



Why Do I Do That?: Psychological Defense Mechanisms and the Hidden Ways They Shape Our Lives

By Joseph Burgo Ph.D.

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Why Do I Do That?: Psychological Defense Mechanisms and the Hidden Ways They Shape Our Lives By Joseph Burgo Ph.D.

Why Do I Do That? is a self-help book for people who don't usually buy self-help books.

Instead of offering cognitive-behavioral techniques for dealing with anger, or affirming strategies to boost self-esteem, this self-help book adapts the basic methods of psychodynamic psychotherapy to a guided course in self-exploration, highlighting the universal role of defense mechanisms in warding off emotional pain. Even the best self-help books tend to stay on the surface, helping readers to modify their conscious thoughts and behaviors. *Why Do I Do That?* instead probes deeply into the unconscious.

With easy-to-understand explanations, the first part teaches you about the unconscious mind and the role of psychological defenses in excluding difficult feelings from awareness. Individual chapters in the longer middle section explore the primary defense mechanisms one by one, with exercises to help you identify your own defenses at work. The final part offers guidance for how to "disarm" your defenses and cope more effectively with the unconscious feelings behind them.

Psychological defense mechanisms are an inevitable and necessary part of the human experience; but when they become too pervasive or deeply entrenched, they may damage our personal relationships, restrict or distort our emotional lives and prevent us from behaving in ways that promote lasting self-esteem. *Why Do I Do That?* promotes self-help for readers who want to improve their relationships, manage their emotional lives more effectively and develop authentic self-esteem that will last. If you find that even the best self-help books lack depth and fail to instigate lasting change, this psychodynamic self-help book may be for you.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This thought-provoking book explores the psychological defense mechanisms Burgo believes all people harbor. In a congenial tone, the author reiterates that human emotions and their associated defenses [are a] part of everyday life. Exercises at the end of chapters apply techniques for recognizing and defusing oppressive defenses in readers' own lives and bring the book down to a personal level, creating a valuable resource for readers."

Publisher's Weekly

About the Author

Joseph Burgo, Ph.D. has practiced psychotherapy for more than 30 years, holding licenses as a marriage and family therapist and clinical psychologist. He earned his undergraduate degree at UCLA and his masters and doctorate at California Graduate Institute in Los Angeles. He is also a graduate psychoanalyst and has served as a board member, officer and instructor at a component society of the International Psychoanalytic Association. He currently writes the popular blog "After Psychotherapy" where he discusses personal growth issues from a psychodynamic perspective.

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