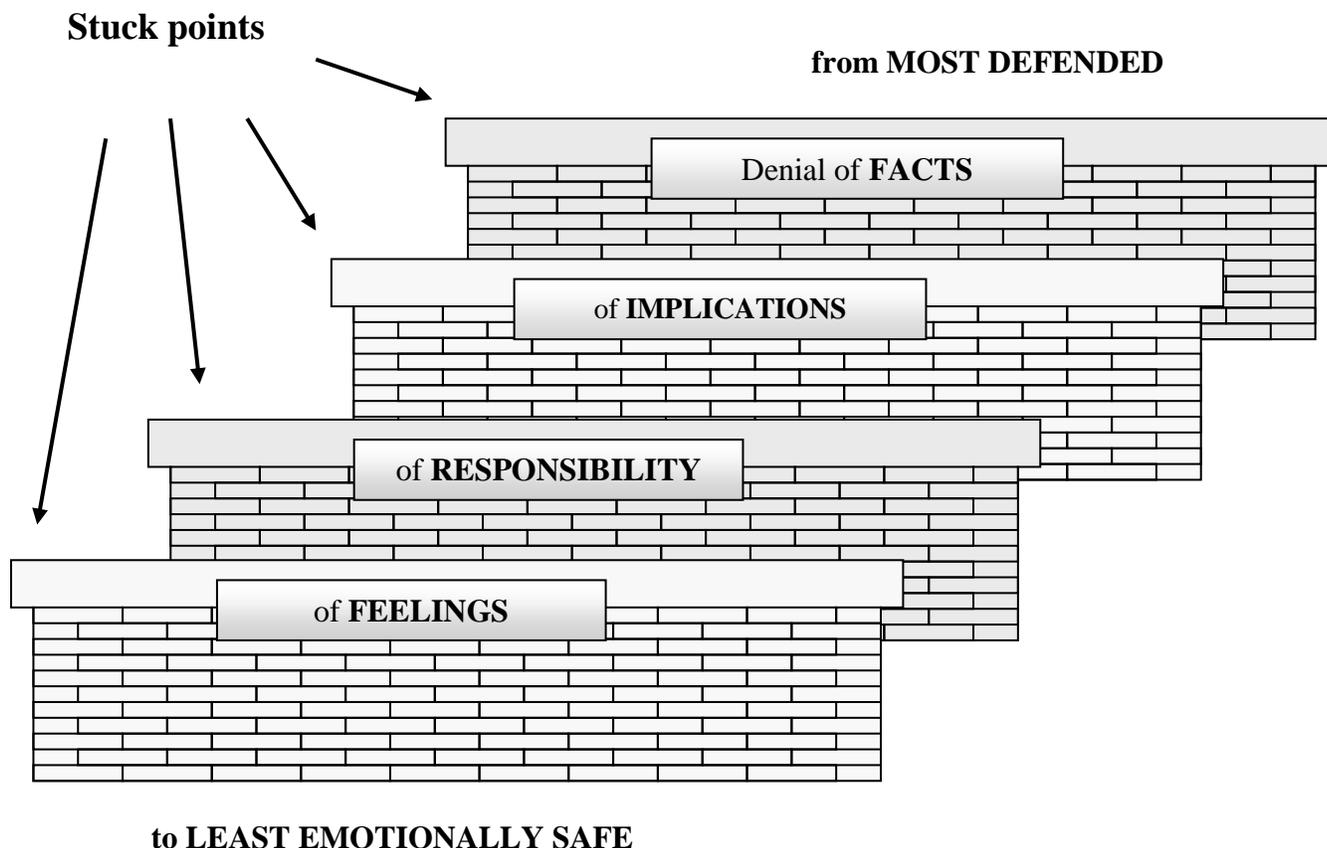


Denial: System of Emotional Self Protection

Positive Features of Denial:

1. It puts off the problem thereby buying us extra time to get ready to face it. We need time to gather our external and internal resources to face the problem.
2. It helps us hold it together. The precipitating problem is bad enough. If we fall apart the problem can turn into a crisis. It is important to stay internally organized (put together).
3. Remember, everyone uses healthy levels of denial every day. We all use filters to block out things that would otherwise disable us from even going to the grocery stores in our cars.
4. Denial is not our home; it is just a temporary blink to help us prepare to face the problem.



Levels of insight within the walls of denial:

1. Denial of **FACTS**: Lying is the most conscious form of denial. *"No, I haven't been drinking."*
2. Denial of **IMPLICATION**: Less conscious. *"My liver may be inflamed but that doesn't mean I have a drinking problem. It just means I need to slow down."* Self-deception.
3. Denial of **RESPONSIBILITY**: Less conscious. Main strategy is to justify inability to change, to side step blame. *"I come from a family that drinks hard, you knew that when you met me."* Etc. The idea is to have others drop all expectations for changes (i.e., facing that problem and working through it). Characterological.
4. Denial of **FEELINGS**: *"LEAVE ME ALONE!"* The level with the least insight. Underlying feelings of fear, despair, shame, guilt etc., are avoided by [defensive mechanisms](#) (such as shutting down, repression and primary denial, dissociating, splitting) or strategies that create chaos and distractions that block out disturbing feelings. Or we get angry and rage chronically to protect us from disturbing feelings associated with facing the pain, and the work of healing. This wall is the last line of defense between the person and emotional crisis. It's why we, as counselors, want to accompany the client through the walls of denial with respect and caution.