

The Anger Management Programme



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Registered with the
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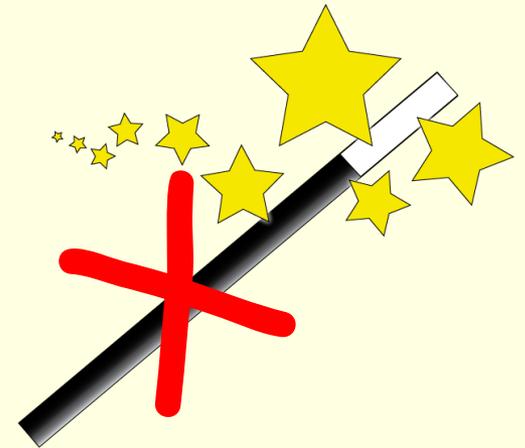
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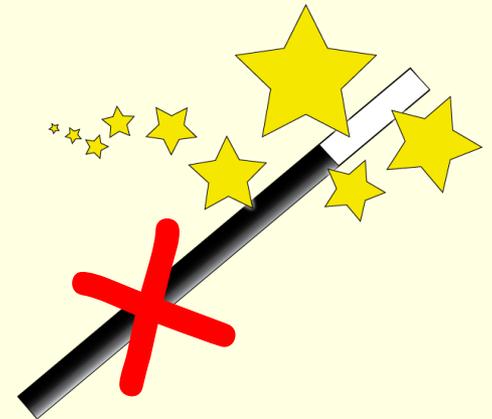


Changing habitual ways of behaving
won't just happen because of what
you will read in this programme.
You have to work at it!
There's no magic wand!



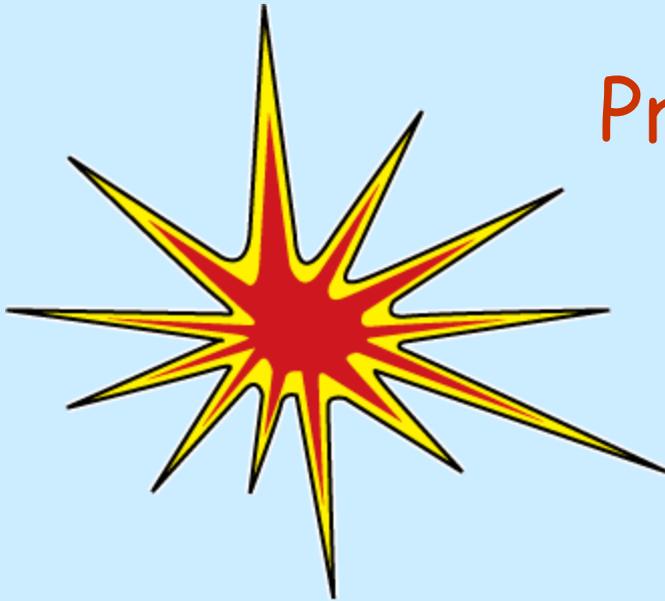
It's not magic - you need to prepare

- If you wanted to learn how to play an instrument, walk a tightrope, juggle, or write a computer programme, it would be no good just reading about it, would it? Success in anything requires practice!
- The aim of this programme is to change habitual ways of responding angrily in some situations. Knowledge alone will not do it - you need to follow the simple preparation steps and practice the new ways of thinking and behaving.



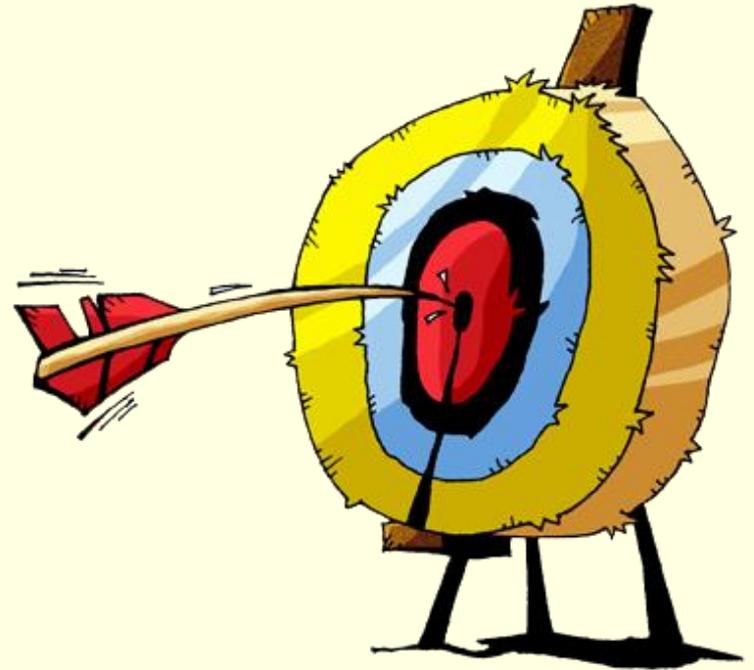
The Anger Management Programme

PART ONE Introduction to the Programme



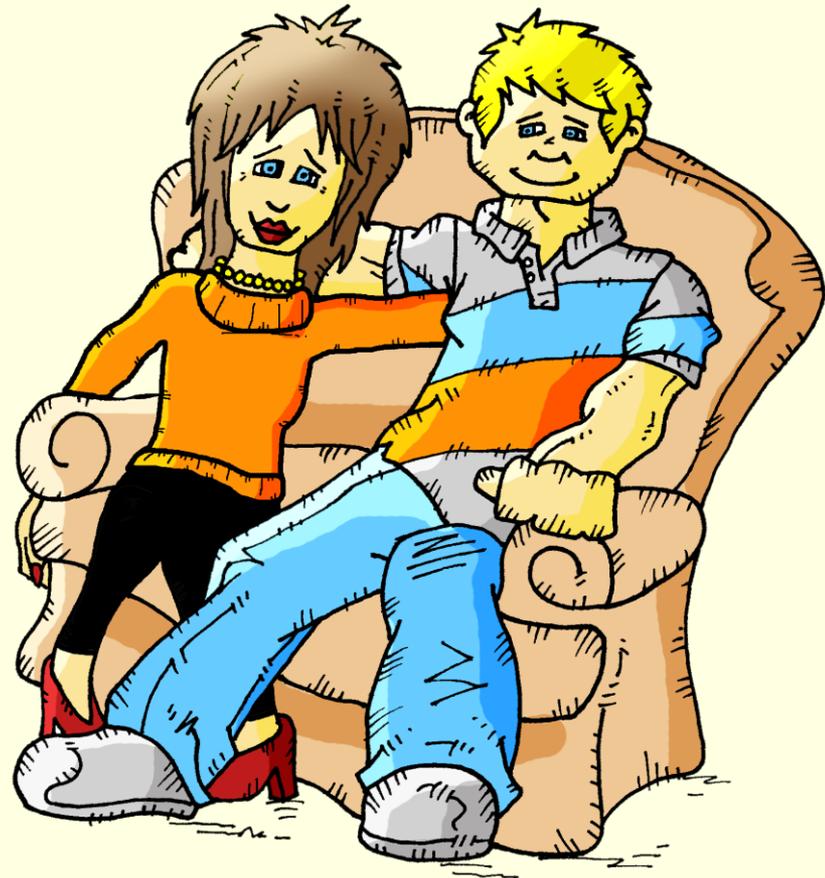
On successful completion of 'The Anger Management Programme'

- You will be able to choose what to do instead of reacting with anger.
- Be better able to discuss things calmly and handle 'wind ups.'
- Know how to defuse anger directed at you.
- Be able to release anger safely without hurting yourself or others.
- Be less stressed and feel angry and frustrated less often.



Sam and Dan

During the programme we meet Sam and Dan who are experiencing anger, stress and relationship difficulties.



Illustrations by
Barry Aldridge
Barry_Aldridge27@tiscali.co.uk

Learning to understand and interrupt the anger process

The Number One Priority of the programme is to provide an Impulse Control Technique to give control over angry and aggressive responses.

Everyone has the ability to control angry impulses, but many people haven't yet learned how to do it!

IMPULSE
CONTROL

IS NUMBER
ONE

1

PRIORITY

Anger Management or Anger Therapy?

- There is no clear line between Anger Management and Anger Therapy because Anger Management is, in many ways, also therapeutic.
- **Anger Management** is about feeling calmer and resisting angry impulses. Its priority is behavioural change.
- **Anger Therapy** is about emotional health, about coping with the present causes of anger and processing 'unfinished business' from the past.

I sometimes find that one or both of the partners in a couple needs to do personal one-to-one work to overcome events stopping them feeling loving towards each other.

You should consider personal therapy or couples counselling if.....

You may need to consult a therapist to complete your work if, at the end of this programme, you are still:-

- Struggling with impulse control.
- Having bouts of rage.
- Feeling angry or hurt about events from the past.
- Unable to express yourself assertively.
- Experiencing relationship difficulties.

IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT
HURTING YOURSELF OR
SOMEONE ELSE YOU SHOULD GET
PROFESSIONAL ADVICE IMMEDIATELY





Working face-to-face with me

I invite potential clients for an initial consultation to help them decide whether sign up for the six session 'Anger Management Programme', or come for anger relief therapy, or both.

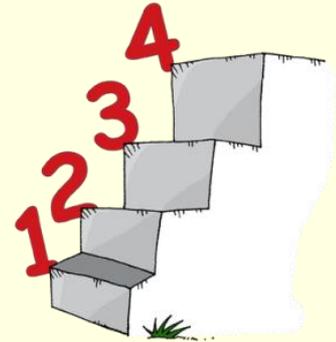
At the time of writing the initial consultation is free
[and without any requirement to book paid for sessions subsequently].

To enquire about arranging a free consultation
and to check my current fees please e-mail:

brian@brianamartin.co.uk

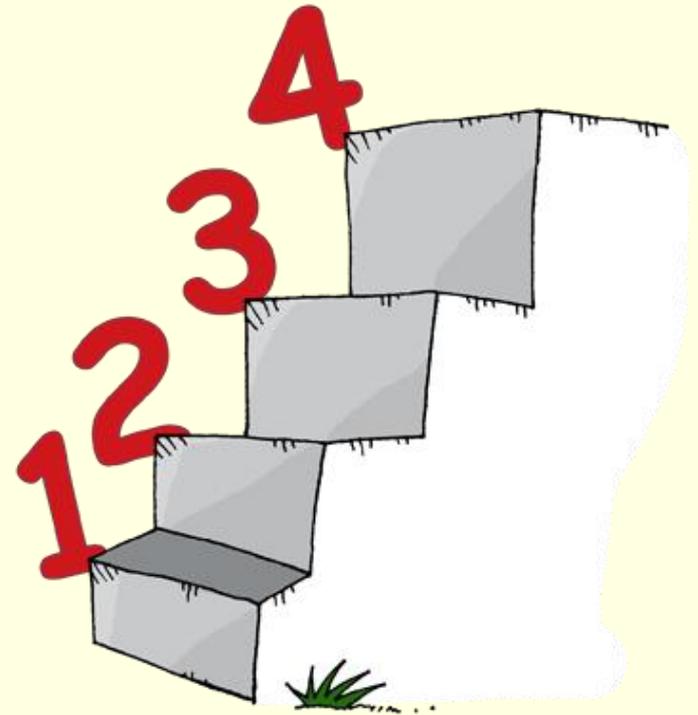
Mastering the techniques will take time

- Right now, you don't know how to control your angry reactions in some situations. This is learning level one.
- At the next stage, when you have read the programme material, you will be aware of how to do it, but unable to do it consistently. Then you will be at learning level two.
- You will then progress to a stage where you can manage your reactions consistently, but are still having to think about it. That is learning level three.
- Finally, you will be managing your responses without having to remind yourself what to do. That is learning level four, the ultimate stage of all learning, and is called:-
'Unconscious Competence'.



Be patient with yourself.....

- Be patient with yourself - there are no short cuts to 'Unconscious Competence'.
- You will have setbacks along the way. Some days you may think that you haven't learned much at all.
- Stick at it - with practice, the Impulse Control Techniques in this programme are highly effective.



Initially, your impulse to react angrily may remain strong - the difference is you will be able to control it!

PART TWO
Understanding
The Anger Process
[so you can manage it
better]

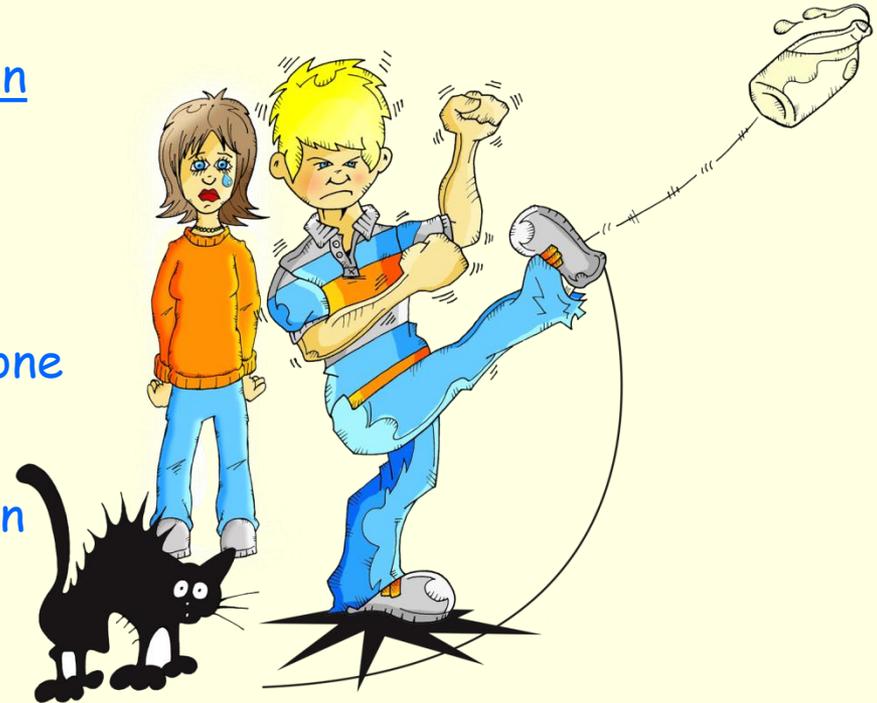


It's vital to be able to release anger and frustration

Anger Management is not about suppressing anger - it's the opposite, in fact. It's about resisting your angry autopilot reaction and learning to release your anger and frustration in ways which don't hurt yourself or anyone else.

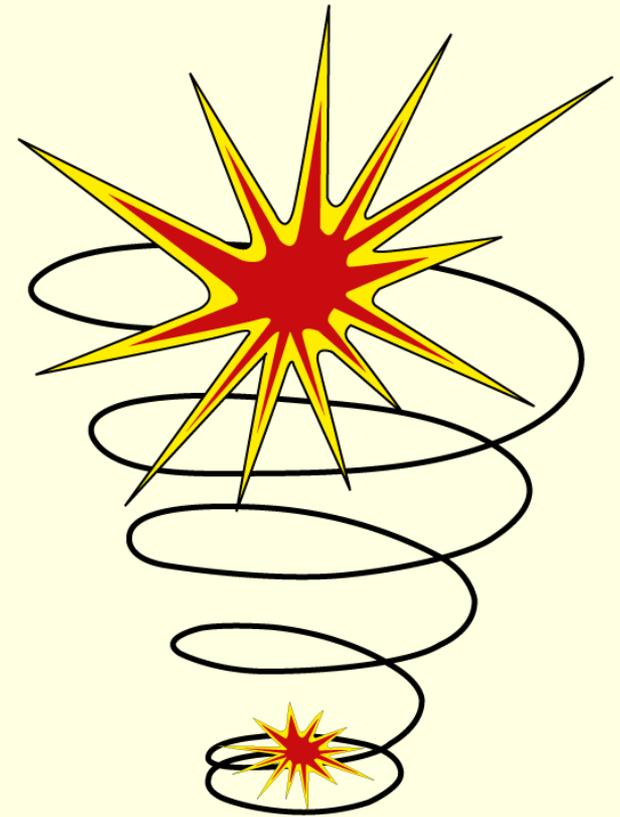
If you 'bottle up' anger and frustration you will find it impossible to achieve self control. At some points you will 'blow' with 'over the top' inappropriate releases of anger and frustration.

It's also about learning to be angry less often.



Anger has many dimensions

- Although I have sometimes used only the word 'anger' in this programme, I also include under this heading aggressive reactions caused by hurt, jealousy, feeling anxious, frustration, resentment and stress. In fact, any state of mind which may lead to an 'over the top' aggressive reaction.
- These feelings are perfectly natural in all human beings. Problems result when they are expressed or acted on inappropriately.



Understanding your anger process: some key points

- We ALL have a last-minute warning from our body when we are on the edge of 'losing it', so we have a few seconds to choose not to [most people coming on the programme don't believe this at first].
- Anger display is often hurt feelings in disguise
- Alcohol switches our Impulse Control Switch to 'OFF'
- We give ourselves Permission to be aggressive
- We store anger and hurt stamps and often 'rubber band' back to old angry feelings.
- Breathing to and from the diaphragm is deeply soothing
- Assertiveness is one of the main keys to overcoming anger

AND

We can use humour to reduce anger.

Anger is OK - It's how you handle it that counts

- Anger is OK, it's one of the core emotions of all human beings.
- It's normal to feel anger when we are faced with unfairness and injustice.
- Anger is often a source of energy to right wrongs and to protect those we love.
- There is nothing wrong with feeling and displaying anger - providing we don't express it, or act, in ways which hurt others or ourselves.
- It's certainly not OK to use anger displays to bully, manipulate and control others.



The difference between anger and rage

- **Anger** usually has identifiable sources - things that have happened or are happening which can be identified and focused on in anger management work.
- **Rage** is often without specific identifiable causes and may originate from early development experiences in childhood. The person is not angry about anything, or with anybody, in particular - but is explosively angry very quickly.
- **Both anger and rage** benefit from anger release techniques, but rage is more likely to need counselling or psychotherapy too!





How do you respond when angry or hurt?

HOT RESPONSE

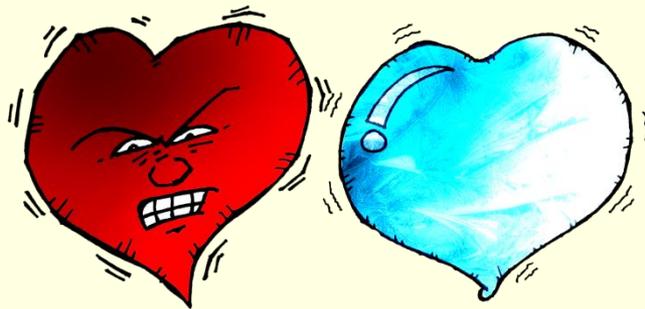
Aggressive, intimidating behaviour including verbally abusive rants



Your priority is to learn Impulse Control and how to be assertive instead



Or a mixture of both?



COLD RESPONSE

Pushing hurt and anger down inside. Fighting back in passive aggressive ways including being icy cold with the other person without explaining why

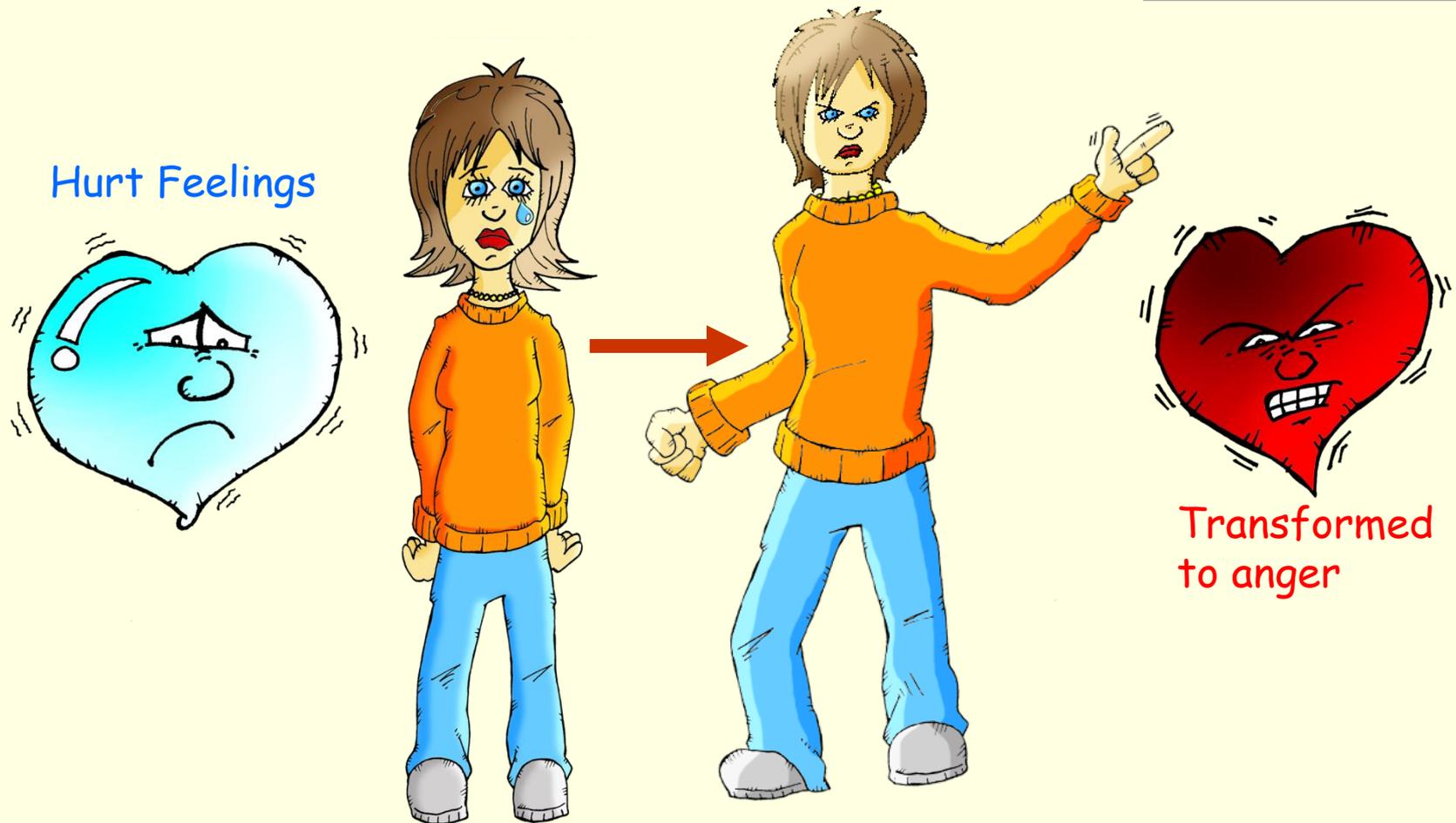


Your priority is to learn to be assertive instead

You need to learn to release anger safely and to use anger reduction techniques



When dealing with anger look for the hurt behind the anger



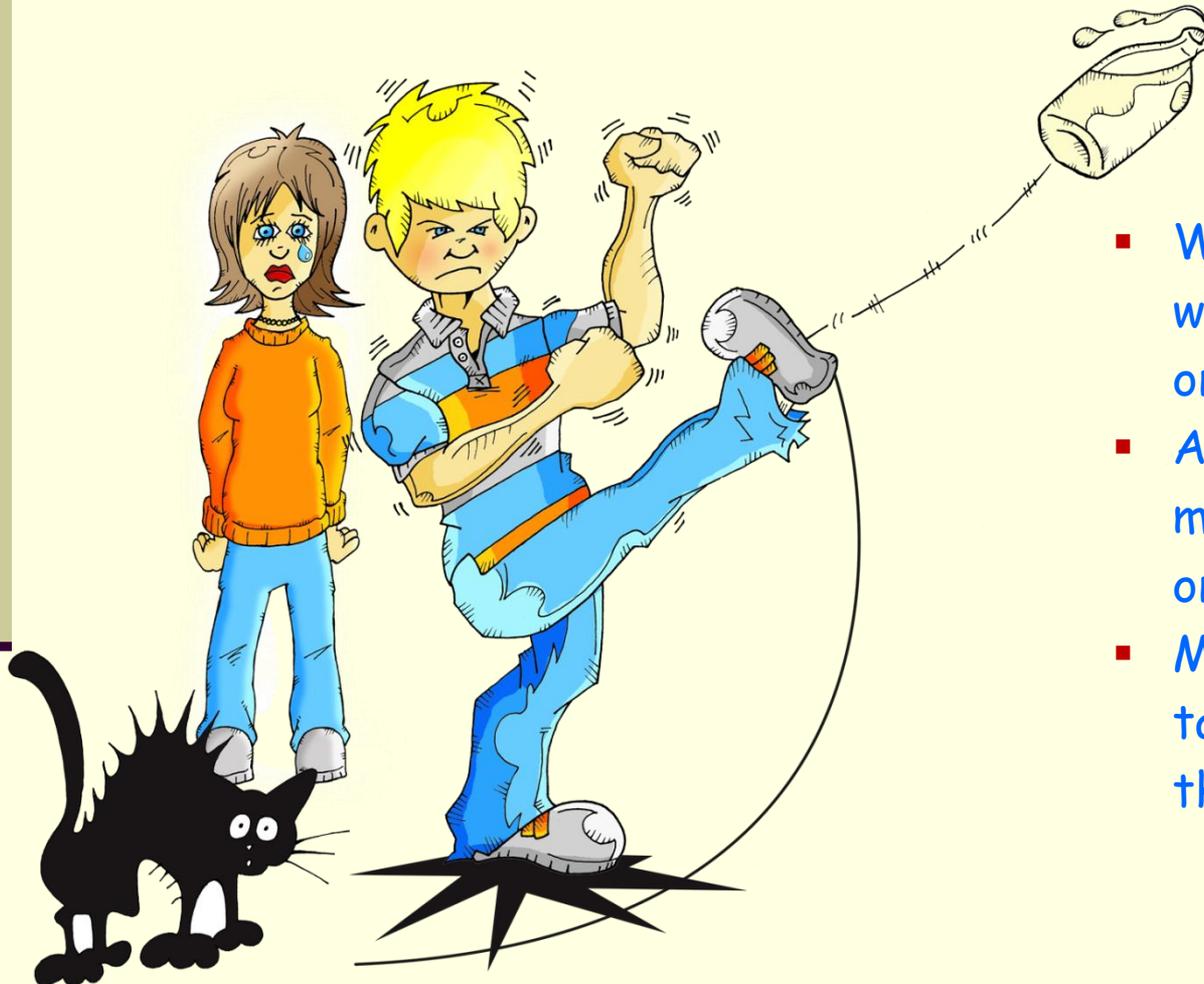
I usually find that there are hurt feelings behind angry behaviour

Emotional Trading Stamps - How we store anger and hurt

- When we store anger and hurt it's like collecting emotional trading stamps and cashing them in later with 'over the top' reactions.
- Unresolved anger and hurt is a major factor in stress.
- Unresolved anger and hurt needs to be released in ways that don't harm yourself or anyone else.



Displacement - known as 'kicking the cat'- is when we take it out on the wrong target

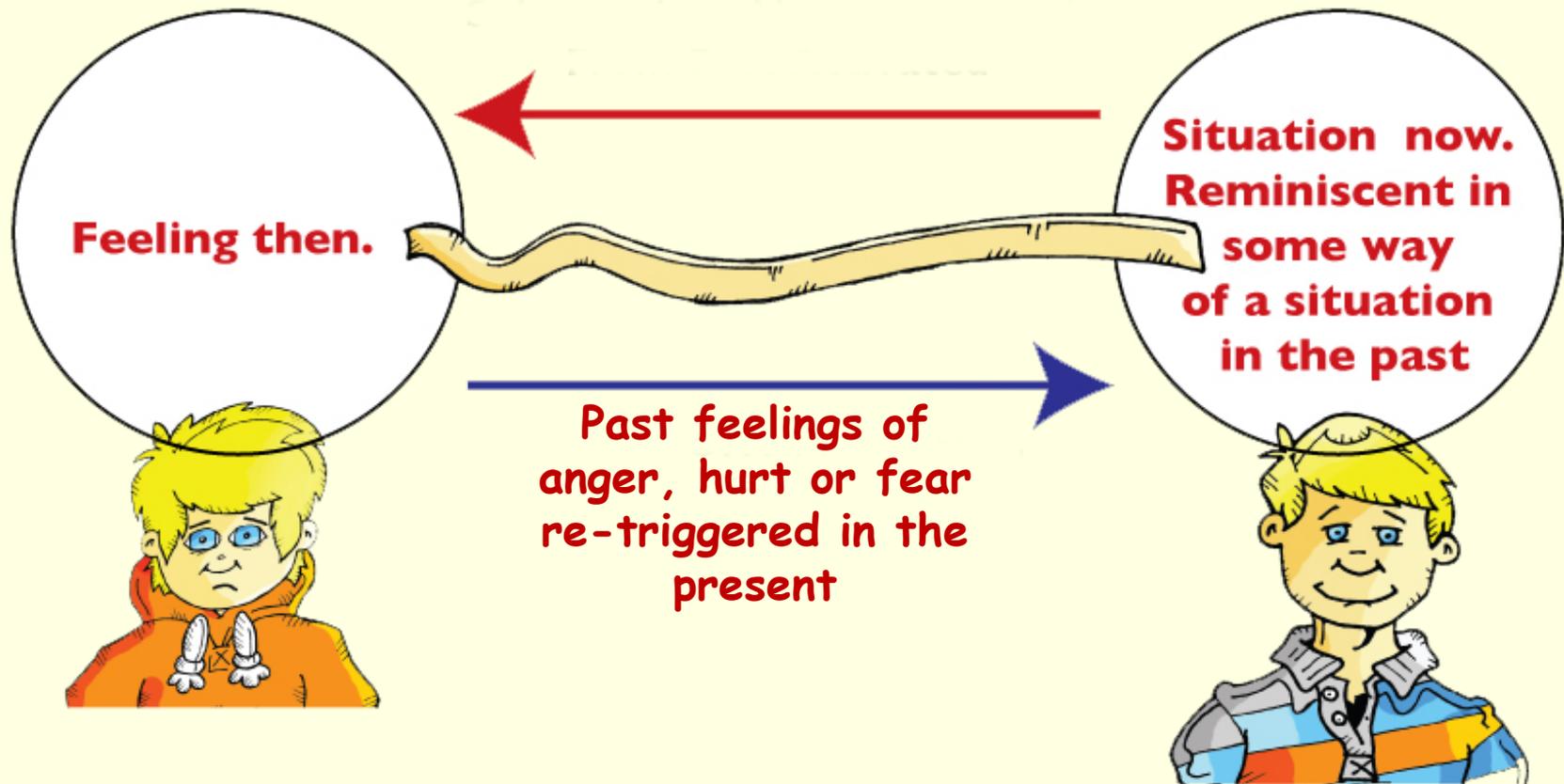


- When we are stressed we tend to 'take it out' on other people.
- Anger and frustration must be released, but not on the wrong person.
- Maybe you sometimes take out your stress on the wrong person?

Rubber Banding - Why past events still make us angry

- 'Rubber Banding' is a subconscious, automatic process, which causes us to re-experience feelings of hurt and anger from the past.
- When anything happening to us reminds us, at a conscious or subconscious level, of something in the past, we get the same feeling now that we got then.
- We can find ourselves reacting with anger, hurt, or fear, to what's going on: find ourselves reacting inappropriately with feelings which belong to the original event/s in the past and not to the present.
- The aim of anger therapy is to 'cut the rubber bands' so we can respond appropriately to the here and now and not replay old feelings.

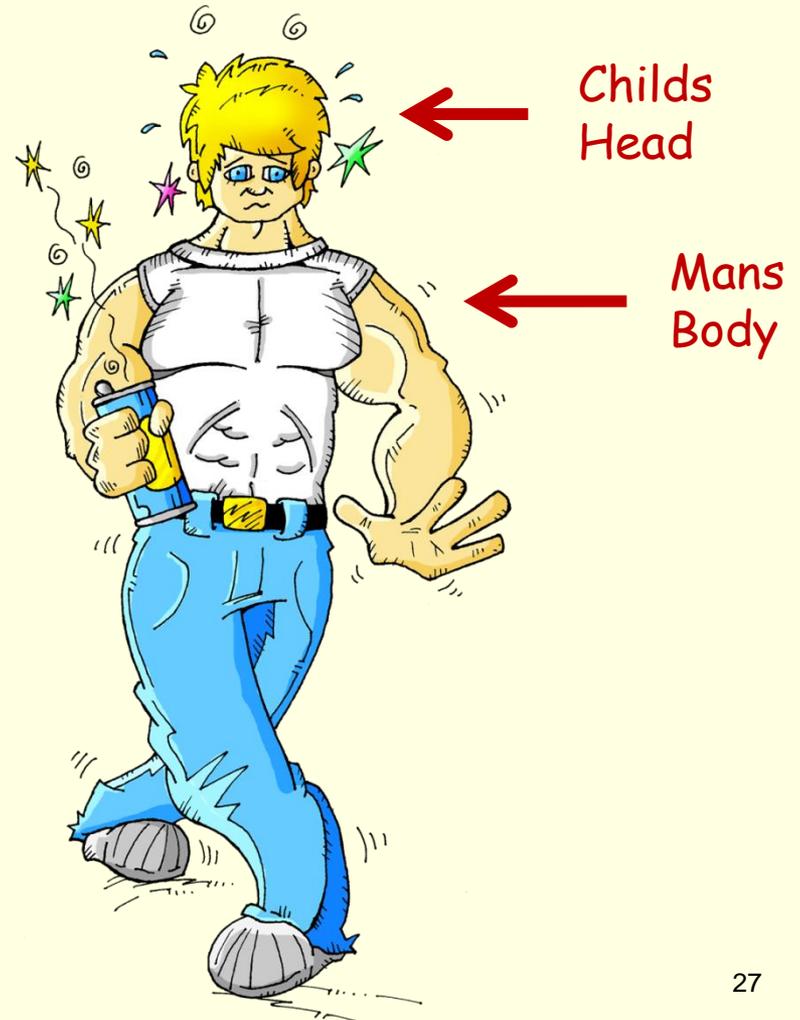
The rubber band which pulls past feelings into the present



The impact of alcohol - you already know it.....

If you get angry when you have had a drink, you need to avoid 'risky' subjects and situations while under the influence.

Excess alcohol switches off impulse control methods taught in anger management programmes.





PART THREE

Keys To Successful Impulse Control

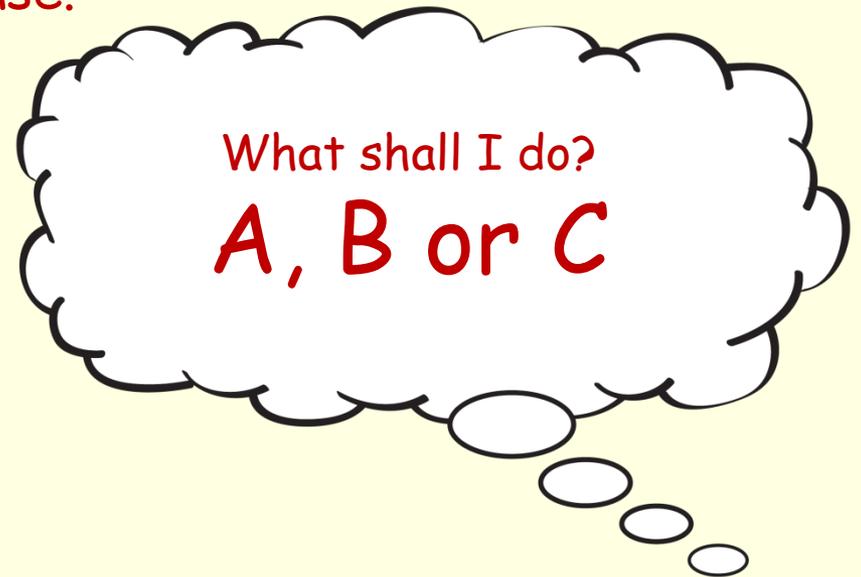


Impulse Control is about being able to choose how to react

Impulse Control is the alternative to an aggressive autopilot response.

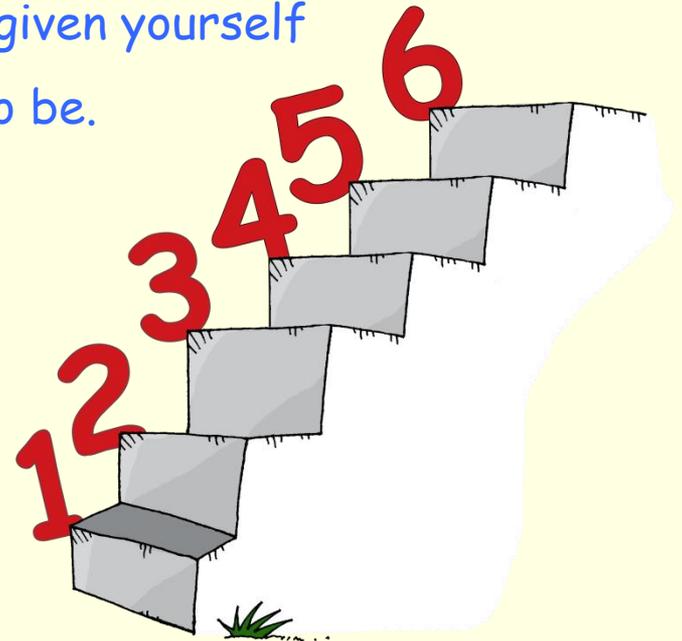
It's about developing sufficient self awareness and self control to be able to exercise choice about how to respond when feeling hurt, angry or frustrated.

The 'Anger Management Programme' teaches how to use the A B C 'Not Now' model to switch off the aggressive autopilot and be in control of your reaction.



The six simple impulse control preparation steps which follow

- Step 1 Make the decision to be in control of yourself.
- Step 2 Get rid of your False Beliefs about anger & Take Responsibility for your aggressive reactions.
- Step 3 Withdraw the Permissions you have given yourself & visualise being the way you want to be.
- Step 4 Make a list of your 'Red Zones' & and 'Anger Triggers'.
- Step 5 Use the Last Minute Warning from your you body.
- Step 6 Learn to use Self Calming Breathing.



Step One: Make the decision to take control of the way you react

Until YOU firmly decide to change the autopilot way you react when angry, frustrated or hurt you are stuck as you are!

Determination to change is fundamental to success in changing!



Step Two

You need to get rid of at two major false beliefs you may have

Major False Belief
Number One

'My angry response
happens in a flash.
I don't get a chance
to control it'.

Major False Belief
Number Two

'People, and things
that happen, cause
my angry responses'.

Why those two beliefs are false



False Belief Number One

'My angry response happens in a flash.
I don't get a chance to control it'.

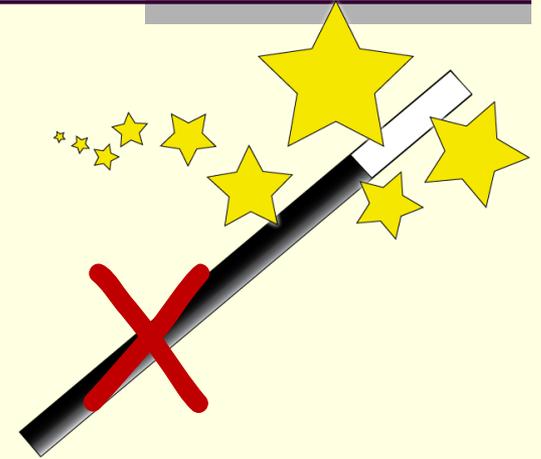
This is not true - because your body
ALWAYS gives you a last-minute warning
when you are on the edge of 'losing it'.
You have just not been noticing the warning!

It's absolutely vital to your success on this programme that you notice what your body is telling you! The last minute warning from your body gives you a few seconds to decide how to react.

False Belief Number Two

'People and things cause
my angry responses'

This is not true!



Of course, the things people do, and things that happen, can give rise to angry feelings and can 'make you angry', but no-one has a magic wand that can make you REACT in an angry way.

It's inevitable that sometimes you will feel angry, but how you react is ALWAYS up to you!

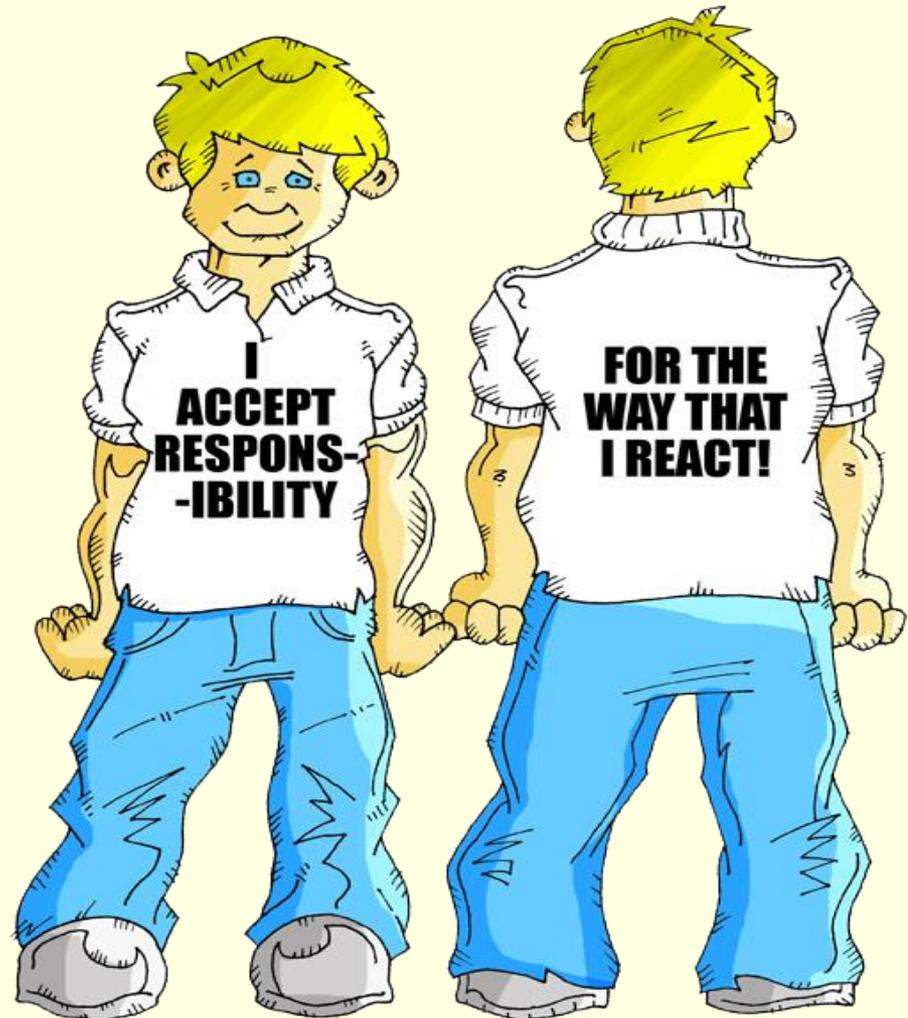
Step Two [continued]

Take responsibility for the way you react

Take
responsibility
for how you
react.

Don't blame
loss of control
on others.

Until you take
responsibility
for how you
react you are
stuck.



Step Three: Withdraw the Permissions to be aggressive you have given yourself

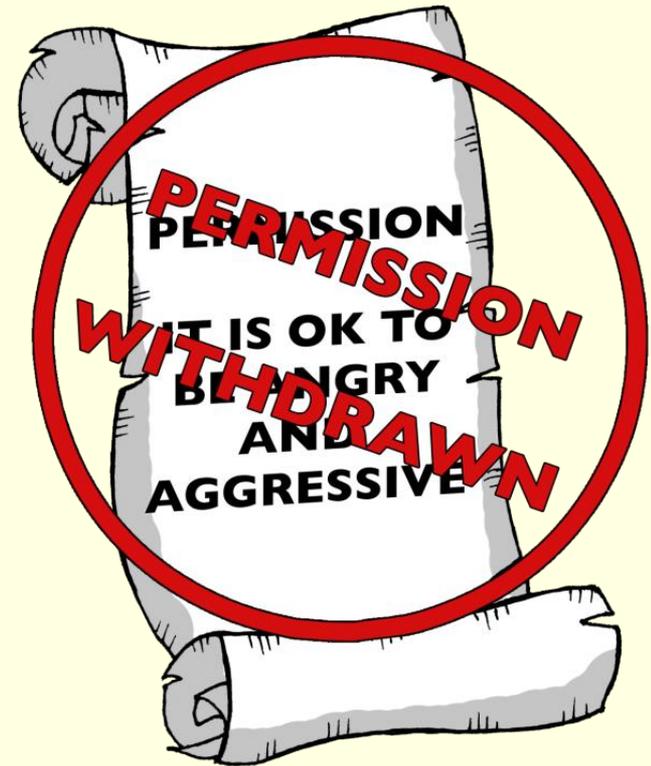
It may sound strange, but the fact is that, without realising it, you have so far given yourself permission, at a subconscious level, to behave aggressively in certain situations and with certain people.

You don't do it with everybody - so you do know how to control your anger when you don't give yourself permission not to.



An example of how 'Permissions' work

- A former client of mine, a lorry driver, was acting out angry impulses at home and his relationship was at break-up point. 'I just can't help it', he said.
- I asked him if he had any rude and awkward customers. 'Yes - lots'.
'Do you lose your temper with them?' I asked.
'No, I'd lose my job if I did'.
- So he did not give himself permission to 'lose it' at work - only at home! He knew how to manage his anger when he had not given himself permission to 'lose it'. So can you!



What Permissions have you been giving yourself? Do you respond aggressively when anyone:

- Forgets the way you like things done?
- Reminds you what you haven't done?
- Reminds you what you have done - wrong?
- Says "Don't do it that way, do it this way" ?
- Is slow, incompetent, or 'thick'?
- Talks back at you?
- Makes a mistake which inconveniences you ?
- Doesn't do things the way you think they should be done?

Or when the children won't do what you say?
Or do you get aggressive when you screw up
and feel angry with yourself?





Do you respond aggressively when anyone....

- Criticises you or disagrees with you ?
- Is selfish, inconsiderate or rude?
- Belittles you: takes the mickey?
- Treats you as though you're stupid?
- Embarrasses you in front of others?
- Is in a mood with you?



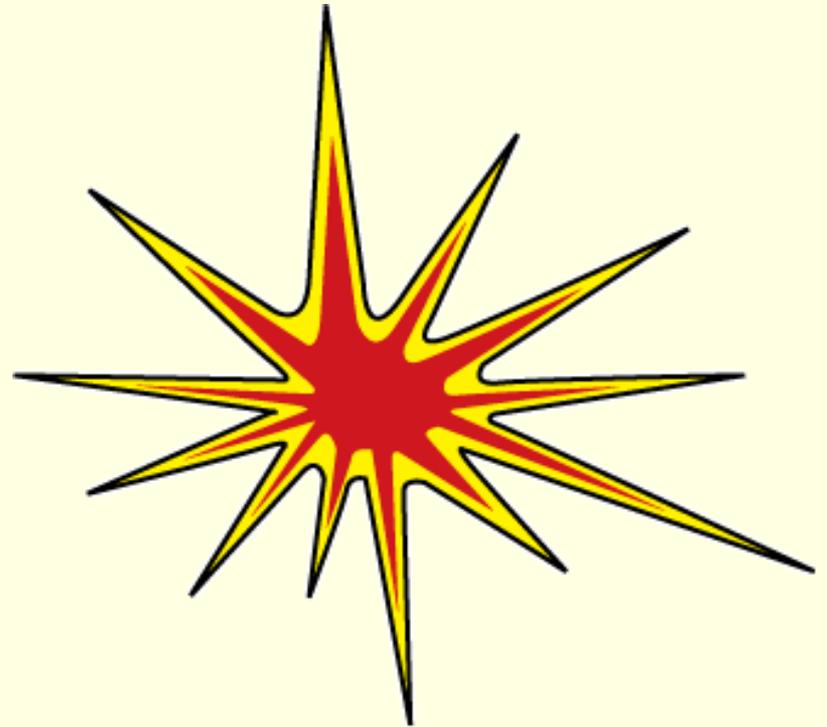
Maybe, sometimes they didn't mean to hurt your feelings, but that's how you experienced it? In other words, it may be your interpretation, not what they meant, and you have taken it wrongly!



Best to 'check it out' before you take offence.
Ask 'what do you mean?'

Step Four: Make a list of your 'Red Zones' and 'Anger Triggers'

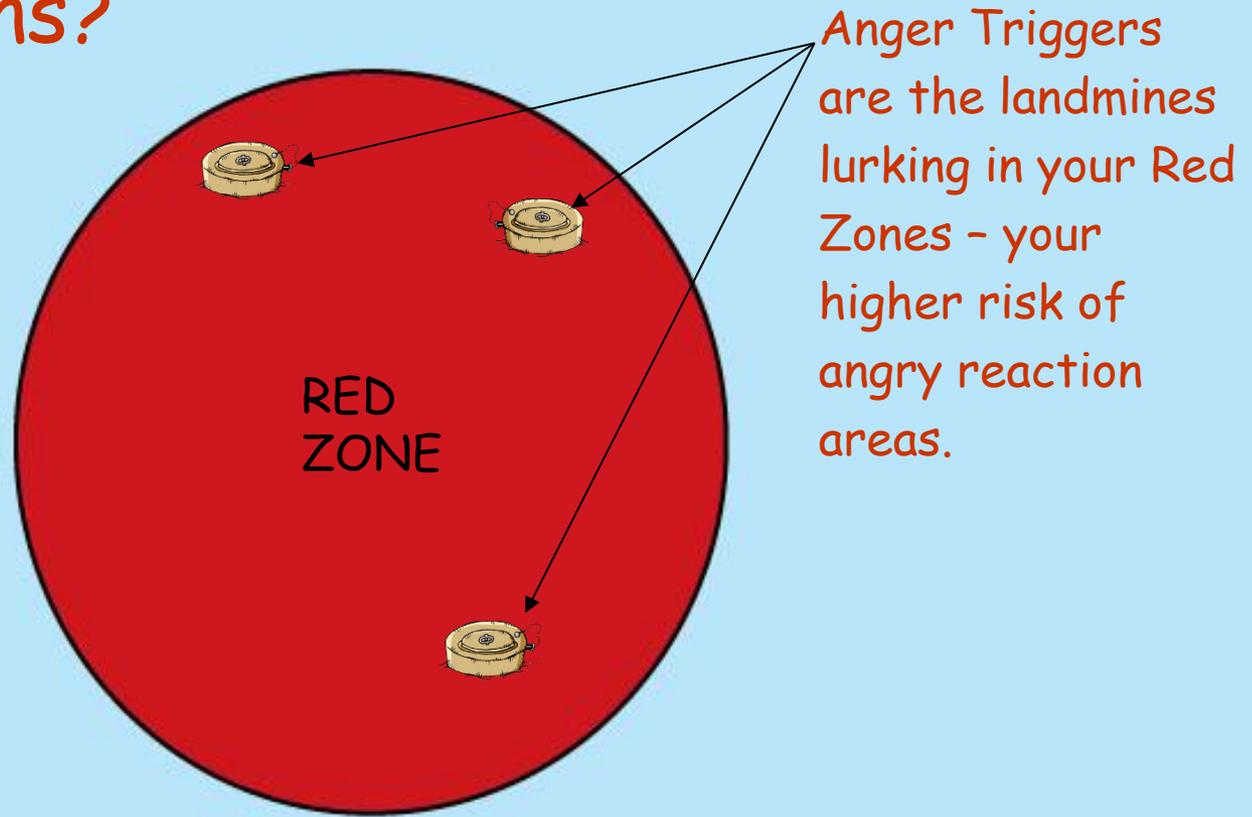
- You already know your anger triggers. They are the things that you have reacted to in the past.
- You could start by checking yourself out against the list of **Permissions** on pages 36 - 39.



What triggers your angry reactions?

Anger Triggers are the specific things that trigger an angry, frustrated or hurt response.

Triggers are flashpoints - specific types of event that you have reacted angrily to in the past.



OK ZONE

Make a list of your 'Red Zones'

Where,
when
and
with who
do you tend
to get angry?

- Think of Red Zones as anger, frustration and hurt minefields where you are at higher risk of hitting an anger Trigger and reacting aggressively.
- Red Zones are the 'where', 'when' and 'around who' of anger.



Where,
when
and
with who
do you tend
to get angry?



Red Zones
are places
and
situations
where there
is a higher
risk that
something
might
happen
which could
spark an
angry
reaction.

OK Zone

How to use Red Zone awareness



- **Purpose One: Planning**
So you can think about how you want to be when you next enter any particular Red Zone.
- **Purpose Two: Visualisation**
So you can visualise how you want to be when you next enter any particular Red Zone.
- **Purpose Three: Learn to notice**
When you are entering a Red Zone you can remind yourself of how you have decided you want to be when in that zone if you feel yourself getting angry.

Red Zones and Triggers

An Example: RED ZONE

When visiting your least favourite relative you are entering a Red Zone, a Minefield



An Example: TRIGGER

When you feel that you are being criticised by that least favourite relative during your visit that is a Trigger, a flashpoint



More examples of Red Zones

- Any place or situation where you have 'lost it' in the past.
- When driving and late.
- When doing a job you don't want to do.
- When with certain of your partner's relatives.
- Any time you risk being refused what you want.



A personal example:
A Red Zone for me personally is when I am with anyone from 'It's more than my job's worth' brigade. You know, the officials who stick to what seem petty rules to stop them having to be helpful. I seem to meet more of this type of person when dealing with banks, so going into my local branch is a definite 'Red Zone'.

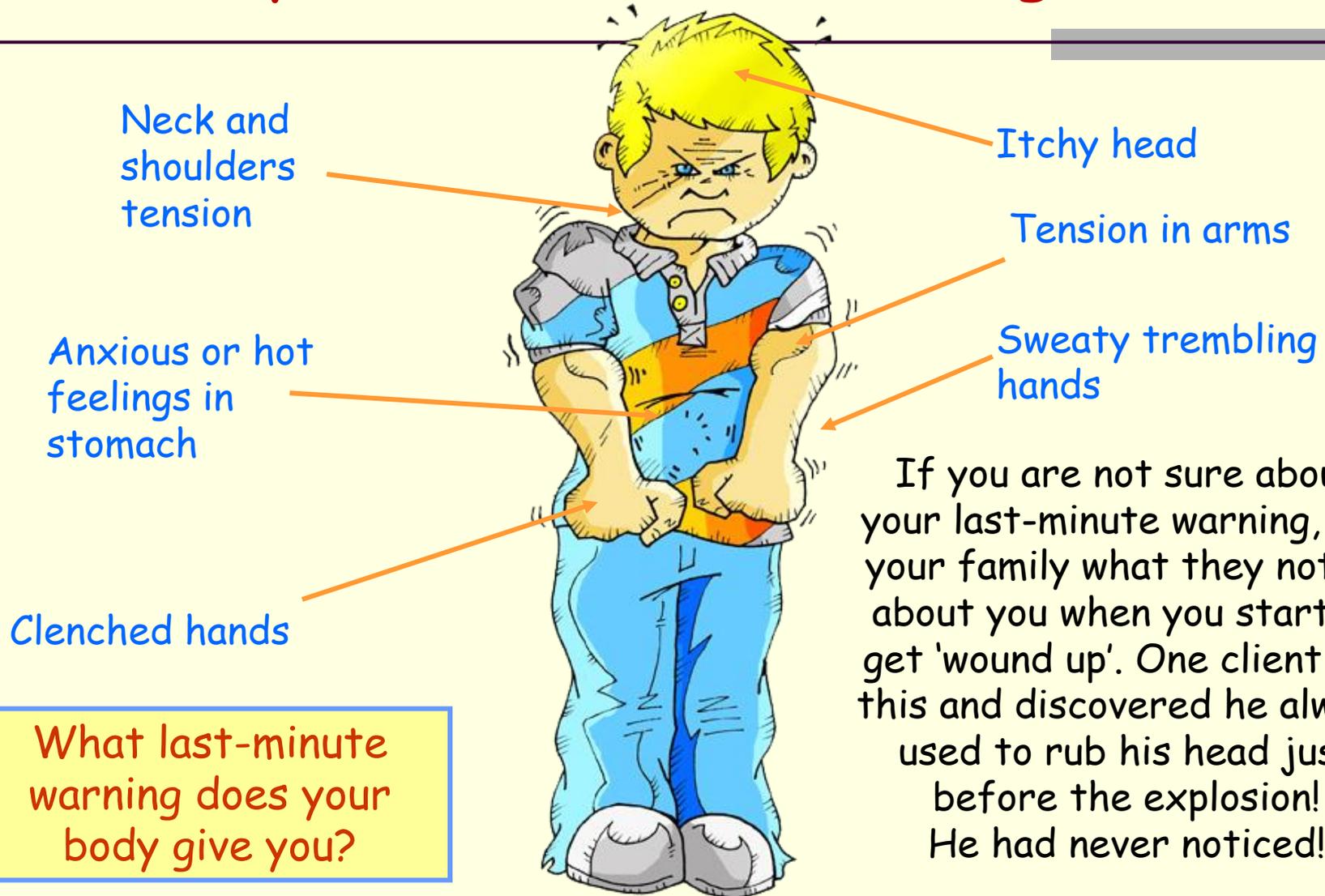
Maybe most of your life is a Red Zone!?

- Maybe your relationship is in trouble and your partner is often angry, critical, or cold towards you.
- Or you are suffering from stress at work.
- Or you have unresolved anger and hurt from the past or present.



Perhaps you are 'an angry person', with most of your life spent in one Red Zone or another? If so, you should consider working with a therapist to resolve the underlying issues.

Step Five: Learn to notice your last minute warning



If you are not sure about your last-minute warning, ask your family what they notice about you when you start to get 'wound up'. One client did this and discovered he always used to rub his head just before the explosion! He had never noticed!

What last-minute warning does your body give you?

You also get advance warning because your anger triggers are very predictable

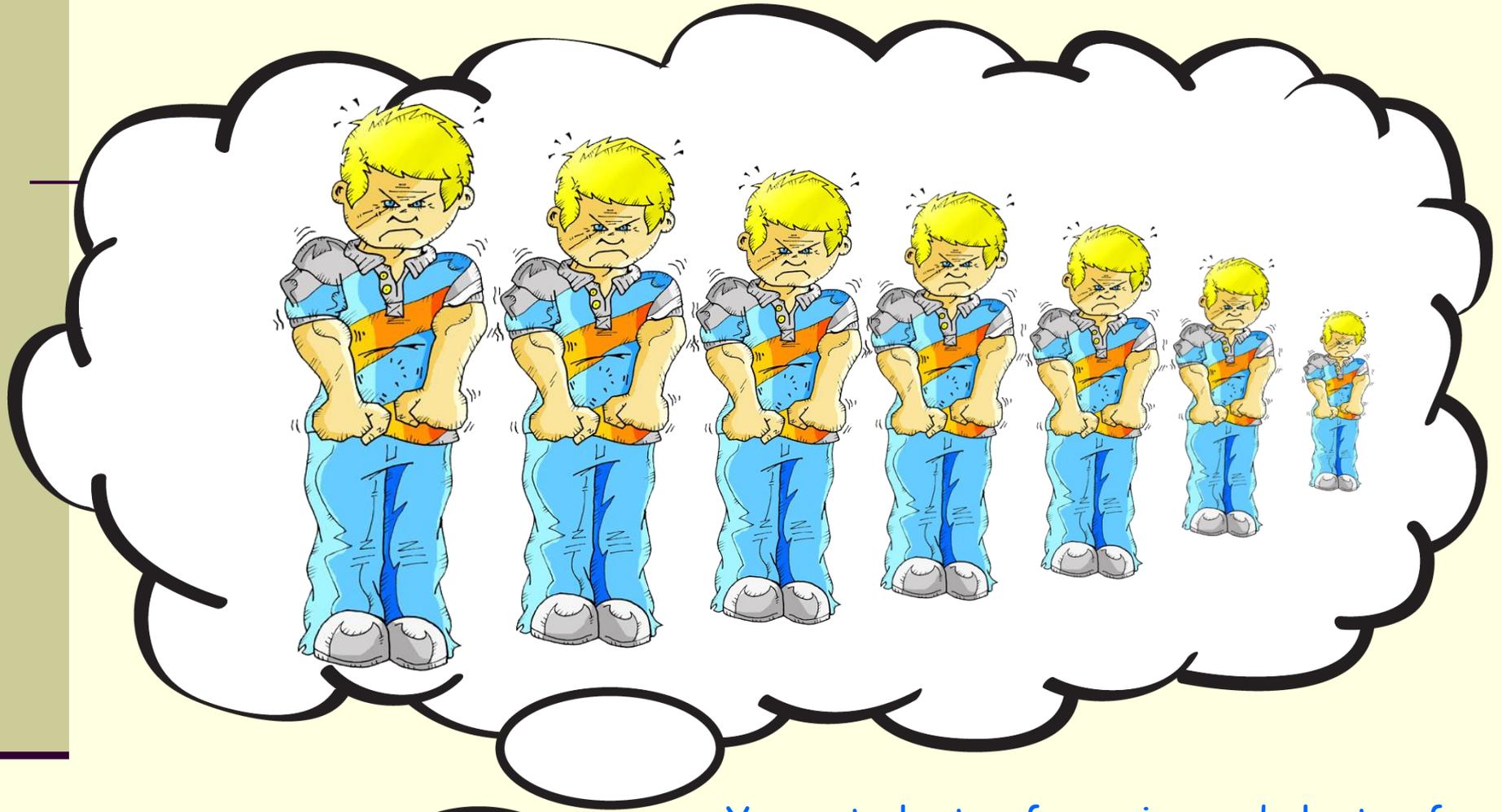
Far from being a surprise, your anger triggers are almost totally predictable in advance!

Why? because the situations in which you are likely to react badly in future are the same situations in which you have reacted badly in the past!

So you already know when you are likely to react! How much notice do you need?

The list of Permissions on pages 36 - 39 should help you identify anger triggers.





You get plenty of warning and plenty of time to prepare! The situations in which you are likely to react badly in future are the same situations in which you have reacted badly before.

How to use your advance warnings



Planning

So you can think about how you want to handle each of your anger triggers when you hit them.

Visualisation

So you can visualise yourself handling each trigger the way you want to.

Step Six: Learn to breathe differently when you want to calm down

- We are programmed by evolution to take a deep breath, or hold our breath, when faced with danger. If you take a deep breath now you will notice how your chest rises.
- When you breathe in that way you are sending a warning signal to your brain 'I am facing a threat, get ready for action: get ready to fight, run or freeze'.
- So when you want to calm down you need to breathe differently. This different way of breathing is called

'Diaphragmatic Breathing'

Use Diaphragmatic Breathing when you want to calm down

Diaphragmatic Breathing sends a different sort of signal to the brain because it is a way of breathing we would never naturally use when faced with threat. It's a way of breathing which sends a signal to the brain 'Everything is OK. It's safe to relax.'

In Diaphragmatic Breathing you fill your lungs from the bottom up by pushing your tummy out as you breathe in deeply. This allows the lower part of your lungs to fill first.

As you continue to breathe in and your lungs fill, your chest will rise too - that's OK, as long as your diaphragm expands first.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

WRONG WAY

Inflate chest first and signal to brain 'Danger! Get ready to fight, run or freeze'.



RIGHT WAY

Push out tummy to allow lungs to expand downwards. Send signal to brain 'Safe'.



How to practice Diaphragmatic Breathing

1. Lie down and make yourself comfortable. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your diaphragm.
2. Slowly take a deep breath, pushing your diaphragm out. Feel your diaphragm rising and not your chest.
3. Count to three before breathing out.
4. Breathe out fully, feeling your diaphragm fall. Pause for 3 seconds before breathing in again.
5. Repeat steps 1 - 4 for at least five minutes each time you practise.



To download a free audio version of the exercises in this book please visit:
<http://audio.angermanagementprogramme.co.uk>

Using Diaphragmatic Breathing to 'Anchor' a relaxed state



- An 'Anchor' is a physical thing you do to connect with a pre-programmed mental state. In this case, the Anchor is deep Diaphragmatic Breathing and the pre-programmed mental state resulting is calmness.
- To set your Anchor, in other words to make the neurological connection, practise the breathing exercise on the previous slide while listening to a piece of beautiful music at a time, and in a place, where you are unlikely to be disturbed.



Intensify your Self Calming Anchor

- Put on a beautiful piece of music [no vocals please].
- Settle yourself comfortably and switch your breathing to Diaphragmatic Breathing.
- Each time you breathe in, imagine that you are gradually being filled with a beautiful white soothing light which is filling you with feelings of peacefulness.
- Each time you breathe out let go of any tension you are holding in your body. Feel yourself relax more and more with each out breath.
- Practise this at least once a week for 20 minutes or more.

Visualise anger Triggers while self calming

Part One:

Make time to practise this
at home

Make yourself comfortable, select one of your anger Triggers, change your breathing to Diaphragmatic Breathing and imagine yourself handling the situation the way you have decided to handle that situation in future.

Part Two:

Practise this when out
and about

If angry thoughts about one of your anger Triggers come into your head hold on to the thought and change your breathing to Diaphragmatic Breathing. Continue this until the angry feeling subsides. Repeat as necessary.

Free Downloadable Hypno Audio Tracks

- Track 1 Introducing the tracks following
- Track 2 Diaphragmatic breathing
- Track 3 Setting your Self Calming Anchor +
Peaceful Place visualisation
- Track 4 Impulse Control Preparation
- Track 5 Tomorrow Box visualisation
- Track 6 Yesterday Box visualisation
- Track 7 Deep Relaxation Music

To download please visit:

<http://audio.angermanagementprogramme.co.uk>

For More Deep Relaxation & Self Calming Tracks visit
www.selfcalming.co.uk



PART FOUR

The ABC Impulse Control Technique

Also known as
the
'NOT NOW'
Technique



How to interrupt your anger process

1

Notice yourself feeling tense - the last-minute warning your body is giving you.



2

Switch to Diaphragmatic Breathing.



3

CHOOOSE
A or B or C

The A B C of choices when you feel angry

A Let your angry/hurt reaction autopilot take over.

B Be assertive [see Pages 89 - 92 & 70 - 73] there and then.

Good idea, but probably you are not in the right frame of mind to do it well. Timing is everything.

C Choose 'NOT NOW'.

Decide to 'let it go' for the moment and deal with it later when you feel calmer.

Highly recommended.



The ABC Impulse Control Technique When entering a Red Zone....



A Red Zone is any situation or place where you are more likely to run into an Anger Trigger [Pages 40 - 41]

When entering a Red Zone

use your Self Calming technique [Pages 52 - 57]

1. Change your breathing to deeper, slower, Diaphragmatic Breathing.
2. Notice that you have begun to feel calmer.
3. Remember how you planned to be in that Red Zone should you feel an angry reaction building up.

If you run into an Anger Trigger follow this Impulse Control process

1

Notice
yourself
feeling
tense - the
last-minute
warning your
body is
giving you.

[Pages 48 - 51]



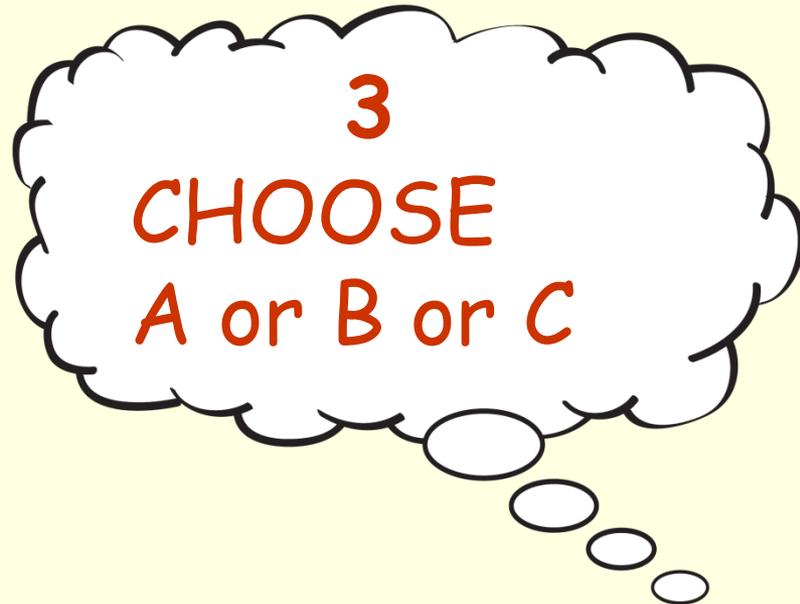
2

Switch to
Diaphragmatic
Breathing
[Pages 52 - 57]



3

CHOOSE
A or B or C



When you run into a trigger notice your body's warning, breathe deeply, and....

....choose

A Let your angry/hurt reaction autopilot take over.

B Be assertive [see Pages 89 - 92 & 70 - 73] there and then.

Good idea, but.....

probably you will not be in the right frame of mind to do it well.

C Choose 'NOT NOW'.

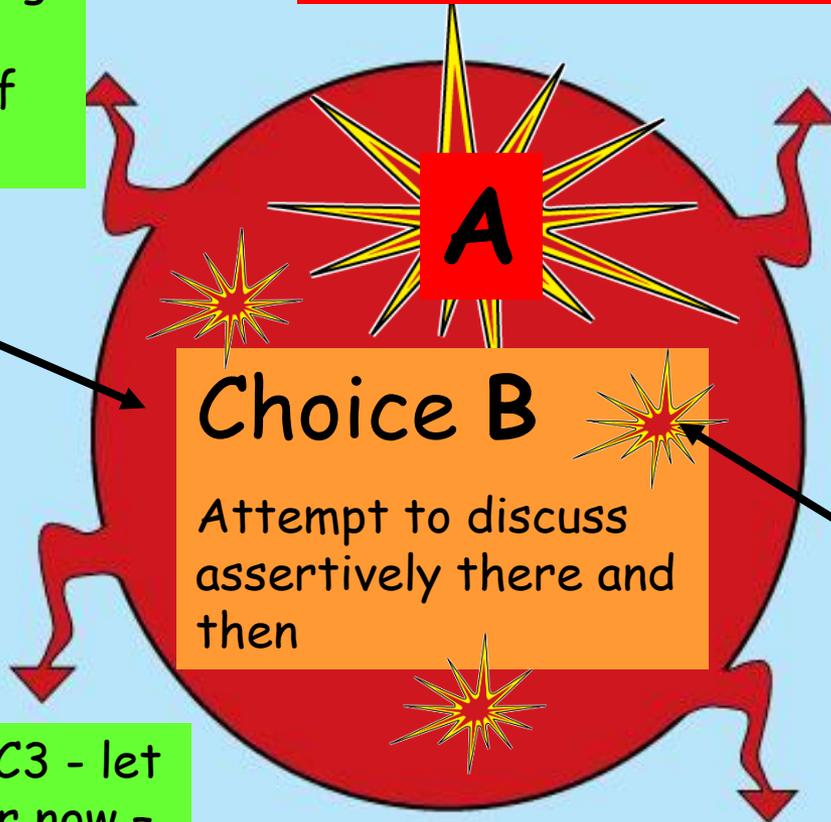
Decide to 'let it go' for the moment and deal with it later when you feel calmer.

Choice C1 - let it go for now - decide later
'it's not worth bothering about' and let it go.
Use the 0 - 10 scale of importance

Choice A Let Angry
Autopilot Take Over

Choice C2 - let it go for now - use Anger Release techniques to process angry and hurt feelings later

RED ZONE



Choice B
Attempt to discuss assertively there and then

TRIGGERS

Choice C3 - let it go for now - discuss assertively later

Choice C When you run into an anger Trigger decide 'NOT NOW', be passive [for the time being at least] and choose C1, C2 or C3 later

Choice A - letting your angry/hurt autopilot take over, is rarely the best choice

It's like
using petrol
to put out a
fire!



Afterwards



If you handled it
the way you planned -
give yourself a treat!

If you didn't get it right - learn from it!
What do you need to do to get it right next
time? If you hit a new Trigger add it to your
list of Triggers and decide how to handle
it the next time it happens.

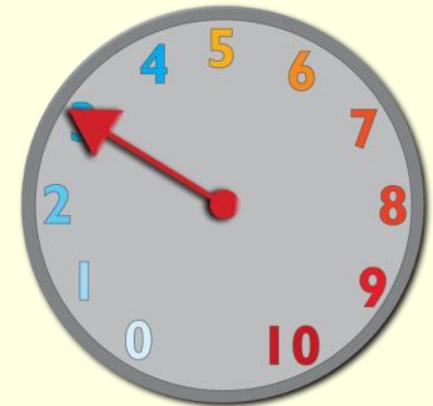
If you are left
with anger,
frustration,
hurt or other
negative feelings.....



When you choose **C**, the 'Not Now' option, you may decide later to 'let it go'

In which case the 'Shrinking the Importance' techniques on pages 97 & 99 will help.

How important is what happened on a scale of 0 - 10? Maybe I should just 'let it go'



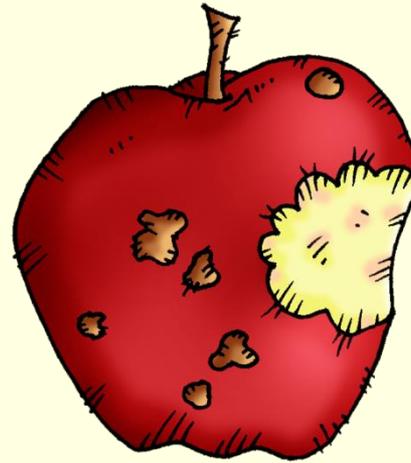
Or you may choose not to 'Let it go' and try to discuss what happened assertively

In which case it would be helpful to set up a meeting and follow the rules for a civilised discussion [next].

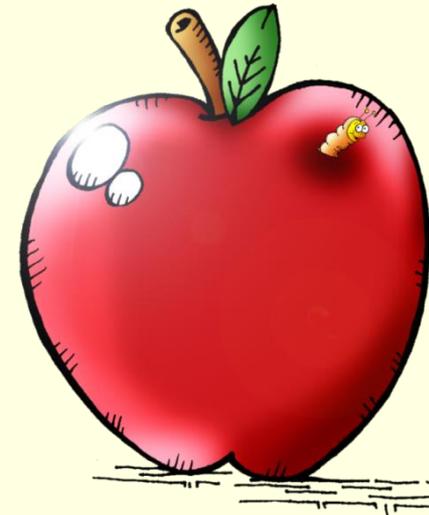
If you can think of the other person as a good person who did something which upset you - rather than a bad person - you will find it easier to stay calm.

Bad behaviour is not the same thing as bad person!

Or a good person who did something bad?
If you can look at it this way will be able to handle things better.



Is the person who upset you a bad person - a 'bad apple'.



An assertive approach [see pages 89 - 92] 'Contracting' for a Civilised Discussion

- A 'Contract' for a Civilised Discussion' [next] is a way of trying to discuss calmly what's upset you.
- The 'Contract' should have a 'TIME OUT' clause. This is a prior agreement that allows either party to withdraw from the discussion, for a period of minutes, hours, even days, if things get too heated.
- The idea of 'Time Out' is to allow a cooling off period.

If you and your partner can't discuss things calmly, you should definitely consider couples counselling or mediation.





The Civilised Discussion 'Contract' should include the following.....

1. The issues for discussion agreed in advance. Don't bring in other issues.
2. Location is a place where you will not be interrupted.
3. TV and mobiles switched off. House line ignored if it rings.
4. No abuse or shouting. Parties remain seated throughout.
5. Have a 'TIME OUT' agreement [page 71].
6. Have 'Uninterrupted speaking time' rule [next]
7. Try to stick to the facts and avoid opinions.

If you feel criticised it may be paranoia!
Check it out by simply asking,
'What do you mean?'

Uninterrupted speaking time

- 'Uninterrupted Speaking Time' is a key feature of a Civilised Discussion. It means just that! Absolutely no interruptions of any kind.
- Questions and explanations should be saved until the speaker has completed their allocated speaking time without interruption.
- Speaking time should be in equal amounts of say, five or ten minutes at a time, each.
- If either of you don't use all your time, the other person still gets the time agreed.
- Have a pen and a rule that the one whose turn it is to speak holds the pen and may not be interrupted while holding the pen.

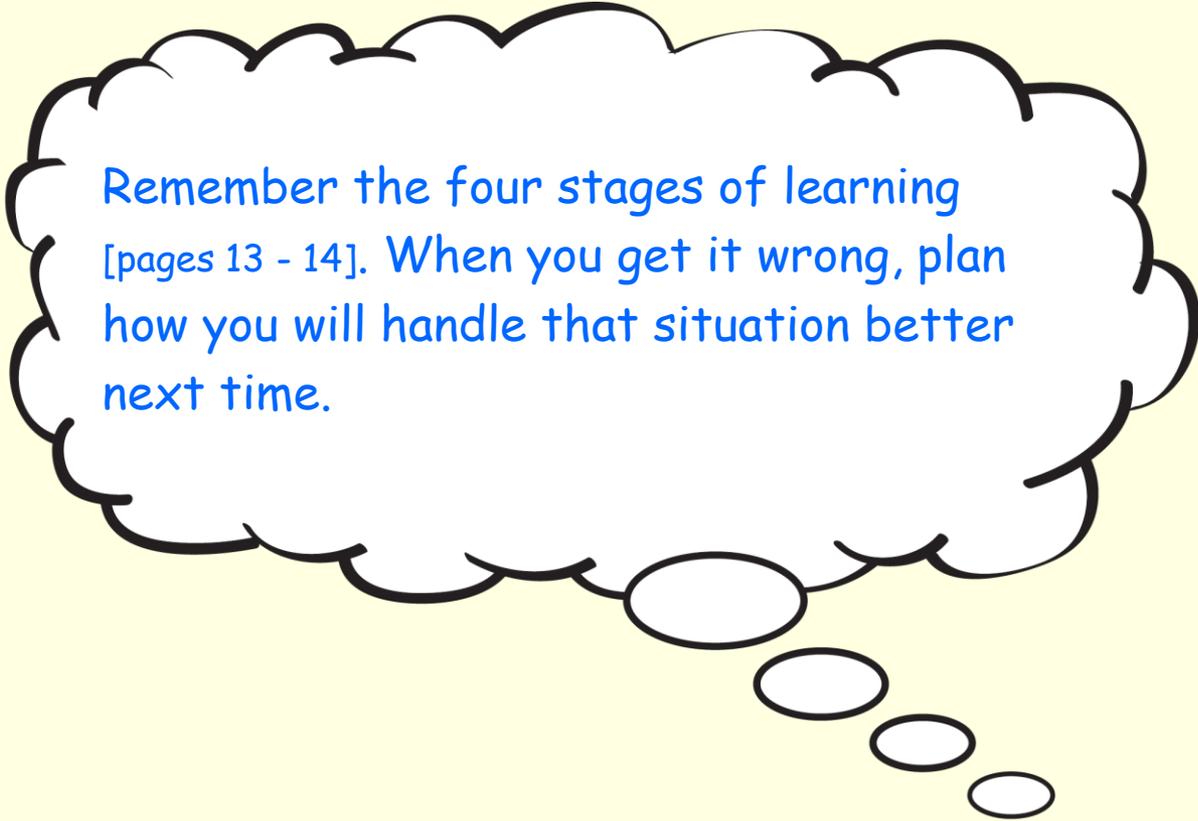


Setbacks are not failure

- When you get it wrong, as you sometimes will, [because you are human, not a robot or a computer] remember it's a setback, not failure.
Just get back on track.
- After all, if you set out to go south and found yourself on the road north, you wouldn't think 'I failed' and keep going in the wrong direction, would you!



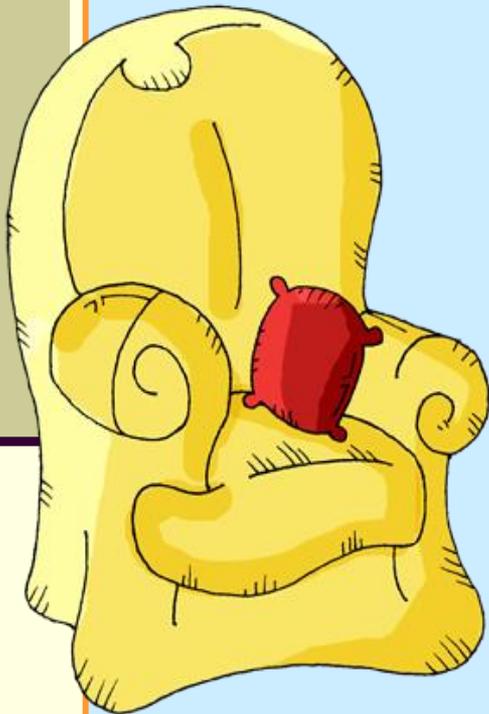
As you progress you will notice that you feel angry less often and that you get over things more quickly.



Remember the four stages of learning [pages 13 - 14]. When you get it wrong, plan how you will handle that situation better next time.

PART FIVE

Releasing Anger & Frustration Safely



**IF YOU ARE THINKING
ABOUT HURTING YOURSELF
OR SOMEONE ELSE YOU
SHOULD GET PROFESSIONAL
ADVICE IMMEDIATELY**

Anger & frustration release is essential

- On page 23 I wrote about how we store anger and hurt as emotional trading stamps which we then cash in inappropriately with 'over the top' reactions to incidents.
- Unresolved anger and hurt needs to be released in ways that don't harm yourself or anyone else.



THE CUP OF POISON



- Hanging on to anger is like sipping from a cup of poison in the hope that it will somehow even the score.
- That poison increases stress, impairs ability to manage anger and damages emotional health.

Unresolved anger and hurt leads to 'Displacement' - also known as 'kicking the cat'

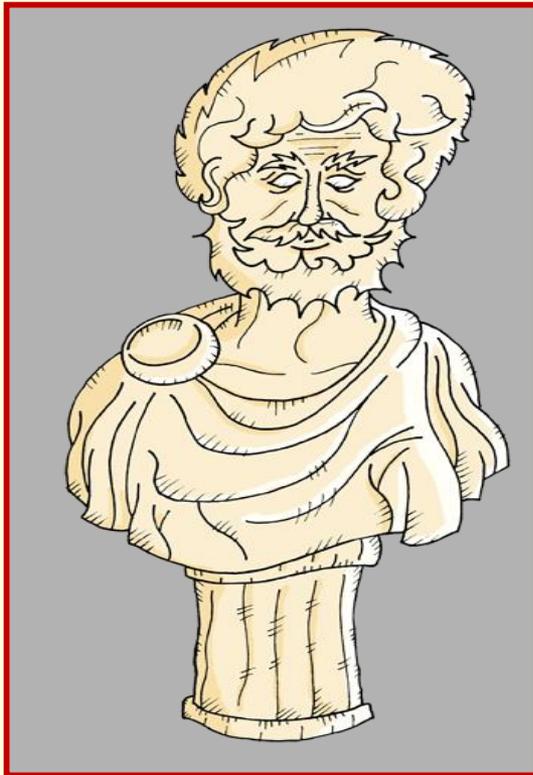
Unresolved anger and hurt is like a kind of pressurised poison gas which keeps leaking out, causing us to react 'over the top'. We find ourselves reacting aggressively at the wrong time, in the wrong place, or with the wrong person. This is known as:

'DISPLACEMENT' or
'KICKING THE CAT'

Check yourself out when you are feeling angry with someone - is the way you feel directed at the right target or are you 'taking it out' on the wrong person?



It's been said countless times. Who said it first?



I don't know, but a philosopher by the name of Epictetus is one who said, over a thousand years ago.....

'It's OK to be angry and essential to release anger, but to release it in ways which are not harmful to self or others.'

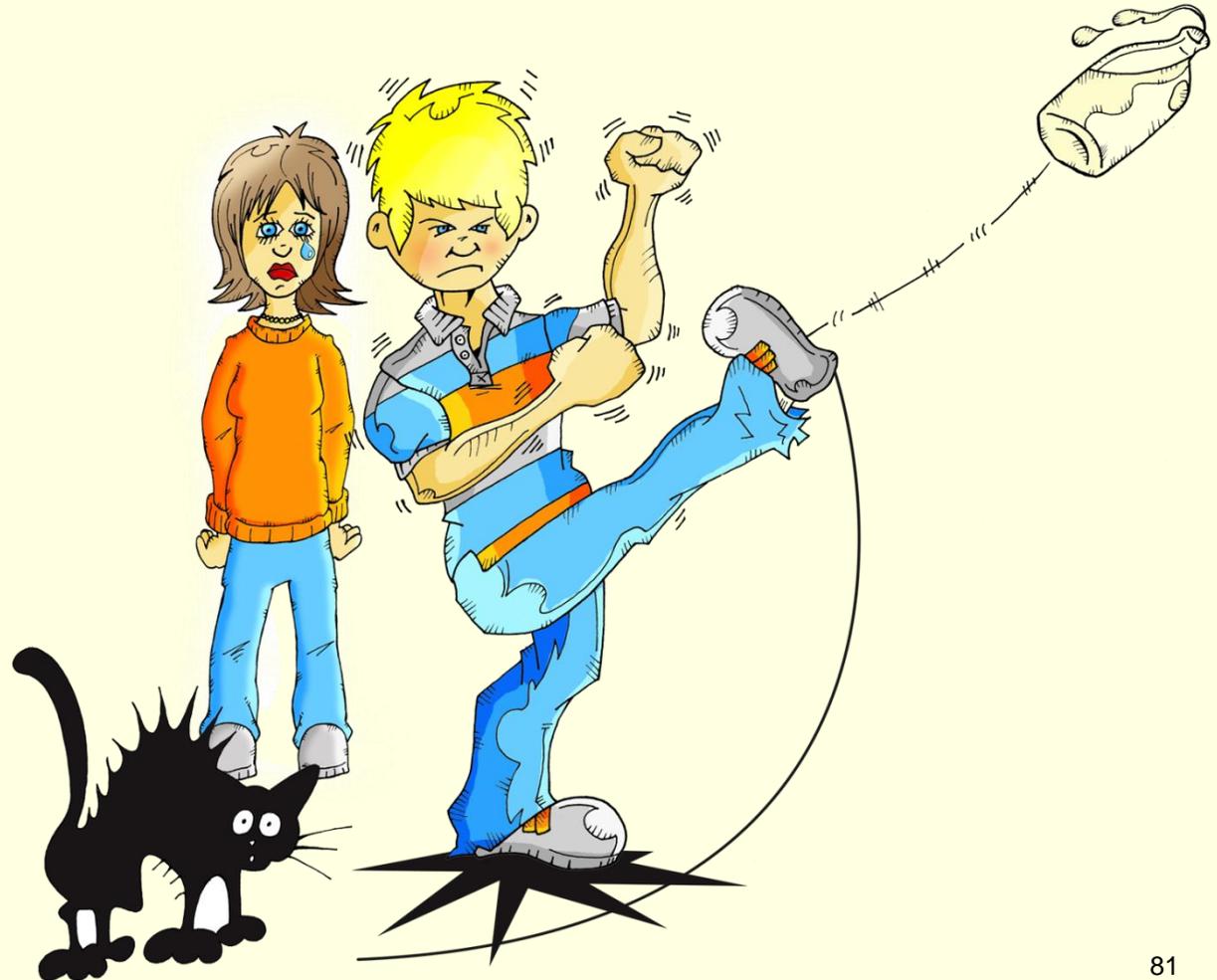
According to Epictetus safe anger release is about choosing:

- The Right Time
- The Right Place
- The Right Way
- The Right Reason
- The Right Length of Time
- The Right Person To Be Angry With

Alcohol is the enemy of impulse control

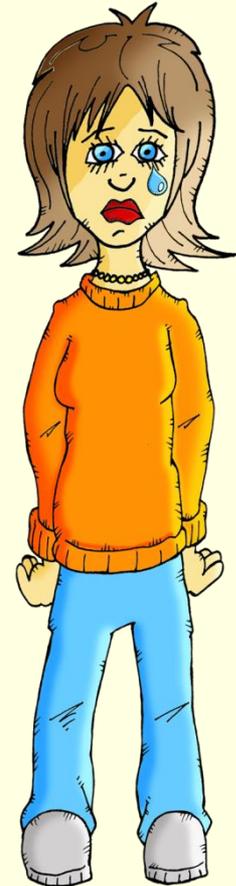
This is why excess alcohol is such a big problem. Under the influence of alcohol people often **DISPLACE** their anger and hurt stamps onto the wrong person.

**Excess alcohol +
anger & hurt stamps
= Big Problem**



The release of anger must be without harm to yourself or others

- By 'harm' I don't just mean physical harm. Bullying behaviour, aggression, verbal abuse and insults can leave emotional scars which last a lifetime or destroy a relationship.
- That old saying 'Sticks and stones may break my bones but nicknames will never hurt me' is not true. Mums say that to help children deal with the pain of toxic messages.
- Toxic nicknames are also a form of harassment. There's nothing funny about them but passive recipients smile and pretend it's OK. It isn't!

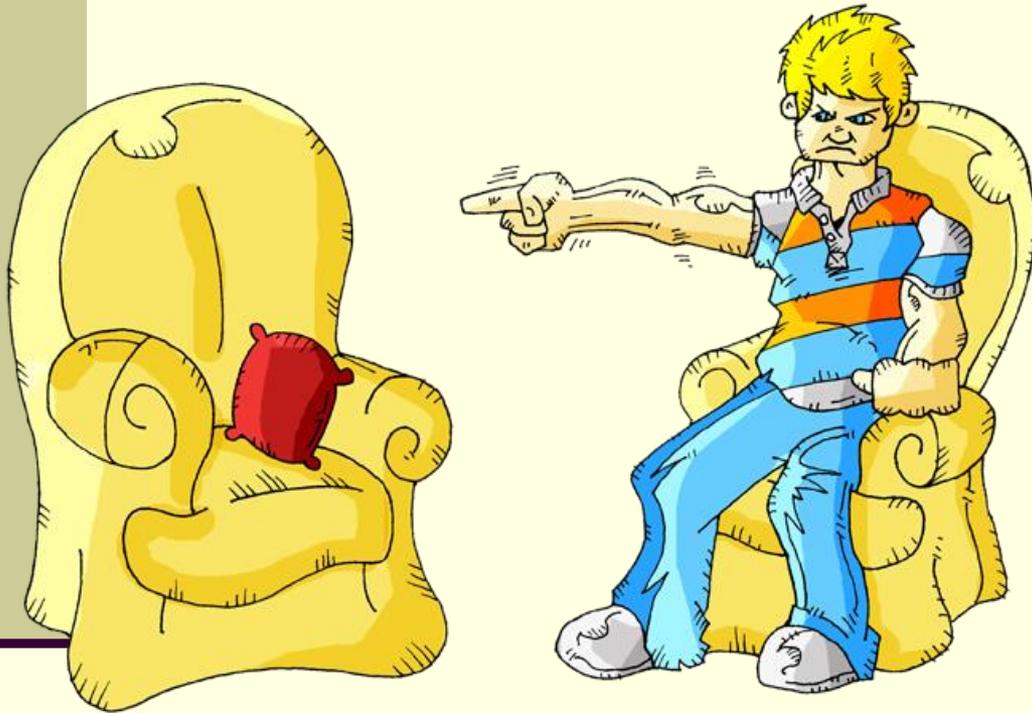


Safe anger and hurt release methods

- Now follows a selection of safe anger and hurt release methods, including the assertiveness option.
- I find that some people prefer physical release methods, others prefer purely emotional release methods. The best methods combine both physical and emotional release.
- Choose and use the method/s which you feel most comfortable with.



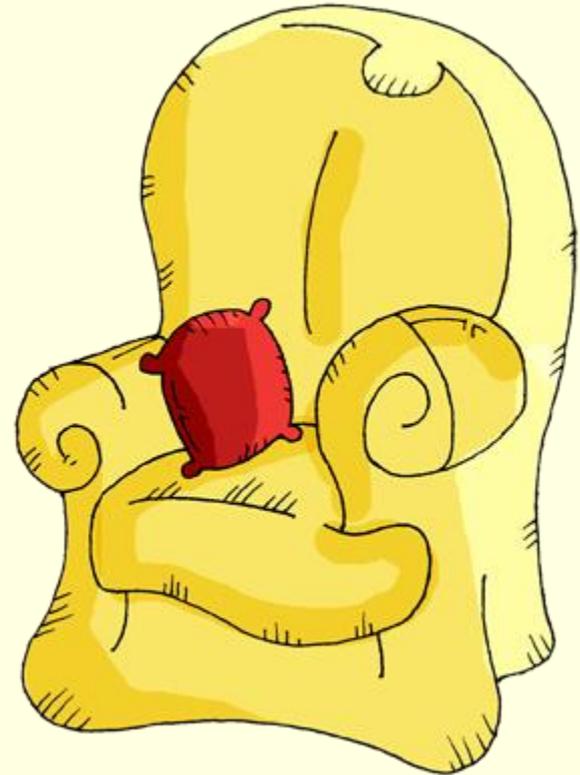
1. Vocal methods of anger release



The Two Chair method of anger and hurt release has been used for many years. Choose a time when you have the house to yourself, put a cushion on the other chair and let rip. Say everything you would like to say to the other person, but to the cushion instead. Let your anger out: foul language is essential!

Advantages of the Two Chair method of anger release

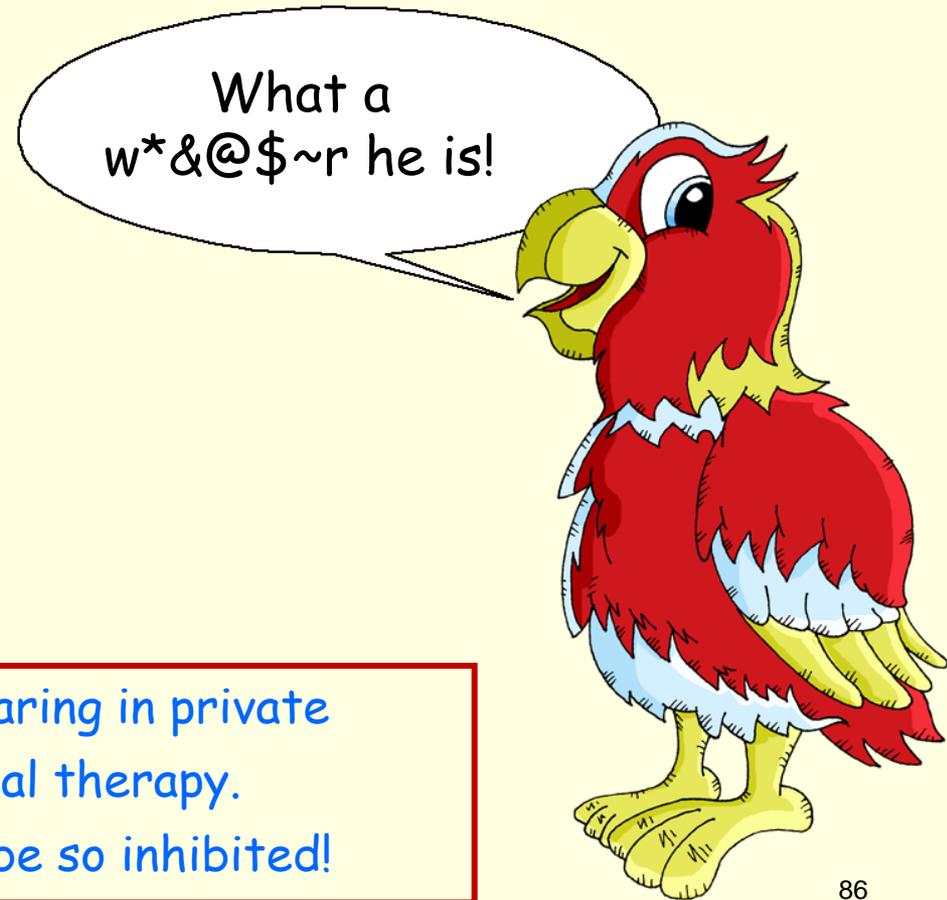
- The Two Chair method of anger and hurt release is particularly helpful when the other person is not available for you to release your anger in assertive ways - for instance, they may be dead or someone you never want to be in touch with again.
- Or it may be your boss you are angry with and you like the idea of keeping your job.



Ranting is excellent anger release.....but not in the street

- Ranting is very good, including lots of swearing.
- Rant at an inanimate object cushion, a photo, the telly, whatever.
- You can also express your feelings to a photo, to the cat or other family pet but, for obvious reasons, not a parrot!

If you can't do ranting and swearing in private
you should consider personal therapy.
It's not emotionally healthy to be so inhibited!



2. Physical release of angry energy



When you are feeling angry, but not angry with anybody in particular, you can release angry energy by thrashing a tree stump with a length of hose....

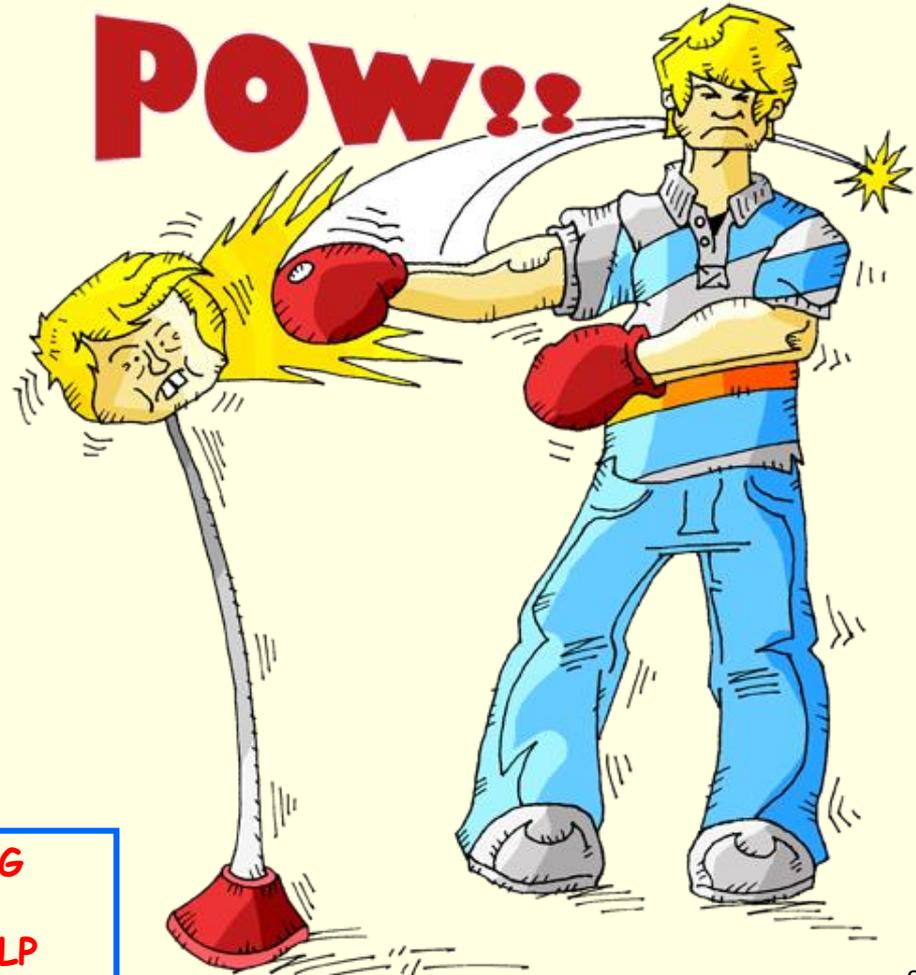
Or hammering nails into a piece of wood....

Or throwing raw eggs at trees.

How about getting a punch bag?

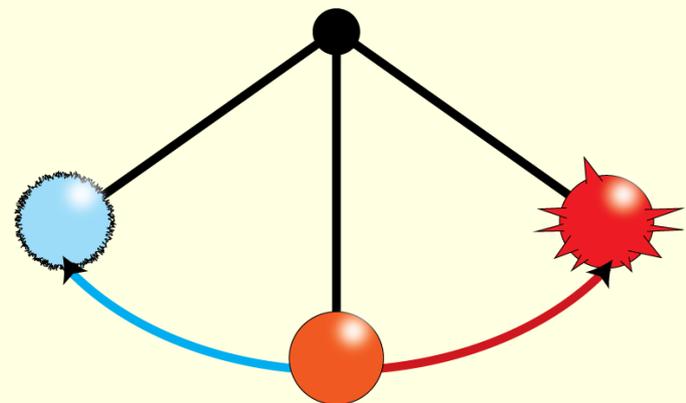
- Releasing your anger on an inanimate object is very effective. How about buying a punch bag?
- You can also do it by putting a cushion on your lap and beating it with your fists.
- It's best to rant at the same time, vocally expressing your pent-up emotions.

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF PLANNING TO HURT SOMEONE IT'S VITAL THAT YOU GET PROFESSIONAL HELP



3. The assertiveness method of anger and hurt release

- The assertiveness method of anger release is about feeling heard, about not suffering in silence, about setting the record straight.
- The assertive option of expressing your feelings openly should always be considered but sometimes it may be impractical or too risky.
- The danger is that the other person will react badly and pile on more hurt. Or it may not be physically safe to express yourself openly.
- If you think you can handle it, choose the assertiveness option and arrange to talk things through with the other person; or write and say how you feel.

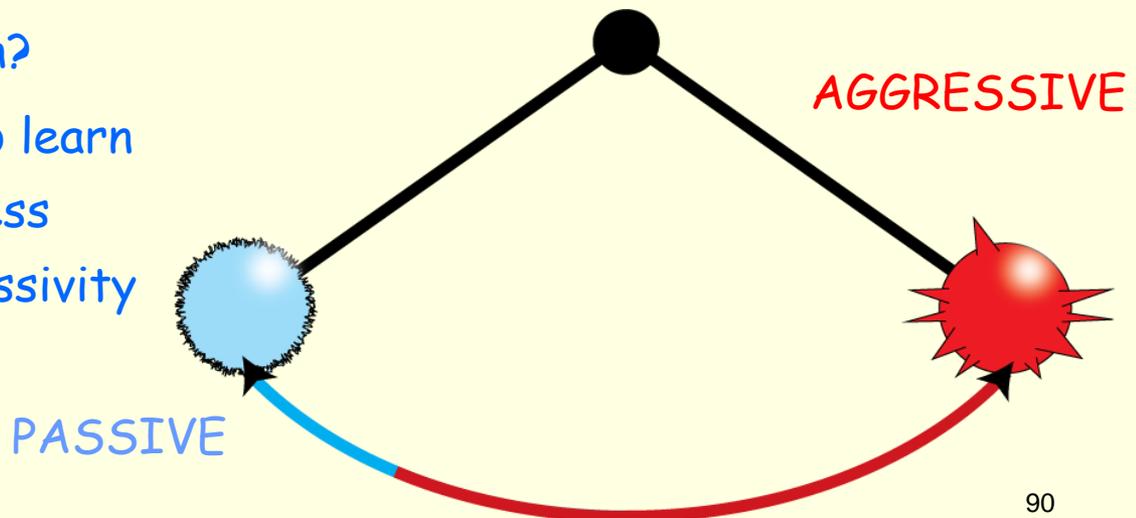


Maybe you don't know how to be assertive ?

If you are normally a passive person [someone who usually 'lets things go'] you may be someone who switches from one extreme to the other, from passive to 'over the top' aggressive reactions when pushed too far.

- Or maybe you are someone with a naturally aggressive style of communication?
- Either way you need to learn how to use assertiveness as an alternative to passivity and/or aggression.

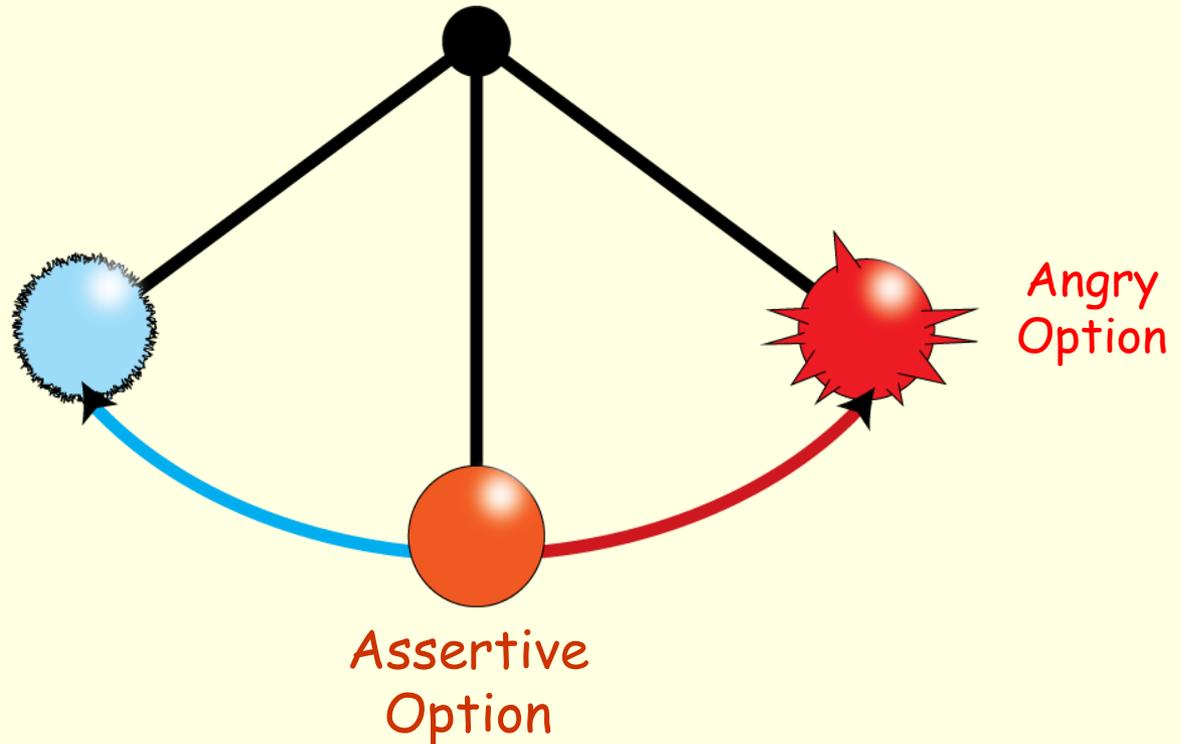
The Passive to Aggressive Pendulum



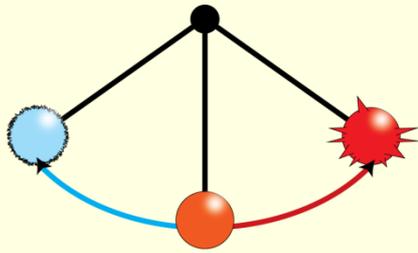
Learn to discuss issues assertively and without anger

Assertive
person's
pendulum

Passive
Option



Assertiveness means you can CHOOSE an appropriate response, passive, assertive or angry, depending on the situation.



Assertiveness

- Lack of assertiveness is usually a big problem because passivity leads to unresolved anger, frustration, and resentment because as issues are 'bottled up' [see Anger Stamps on page 23].
- Once you have learned how to be assertive you are no longer stuck with the extremes of passive or aggressive responding.

Assertiveness is:

- Knowing what you want.
- Asking simply and clearly for what you want
- Saying how you feel and what you think in a non-aggressive way.
- Enquiring when you are not sure what someone means.
- CHOOSING whether to react passively, assertively, or aggressively.

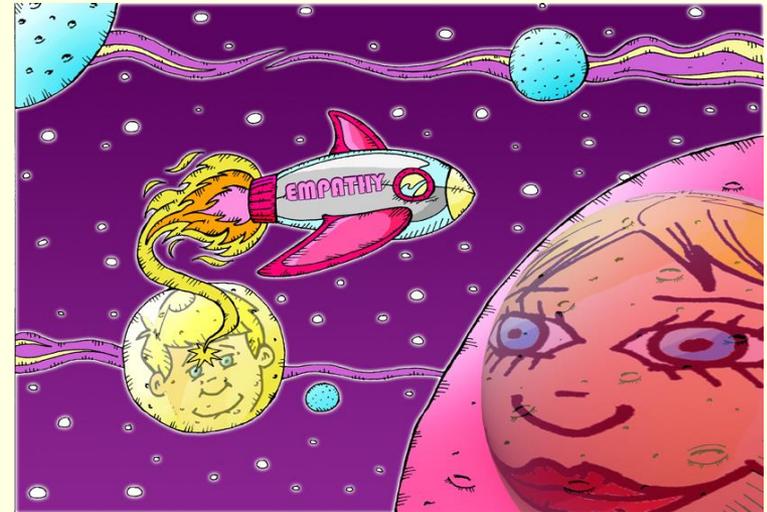
4. Accept responsibility.....for your contribution

- I know that it may be really hard for you to accept that part of what's gone wrong is down to you.
- But, IF you want relief from your anger and hurt [see 'Cup of Poison' on page 78]. that may be what you need to do.
- If you can accept responsibility for your contribution your anger should be less painful.
- The problem is that our 'Empathy Switch' is in the 'Off' position when we are angry with someone and we can't [or won't] see their point of view.
- One way to turn the empathy switch back on is to sit in a chair you don't normally sit in, pretend to be the other person and tell the story out loud from their point of view.



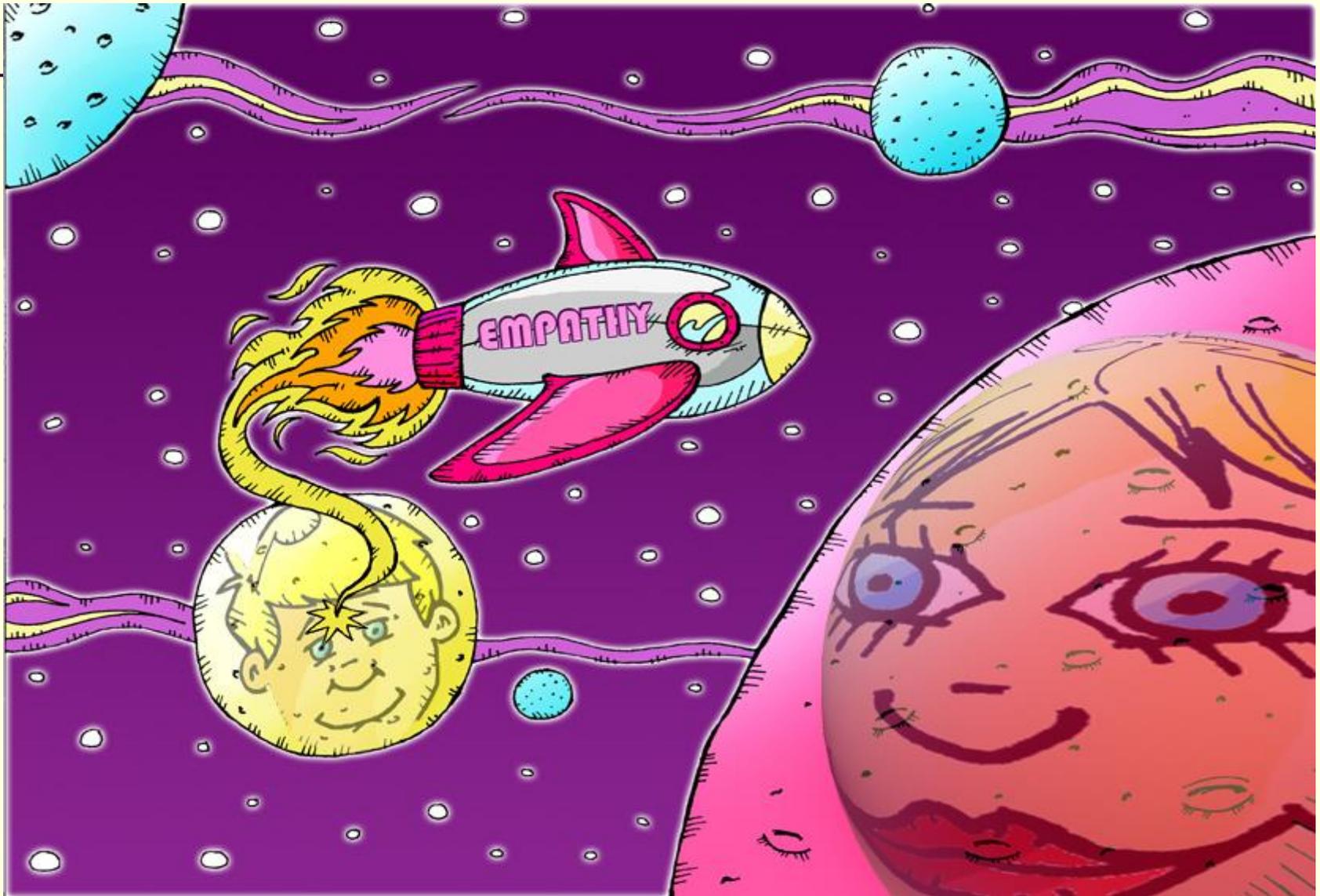
Try to be empathic, to understand the other persons point of view

- The biggest misunderstanding about empathy is that to be empathic means that you have to agree with the way the other person is thinking, feeling and behaving. This completely untrue.
- Empathy does not mean you have to agree - it's about understanding the other person's perspective, not necessarily agreeing with it.
- Empathy is 'putting yourself in the other person's shoes and trying to understand things from their point of view even when you find it impossible to agree.

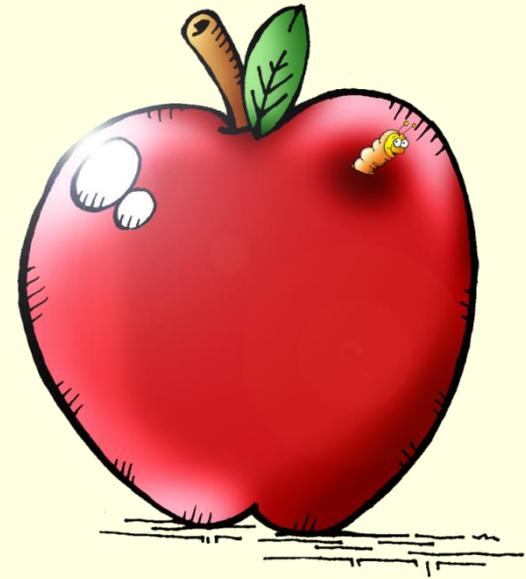
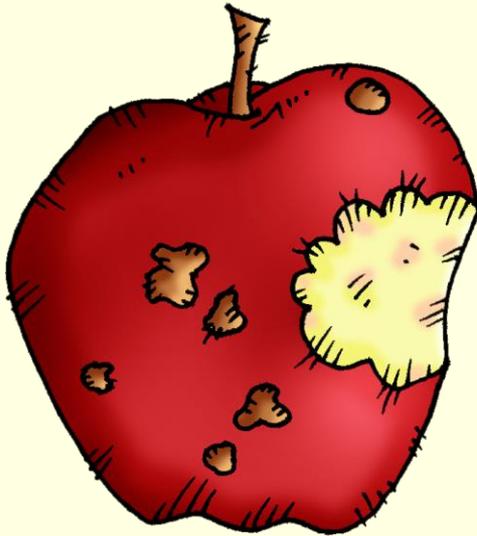


Empathy involves trying to get inside the other person's head, entering their internal world for a while and seeing things as they see them.

The Empathy Space Probe



Good apple: bad behaviour? Or a bad apple?



If you can accept someone as an OK person who did something not OK [rather than a 'bad' person] you will be able to empathise better.

5: Shrink old hurtful images

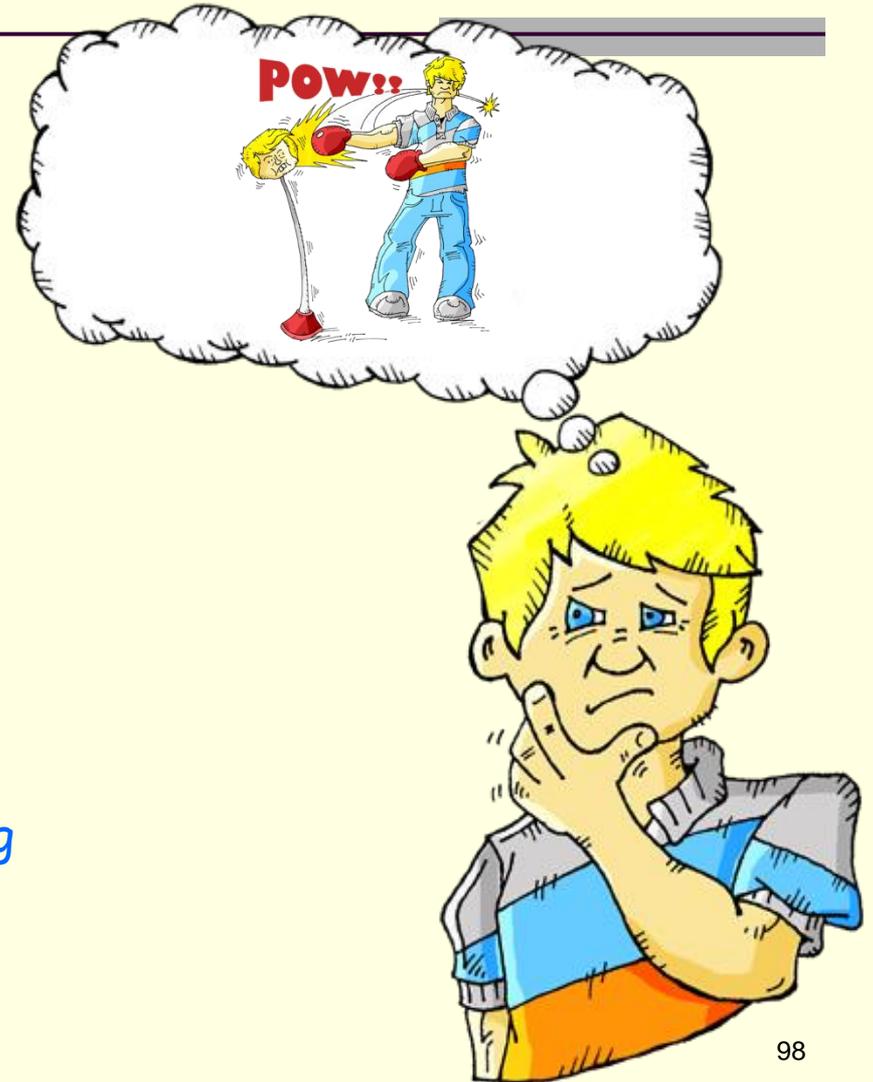


1. Choose an image from the hurtful memory which represents the worst part of it.
2. Imagine you are looking at that image on a large flat-screen TV.
3. As you watch, let the TV gradually move away from you. As it moves away make the TV screen gradually smaller and smaller.
4. Then change the TV to an old black and white TV and take all colour out of the image.
5. Keep shrinking the screen until it's just a few inches across and the picture is a grey and white blur.
6. Then switch off the TV so you are left with a blank screen except for a small dot in the centre.



6: If you are physically able you can use exercise....

- Vigorous exercise and sport are good ways of releasing angry energy, but exercise alone won't release angry energy - it needs an aggressive element!
- At the gym there may be a punch bag and you should consider getting one at home.
- Playing squash, tennis or golf - you can take your anger out on the ball.
- Jogging - you can imagine treading on various bits of the anatomy of the person you are angry with.



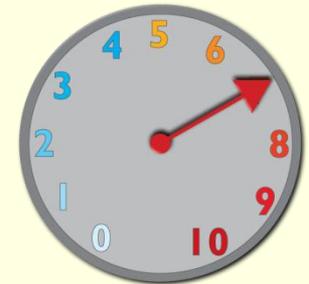
7. Shrink the importance of the incident using the 0 - 10 scale

Things which seemed so important at the time can be scaled downwards and then let go once your anger has cooled.

At the time score:
10 = Big Deal



Next day's score:
7 = Still hurting

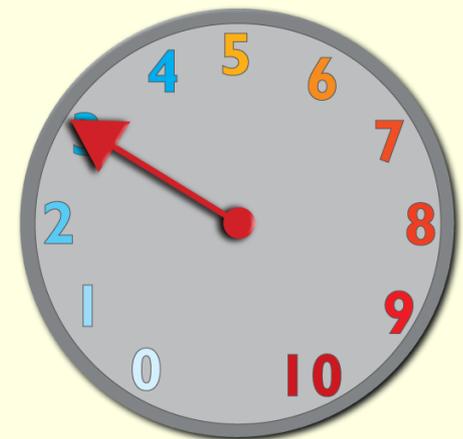
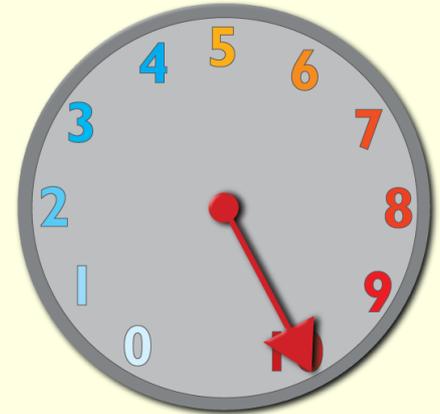


Next week's score:
3 = 'Not worth bothering about'



8. Reduce the power and quantity of Anger Triggers

- We all 'make mountains out of molehills' sometimes. Rate your Triggers - give each of them a score on a scale of 0 - 10
 - 0 = 'not worth bothering about'
 - 10 = 'life threatening'.
- You will find that many Triggers are simply minor irritations which you let bother you.
- You can stop minor Triggers getting to you in future by deciding to not let them. Visualise yourself staying calm when they happen.
- A good tip is to expect the irritations to happen and be pleased when they don't - instead of the other way round.

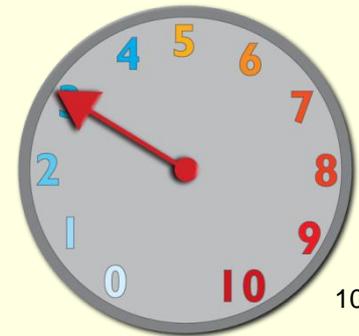


How important now?

- One of my clients was upset that her boss had criticised her. For her, this was a definite 10 on the 0 - 10 scale of upset.
- I asked her to imagine leaving the office after being criticised and finding someone had run their car keys down the side of her new car. What score was that? 10! And the boss criticising her? Now 6.
- I then asked her to imagine getting a text from her husband, 'Meet me at the casualty department - urgent'. What score the criticism and the car scratch now? Zero!

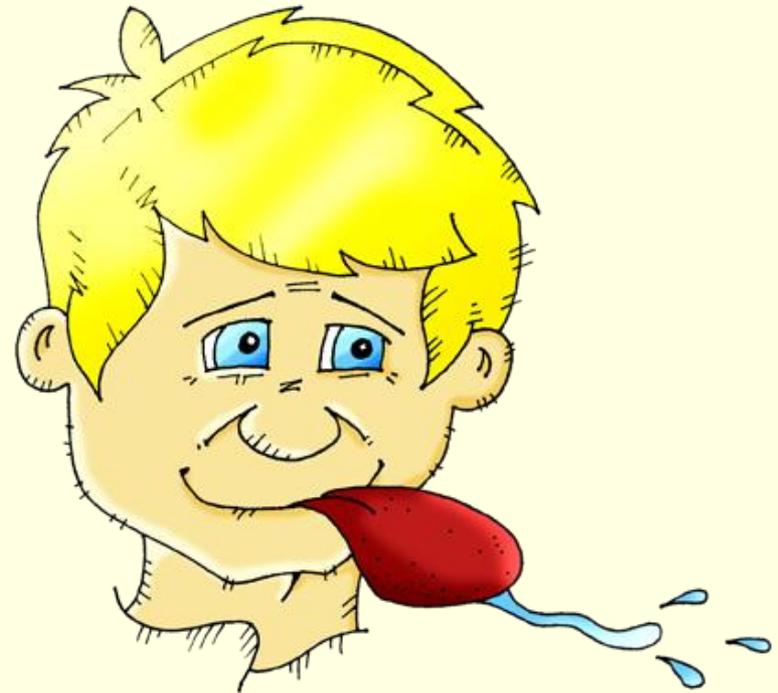
No event has a fixed scale of importance
- only the score we choose to give it.

It's possible to re-score most anger Triggers lower on the 0 - 10 scale when we choose to.



Reduce the power of Triggers using humour

- When you have angry thoughts about what another person may say or do you can reduce the power of the Trigger on the 0 - 10 scale by fantasising a response which is funny.
- **Try it!** Imagine a situation where you would in the past have got angry at what someone said or did and imagine doing something slapstick.



Don't do it!
Only fantasise doing it!

What you can laugh at, you can't feel angry about

For example: A client was getting angry about what her ex daughter-in-law might say if she ever came to her front door. I suggested she imagine the encounter but, at the crucial moment, sticking a custard pie in her daughter-in-law's face. After doing that she was able to stop worrying about the meeting and think about how to respond assertively, rather than angrily.



It's OK to fantasise harmless humiliationbut it's not OK to actually carry it out

9: The fantasy Harmless Revenge method of anger release

Harmless fantasy is a good way of releasing anger and frustration towards a particular person or group. Notice I said harmless.



IF YOU FIND YOURSELF
PLANNING TO HURT SOMEONE
IT'S VITAL YOU GET
PROFESSIONAL HELP
RIGHT AWAY

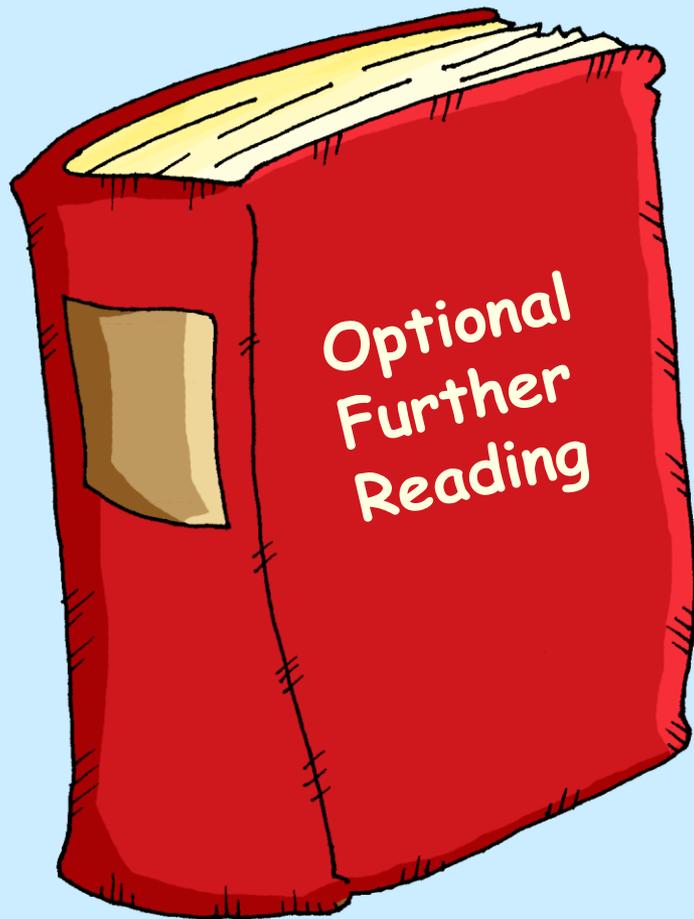
For example: you could imagine hitting someone over the head with a giant foam hammer.



Self Review - How are you doing?

- Have you visualised how you will handle each of your Anger Triggers?
- When entering a Red Zone do you remind yourself how you want to be?
- Do you notice the Last-Minute Warning your body gives you?
- Are you able to calm yourself down using the Self Calming technique?
- Can you consistently resist reacting aggressively to Anger Triggers?
- Do you use the ABC Model to choose how to handle Anger Triggers?
- Do you find some things that used to bother you a lot bother you less?
- Do you feel generally calmer, more in control of yourself?
- Has anyone commented on the way you have changed?
- Are you pleased with your progress? **IF YES.... Great!**

IF NOT....You need to re-visit some parts of the programme - or consider getting professional help.



PART SIX



Free Optional Reading Online

If you would like to read more about:

- Listening Skills
- Empathy
- Assertiveness
- Conflict Resolution Skills
- Transactional Analysis

Please visit:

<http://selfhelp.brianamartin.co.uk>

OR know more about:

- Choosing a Therapist
- Personal Counselling
- Couples Counselling
- Psychotherapy
- Hypnotherapy

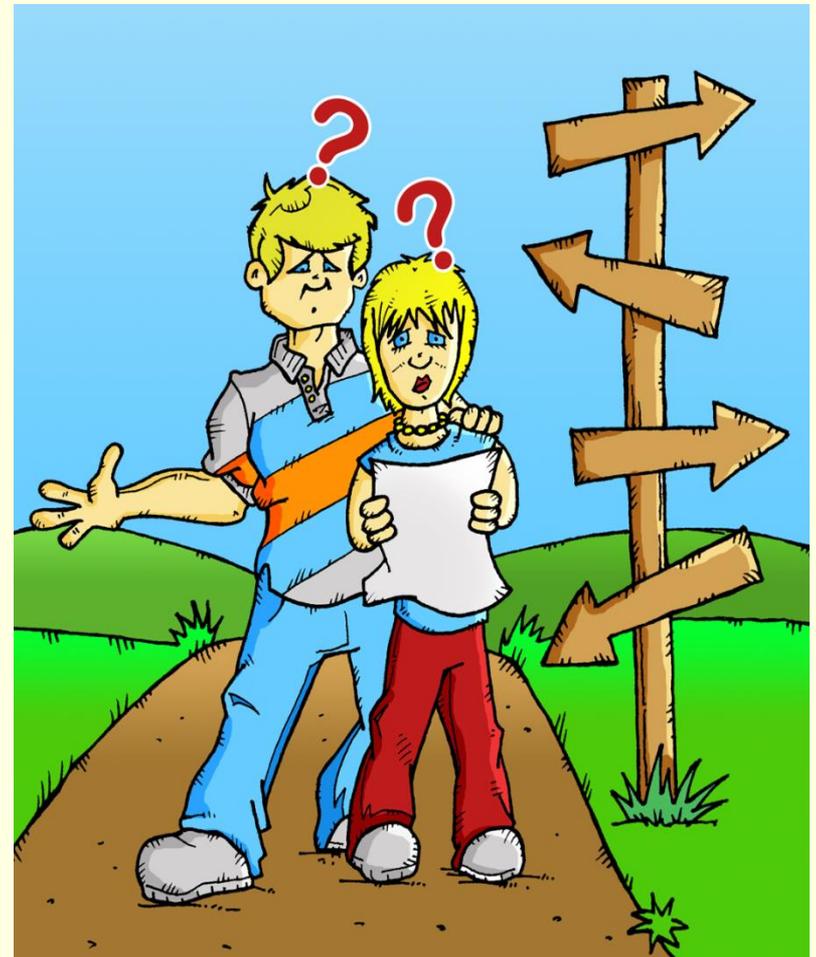
Please visit:

www.brianamartin.co.uk

The importance of self awareness and understanding others

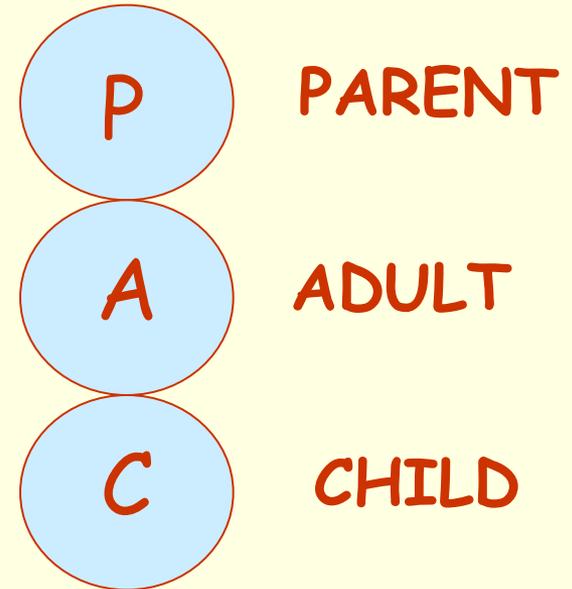
It seems to me, that without an understanding of the psychology of yourself and others, life's journey is like setting out on a journey in a foreign country without directions, a map or a Sat Nav.

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS [TA] is my main model for understanding myself and others. It's a brilliant way of developing self-awareness and understanding of others. I trained at 'The Berne Institute' in Kegworth, Leicestershire, UK.
www.theberne.com



The TA theory of Ego States - our multiple 'personalities'

- Eric Berne, the mastermind behind Transactional Analysis Psychology [TA], identified different states of mind which he labelled as Ego States.
- Berne described how we move rapidly and frequently between these different states of mind, these Ego States, depending on the situation we are in and who we are with.
- In many ways it's like having multiple personalities. Which 'personality' we bring out depends on the situation we find ourselves in at the time.



You can learn more about TA by visiting: UKATA
'The United Kingdom Association for Transactional Analysis'
www.uktransactionalanalysis.co.uk



P

P = Parent Ego State
Attitudes, thoughts and feelings picked up as a child
parent figures



A

A = Adult Ego State
Behaviours, thoughts and feelings in direct response to here and now reality



C

C = Child Ego State
Behaviours, thoughts, and feelings replayed from childhood

We switch rapidly between being the Parent, Adult or Child in our head depending on the circumstances we find ourselves in at any moment

'HEALING YOUR RELATIONSHIP'

Available in print, as a cd,
or as immediate download at
www.advice4couples.co.uk

Includes

'An Introduction to
Transactional Analysis [TA]
Psychology

HEALING YOUR RELATIONSHIP

HEALING YOUR RELATIONSHIP

ADVICE FOR COUPLES IN CONFLICT

Brian A Martin
MSC CTA MNCH MBACP



INCLUDES

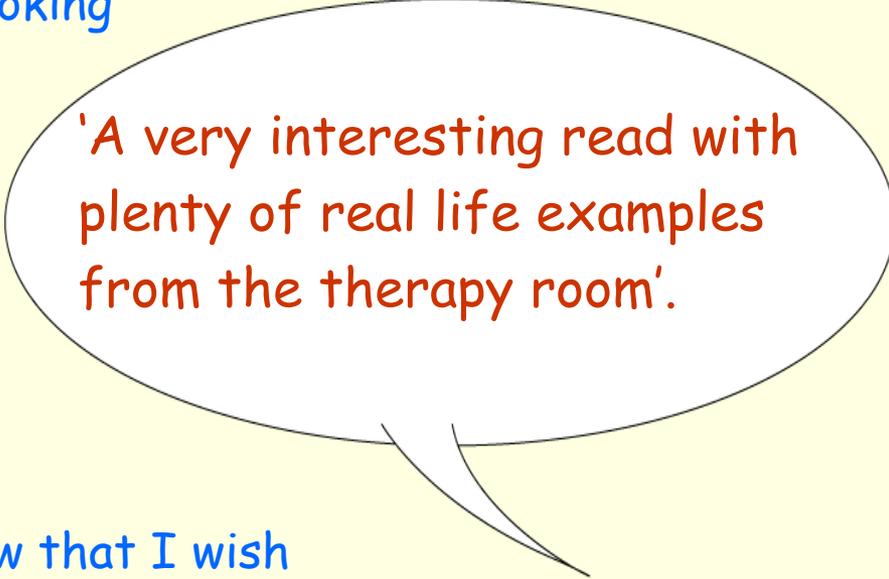


ALSO INCLUDES

'An Introduction to
Transactional Analysis [TA] Psychology'

What readers say about 'Healing Your Relationship'

- 'Sound, practical advice about overcoming relationship problems'
- 'Very interesting and thought provoking'
- 'Easy to read and understand'
- 'Knowledgeable and wise'
- 'Informative', 'Punchy' 'Superb'
- 'Brilliantly illustrated'
- 'Very useful and easy to refer to'



'A very interesting read with plenty of real life examples from the therapy room'.

'I understand so many things now that I wish I had known before'.

Relationship improvement advice in easy reference format

Don't play archaeology [See page 168]

Until you close the door on the past, you will have great difficulty in opening the door to the future.

See 'Letting go of anger and hurt' on pages 384 - 415



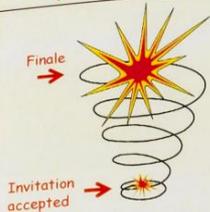
Ban these 'Uproar' invitation words!

- You started it...No I didn't, you did!
 - It's your fault - if you hadn't.....
 - You need talk - how about when.....
 - You always.....
 - You never.....
 - You said.....
 - My life's harder than yours.....
 - The trouble with you is.....
- There are 'special words' too - words which you have used to hurt each other before. It would be helpful to make a list of your special hurtful words and agree to avoid using them in future.



These 'special words' keep relationships in a blaming loop which blocks constructive communication.

Don't play 'Uproar'



- Key to avoiding Uproar [pages 245 - 247 following] is to spot the invitation and decline it by not rising to it.
- It's important to discuss the Uproar game and the invitations [Triggers: Page 358 [things you say and do that cause arguments] which you both use.
- Maybe you could agree a humorous codeword to use when an invitation is received, a codeword which says 'let's not play' e.g. 'sausages'.
- Refusing to accept Uproar invitations will wind up your partner if you haven't agreed in advance about not playing Uproar [see page 210]

When resisting Uproar invitations, acknowledge your partners feelings, 'I can see you are upset/angry, but this is not a good time' [see page 206]

Notice and resist 'Uproar' invitations especially using your 'special words' [page 245]

What Uproar invitations does your partner issue [things which trigger your anger] [page 359]? Be on the lookout for their invitations and resist them.

What Uproar invitations do you issue? Make a list of your partner's anger and hurt triggers and tread carefully around them.

Use the ABC Impulse Control Technique when you receive an Uproar invitation [Page 375].



The spiral - either of you can 'spot it and stop it' at any point

Indexed and fully cross referenced, so you can easily find the topics most relevant to you and your partner.

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