time I met my wife and our courtship, to special family events (e.g., holidays, vacations, birth of children, milestones). Examples of the loving thoughts and feelings recorded included: "I am glad I married this woman!" "What would I do without you?" "I am concerned about what you are doing." "I love you, son." Immediately following the introduction of think/count positives for one minute, the frequencies of destructive thoughts and feelings showed a jump down to below the counting period only with an occasional frequency spike. Loving thoughts and feelings show a corresponding jump up in frequencies. The think/count positives for one minute procedure was discontinued after nine one minute sessions. I continued counting and charting inner events until May 6, 1991.

The Improvement Continued

To assess maintenance, recording was reinstated on September 4, 1991. The frequencies show loving inners remaining high with the destructive inners low.

Comments

The intervention of think/count positives for one minute produced quick and durable positive improvement of inner events. I believe my personal history contributed to the effectiveness of this self-management project. The long positive family history with a wonderful wife and a happy marriage is likely to be linked to the immediate robust effect of the intervention. In addition, the self-management procedure was started before the destructive inners actually impacted my family. I kept the inners private and did not let them influence my public behavior.

Consumer Satisfaction

I was not pleased with the outcome of self-recording alone. The use of the Standard Celeration Chart and think/count positives for one minute was quick and easy to use. Destructive thoughts and feelings are no longer a personal or potential family problem. Best of all, I did not have to pay a marriage counselor. (See Chart pg. 45)

References

- Calkin, A. B. (1981). One minute timing to improve inners. *Journal of Precision Teaching*, 2, 9-21.
- Duncan, A. D. (1971). The view for the inner eye: Personal management of inner and outer behaviors. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 3, 152-154.
- Hughes, C. A., & Boyly, J. R. (1991). Effects of self-monitoring for on-task behavior and task productivity on elementary students with moderate mental retardation. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 14, 96-111.
- Lindsley, O. R. (1968). A reliable wrist counter for recording behavior rates. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 1, 77-78.
- McCrudden, T. (1989). Precision Teaching: Feeling fixer. *Journal of Precision Teaching*, 7, 19-20.

The Chart

The Chart should be as self-explanatory as possible. All the information at the bottom of the Chart (i.e., Supervisor, Adviser, Manager, etc.) should be completed as descriptively as possible. All charting conventions should be followed. If additional symbols or extensions of the conventions are required, they should be explained in an appropriate "Key." For example, if in addition to charting "words said correctly" with a • and "words said incorrectly" with an x, you wish to note "words omitted" with a Δ, that should be noted on the Chart. Each phase of a multi-phase project should be clearly labeled with brief but descriptive phrases. For example, instead of labeling phases, "Phase I, Phase II," etc., the phases might be labeled, "One minute of practice; teacher charts results," and "Same practice; learner charts results." Additional notes should be provided as necessary to explain the project, unplanned events which appeared to affect performances, and other features of interest.

The Back

The back of the Chart may be used to explain the project in more detail. At a minimum, you should try to provide the following:

1. title for the project;
2. your name and affiliation;
3. names and affiliations of other people involved in the project (first names, initials, or pseudonyms may be used to protect privacy, if necessary);
4. the purpose or goal of the project;
5. the specific measurement cycle(s) or target(s) being evaluated;
6. a brief statement of what you learned from the project.

Chart Share Guidelines

People wishing to share interesting charts without writing lengthy "articles" are encouraged to submit a Standard Celeration *Chart-share*. Each *Chart-share* is limited to two pages in length--one Chart and a maximum of one page of explanatory text. The Chart and accompanying text will be printed on reverse sides of the same page to ensure they will not be separated or removed from the *Journal* for copying.

Space permitting, you may add as much additional comment or discussion as you wish. If the submission exceeds the space available, the *Journal* editors will make whatever changes may be necessary while trying to preserve the basic message of the *Chart-share*.



CALENDAR WEEKS

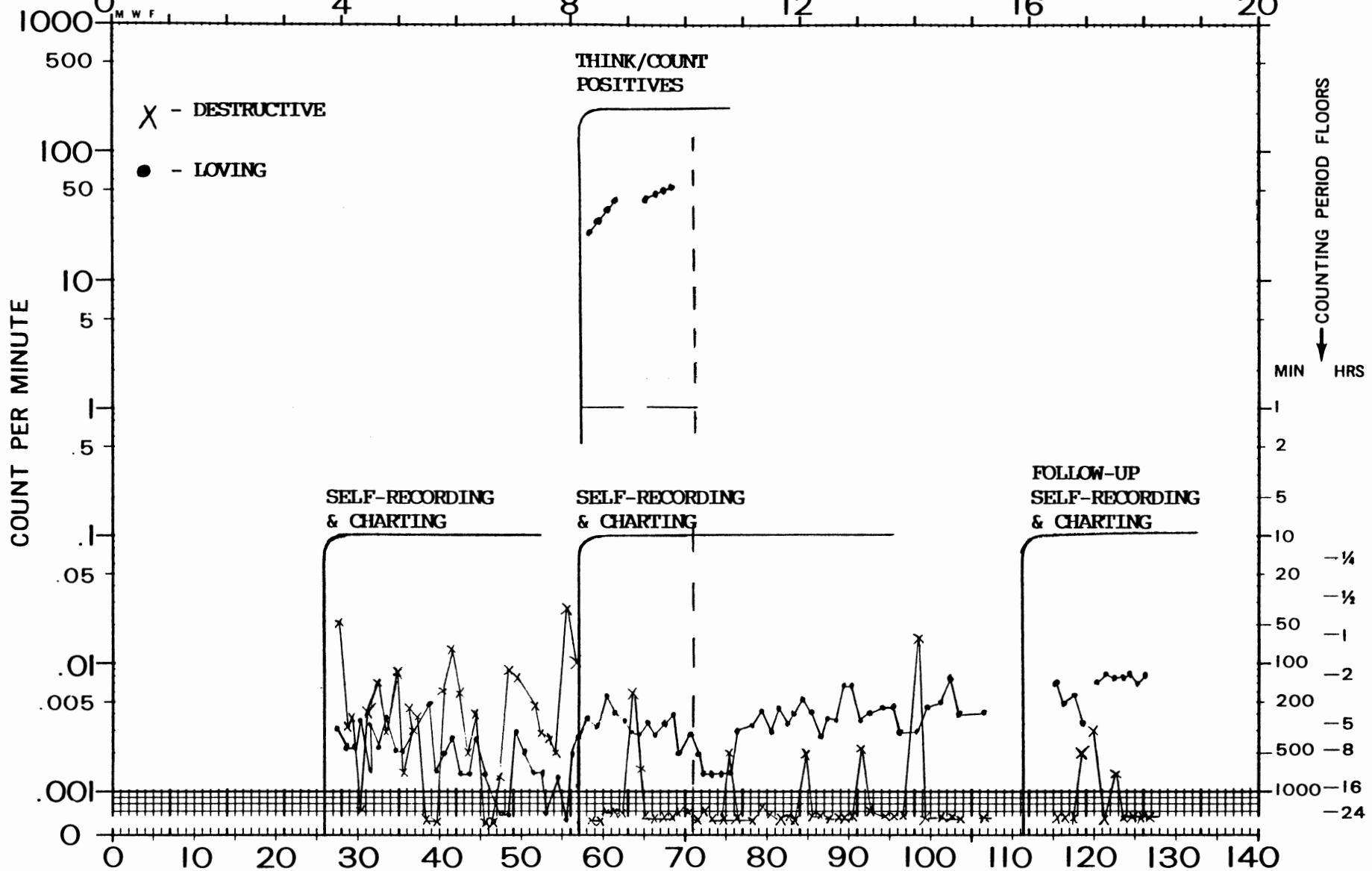
20 | 1 | 91
 DAY MO YR

17 | 2 | 91
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17 | 3 | 91
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14 | 4 | 91
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SUCCESSIVE CALENDAR DAYS

SUPERVISOR _____
 ADVISER _____
 COOPER
 DEPOSITOR _____
 AGENCY _____
 COOPER
 MANAGER _____

COOPER
 TIMER _____
 COOPER
 COUNTER _____

J.D. COOPER
 BEHAVIOR _____
 COOPER
 CHARTER _____
 52
 AGE _____
 LABEL _____

DESTRUCTIVE &
 LOVING THOUGHTS
 AND FEELINGS
 COUNTED