

# **Compassion Fatigue**

## **Self Test for**

## **Practitioners**

## Compassion Fatigue Self Test for Practitioners

Please describe yourself:           Male           Female           Years as a Practitioner

Consider each of the following characteristics about you and your current situation.

Write in the number for the best response. Use one of the following answers:

1=Rarely/Never    2=At Times    3=Not Sure    4=Often    5=Very Often
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Answer all items, even if not applicable. Then read the instructions to get your score.

### Items about you:

1. ☐ I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings that remind me of a frightening experience.
2. ☐ I find myself avoiding certain activities or situations because they remind me of a frightening experience.
3. ☐ I have gaps in my memory about frightening events.
4. ☐ I feel estranged from others.
5. ☐ I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.
6. ☐ I have outbursts of anger or irritability with little provocation.
7. ☐ I startle easily.
8. ☐ While working with a victim I have thought about violence against the person or perpetrator.
9. ☐ I am a sensitive person.
10. ☐ I have had flashbacks connected to my clients and families.
11. ☐ I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my adult life.
12. ☐ I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my childhood.
13. ☐ I have thought that I need to "work through" a traumatic experience in my life.
14. ☐ I have thought that I need more close friends.
15. ☐ I have thought that there is no one to talk with about highly stressful experiences.
16. ☐ I have concluded that I work too hard for my own good.

### Items about your clients and their families:

17. ☐ I am frightened of things traumatized people and their family have said or done to me.
18. ☐ I experience troubling dreams similar to a client of mine and their family.
19. ☐ I have experienced intrusive thoughts of interactions with especially difficult clients and their families.
20. ☐ I have suddenly and involuntarily recalled a frightening experience while working with a client or their family.
21. ☐ I am preoccupied with more than one client and their family.
22. ☐ I am losing sleep over a client and their family's traumatic experiences.
23. ☐ I have thought that I might have been "infected" by the traumatic stress of my clients and their families.
24. ☐ I remind myself to be less concerned about the well-being of my clients and their families.
25. ☐ I have felt trapped by my work as a helper.
26. ☐ I have felt a sense of hopelessness associated with working with clients and their families.
27. ☐ I have felt "on edge" about various things and I attribute this to working with certain clients and their families.
28. ☐ I have wished that I could avoid working with some clients and their families.
29. ☐ I have been in danger working with some clients and their families.
30. ☐ I have felt that some of my clients and their families dislike me personally.

**Items about being a helper and your work environment:**

31. ☐ I have felt weak, tired, and rundown as a result of my work as a helper.
32. ☐ I have felt depressed as a result of my work as a helper.
33. ☐ I am unsuccessful at separating work from personal life.
34. ☐ I feel little compassion toward most of my coworkers.
35. ☐ I feel I am working more for the money than for personal fulfillment.
36. ☐ I find it difficult separating my personal life from my work life.
37. ☐ I have a sense of worthlessness/disillusionment/resentment associated with my work.
38. ☐ I have thoughts that I am a "failure" as a helper.
39. ☐ I have thoughts that I am not succeeding at achieving my life goals.
40. ☐ I have to deal with bureaucratic, unimportant tasks in my work life.

**SCORING INSTRUCTIONS**

- Make sure you have responded to ALL questions.
- Next, circle the following 23 items: 1-8, 10-13, 17-26 and number 29.
- Now ADD the numbers you wrote next to the items circled.

**Note your risk of Compassion Fatigue**

**26 or LESS = Extremely LOW risk**

**27 to 30 = LOW risk**

**31 to 35 = Moderate risk**

**36 to 40 = HIGH risk**

**41 or more = Extremely HIGH risk**

- To determine your risk of Burnout, ADD the numbers you wrote next to the items NOT circled.

**Note your risk of Burnout**

**19 or less = Extremely LOW risk**

**20 to 24 = LOW risk**

**25 to 29 = Moderate risk**

**30 to 42 = High risk**

**43 or more = Extremely high risk**

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## Compassion Satisfaction/Fatigue Self-Test for Helpers<sup>1</sup>

Helping others puts you in direct contact with other people's lives. As you probably have experienced, your compassion for those you help has both positive and negative aspects. This self-test helps you estimate your compassion status: How much at risk you are of burnout and compassion fatigue and also the degree of satisfaction with your helping others. Consider each of the following characteristics about you and your current situation. Write in the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these characteristics in the last week. Then follow the scoring directions at the end of the self-test.

0=Never 1=Rarely 2=A Few Times 3=Somewhat Often 4=Often 5=Very Often	
Items About You	
1.	I am happy.
2.	I find my life satisfying.
3.	I have beliefs that sustain me.
4.	I feel estranged from others.
5.	I find that I learn new things from those I care for.
6.	I force myself to avoid certain thoughts or feelings that remind me of a frightening experience.
7.	I find myself avoiding certain activities or situations because they remind me of a frightening experience.
8.	I have gaps in my memory about frightening events.
9.	I feel connected to others.
10.	I feel calm.
11.	I believe that I have a good balance between my work and my free time.
12.	I have difficulty falling or staying asleep.
13.	I have outburst of anger or irritability with little provocation
14.	I am the person I always wanted to be.
15.	I startle easily.
16.	While working with a victim, I thought about violence against the perpetrator.
17.	I am a sensitive person.
18.	I have flashbacks connected to those I help.
19.	I have good peer support when I need to work through a highly stressful experience.
20.	I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my adult life.
21.	I have had first-hand experience with traumatic events in my childhood.
22.	I think that I need to "work through" a traumatic experience in my life.
23.	I think that I need more close friends.
24.	I think that there is no one to talk with about highly stressful experiences.
25.	I have concluded that I work too hard for my own good.
26.	Working with those I help brings me a great deal of satisfaction.
27.	I feel invigorated after working with those I help.
28.	I am frightened of things a person I helped has said or done to me.
29.	I experience troubling dreams similar to those I help.
30.	I have happy thoughts about those I help and how I could help them.
31.	I have experienced intrusive thoughts of times with especially difficult people I helped.
32.	I have suddenly and involuntarily recalled a frightening experience while working with a person I helped.
0=Never 1=Rarely 2=A Few Times 3=Somewhat Often 4=Often 5=Very Often	
33.	I am pre-occupied with more than one person I help.
34.	I am losing sleep over a person I help's traumatic experiences.
35.	I have joyful feelings about how I can help the victims I work with.
36.	I think that I might have been "infected" by the traumatic stress of those I help.
37.	I think that I might be positively "inoculated" by the traumatic stress of those I help.

<sup>1</sup> Adopted by B. Stamm and included in a chapter in C. R. Figley (Ed.) (in press), Treating Compassion Fatigue. Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel. This form may be freely copied as long as (a) authors are credited, (b) no changes are made, & (c) it is not sold.

38.	I remind myself to be less concerned about the well being of those I help.
39.	I have felt trapped by my work as a helper.
40.	I have a sense of hopelessness associated with working with those I help.
41.	I have felt "on edge" about various things and I attribute this to working with certain people I help.
42.	I wish that I could avoid working with some people I help.
43.	Some people I help are particularly enjoyable to work with.
44.	I have been in danger working with people I help.
45.	I feel that some people I help dislike me personally.
<b>Items About Being a Helper and Your Helping Environment</b>	
46.	I like my work as a helper.
47.	I feel like I have the tools and resources that I need to do my work as a helper.
48.	I have felt weak, tired, run down as a result of my work as helper.
49.	I have felt depressed as a result of my work as a helper.
50.	I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a helper.
51.	I am unsuccessful at separating helping from personal life.
52.	I enjoy my co-workers.
53.	I depend on my co-workers to help me when I need it.
54.	My co-workers can depend on me for help when they need it.
55.	I trust my co-workers.
56.	I feel little compassion toward most of my co-workers
57.	I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping technology.
58.	I feel I am working more for the money/prestige than for personal fulfillment.
59.	Although I have to do paperwork that I don't like, I still have time to work with those I help.
60.	I find it difficult separating my personal life from my helper life.
61.	I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with helping techniques and protocols.
62.	I have a sense of worthlessness/disillusionment/resentment associated with my role as a helper.
63.	I have thoughts that I am a "failure" as a helper.
64.	I have thoughts that I am not succeeding at achieving my life goals.
65.	I have to deal with bureaucratic, unimportant tasks in my work as a helper.
66.	I plan to be a helper for a long time.

### Self-Test Scoring Instructions

Please note that research is ongoing on this scale and the following scores should be used as a guide, not confirmatory information.

1. Be certain you respond to all items.
2. Mark the items for scoring:
  - a. Put an x by the following 26 items: 1-3, 5, 9-11, 14, 19, 26-27, 30, 35, 37, 43, 46-47, 50, 52-55, 57, 59, 61, 66.
  - b. Put a check by the following 16 items: 17, 23-25, 41, 42, 45, 48, 49, 51, 56, 58, 60, 62-65.
  - c. Circle the following 23 items: 4, 6-8, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20-22, 28, 29, 31-34, 36, 38-40, and 44.
3. Add the numbers you wrote next to the items for each set of items and note:

*Your potential for Compassion Satisfaction (x):*

118 and above = extremely high potential

100-117 = high potential

82-99 = good potential

64-81 = modest potential

below 63 = low potential

*Your risk for Burnout (check):*

32 or less = extremely low risk

33-37 = low risk

34-50 = moderate risk

51-75 = high risk

76-85 = extremely high risk

*Your risk for Compassion Fatigue (circle):*

26 or less = extremely low risk

27-30 = low risk

31-35 = moderate risk

36-40 = high risk

41 or more = extremely high risk

Chart by circling the appropriate score categories below for your assessed level of risk.

Level of Risk	Burnout Level	Compassion Fatigue (CF) Level	Satisfaction Level
High/Extremely High	51 or more	36 or more	82 or more
Moderate	34 - 50	31 - 35	64 - 81
Extremely Low/Low	32 or less	30 or less	63 or less

## Resiliency Quiz

Rate yourself on the following items:

(1 = very little, 5 = very strong)

1. \_\_\_\_ In a crisis or chaotic situation, I calm myself and focus on taking useful actions.
2. \_\_\_\_ I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary, expect to overcome them, and believe things will turn out well.
3. \_\_\_\_ I can tolerate high levels of uncertainty and ambiguity.
4. \_\_\_\_ I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm good at bouncing back from difficulties.
5. \_\_\_\_ I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations, laugh at myself, and am easily amused.
6. \_\_\_\_ I'm able to recover emotionally from losses and setbacks. I have friends I can talk with. I can express my feelings to others and can ask for help.
7. \_\_\_\_ I feel self-confident, appreciate myself, and have a healthy concept of who I am.
8. \_\_\_\_ I'm curious. I ask questions. I want to know how things work. I like to try new ways of doing things.
9. \_\_\_\_ I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.
10. \_\_\_\_ I'm good at solving problems. I can think in analytical, creative, or practical ways.
11. \_\_\_\_ I'm good at making things work well. I'm often asked to lead groups and projects.
12. \_\_\_\_ I'm very flexible. I feel comfortable with my paradoxical complexity. I'm optimistic and pessimistic, trusting and cautious, unselfish and selfish, and so forth.
13. \_\_\_\_ I'm always myself, but I've noticed that I'm different with different people and different situations.
14. \_\_\_\_ I prefer to work without a written job description. I'm more effective when I'm free to do what I think is best in each situation.
15. \_\_\_\_ I "read" people well and trust my intuition.
16. \_\_\_\_ I'm a good listener, I have good empathy skills.
17. \_\_\_\_ I'm nonjudgmental about others and am comfortable with many kinds of people.
18. \_\_\_\_ I'm very durable. I hold up well during tough times. I have an independent spirit underneath my cooperative way of working with others.
19. \_\_\_\_ I've been made stronger and better by difficult experiences.
20. \_\_\_\_ I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

Total points: \_\_\_\_\_

## Scoring:

**Low score:** A self-rating score under 50 indicates that life is probably a struggle for you and you know it. You may not handle pressure well. You don't learn anything useful from bad experiences. You feel hurt when people criticize you. You may sometimes feel helpless and without hope.

If these statements fit you, ask yourself, "Would I like to learn how to handle my difficulties better?"

If your answer is yes, then a good way to start is to meet with others who are working to develop their resiliency skills. Let them coach, encourage, and guide you. Another way is to get resiliency coaching from a counselor or coach.

**High score:** If you rated yourself high on most of these statements, you have a score over 90. This means you know you're already very good at bouncing back from life's setbacks.

**Middle score:** If you agreed with many of the statements and scored in the 70-89 range, then that is very good! Additional resiliency training/coaching will allow you to become even more self-confident and resilient than before. You will become better and better at bouncing back from adversities.

If you scored in the 50-69 range, your capacity for resilience appears to be fairly adequate, but you may be underrating yourself. A much larger percentage of people underrate themselves than overrate themselves on the assessment. Some people have a habit of being modest and automatically give themselves a 3 on every item for a total score of 60.

❖ The Resiliency Advantage, Al Siebert, PhD



## Test Your Stress-Hardiness

Are you tough when life gets rough? This simple quiz can give you an idea of how stress-hardy you are. Indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement, using this scale:

0=strongly disagree    1=mildly disagree    2=mildly agree    3= strongly agree

- A. \_\_\_\_ Trying my best at work makes a difference.
- B. \_\_\_\_ Trusting to fate is sometimes all I can do in a relationship.
- C. \_\_\_\_ I often wake up eager to start on the day's projects.
- D. \_\_\_\_ Thinking of myself as a free person leads to great frustration and difficulty.
- E. \_\_\_\_ I would be willing to sacrifice financial security in my work if something really challenging came along.
- F. \_\_\_\_ It bothers me when I have to deviate from the routine or schedule I've set for myself.
- G. \_\_\_\_ An average citizen can have impact on politics.
- H. \_\_\_\_ Without the right breaks, it is hard to be successful in my field.
- I. \_\_\_\_ I know why I am doing what I'm doing at work.
- J. \_\_\_\_ Getting close to people puts me at risk of being obligated to them.
- K. \_\_\_\_ Encountering new situations is an important priority in my life.
- L. \_\_\_\_ I really don't mind when I have nothing to do.

A+G    minus    B+H    =    Control score

C+I    minus    D+J    =    Commitment score

E+K    minus    F+L    =    Challenge score

**Total hardiness score = \_\_\_\_\_**

In this fast-paced, constantly changing world, stress is an ever-increasing problem. Undue stress wears down our immune system and leaves us susceptible to all types of physical ailments.

Psychological hardiness has been shown to reduce the occurrence of illness in reaction to stress. It is also linked to the ability to thrive under pressure in both personal and professional life.

The quiz measures the traits that make up the "hardy" personality. These include commitment, control, and challenge:

- Stress-hardy people realize they have **control** over their feelings. They may not necessarily have any control over the situation, but they can control how they react to that situation.
- Stress-hardy people view things as **challenges** instead of seeing them as being difficult.
- Stress-hardy people are **committed** to something, such as family, school, or career goals.

These three traits work in combination with each other to make an individual vulnerable or resistant to stress.

People who are "hardy" are more resilient to the effects of stress and are therefore less likely to develop stress-related illnesses than their less hardy counterparts. They also thrive in a variety of circumstances where less hardy individuals would falter.

Review the results below to see how stress-hardy you are.

### ***Quiz Results***

Hardy = 10 - 18

Moderately hardy = 1 - 9

Low hardiness = 0 or below

The Hardiness Questionnaire is taken from Suzanne Ouellette Kobasa's article "How Hardy Are You?" (American Health Magazine September 1984, p 64-77). Reprinted with permission from the publisher.

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# ***IN SIGHT*** for Oregon Lawyers and Judges

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

## **BUILDING STRESS HARDINESS**

Solutions for handling stress typically come in the form of helpful advice: eat better, exercise more, relax more, and learn how to say no. Although important to an overall strategy, these suggestions do not develop a general resilience in stressful situations. Deep breathing, for instance, *does* have a temporary positive effect on stress as an on-the-spot strategy, but in the long run, building stress hardiness is most effective in developing resistance to the harmful effects of stress.

Research on stress hardiness shows that people who possess certain skills and attitudes are less likely to experience stress and are more likely to respond effectively to changes, problems, and difficult situations. The key "three Cs" of stress hardiness are challenge, commitment, and control. Studies have found that people who believe they can handle life's challenges, who have a sense of personal commitment to what they are doing, and who feel in control of their lives tend to be resistant to many kinds of illness. On the other hand, those who focus on fear, chronic worry, anger, impatience, unhappiness, and perfectionism are more susceptible to stress-related problems. The legal profession often involves performance under stress, so lawyers, in particular, can benefit from developing stress hardiness.

### **Challenge**

The first attitude of stress hardiness is to approach life as a challenge. This mindset is based on the belief that change is a constant, normal, and positive part of life. People who handle stress successfully tend to see change as something to embrace and master rather than to avoid. They welcome new situations as opportunities to

learn and develop instead of viewing them as potential threats. They believe they can grow from both positive and negative life experiences. This optimistic, "challenging" attitude builds motivation, performance, leadership, and health. This attitude encompasses taking risks, embracing and adapting to change, and meeting life with a "give it your best shot" attitude. People who adopt this attitude see the glass as "half full."

### **Commitment**

The second attitude that defines stress hardiness is commitment. Commitment gives people a sense of purpose and meaning. It allows them to fully engage in projects and tasks despite stressful changes or circumstances. When people are committed to something, they bring their curiosity and their best effort to their activities. Being fully engaged ignites energy and passion, which lessen the impact of stress. By realizing the important role they play, the positive impact they can have on others, and the meaning in what they do, people can become less stressed, more energized, and more motivated.

### **Control**

The third stress-hardy attitude is a sense of control over your destiny and direction. Individuals with this attitude see themselves as in charge of and responsible for their own lives. They tend not to spend a lot of time complaining or blaming other people and circumstances for their situation. They also have a realistic perspective on their current sphere of influence, focusing their energy and efforts on changing the things they can and accepting the things they can't. When people make a clear plan of reasonable action for situ-

ations that they can alter, their stress lessens. Even if things don't turn out exactly how they would like, they feel a sense of accomplishment in having taken steps toward their desired outcome. Additionally, they are likely to believe that they can learn from the experience and will be motivated to continue looking for positive ways they can improve a situation.

## Thriving in the Practice of Law

On Thursday, April 7, 2011, the OAAP will present two half-day CLEs to help lawyers and judges increase their resilience for the practice of law.

### ***Stress Hardiness for Lawyers and Judges***

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

How can you develop stress hardiness? Nancy Stek, Assistant Director of the New Jersey Lawyers Assistance Program, will identify the attitudes and skills that lawyers and judges can employ to increase their resilience to the stress of the legal profession. Qualifies for 3 MCLE personal management assistance credits.

This CLE is a fundraiser for the Oregon Lawyers Assistance Foundation (OLAF). OLAF provides treatment funds to lawyers who otherwise are unable to afford needed mental health and addiction treatment. Donations are welcomed but not required for attendance. The average cost of a half-day CLE is \$100. A donation to OLAF in any amount is greatly appreciated.

### ***What Lawyers and Judges Need to Know About Compassion Fatigue***

#### ***– And the Strategies to Prevent It***

1:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

What is compassion fatigue and why are lawyers and judges at risk for developing it? Mike Long, OAAP Attorney Counselor, JD, MSW, will discuss the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue and present strategies you can use to prevent it. Qualifies for 3 MCLE personal management assistance credits. This CLE is free.

The seminars will be held at the World Trade Center, 121 SW Salmon, Skybridge Rooms A & B, Portland, OR.

To register, go to [www.oaap.org](http://www.oaap.org) and select CLE/Workshops. For more information about these CLEs, call 503-226-1057 or 1-800-321-6227.

## Building Resilience

Resilience is the capacity to rise above adversity or trauma and become stronger as a result of the struggle. It is the ability to cope with stress and develop a "muscle" to handle future negative events – in other words, stress hardiness. The benefits are clear. So how do we actually develop stress hardiness or resilience? One of the key skills is learning how to "reframe" a situation.

Reframing is shifting your focus to the cup being half full. By reflecting on a stressful incident and finding and building strengths from the achievement, you build resilience. Instead of seeing yourself as a helpless survivor, you can reframe an experience to see yourself as an accomplished strategist. Admittedly, being the victim is sometimes easier; it removes the obligation to change. But it is also possible to emerge from difficult situations with dignity and become stronger and more resilient as a result.

Take a closer look at a particularly challenging situation that you have faced and come through. How did you handle it? What did you learn from the experience? How are you stronger as a result? What possible opportunities were created? How might you handle things differently in the future? Reflecting on these questions about past events can help you become more practiced in reframing new situations as they arise.

Reframing does not mean being a Pollyanna or denying the reality of hardships. It is shifting your perspective from seeing only the dark cloud to also looking for the silver lining. As you practice reframing the circumstances and events in your life and your work, you will find that you become better equipped to handle the stresses of life and the law.

If you would like to develop a stress-hardy attitude and work on your resiliency skills, the OAAP is presenting a seminar to help you develop your resiliency. See the box accompanying this article for more information.

NANCY STEK, LCADC

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, NEW JERSEY  
LAWYERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

*This article is adapted and reprinted from the article, "From the Conference: More on Building Stress Hardiness," Nancy Stek, Highlights, Vol. 12, No. 4, Winter 2010, published by the ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs.*

ROBERT M. SAPOLSKY

Author of *A Primate's Memoir*

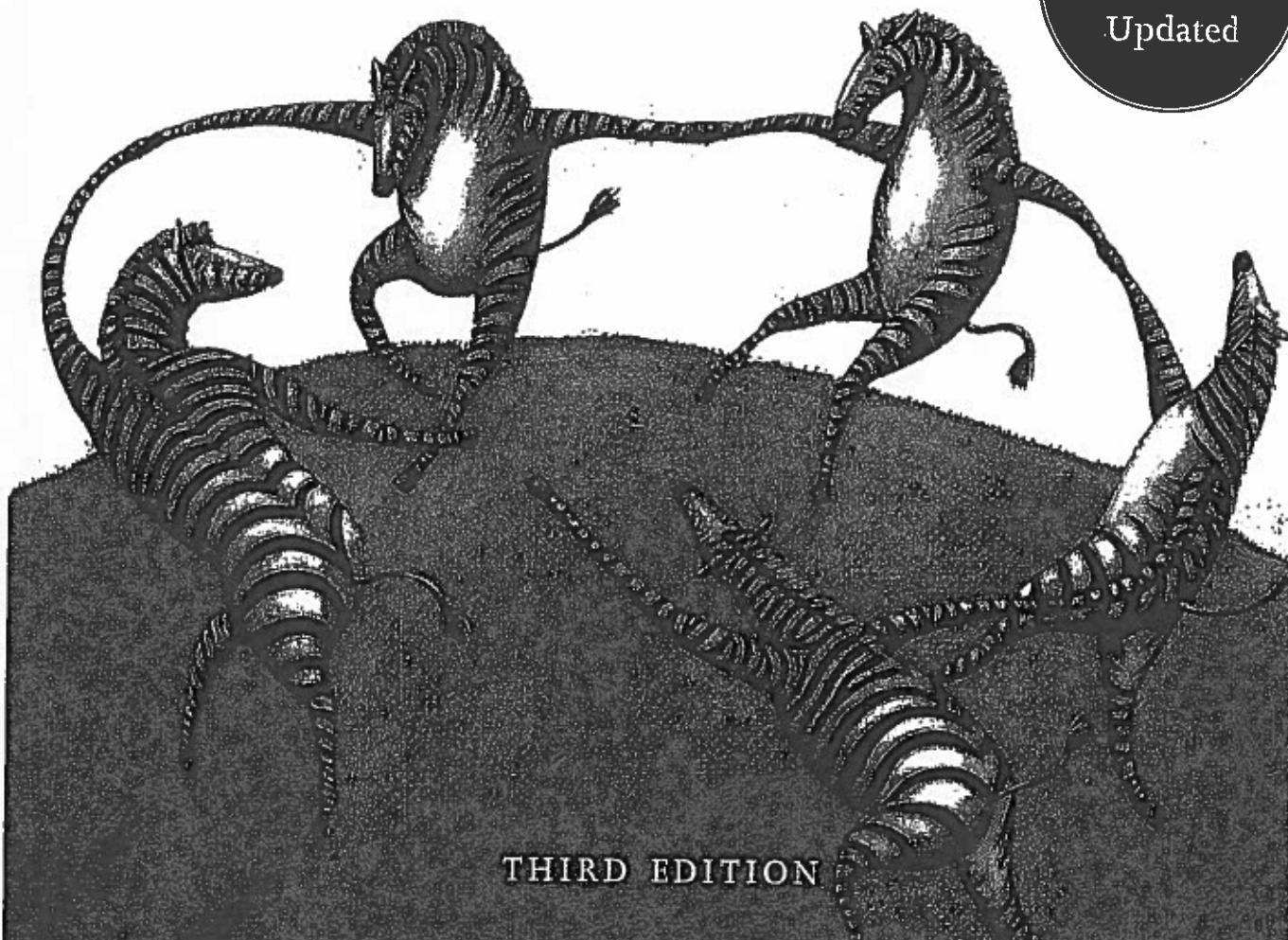
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