

Healing Your Relationship

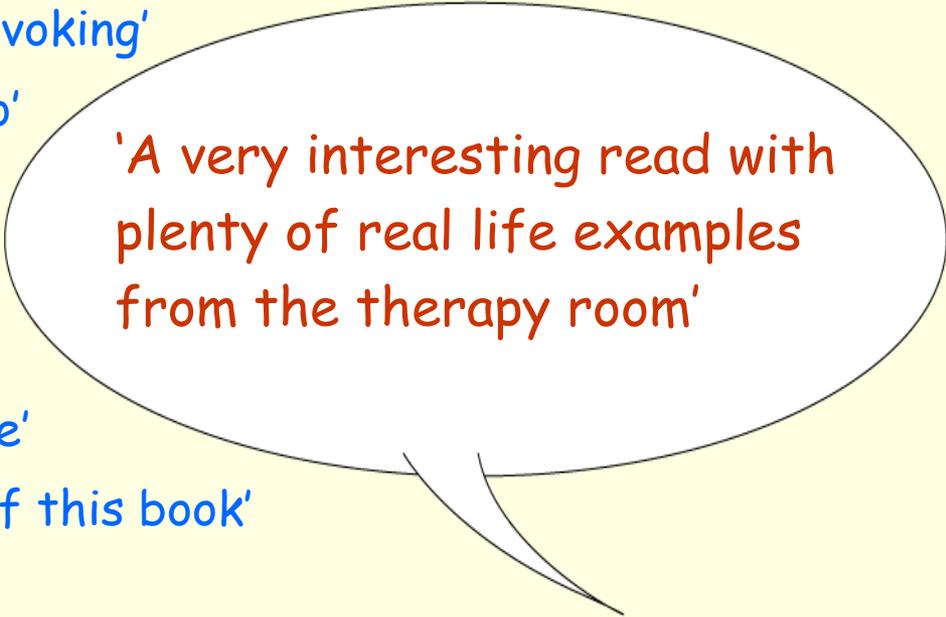
A REFERENCE
GUIDE FOR
COUPLES

- ❑ BITE SIZED ADVICE ON OVER 100 TOPICS
- ❑ FULLY INDEXED AND CROSS REFERENCED
- ❑ INCLUDES THE TOP TEN STEPS IN IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS



What readers say.....

- 'Sound, practical advice about overcoming relationship problems'
- Very interesting and thought provoking'
- 'Very useful and easy to refer to'
- 'Easy to read and understand'
- 'Informative', 'Punchy'
- 'Brilliantly illustrated'
- 'Superb' 'Knowledgeable and wise'
- 'Every home should have a copy of this book'



'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.'

Brian A Martin MSc CTA MNCH MBACP

Counsellor, Couples Counsellor, Psychotherapist, Mediator and Life Skills Coach based in Hinckley, Leicestershire, UK. Registered with the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy [UKCP] and the British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy [BACP].

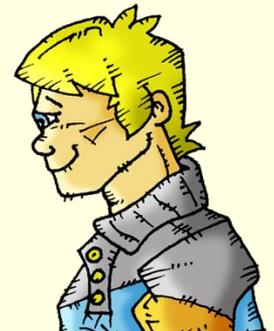
Don't be misled by the easy-read style of my book! The illustrations and slide show format are to help make some of the more complicated psychological concepts easy to understand and remember. It's a fully cross referenced book, so you can find topics and refer back to them using the extensive index [page 422] whenever you choose.



www.brianamartin.co.uk

Top Ten Steps in healing your relationship

1. Learn to draw a line on past hurt: the hardest thing, but essential 146
2. Learn to control what you say and do when feeling angry or hurt 332
and how to discuss things calmly and constructively 206
3. Develop the 'right attitude' to each other and the relationship 157
4. Listen empathically even when you find it impossible to agree 190
5. Take responsibility for your contribution to the problems 174
6. Release anger and hurt in safe ways 384
7. Be assertive in getting your needs met 212
8. Reduce stress levels using the deep relaxation audio downloads 325
9. Learn to use the relationship management tools on page 10
10. Understand yourself and partner better with
Transactional Analysis [TA] psychology 26





THE A TO Z OF RELATIONSHIP IMPROVEMENT TOPICS Page 422

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Part Seven:	The Anger Management Programme	326
Part Eight:	The ABC Impulse Control Method	375
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Essential Reading

- Top Ten Steps In Improving Your Relationship 4
- List of essential Relationship Management Tools 10
- How To Get Love, Feel Valued and Be Heard 129
- The Right Attitude for Relationship Success 159
- Relationship Progress Monitor 11
- Compatibility Test For Couples 107
- Listening Skills Self Assessment 192
- Assertiveness Self Assessment 224
- Anger Management Progress Monitor 416
- Optional Additional Reading Links 419
- Stress Management and Impulse Control
Free Audio Downloads 325



Part One: Introduction

- Contents Page 5
- How to get the best out of this book 8
- Causes of conflict 9
- Essential relationship management tools 10
- Progress monitor 11
- About 'Healing Your Relationship' 12 - 19
- Health warning 20
- Manage your expectations 21 - 24
- Handling setbacks 25



To get the best out of this book you need to do more than just read it!

- The book is not meant to be read straight through, cover to cover, any more than you would attempt to read a dictionary starting from A through to Z.
- It's meant to be dipped into, referred back to and be the basis for discussion between couples working to improve their relationship.
- The book is indexed and cross referenced so you can easily move from one part to another and refer back as you wish.
- I suggest that you choose something which you find particularly relevant to you and your partner and start there.



Some of the causes of conflict brought by clients and covered in this book

- Anger and hurt from the past that won't heal 146
- Anger management & impulse control problems 326
- Arguments over the children 278
- Inability to discuss problems without falling out 206
- Jealous and controlling behaviour 255
- Partner doesn't listen or talk 206
- Partner has changed for the worse 103
- Partner is always criticising 184
- Partner won't consider counselling 137
- Partner won't stop unacceptable behaviour 136 & 212
- Passive aggressive behaviour 113
- Personality clash 99
- Sexual problems 271
- Stress 303

Essential relationship management tools



In this book you will find details of tools and techniques to use in healing your relationship. Essential amongst these are the following :

1. 'Not Now' method of controlling angry words 332
2. Spotting and stopping when you are heading for the 'game' of Uproar 65
3. 'Time Out' technique to be used to interrupt the 'Uproar' process 206
4. Contracting for a civilised conversation when you are feeling calmer 206
5. Uninterrupted Speaking Time - key to hearing and being heard 208
6. The Stuck Record - expressing yourself assertively 228

Although the book is meant primarily for couples, many of the principles and practices hold true with any relationship including with family, friends and colleagues.

Use this Progress Monitor regularly as a basis for discussion

1. Do you feel better about the relationship?
2. Are fall outs less severe than they were?
3. Do fall outs happen less often than they did?
4. Are fall outs more quickly recovered from?
5. Have you made helpful changes?
6. Has your partner made helpful changes?
7. Do you feel that you understand each other better than you did?
8. Are you better able to control your reaction when feeling angry, frustrated and hurt?
9. Are you able to discuss issues without ending up arguing ?
10. Do you use setbacks as learning opportunities?

The results of this Progress Monitor will indicate whether you need to consider professional help

Evaluate progress against each point

0 = No 1 = Some improvement 2 = Big improvement 3 = OK Now

'Healing Your Relationship' is based on accepted wisdom and practice

My contribution has been to capture and express in easily understood language, many ideas which are of fundamental importance in understanding human relationships and emotional health. In writing, I have also been able to draw on my extensive work with couples and individual clients and the personal experience of a long life. I could well have called this book, 'Things I Wish I Had Known At The Start'. Prominent amongst authors who have influenced my writing are: Eric Berne, Claude Steiner, Carl Rogers, James & Barbara Allen, David D Burns, Albert Ellis, Joseph O'Connor, John Seymour, John Gray, Bob & Mary Goulding, Frederick Perls, Richard Bandler, Windy Dryden, Ian Stewart and Vann Joines. Thanks too, to Tony Tilney for his splendid 'Dictionary of Transactional Analysis' which so much helped me as a student.

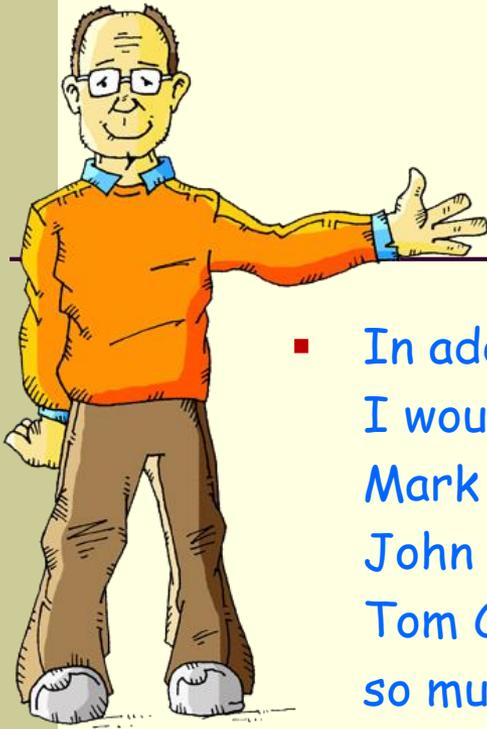
Brian A Martin

This book is about action, about deciding how to change the way you think, feel and behave in your relationship.

- As has been said so often, if you do what you have usually done, you'll get what you have usually got!
- Just reading this book without pausing and practicing the advice offered, would be like you and your partner trying to learn to dance by just reading a book.
- The longest journey starts with a single step - so does changing the way your relationship is! I wonder what way of thinking, feeling, or behaving you will choose to change first?



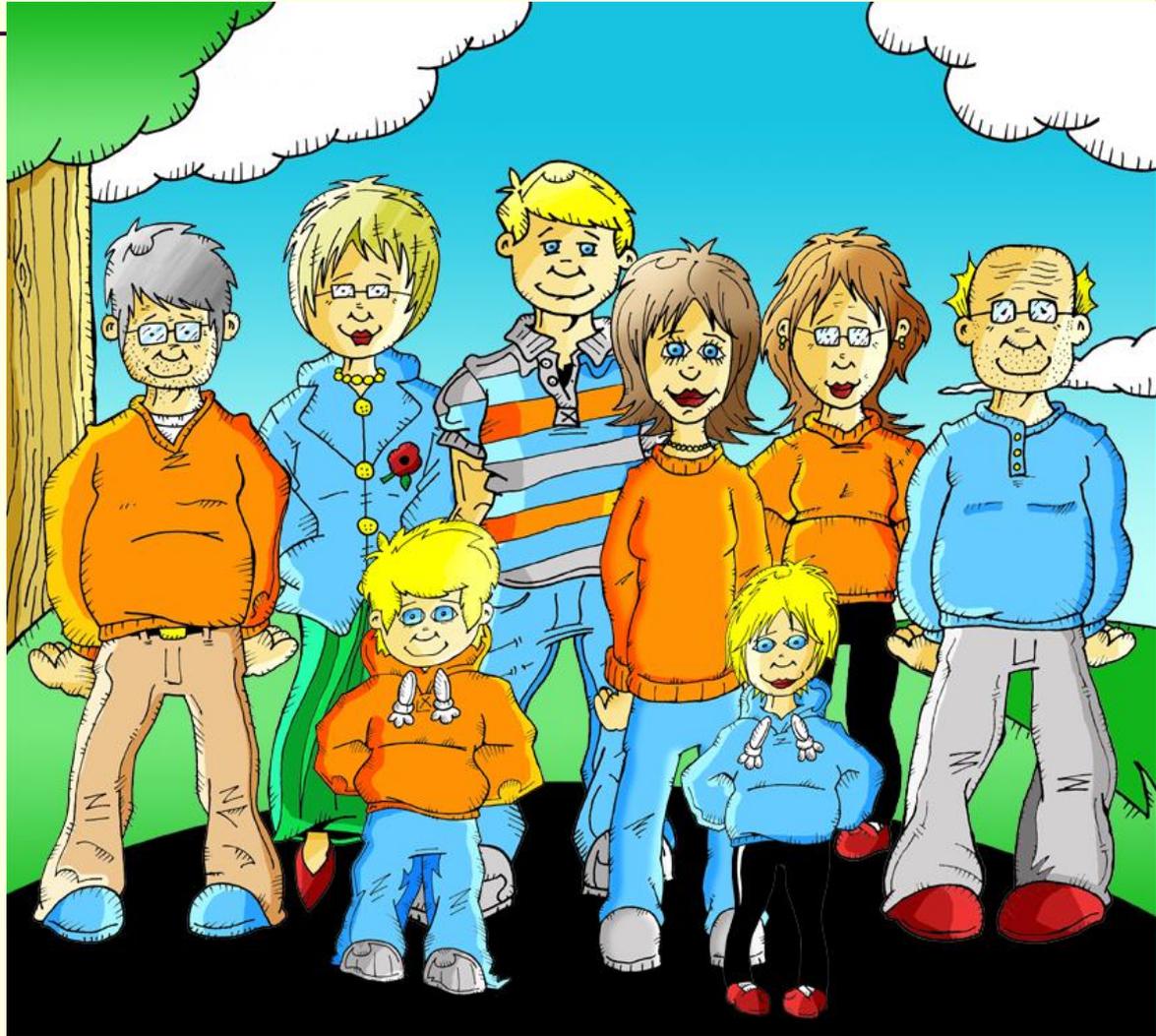
Personal Thanks



- In addition to the many writer who have informed my work, I would like to thank Ian Stewart, Adrienne Lee and Mark Widdowson of the Berne Institute, Maureen [Mo] Felton, John Monk-Steel, Kathy Nettleton, Josephine Teague , Tom Cartwright and my clients, from whom I continue to learn so much on our journeys together.
- Thanks too to illustrator Barry Aldridge, who has successfully captured and improved on, the images in my head.
- I would especially like to thank my wife Diane, who has always supported me in a career which often intruded far too much on our life together. Without your love and support Diane, this book would not have been possible. I shall always be deeply grateful to you for that and for everything.

Sam and Dan

In the book we meet Sam and Dan and members of their family who are experiencing anger, stress and relationship difficulties



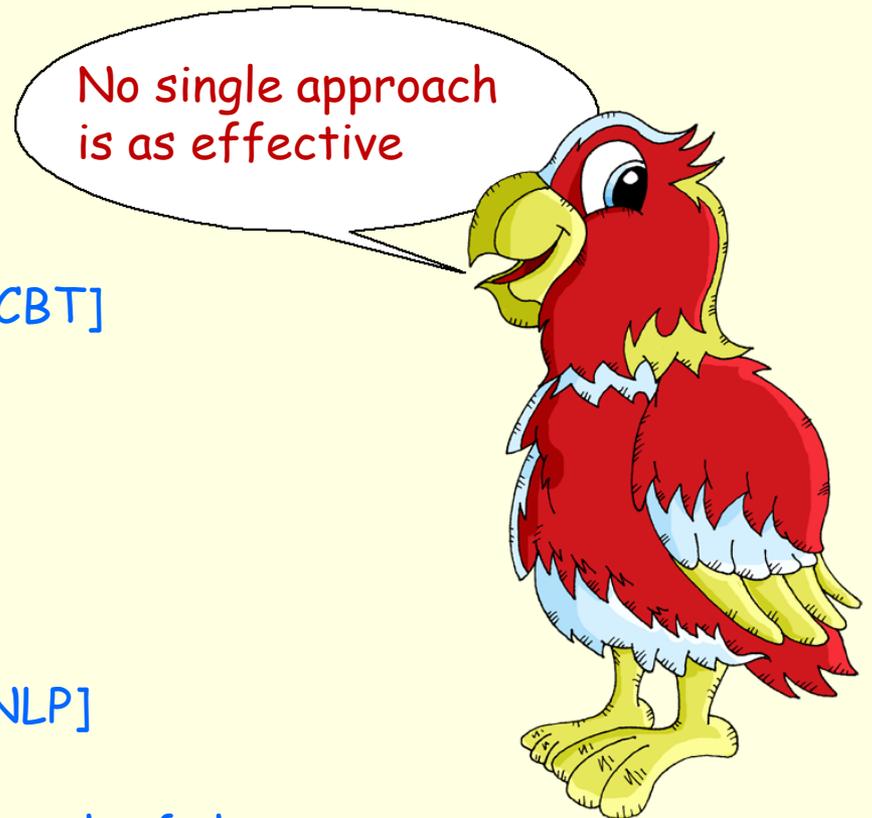
Illustrations by
Barry Aldridge
Barry_Aldridge27@tiscali.co.uk

The methods described are based on what is called an 'integrative' approach

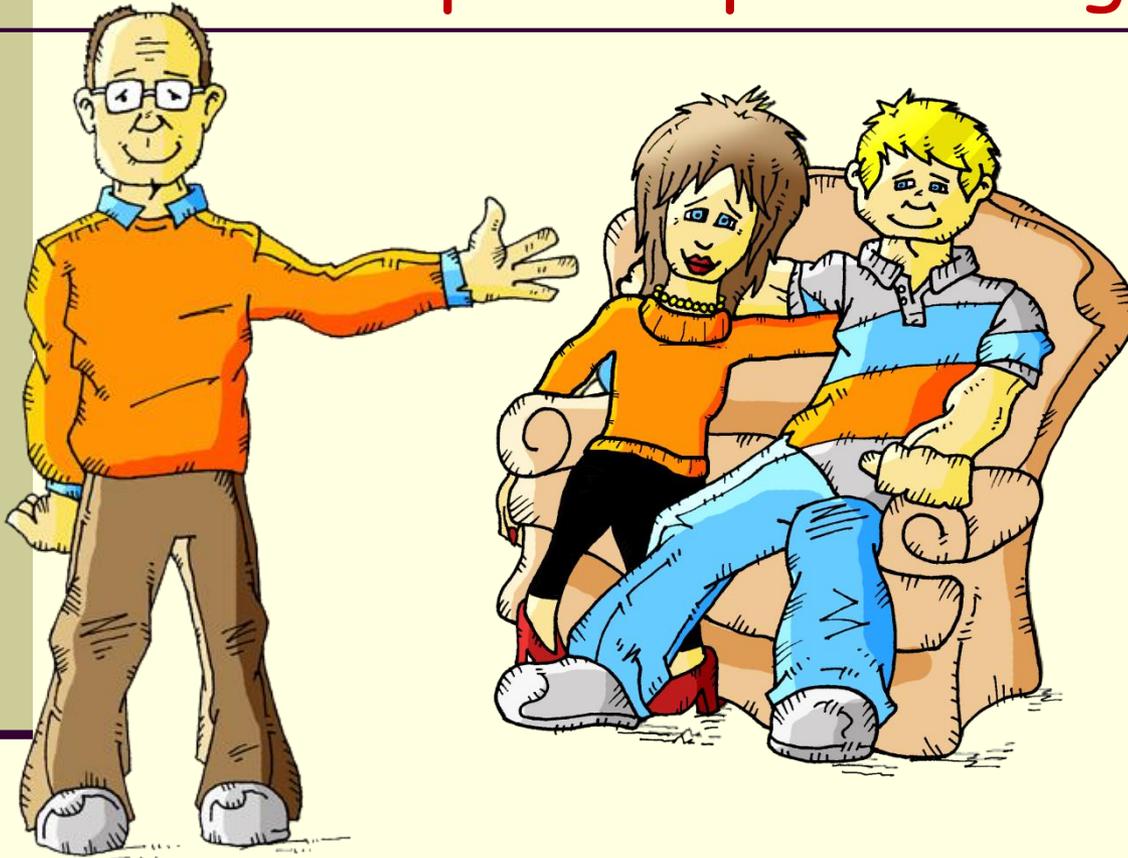
The book incorporates techniques drawn from different 'schools' of therapy, specifically:

- Transactional Analysis [TA]
- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy [CBT]
- Couples Counselling & Mediation
- Person Centred Counselling
- Hypnotherapy
- Constructivism
- Neuro Linguistic Programming [NLP]

The link for a brief description of each of these approaches please can be found on Page 421



My aims in writing this book for couples experiencing difficulties



- Provide practical relationship advice in plain language and memorable format.
- Enable couples to understand themselves and each other better.
- Help couples learn to resolve issues by calm discussion.

It's indexed and fully cross referenced, so it can be dipped into and referred back to. The topics most relevant to you and your partner can be selected for reading and discussion without reading the whole book.

You are welcome to use the contents of this book in a professional capacity

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You are welcome to use extracts from this book as a resource for your personal work as a therapist, trainer, teacher, life skills coach or mediator: or as a manager delivering 'in house' training programmes: or in writing articles about topics covered by the programme, providing the source is clearly identified as [Brian A Martin at www.brianamartin.co.uk](http://www.brianamartin.co.uk)



If you wish to purchase multiple copies of the printed version, or sections from it, at a discounted price as a training/therapy resource please e-mail me at brian@brianamartin.co.uk

'Successful relationships aren't successful because they are problem free. They are successful because the couple have learned how to relate and how to discuss constructively the problems which come up'.

Successful Relationships





Health Warning

- This book is intended to help couples improve their relationship. However, it will almost certainly confirm that some of the blame which you may have been heaping on your partner, is justified.
- Should you now use what I have written to play blaming games [by pointing out to your partner his or her 'confirmed' deficiencies] you would have missed a main point from my message.
- What is that point? That blaming games have to stop if you are going to get along better: that you need to learn to put the past in the past [page 146] and focus on the present.
- How to let go of hurt and anger is covered in Part Eight [page 384].

So please, please, don't play blaming games with a book designed to help you to do just the opposite!

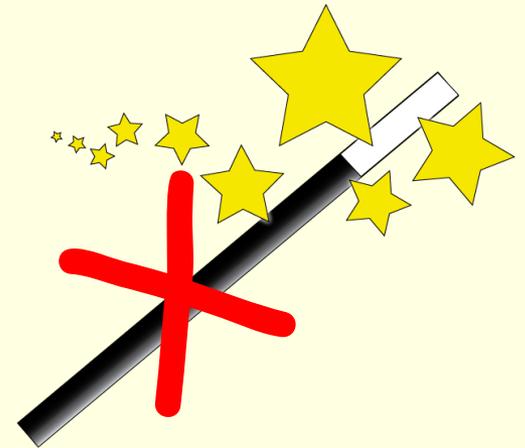
Manage your expectations



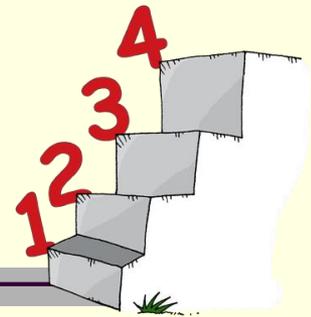
- It's important to realise at the outset that you are bound to have occasional setbacks, an old unhelpful behaviour occurring.
- Most couples working on their relationship are trying to change ways of being with each other which have become habitual. It's unrealistic to expect total consistency in new ways of being until they have become the new habits.
- In fact, progress can be measured by monitoring the setbacks:
 - Is the number of setbacks becoming more spaced out?
 - Are the setbacks less severe?
 - Are you able to get 'back on track' more quickly than before?

Expect setbacks: don't let them derail your attempts to change the old destructive ways of being with each other.

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



Mastering the techniques will take time and patience

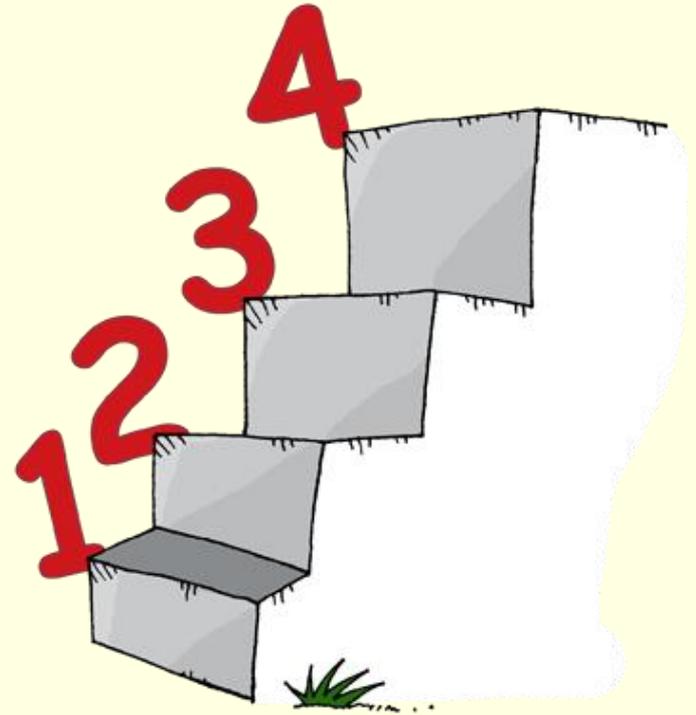


1. Right now, you don't know how to handle some situations better. This is called unconscious incompetence and is learning level one.
2. As you progress, you will be aware of what to do differently but unable to do it consistently. This is called conscious incompetence and is learning level two.
3. You will then progress to a stage where you can be consistent, but are still having to think about it. This is called conscious competence and is learning level three.
4. Finally, your new ways will become automatic, you will not have to remind yourself what to do. This is called unconscious competence and is learning level four.

Learning level four, unconscious competence, is the ultimate stage in all learning processes.

Be patient with each other.....

- 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, a changed you will emerge.

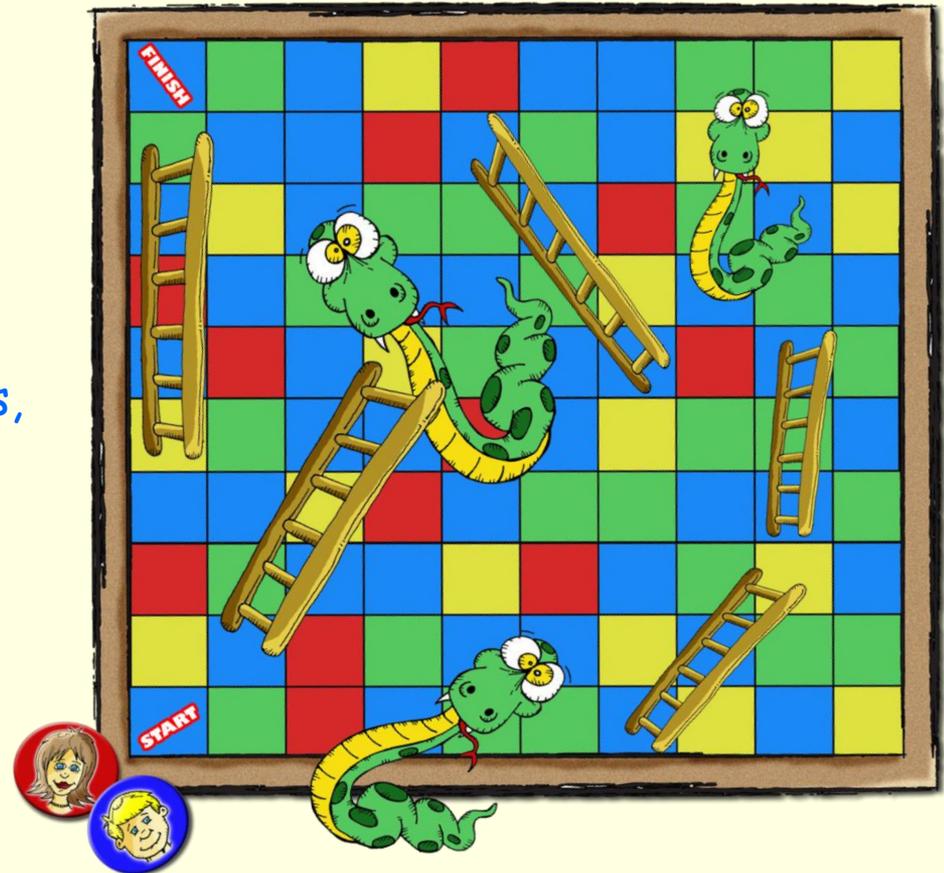


The impulse to behave in the old way will often still be there for quite a while. The difference is you will be able to choose to control the impulse [page 375]

Don't turn setbacks into failure

The methods in this book are highly effective in improving relationships and helping solve relationship problems. However, relationship improvement is, in some ways, like the game of snakes and ladders! Sometimes, because you and your partner are human and therefore fallible, you will get it wrong and replay an old, damaging, behaviour.

At these times it's vital to remember that setbacks are not failure and get back on track.



Part Two: Self Awareness

The TA way
of understanding
yourself
and
your partner

P
A
C

Self Awareness: The TA way of understanding yourself and your partner

- The importance of self awareness and understanding others Page 29
- The three big concepts at the heart of TA 31
- What is 'Transactional Analysis' 33
- Ego States - our multiple 'personalities' 34
 - Our Parent Ego State 39
 - Our Adult Ego State 44
 - Our Child Ego State 46
- The Life Script we have constructed for ourselves 51
- I'm OK : You're OK - the philosophy at the heart of TA 52
- Emotional Trading Stamps: how we store anger and hurt: 57
- Rubber banding: How the past drives feelings in the present 58
- Displacement: how we take our anger out on the wrong target 60
- Psychological games we play 61
- Contracting for change - essential for personal change 68



The two worlds of Sam and Dan

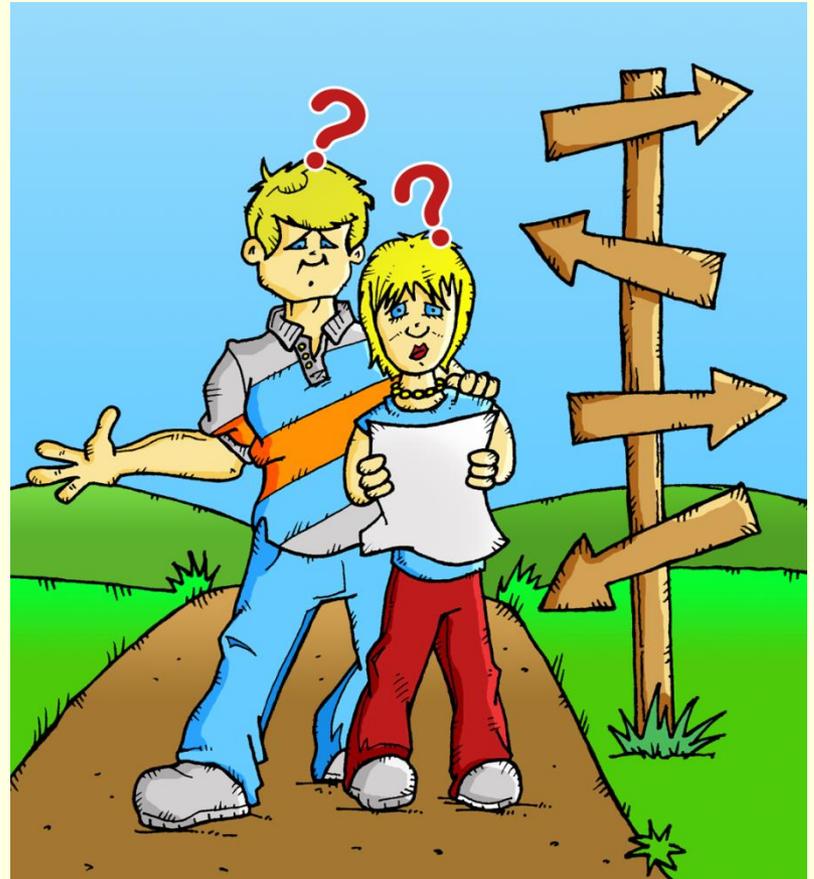


- **Sam:** 'He says he loves me, but you wouldn't believe it from the way he treats me. Sometimes he is just like his father was, horrible; at other times he is like a spoilt child. He says I'm just like his mother, always criticising and trying to control him.' He promises changes, but when he does change his behaviour he can never keep it up'.
- **Dan:** 'I love her, but she is so critical and 'on my back' all the time. She wants me to change the way I am, but I can't see what's so wrong with the way I am. I know I'm not perfect, but I think I'm a good husband. I don't keep her short of money and I'm not violent. It's as though she wants to turn me into someone I'm not. However hard I try to please her I always finish getting the same old complaints.'

They don't realise that they are being kept on a collision course driven by their auto pilot - their personal programming [page 72].

The importance of self awareness and understanding others

It seems to me, that without self- awareness, without an understanding of the psychology of your partner and yourself, trying to fix relationship problems is like setting out on a journey without knowing the route, without having a sense of direction and without being clear how to get to where you want to.



Transactional Analysis is a brilliant way of developing self- awareness and understanding of others [page 31]

Self awareness gives us choice about how to be, instead of being stuck on autopilot

- Self awareness gives us choice - it enables us to be able to stop and choose to switch to a more helpful state of mind when we are responding to our partner and to others.
- TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS [TA] is my main model for understanding myself and others. I found the CTA [Certified Transactional Analyst] qualification process life changing. #
- In this book I have drawn on many ideas which come from TA, the brainchild originally of Eric Berne, but further developed since by many writers.

At 'The Berne Institute' in Kegworth, Leicestershire, UK., www.theberne.com



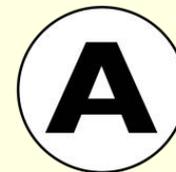
Three of the big ideas at the heart of Transactional Analysis [TA]



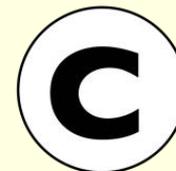
**I'M OK:
YOU'RE OK -**
The philosophy
at the heart
of TA [Page 52]



PARENT

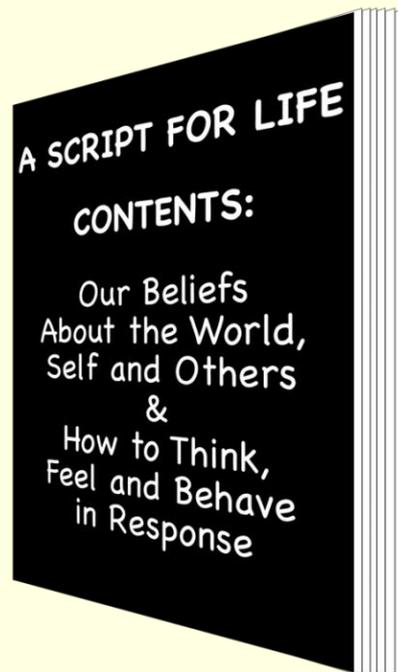


ADULT



CHILD

LIFE SCRIPT -
The script we've
constructed to live
our life by [Page 51]

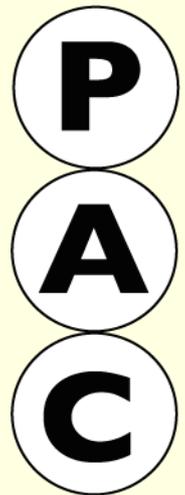


EGO STATES -
Our multiple 'personalities'
[Page 34]

Other Transactional Analysis concepts covered in this book

- The Critical & Controlling Parent in our heads [Pages 39 & 184]
- Drivers & Injunctions - parental musts and mustn'ts and Parent Permissions - what's OK for us to do and be [42 - 43]
- There is much more to TA than I have been able to include in this book and I recommend further study of it if you are interested in personal development and understanding why we think, feel, behave and express ourselves the way we do - even when it's very unhelpful.

If you would like to know more about TA, I suggest you visit 'The United Kingdom Association for Transactional Analysis [UKATA] at: www.uktransactionalanalysis.co.uk



What is 'Transactional Analysis'?

- A Transaction is simply a unit of communication. You say something to your partner who responds in some way, verbal or non-verbal. You have exchanged transactions. Or I nod and say 'Hello' and you nod and say 'Hello' back. We have exchanged transactions.
- Transactional Analysis is exactly that - an analysis of what is going on in the communication process between ourselves and others and internally between different parts of our own personality.
- Ego States A key part of Transactional Analysis, is the theory about different parts of our personality. This is a really helpful way of understanding what is going on between ourselves and others and inside our head between the different parts of our personality.

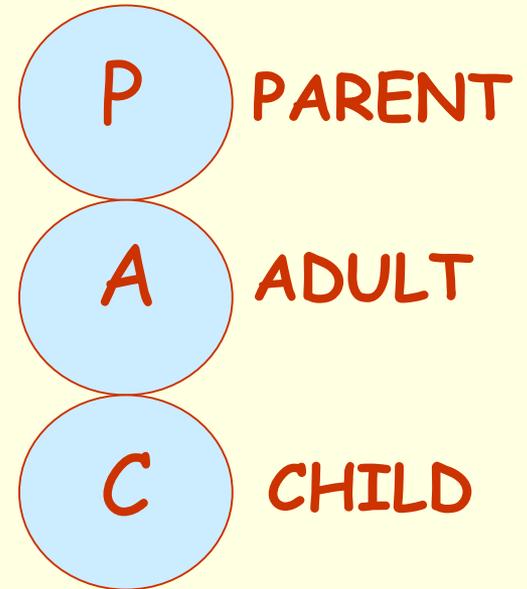
Ego States - our multiple 'personalities' - the brainchild of Eric Berne

- Eric Berne was a psychoanalyst and psychotherapist, the Canadian born son of a medical doctor, and practised in the U.S.A. He died in 1970 at the age of 60, the author of nine books, including 'The Games People Play' which brought him international fame.
- Berne built on work by Paul Federn and Eduardo Weiss to develop a theory of personality which led to a new way of thinking about psychological processes and a whole new type of psychotherapy. His theories have helped to change the lives of many people through the work of thousands of TA psychotherapists worldwide. He called the new approach 'Transactional Analysis', or TA for short.
- Transactional Analysis is not a very catchy name is it? But the core idea is simple enough. Berne came to believe, as a result of his work over several decades, that each of us have a number of different 'Ego States', or different aspects of our personality. Which 'personality' comes out at any one time depends on the situation.

Ego States - our multiple 'personalities'

- Eric Berne, the mastermind behind Transactional Analysis [TA], identified different states of mind which he called 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.

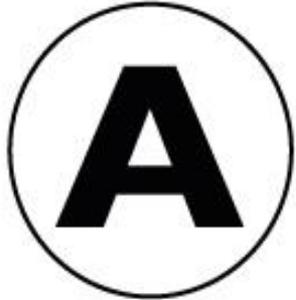
You can learn more about Eric Berne by reading 'Eric Berne' by Ian Stewart.



Berne identified three Ego States - Parent, Adult & Child



P = Parent Ego State
Attitudes, thoughts and feelings 'swallowed whole' without question from parent figures



A = Adult Ego State

Behaviours, thoughts and feelings in direct response to here and now reality



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

The impact of different Ego States on our behaviour and our relationships

- I think you will easily agree how unhelpful it is when you or your partner behave like the child you used to be, or criticise and try to be controlling, in the way your mother or father might have done.
- It's far more helpful to behave in rational, logical, common sense ways which are appropriate to 'here and now' reality, rather than replaying child or parent behaviours from the past.
- Only when we are in Adult Ego State are we fully present in the 'here and now'. When we are in Child or Parent Ego State we are replaying behaviours from the past which will often be very unhelpful.
- TA is a brilliant way of understanding ourselves and others and why we behave the way we do. By being able to notice when we are in Child or Parent Ego State we can choose to switch into Adult Ego State and handle situations in more appropriate ways.



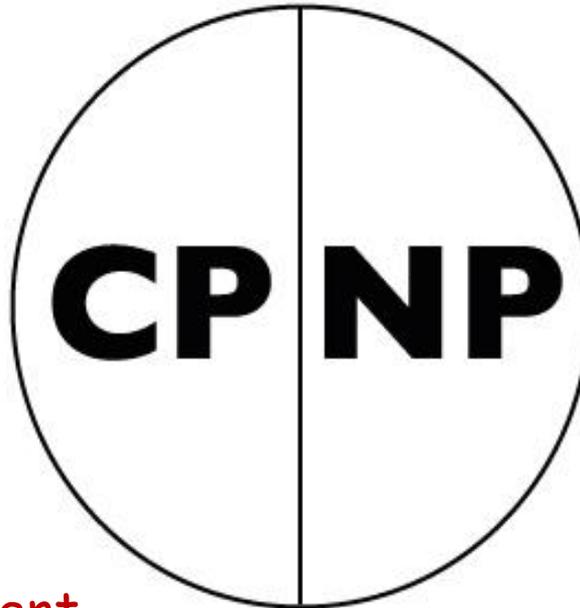
Children have Ego States too!



- As new born babies we have only one ego state - Child. At this point we are totally selfish little human animals concerned only with survival, being fed and being kept comfortable and safe.
- As we grow the content of our Child Ego State develops and we learn how to be to get the right results from the adults around us, principally mum and dad. In healthy development we soon start to develop empathy skills and become less selfish.
- We also start to learn practical stuff, like not eating the freshly baked cakes while they are still hot and not to cross the road without looking both ways. This is our emerging Adult Ego State, learning how to respond appropriately to what's going on in the here and now.
- We start to copy parental behaviours, as can be seen when 4 year old 'big' sister plays with her younger brother and uses the same words and gestures which mum uses. This is the seedling Parent Ego State.

P
A
C

Two kinds of Parent Ego State



Critical/Controlling Parent

Always trying to impose on others their
'BIG BOOK OF RIGHT AND ONLY WAYS'.

Nurturing Parent

Caring, supportive,
forgiving.

Our Parent Ego State

- When we are in Parent Ego State we are replaying ways of thinking and behaving we have, out of awareness, copied from one or more parent influences - mum, dad, grandparents, teachers, or culture of origin.
- This way of thinking and behaving may, amongst many other things, include permission to be aggressive and permission to be prejudiced against some groups in society.
- So when we are aggressive and critical we may be in what is called Critical/ Controlling Parent Ego State and dealing with the situation as one of our parent figures would have done.



Nurturing
Parent



Critical/
Controlling
Parent

In what situations do you temporarily become your mother or father?

Our Critical & Controlling Parent not only criticises and tries to control others

It also criticises and controls us!

- The Critical/Controlling Parent in our head demands that we think, feel and behave in certain ways. For example, we may feel driven to be perfect, try hard, be strong or please others.
- We may be forbidden by the Parent in our head to have fun, show off, think positive thoughts about ourselves, get our needs met, appear weak or vulnerable or let our feelings show.
- We may also be carrying **Parent Ego State permission** to be angry and aggressive in some situations or, conversely, be forbidden to show anger.
- What prejudices we have are more likely to be coming from our Parent Ego State than from personal experience in life.



How our parents of childhood days still control us

- We all have Parent programming from childhood about how we must be to win the approval of the Parent in our head.
- In Transactional Analysis [TA] the instructions in our programming are called '**DRIVERS**'. These '**DRIVERS**' may include instructions to Be Perfect, Try Hard, Be Strong and Please Others.
- When we disobey the Parent in our head and fail to Be Perfect, Try Hard, Be Strong or Please Others, we feel very anxious or guilty - just like a fearful disobedient child would feel.



The Child in Sam's grown up head who must still obey her parents instructions.

We also carry parental instructions from childhood about what we must not do

- We also carry Parent programming about how we must not be.
- In Transactional Analysis [TA] these instructions are called '**INJUNCTIONS**'.
- Our '**INJUNCTIONS**' may forbid us to have fun, show off, think positive thoughts about ourselves, get our needs met, allow ourselves to accept help or express our feelings. Should we dare to disobey any of our '**INJUNCTIONS**' we feel anxious.
- Normally, we just do as we are told by the Parent in our head - anything rather than the acute anxiety which follows disobeying.



If the Parent in your head is making life difficult you should consider TA Psychotherapy

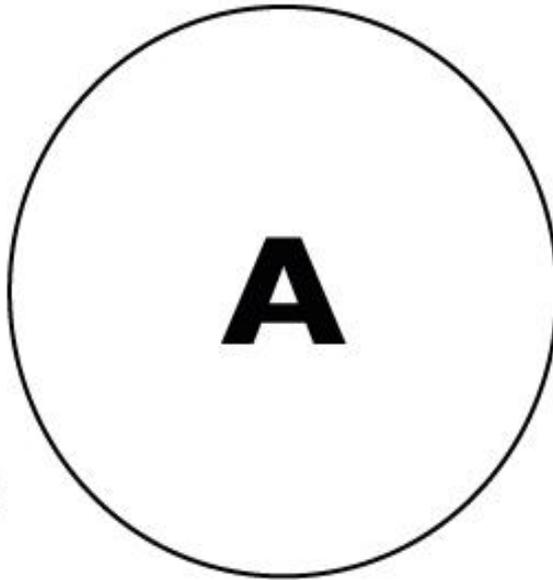
See also pages 184 - 189

Our Adult Ego State

- When we are in Adult Ego State we are in the 'here and now', responding appropriately to the situation we are in at the moment.
- **For Example:** When we use the parenting skills we have learned from reading and personal experience we are in **Adult Ego State**.
- When we use parenting methods which we accepted and swallowed whole from our parents without thinking about it we are in **Parent Ego State**.



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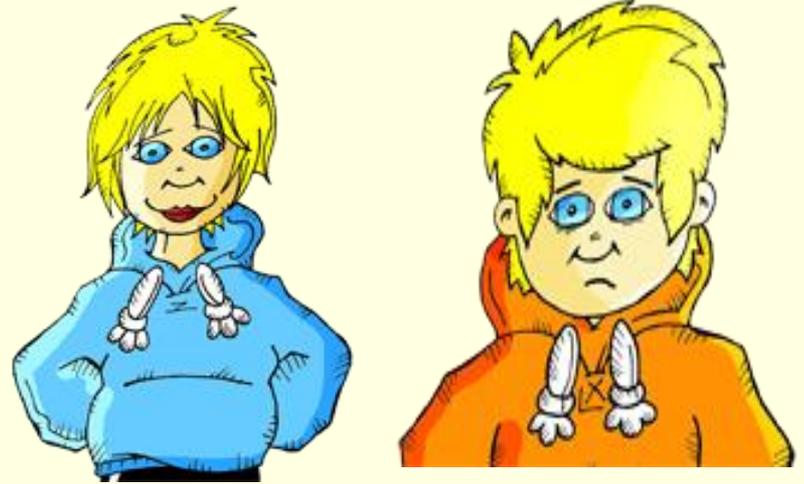
Adult Ego State

- Behaviours, thoughts and feelings in direct response to here and now reality.
- Factual, analytical, open-minded, reality-based, common sense approach.
- The Adult Ego State contains our accumulated wisdom based on our life experience and learning.

There are several kinds of Parent and Child Ego States but there is only one Adult Ego State.

Our Child Ego State

- We are in Child Ego State when we are thinking, feeling, and behaving as we would have done in childhood.
- Child Ego State is not the same as being 'childish'. When we are in Child Ego State we have regressed temporarily to being the child we used to be.
- Child Ego State includes our magical and irrational thoughts and feelings.



In whose company, and/or when, do you become a child again?

Example: If in the presence of an authority figure we feel inadequate or scared although there is no danger, we are in Child Ego State. We are responding to that authority figure as we did to a parent, bullying teacher or stern grandfather. Also, when we have phobic level fears we have regressed temporarily to childhood and are responding like the child we were.

P
A
C

Different Child Ego States



FC = Free Child

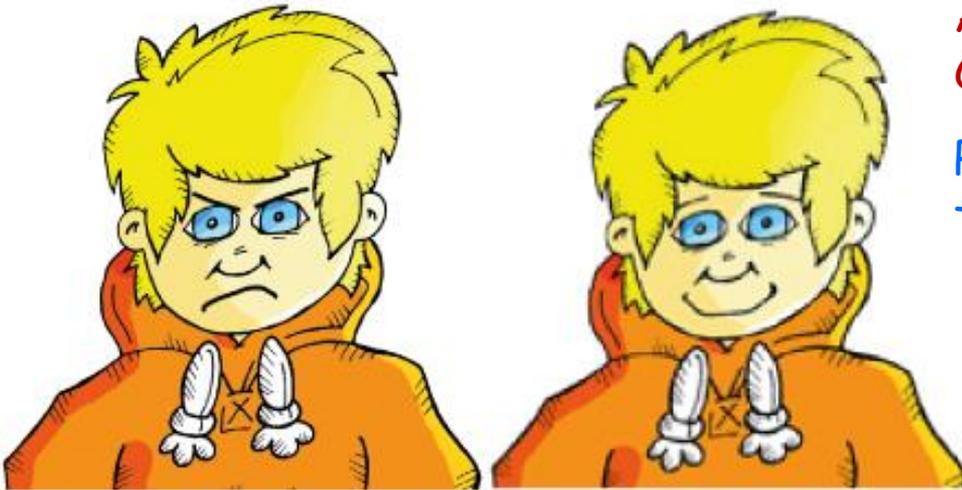
Fun loving,
spontaneous,
uninhibited

RC = Rebellious Child

Defiant, complaining,
obstructive

**AC = Adapted
Child**

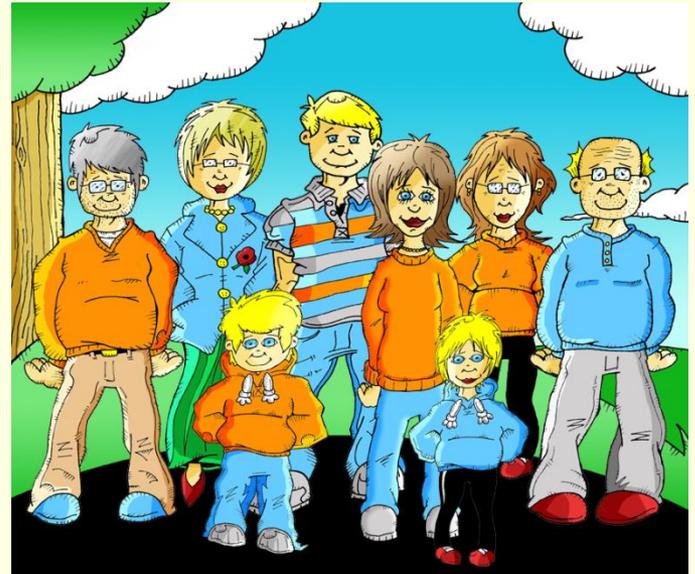
Passive, tries
to please



Every conversation is a group discussion!

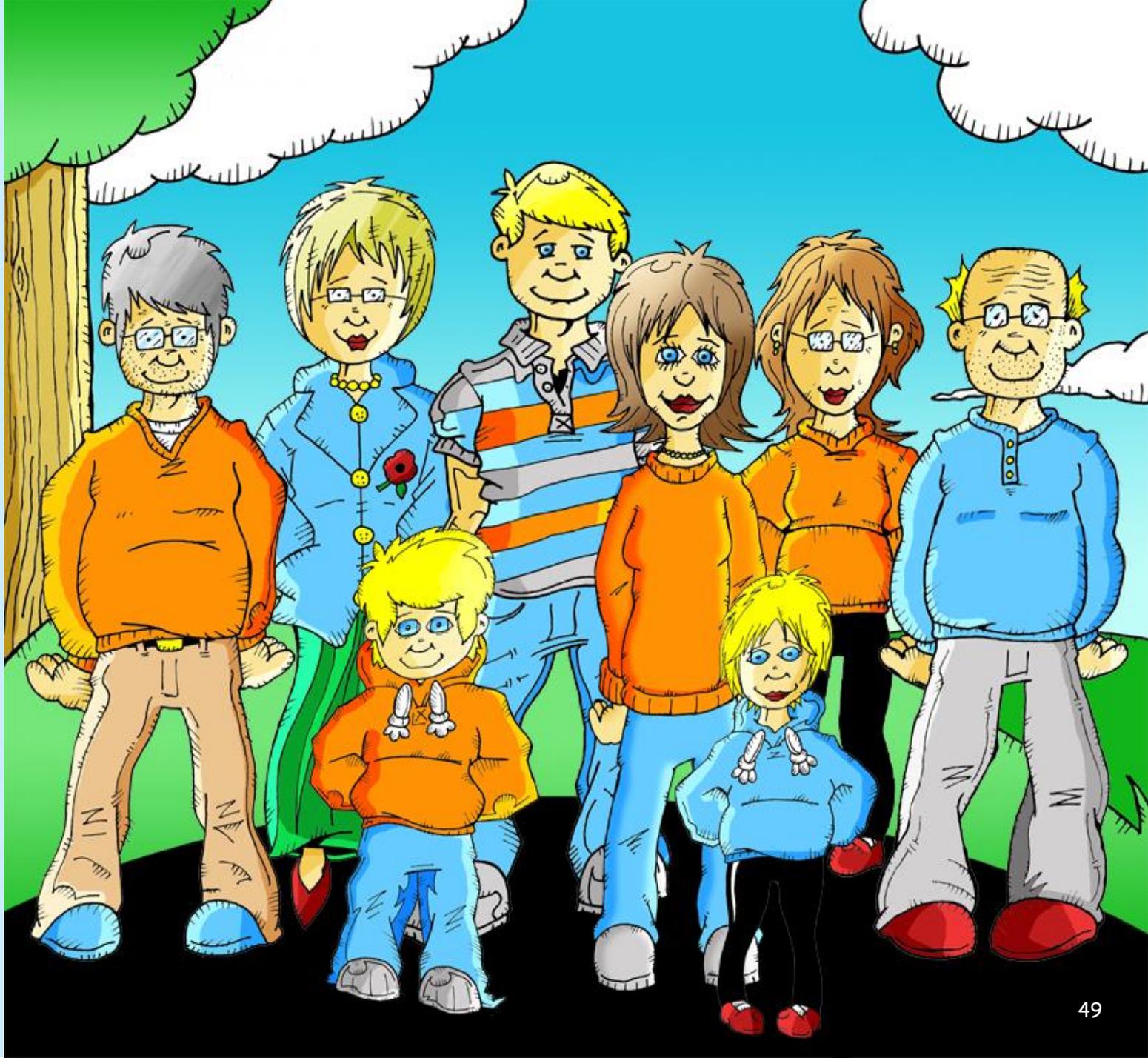
- Because we have multiple Ego States, when two people are in conversation it's in some ways like a group discussion.
- The Parent Ego State of each person is around, as are the Child Ego State and Adult Ego State of both. So, as the two grown-ups attempt to engage in Adult discussion, their Child and Parent Ego States keep switching in and out, bringing in ways of thinking, feeling and behaving from the past.
- No wonder it's hard to have a simple discussion without things going wrong!

When Sam and Dan talk, their Parent and Child Ego States keep disrupting their attempts to stay in Adult.



Every
Conversation
is like having
a group
discussion!

When Sam &
Dan talk,
their Parent
and Child
Ego States
keep butting
in, frustrating
their attempts
to have a
conversation
in Adult.



Using Ego State awareness

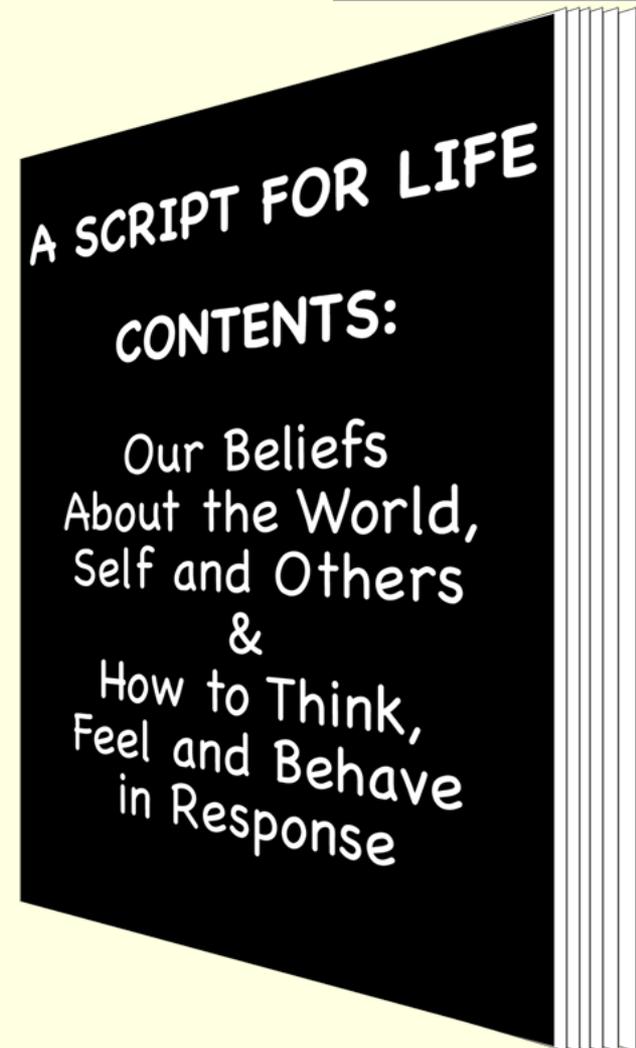
- The key is to learn to notice when you have moved out of rational, 'sensible' Adult and slipped into Parent or Child.
- Responses you make from your Parent or Child Ego States are much less likely to be appropriate to what is going on in the 'here and now' than those from your Adult Ego State.
- The 'Not Now' impulse control technique [page 375], which is at the centre of 'The Anger Management Programme' [page 326], helps to achieve an Adult frame of mind because it forces us to stop and think.



The Life Script we have constructed in response to our 'Map of the World'

Our Life Script is our programme of how to think, feel and behave when travelling on our journey through life. It was originally constructed, mainly unconsciously, in childhood, based on our experience of life. As a result of our Life Script we tend to endlessly replay old patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving in specific situations.

Life Script is covered more fully on pages 80 - 83.



'I'm OK, You're OK'

The basic philosophical position of TA

- This does not mean accepting the not OK behaviour of the other person as OK, but it does mean valuing and accepting the other person despite their behaviour.
- It also means valuing and accepting yourself despite your flaws.
- You may not be able to fully accept this philosophy at the moment, but it's worth asking yourself whether the person whose behaviour you feel upset by is at heart an OK person or a 'bad', 'not OK', person.
- If you can accept someone as an OK person who did something not OK [rather than a 'bad' person] you will be able to handle things better .



'You are an OK person even though your behaviour is sometimes not OK'

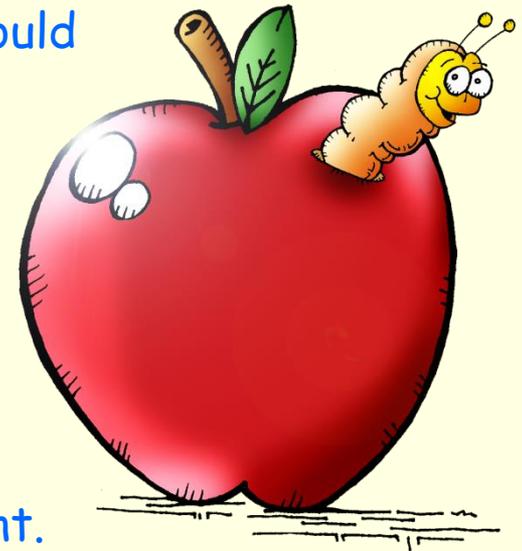
When we feel upset with people, we often forget temporarily that although they have done things we are upset about, they are still OK people.



When you think about others whose behaviour you feel upset by have you, without realising it, slipped into thinking of them as 'bad', rather than 'OK, at heart despite what they did'?

Bad apple or good apple with a blemish?

- Whenever I was working with a new group at the local college where I was visiting lecturer I used to take an apple into a session. The apple was always good - but not perfect - I deliberately chose an apple with a bruise or skin blemish. Without explanation, I would pass the apple round and ask each of the students to inspect it.
- When the apple eventually came back to me I would ask the students, 'What do you think of the apple?' They would have no trouble in agreeing it was a nice apple. I would then throw the apple into the litter bin without comment.



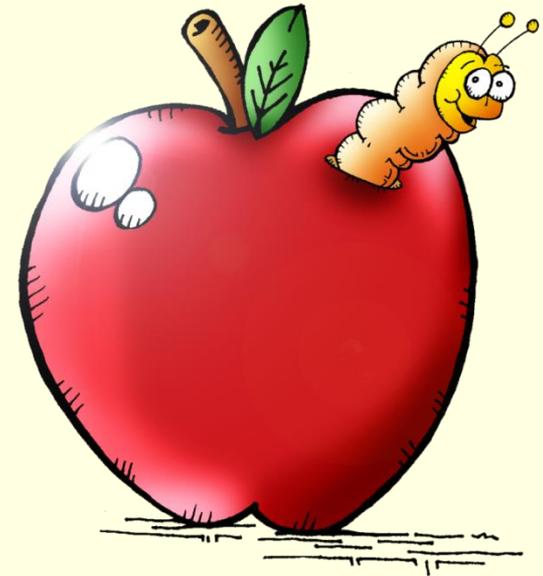
Not perfect - but good enough?

Eventually somebody would ask 'Why have you thrown it away - it's a good apple'. My reply? 'It's obviously no good, it's not perfect'.

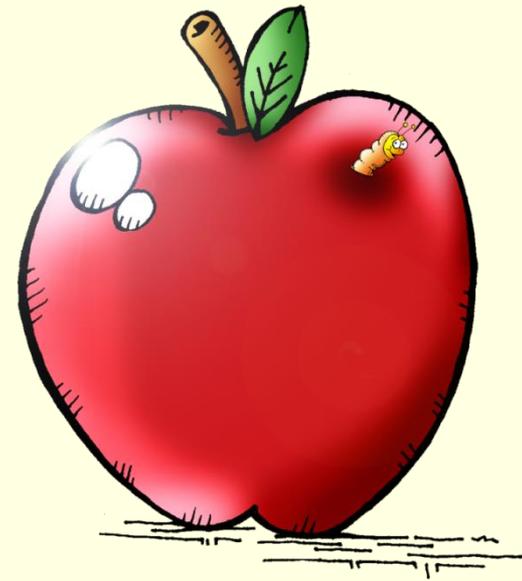
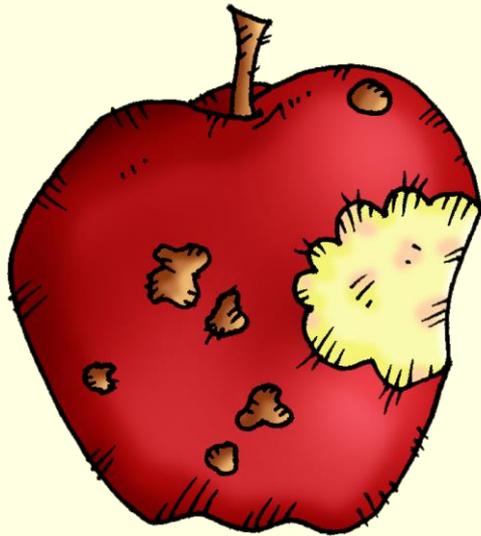
That was my way of demonstrating what we do with people too - we reject them because they are flawed [like us!].

People with low self-esteem do it all the time - reject themselves because of their flaws!

The person you feel upset by is imperfect, like you and me. The question is 'Is he/she an OK person or not?'



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 handle things better.

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 with 'over the top' reactions.
- Unresolved anger and hurt is a major factor in conflict and need to be released in ways that don't harm yourself or anyone else.
- How to do this is described in 'The Anger Management Programme' on page 384.



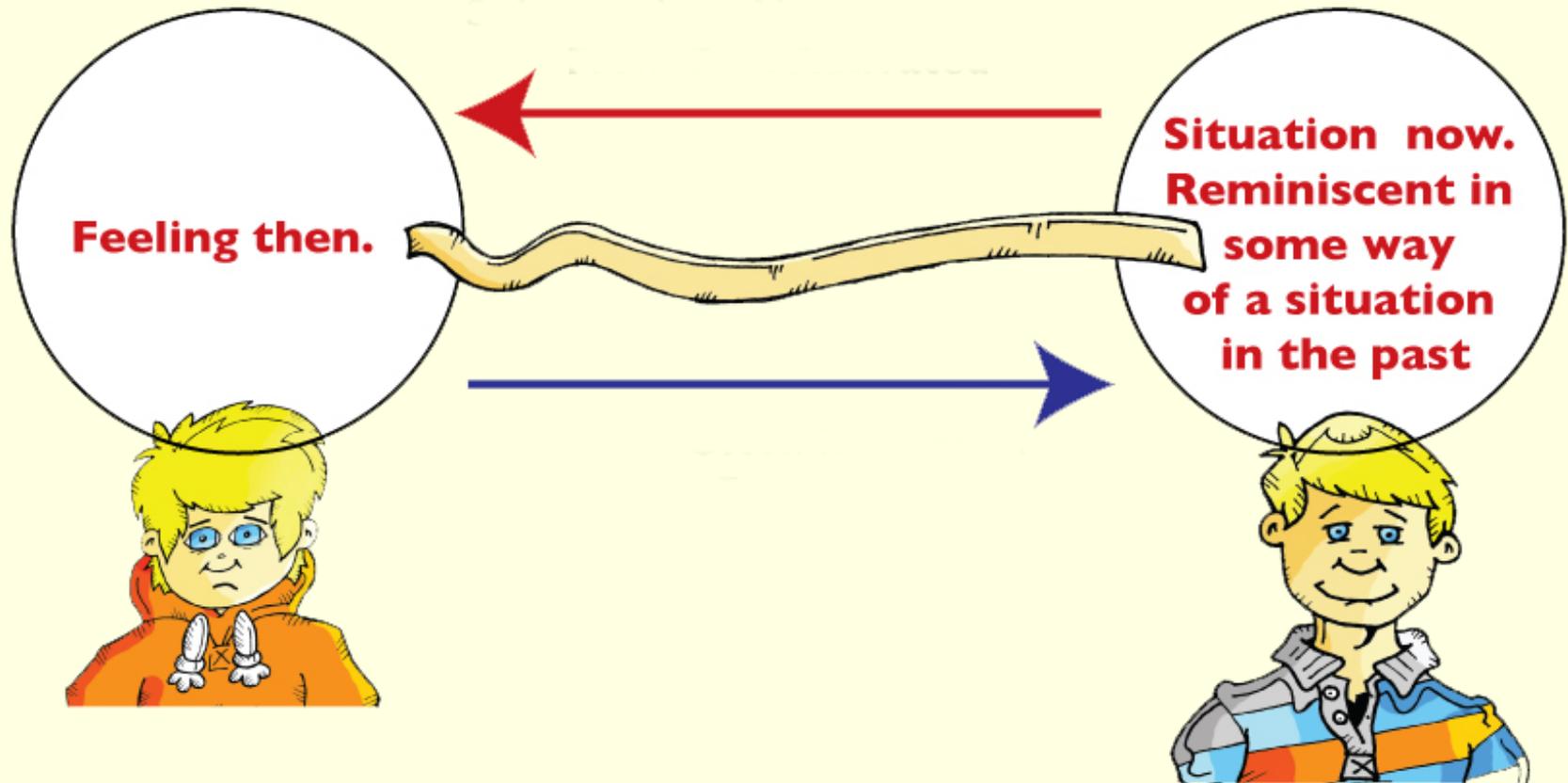
Rubber banding

How the past drives feelings in the present

- 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 in the here and now reminds us at a conscious or subconscious level of something in the past, we get the same feeling now that we got then.
- If we are still angry or hurt about something in the past and anything in the present reminds us of it, we re-experience the 'there and then' emotion. We can find ourselves angry, sad, afraid or happy - sometimes without a clue why. Sometimes the Rubber Band is connected to 'forgotten' childhood experiences.



The rubber band which pulls past feelings into the present



Displacement - or 'kicking the cat', is when we take it out on the wrong target

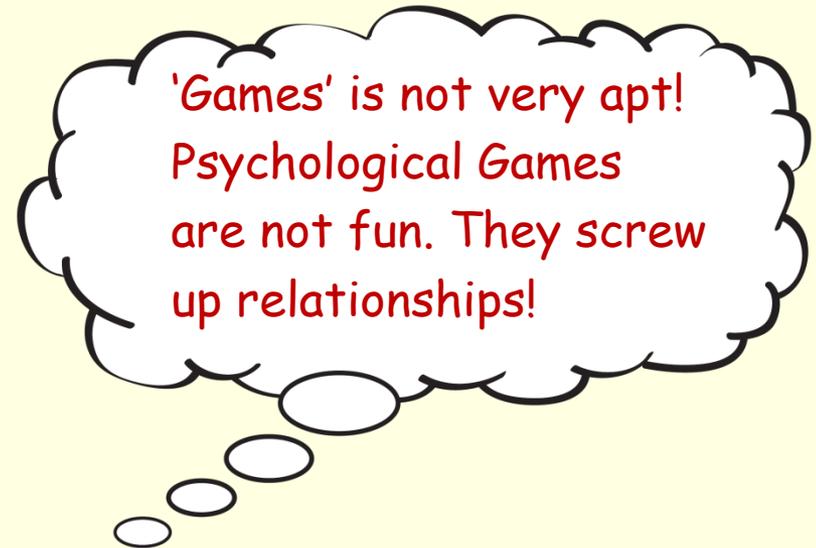


When we are angry or frustrated we may 'take it out' on our partner. Anger and frustration must be released, but not on the wrong target.

Maybe you sometimes take out your frustration on your partner when the real problem is elsewhere!? When you realise that's what you have done, find some way of putting it right as soon as possible. Don't let your pride stand in the way - apologise ASAP.

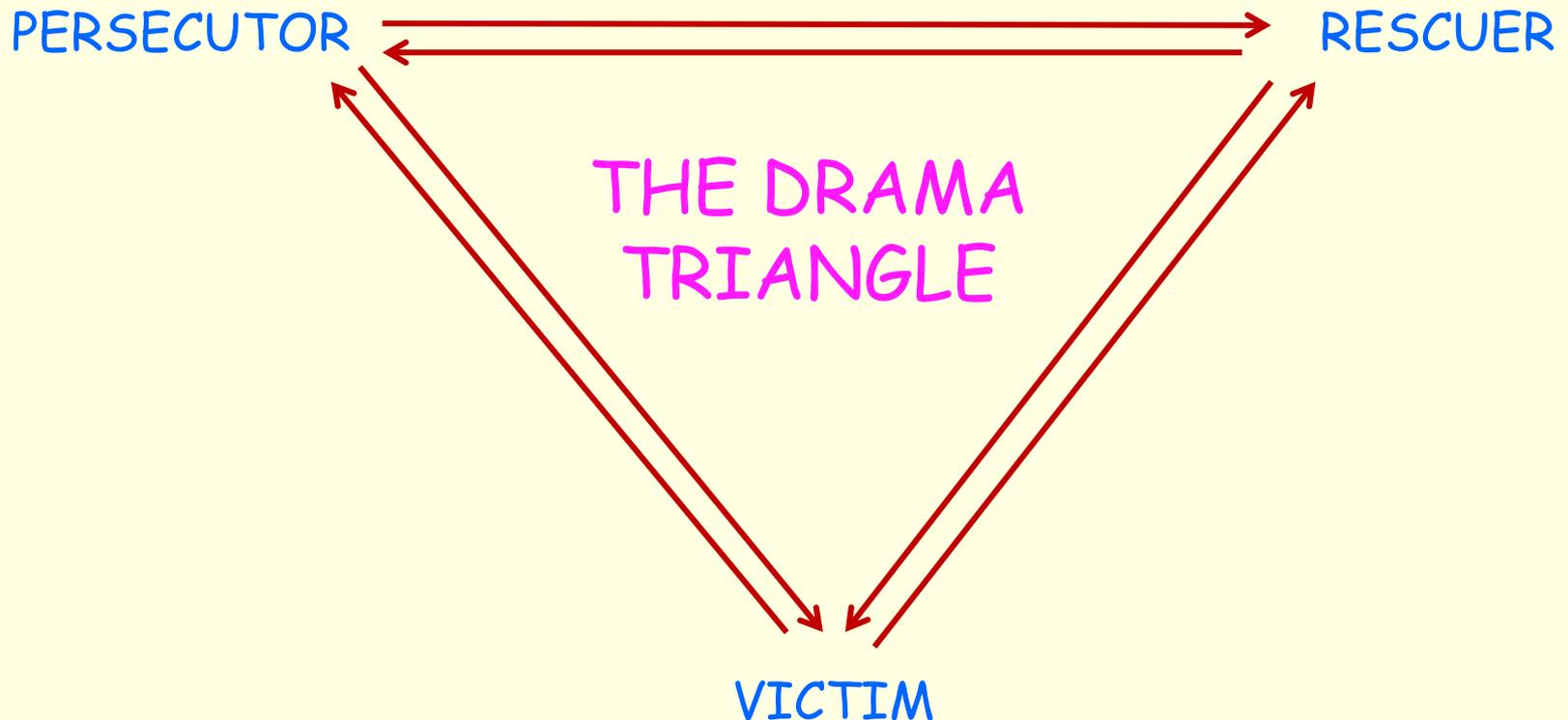
Psychological games we play

- Eric Berne, the founder of Transactional Analysis, initially achieved international recognition with his book 'The Games People Play'.
- He drew attention to the ways in which we attempt to manipulate each other. He described the 'invitations' we habitually issue when we try to get another person to 'play' and the steps we follow when 'playing'.



Main games played by couples are:
Uproar, Archaeology, Payback, and
'You should know what I want'
[pages 65 - 67].

When we play psychological games we move around these positions



The positions on the Drama Triangle are interactive as a game unfolds

One party may see themselves as a Victim resulting from the behaviour of the other partner. They retaliate by moving from Victim to Persecutor and punishing the Persecutor with passive aggressive or openly aggressive behaviour.

Their partner may initially respond by taking up the Victim position, but then moves into Persecutor and counter-attacks.

From then on, until they get fed up of fighting, the parties alternate between the Victim and Persecutor positions in a psychological game of attacks and counter-attacks.

This is why relationship problems are never all the fault of one party or the other. Somebody caused the first hurt but, from then on, both parties play their part.

When the 'game' is over.....

'Games' is not really a good word because the games are anything but fun. The most serious 'games' can end up in court, hospital or the morgue.



We've done it again!

Why do we keep doing that?

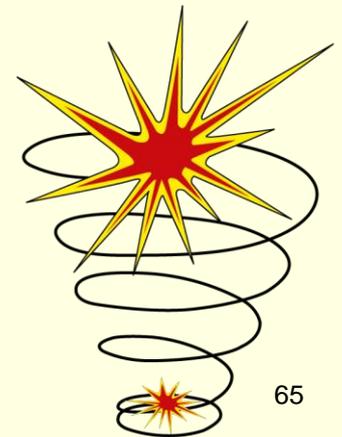
Psychological Games do not have positive outcomes and the players both feel bad when the game is over. In fact, that's how to tell you have been in a game with your partner, when both of you share a familiar bad feeling afterwards.



Couples favourite games.....

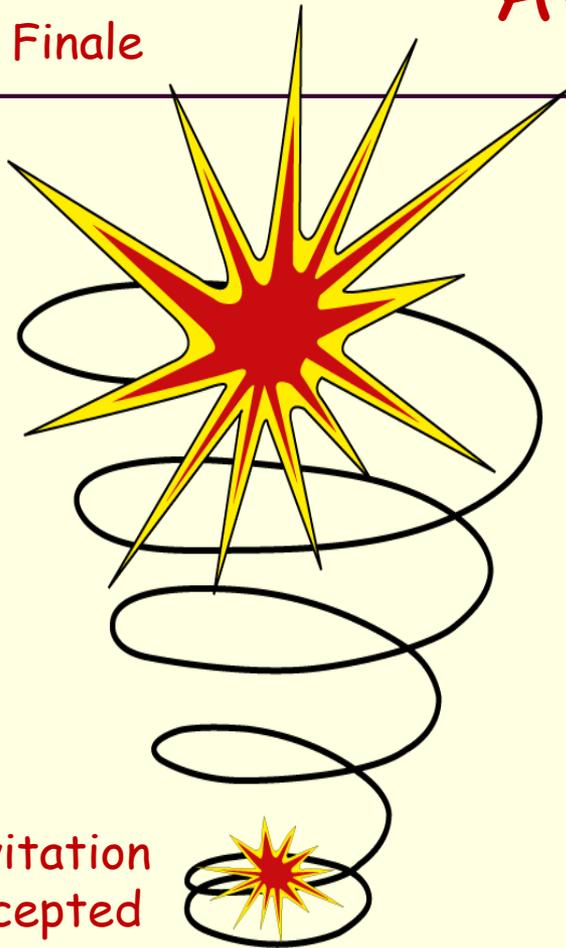
A favourite psychological game amongst couples is called 'Uproar'.

- Partner A says something likely to get an angry or hurt response from Partner B. Partner B may initially decline the invitation by not responding in a hurt or aggressive way.
- Partner A may then re-issue the invitation or issue another one. This time, Partner B may take exception and respond accordingly. Partner A now feels hurt or angry at the response and raises the stakes with a supplementary invitation. **Game on! The spiral is triggered!**
- Another regular game is **Payback**, a passive aggressive retaliation game which is often played over a long period of time - months or years. There's also the passive aggressive game of 'You should know what I want [without me saying!]



Avoiding 'Uproar'

Finale

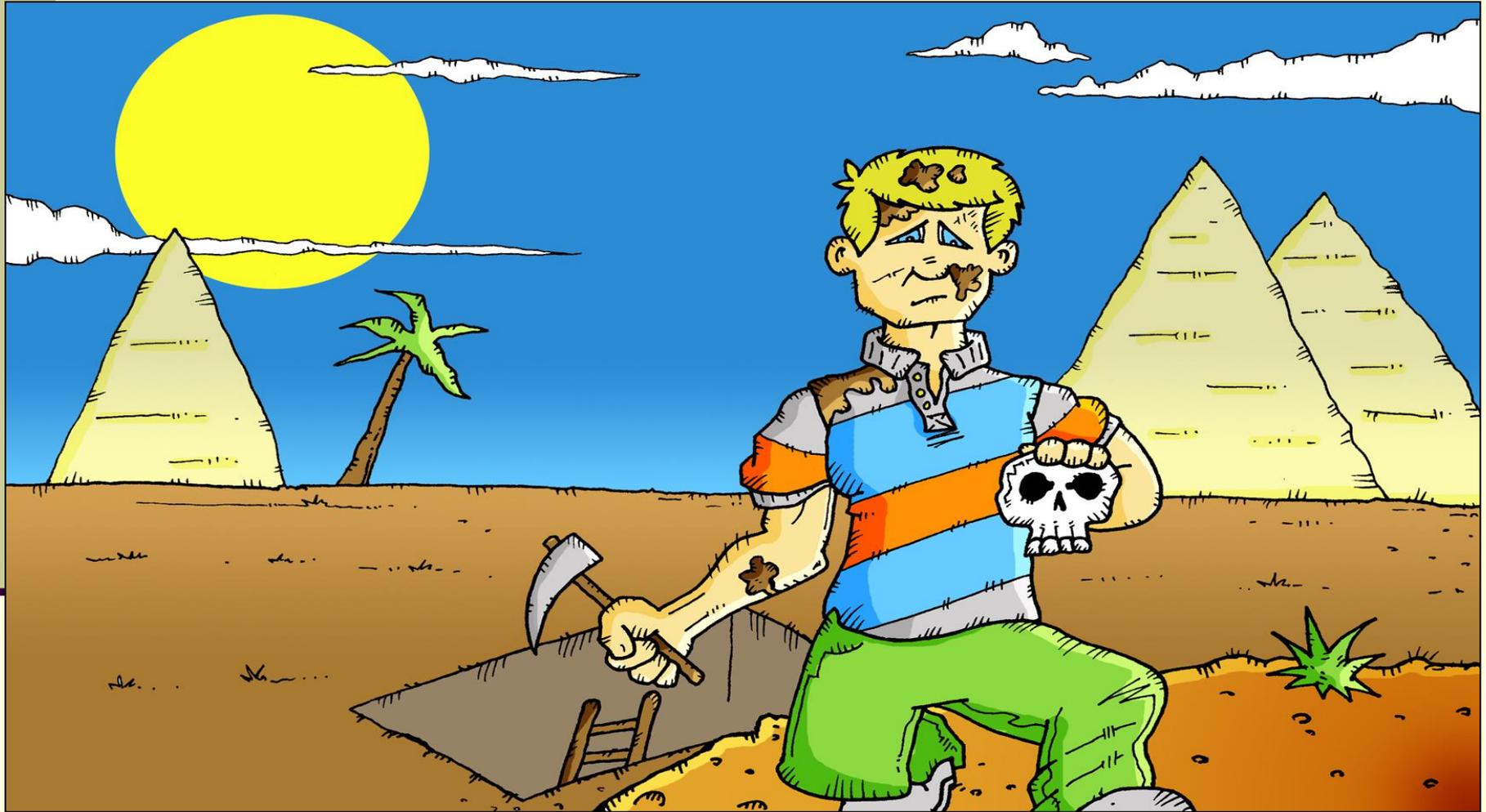


Invitation
Accepted

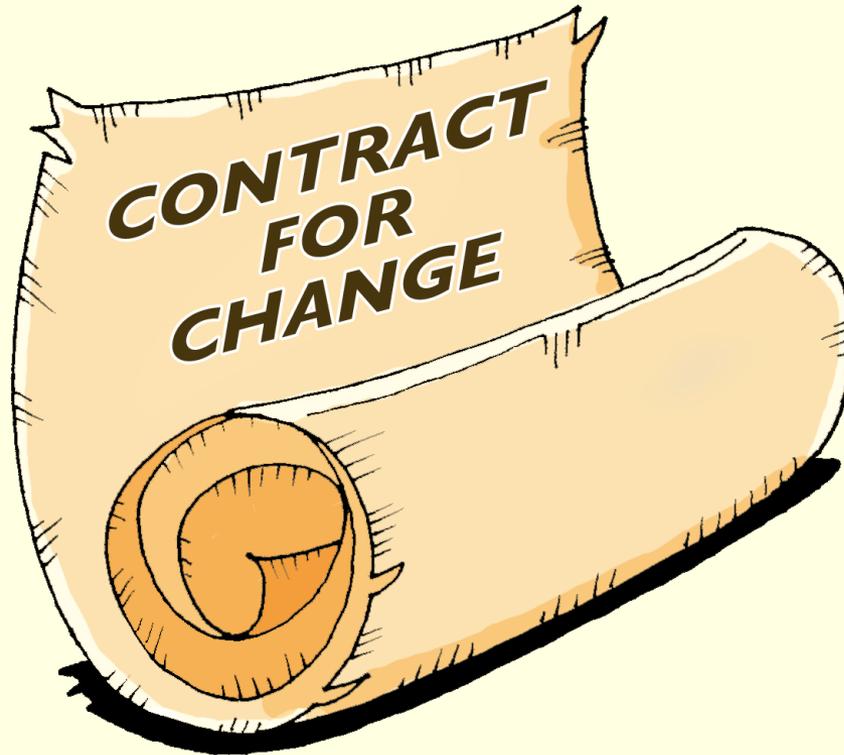
- The key to avoiding Uproar is to spot the invitation and refuse to accept it - not play. Instead, respond appropriately from Adult, or let it go.
- It's helpful to discuss the Uproar concept with your partner and the invitations which you both use when you play.
- Another game played often by couples is '**Archaeology**'. This is constantly 'digging up the past' with both parties accusing the other of having caused the present problems in the relationship.

Maybe you could agree a codeword which means 'let's not play'.
How about 'sausages' or 'rumplestiltskin' or 'not now'.

The Archaeology Game - played often by couples in conflict *See page 66*



No contract for change - no change!



If you want someone to change it's vital to first get their commitment to change, without which their attempts to change will fail.

And watch out for that word 'try' - it's leaving the door open to failure right at the start!



Contracting for change - essential for personal change

- In life we often want people to change something about the way they are - mainly parents, partner or children, but however hard we try to get them to change they don't! The problem is we start off on the wrong foot! When did your partner, mother, father, son or daughter agree they wanted your help in changing the way they are?

No contract for change - no change!

- Eric Berne said 'If there is no outcome contract [goals for treatment] you are not doing TA'. I explain to my clients that the outcome contract enables us to be clear what changes they want me to help them make. Often the client's ideas are initially unrealistic given the scale of desired change and the investment of time and money they are prepared to commit. We negotiate realistic outcomes before proceeding.
- Throughout this programme I emphasise the need to get agreement to work on change as the first step in any change process.

Part Three - Self Awareness 2

The unique
personal world
we have
constructed



In some ways you and your partner are not in the same world

- How we developed the programme that drives the way we are Page 72
- Conflict at times is inevitable 74
- Different realities 76
- Our 'Big Book of Right Ways' 81
- Our 'Map of the world' 82
- Our 'Life Script' 83
- Faulty thinking and inappropriate behaviour 89
- We unconsciously filter and distort things 91
- Differences between male and female 98
- Personality & personality clash 99
- Compatibility Test for couples 107
- Living with passive aggression 113
- Workaholism 117



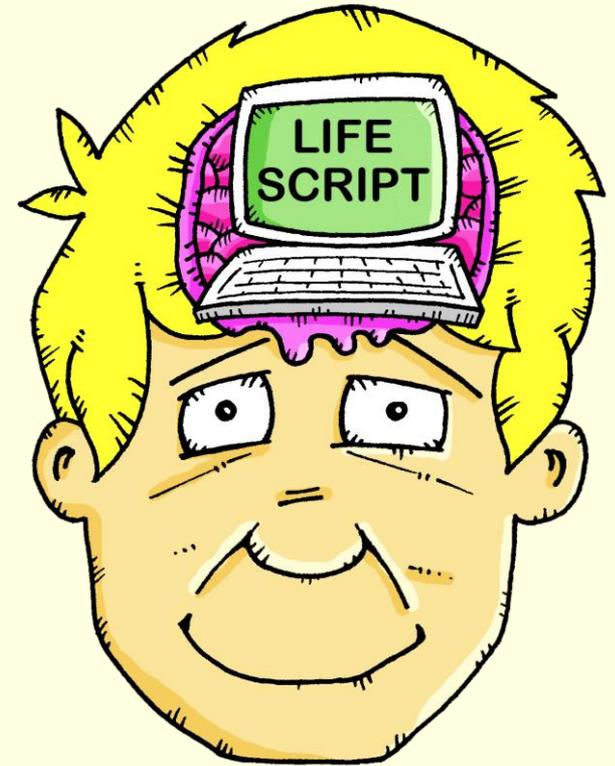
How we developed the programme which drives the way we are

- I guess you are already aware that the human brain is, in some respects, a super computer between our ears. Unlike computers, we also have feelings and emotions, experience pain and pleasure and can be spontaneous when we choose to let ourselves be.
- Our default programme, the programme of ways to think, feel and behave, that we naturally fall back on, has been developed from characteristics inherited from our parents and our experience of the world around us since the moment of birth [and maybe in womb too!].
- Unlike a computer, our programme gets modified by life's painful and pleasurable experiences. We can also, within limits, re-programme ourselves , learn new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, by personal development work and therapy.

Four major control files held in the computer between our ears

Four major parts of our early life programming covered in this book are:

1. Characteristics copied from our parents [Parent Ego State [page 39].
2. Ways of thinking, feeling and behaving which are a replay of our childhood selves [Child Ego State [page 46].
3. Our personal 'Map of the World' [page 82] which contains our beliefs about what is so and not so, real and not real, fact and fiction.
4. A 'Life Script' [page 83] which is our response to our 'Map of the World' and is captured in a personal 'Book of Right Ways' to think, feel and behave.



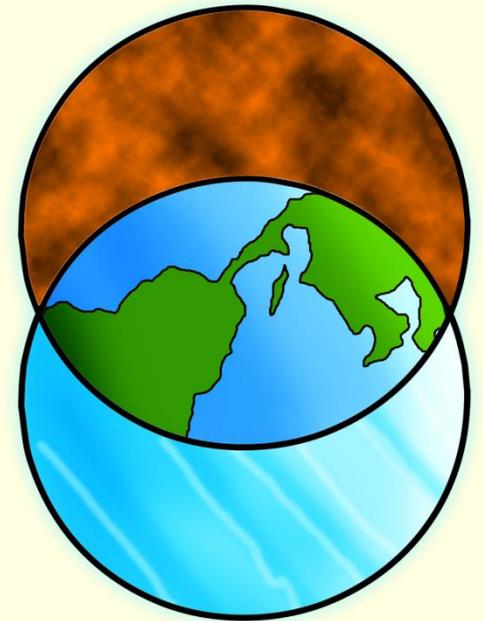
Misunderstanding, disagreement and conflict at times is inevitable.....

- Because, in some ways, you and your partner are not on the same planet as each other or anyone else.
- Sam and Dan live in different worlds with some different beliefs about what's true or not true, what's fact or fiction, what's OK or not OK.
- On top of this, they view events and behaviour through their invisible distorting spectacles. [pages 91 - 97] and interpret things differently
- Given differences in their view of the world and the problems of interpretation, it's inevitable that there will be friction at times.

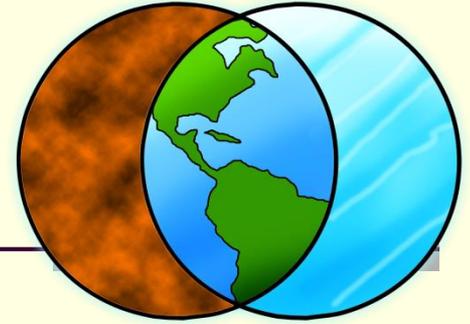


You and your partner are not 'on the same planet' sometimes

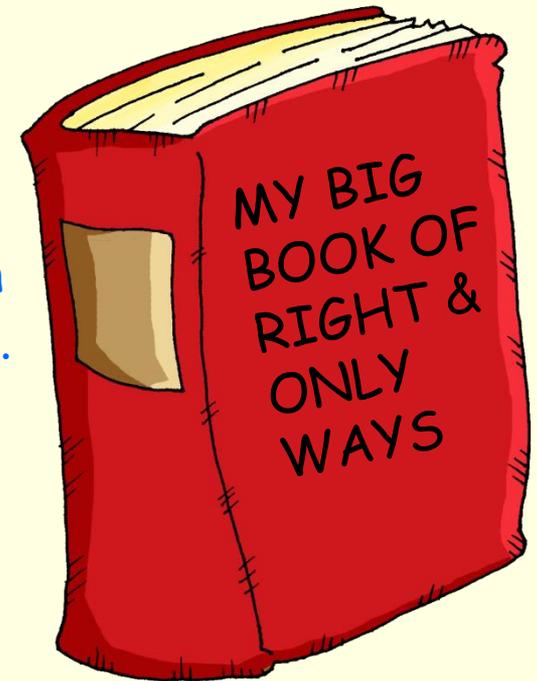
- No two people have all the same thoughts and beliefs about what's true or not true, what's fact or fiction, what's OK or not OK.
- As we have travelled through life, we have unconsciously assembled all of our life experiences into a unique set of beliefs about ourselves, others and the world. Without knowing it, we grew invisible distorting spectacles through which we view life, interpret events and form judgements.
- We have captured our view of the way things are and should be, in a 'Big Book of Right Ways' which we use to guide us and to judge the behaviour of others. [See also page 87]



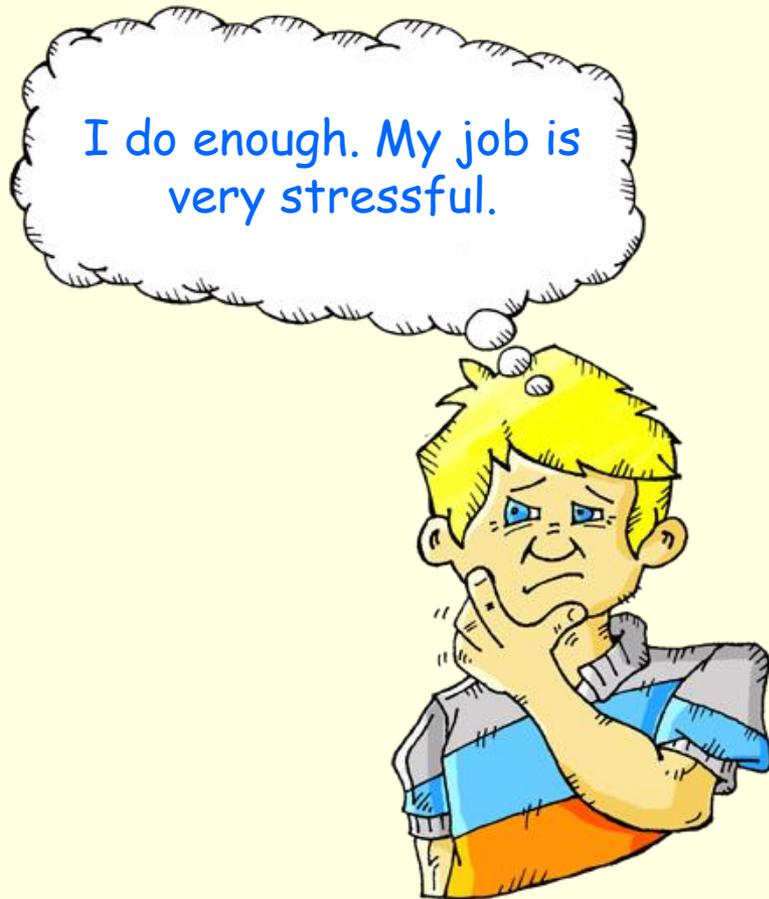
Different realities



- Our different beliefs about what's 'real' and 'right' developed because we have had to interpret the meaning of everything that was said to us and happened to us, since our earliest childhood.
- We have been interpreting everything using our invisible distorting spectacles. [pages 91 - 97].
- As a result, we each now have a unique private 'reality' based on our accumulated interpretation of events [and ignorance - gaps in our knowledge].
- Much of what you think is right and factual depends on your experience of life and how you have interpreted your experience.
- Opinion is based on experience and knowledge. No two people have the same experience and knowledge, so ways of thinking are bound to differ.



Different 'realities' 1



Different 'realities' 2

He criticises his
control freak
father, but he's
just like him.



The kids have got to
learn some respect.



Different 'realities' 3

It would be good
to talk about our
problems.

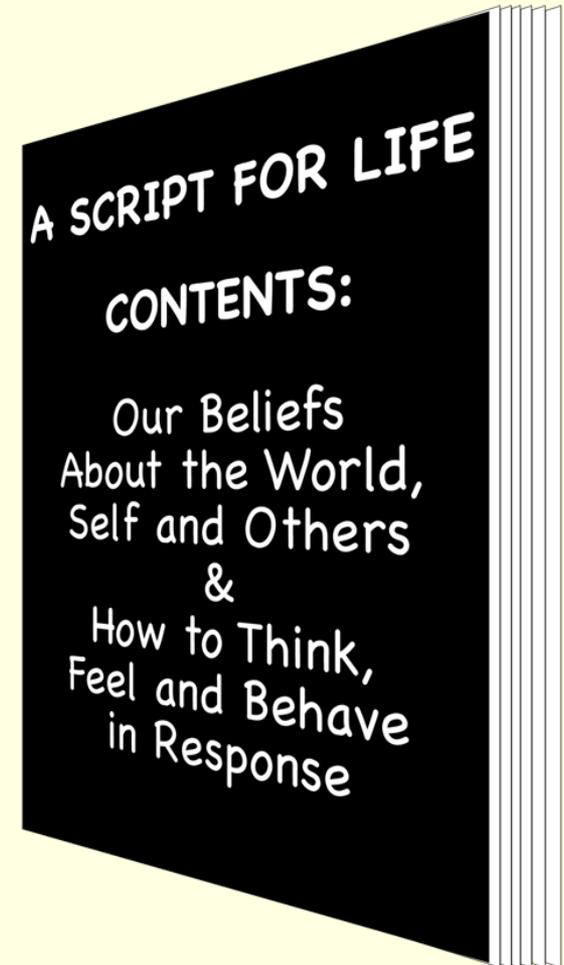


Uuh uuh!
Time for a sharp exit!



Your version of 'reality' is bound to be different to your partners

1. We have each developed a unique 'Map of the World', which we use to understand everything that happens to us and around us [page 82].
2. We have also constructed a personal 'Life Script' to live our life by, a way of thinking, feeling and behaving in response to our 'Map of the World' [page 83].



How we maintain our personal understanding of what's so and isn't [continued]

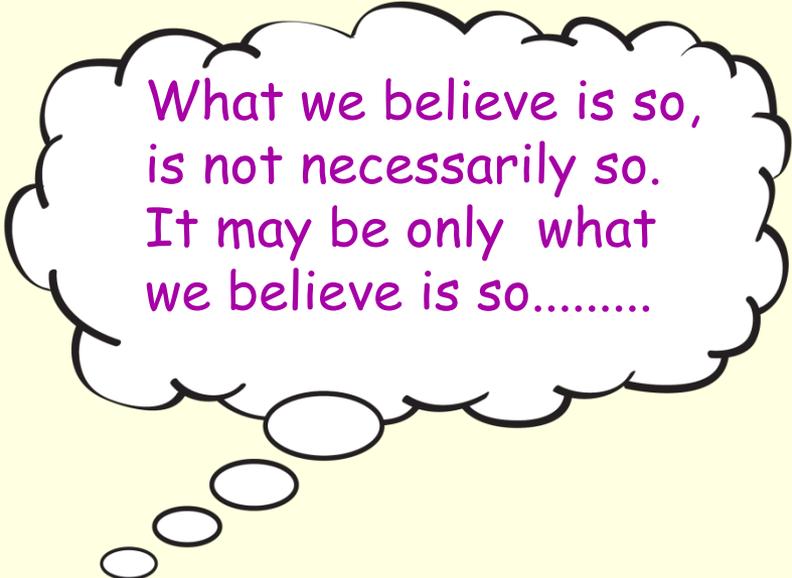
3. We have captured our Script in a 'Big Book of Right Ways' [pages 87 - 89] to think, feel, and behave in response to our 'Map of the World'.
4. We unconsciously filter and distort everything that happens and fill in missing bits to make things fit our expectations [pages 91 - 97].

Since our 'Big Book of Right & Only Ways' is not the same as anyone else's , friction, conflict and disagreement is inevitable.



Our 'Map of the World' may clash with our partners in important ways

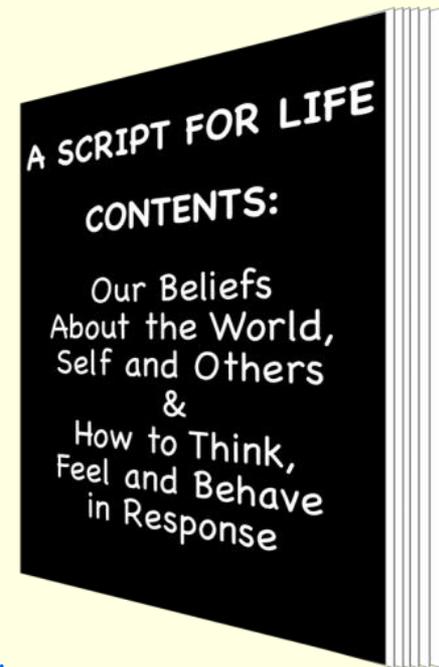
- Our 'Map of the World', is our perception of what is and isn't so, what is and isn't right, what is fact or fiction.
- It's our personal set of beliefs about ourselves, others and the world, but it's only our opinion based on our unique personal experience of life, it isn't exactly the same as anyone else's map!
- Our map is bound to be more or less incorrect when you consider that no-one else's map is exactly the same as yours or mine. *Maybe you and me are the only ones who have got it right. Maybe not!*



What we believe is so, is not necessarily so. It may be only what we believe is so.....

The Life Script we have constructed in response to our 'Map of the World'

- Our Life Script is our programme of how to think, feel and behave when travelling on our journey through life using our 'Map of the World'. It was originally constructed, mainly unconsciously, in childhood as a result of childhood experience and observation of the behaviour parents and others around us.
- As a result of our Life Script, we endlessly replay old patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving in specific situations.
- In other words, the way we are is habitual. We are destined by our script autopilot to endlessly repeat our ways of thinking, feeling and behaving until life experience and personal development work help us to become self aware and change the way we are, help us to 'put a new show on the road'.



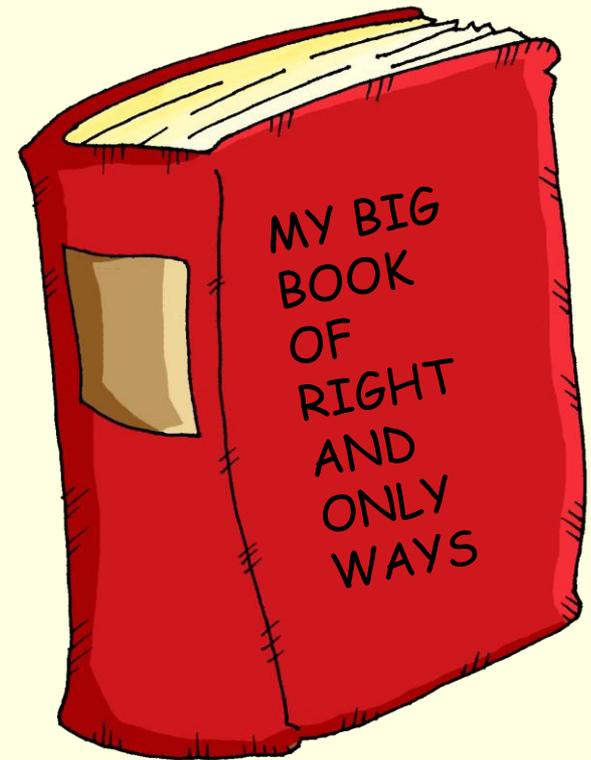
Why aren't our maps all the same?

- Different personal belief systems develop because no event, behaviour or communication has a fixed meaning. Everything that happens, everything that is communicated and everything that is experienced, is capable of a range of possible interpretations and constructed meanings.
- As children we have to interpret everything that happens to us and around us to make sense of it. We have to decide what's true or not true about ourselves, the world and others.
- You have been constructing a personal belief system since childhood. Your 'Big Book of Right & Only Ways' is based on thousands of day-to-day interpretations of what has happened to you and around you. So has mine and everyone else's!



Conflict at times is inevitable

- Conflict is inevitable when we try to get others to 'do it our way', to conform to what's in our 'Big Book' and abandon parts of what's in theirs.
- Successful couples have the ability to agree how to manage differences. It's not differences that cause problems, it's our intolerance of differences plus our attempts to change the way the other person is when we don't have a 'contract' [page 68 - 69] with them to change.



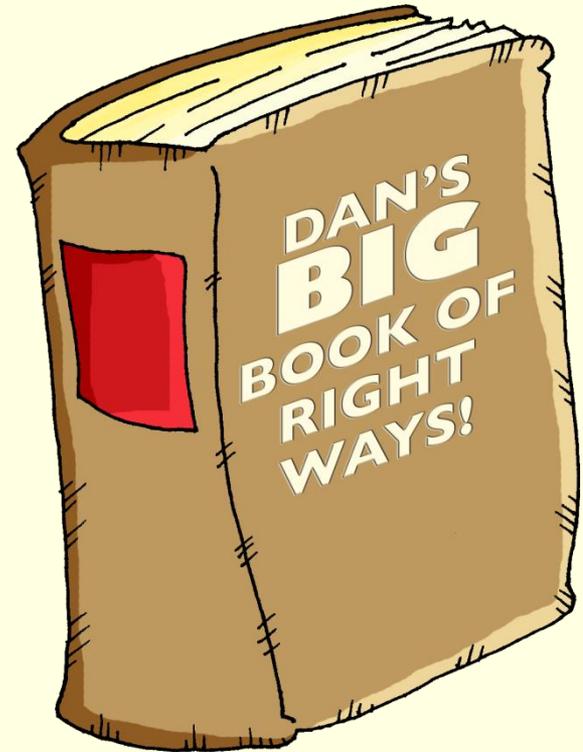
Other main causes of conflict

- Personality differences [pages 99 - 118].
- Evolutionary differences between the sexes [page 98].
- Faulty thinking and inappropriate behaviour [page 89].
- Stored anger and hurt [Anger Stamps: page 57].
- Filtering and distortion [page 91 - 97].



Our 'BIG BOOK OF RIGHT WAYS' is not exactly the same as anyone else's

It's not the difference in the way we look at things that's the problem - it's our intolerance of the difference, our attempts to impose our **BIG BOOK OF RIGHT WAYS** on others, who have a **BIG BOOK OF RIGHT WAYS** of their own.



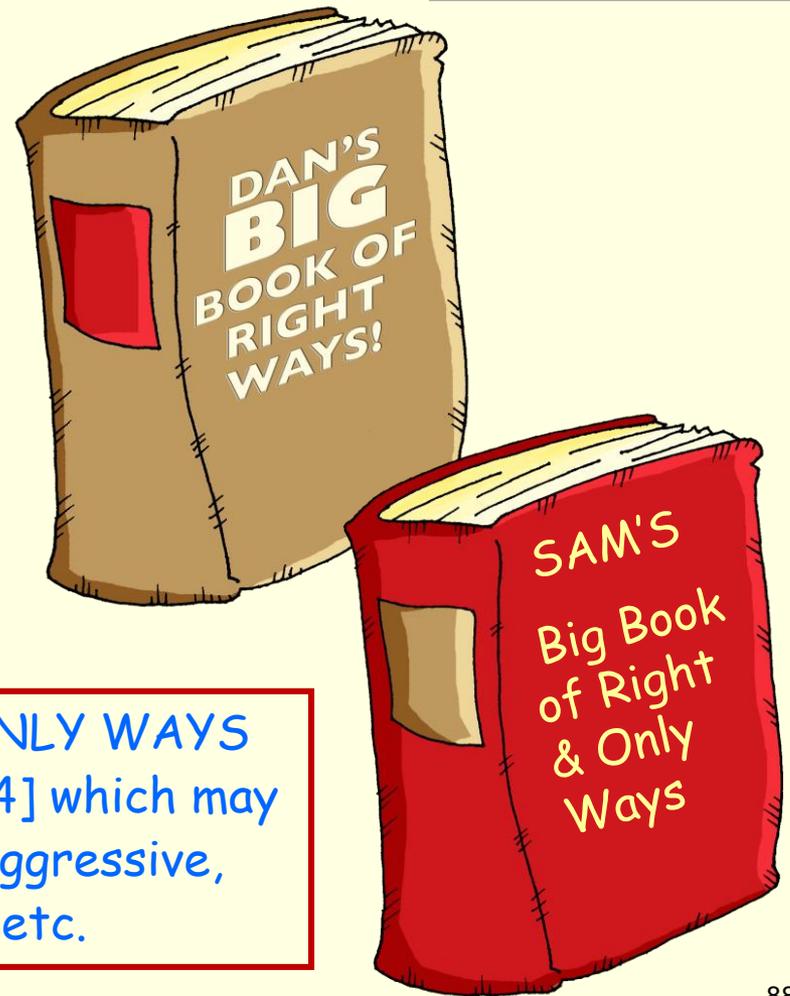
There is no universal big book of the right way to think, feel and behave in every situation. The book you have in your head is just that - **YOUR** book. Everybody else has their own book which is, in some respects, very different to yours and really difficult for you to understand at times.

It's not the difference between us that's the main problem -

- it's our intolerance of the
difference

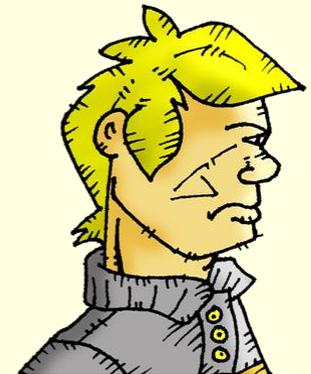
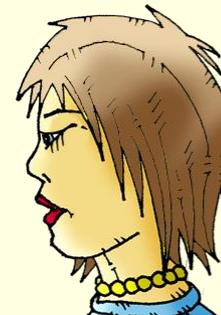
Conflict is inevitable when we
try to impose our BIG BOOK
OF RIGHT AND ONLY WAYS
on others, since everyone has
their own different BIG BOOK
OF RIGHT AND ONLY WAYS.

Our BIG BOOK OF RIGHT AND ONLY WAYS
includes Permissions [page 339 - 344] which may
include permission to be violent, aggressive,
selfish, sexist, homophobic etc.



Faulty thinking and inappropriate behaviour - in whose opinion?

- Faulty thinking and inappropriate behaviour is essentially a clash between one 'Big Book of Right Ways' and another.
- The biggest books of right and only ways are religious and political, but everyone has their own unique 'Big Book'.
- When we behave, or express opinions, which clash with the content of someone else's 'Big Book of Right Ways', conflict often results. Each party [even passive types] tries to impose their own version of the 'right way' to think and behave on the other.



Harmony can be helped by.....

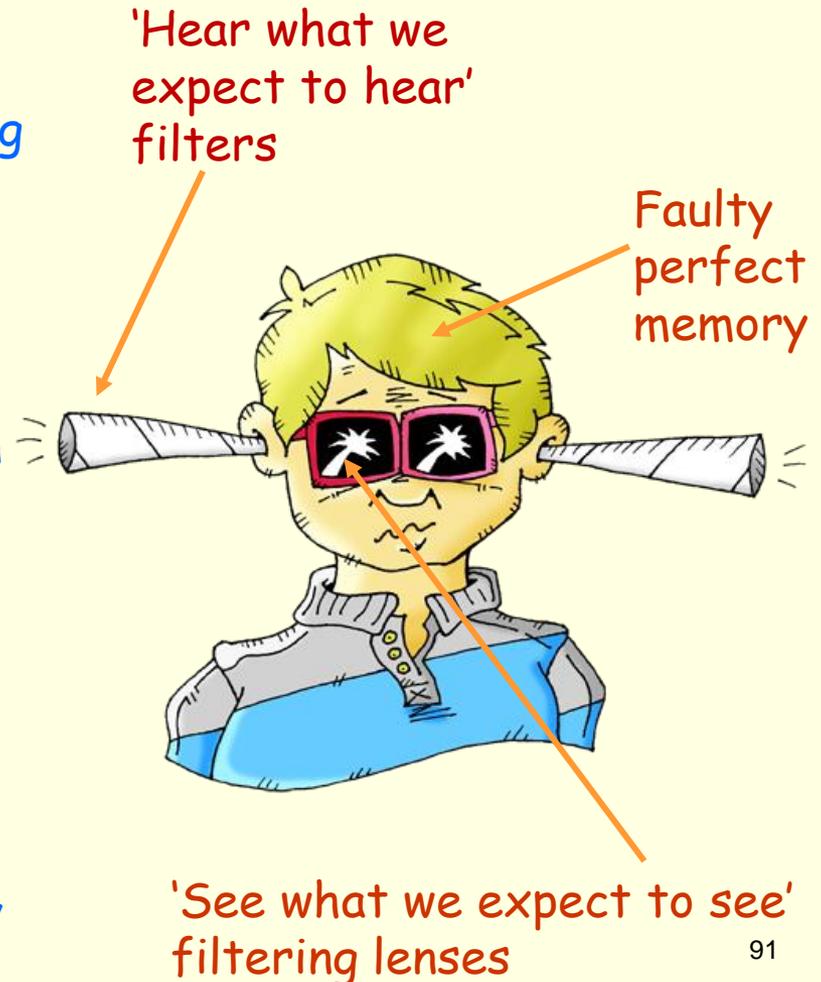


- ✓ Empathy - developing understanding of the other person's perspective
- ✓ Tolerance - 'agreeing to disagree'
- ✓ 'Letting go' of specific issues
'It's not worth arguing about'
- ✓ Personal re-decisions modifying the content of our 'Big Book'
- ✓ Accepting that we 'got it wrong' and moving on.

The support of a mediator or counsellor is often needed to help individuals and couples to modify their position and the content of their 'Big Book'.

We unconsciously filter and distort what happens to create our own 'facts'

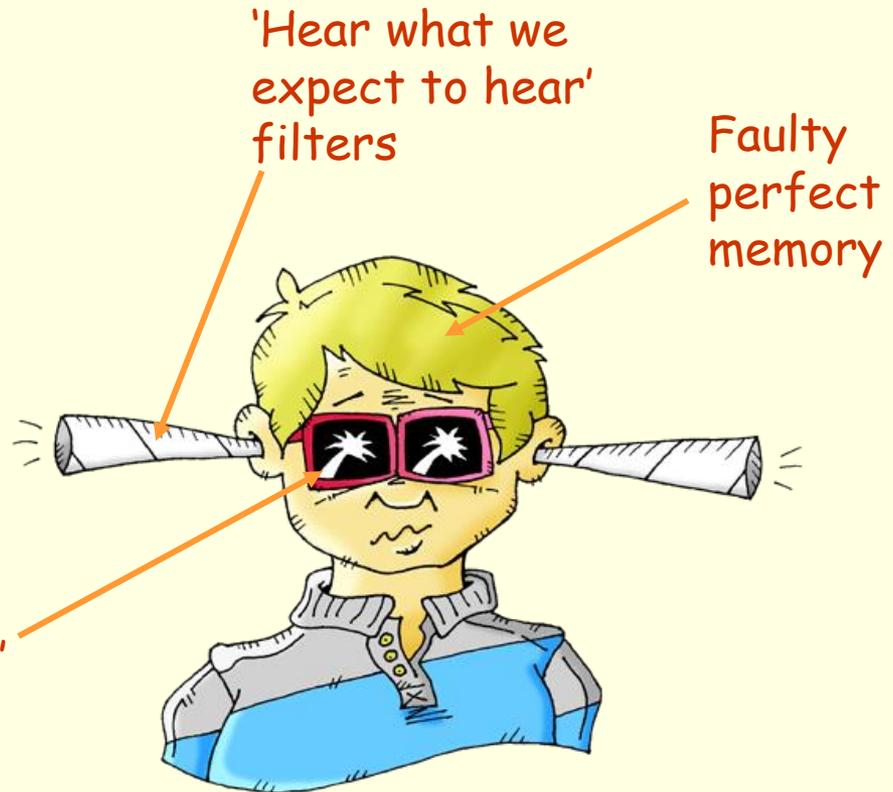
- We filter and distort what happens and fill in missing bits, to make things fit our expectations according to our 'Map of the World'.
- In doing this we often interpret things so they confirm what we expect, whilst being blind to any contrary evidence which might mean we have interpreted something incorrectly.
- **For example:** Jobs not being done around the house is often interpreted as evidence that the partner doesn't care about the relationship. Sometimes this is true, but often it's different priorities.



.....so it fits what we believe

- We often hear only what we expect to hear.
- See what we expect to see.
- Remember things in a way which fits our personal 'Map of the World'.

'See what we expect to see'
filtering lenses



We really, absolutely, believe our distorted version of what happened - which is often not the same as another person's distorted version. We accept that we can get things wrong, but not that we did get it wrong on that occasion.

How we fill in with bits of fantasy

We fill in missing bits of information by making it up, jumping to conclusions, interpreting. We then proceed as if what we have filled in is factual and disagree with others who have a different version.

At the college where I was a visiting lecturer we would read a story of an old lady who was jostled by a group of youths and dropped her handbag. One of the youths picked it up and ran off with it. A passer-by rugby tackled the youth and got the handbag back. Naturally the old lady was very grateful.

At the end of the story the students were asked questions about what had happened. One question was 'What colour was the lorry that went past?' Most students remembered the colour. Trouble was, they didn't remember the same colour. In fact, there was no lorry in the story. Their subconscious had invented the missing information!

We are all a bit paranoid and often distort what we hear and experience to make up pessimistic interpretations - thinking and believing the worst.

Filtering and distorting reality so it fits what we choose to believe

No action or communication has a fixed meaning!

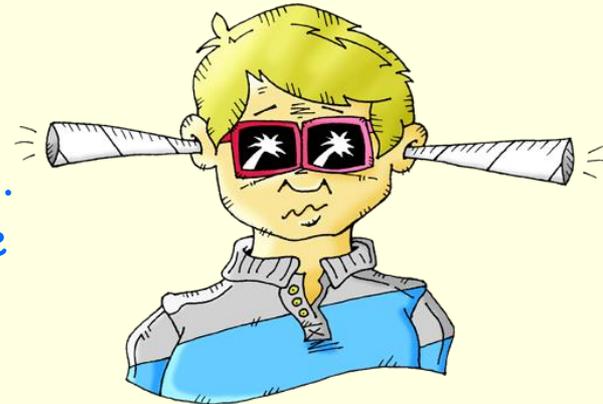
What some things mean can seem pretty obvious but we still have to interpret what is meant. Obviously we choose to interpret things in a way which makes most sense from our unique perspective.

When she took down their wedding photo,
what did it mean?

My client took down their wedding day photograph.
This coincided with her starting to take more care
of her appearance for the office.

What her partner thought it meant!

Her partner didn't discuss how what she had done was affecting him and used his jealousy filter [page 97] to conclude she was having an affair and was planning to leave him. He started to be horrible to her and obsessively jealous without saying why.





'Reality' can be very elusive!

What she thought her action actually meant for her

Her mother had recently died, which proved to be a wake up-call. She made the decision to take more of an interest in her career. She had replaced the original wedding photo on display with one which also had her mother and father in it. She was oblivious to the interpretation her partner might place on what she did.

What happened next

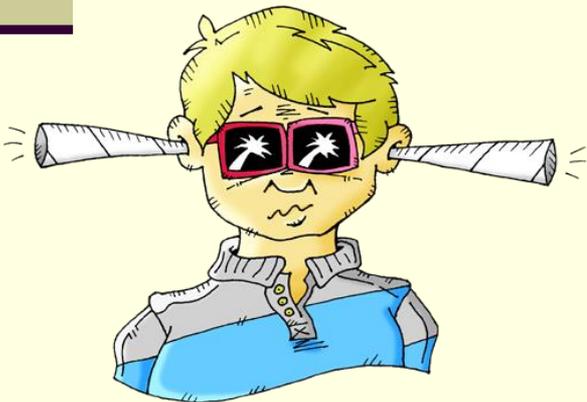
Her partner thought she was having an affair and began to treat her badly. She was previously content in the relationship but, gradually, her partner's horrible behaviour hardened her heart towards him. Their relationship eventually died!

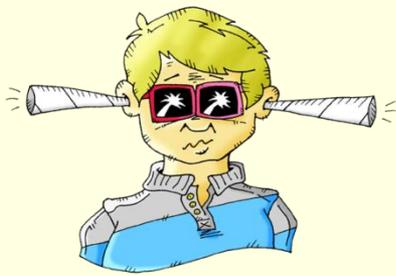
What was the reality behind her changing the photo?

Nobody knows! There's his interpretation, her interpretation, my interpretation and now your interpretation!

Why do we distort what we experience in ways which are often unhelpful to us?

- A constant problem for us human beings is that no words or behaviour have a fixed meaning! We have to decide, to interpret, what every word and behaviour means: decide what to think and how to feel about it.
- We instinctively react with an interpretation, but the interpretation is often inaccurate. Unfortunately, we are often absolutely certain that we got it right.
- We really, absolutely, believe our distorted version of what happened - which is not the same as our partner's distorted version. We accept that we can get things wrong, but rarely admit that we did get it wrong on that particular occasion.





A few of the filters which screw up relationships

- Big Book of Right Ways [I know best]
- Critical Parent filter [You never do anything right]
- Paranoid filter [You 're getting at me again]
- Narcissistic filter [There's nothing wrong about me]
- Victim filter [I never get what I want]
- Blame filter [YOU are the problem]
- Jealousy filter [You will meet someone else]
- Pessimism filter [The worst that can happen will happen]

These are examples of filters we use to shape how we look at things.

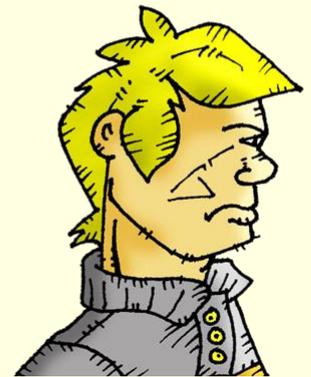
The same event triggers a different 'reality' for different people depending on their filters.

Other filters include all the prejudices e.g. sexism: racism: homophobia religious intolerance and also dislike of personality types e.g.

'I can't stand people like that'.

Evolutionary differences between male and female

- As a result of tens of thousands of years of evolution men and women have grown up with some fundamental personality differences. This is the topic of a widely read book by John Gray, 'Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus'.
- One profound difference is that when there is a problem in the relationship the stereotype woman will want to talk about it now, whereas the stereotype man will want to 'withdraw into his cave and try to avoid it or solve it on his own'.
- Many of the couples I have worked with experienced difficulties because the male [but not always the male] couldn't or wouldn't talk about issues.



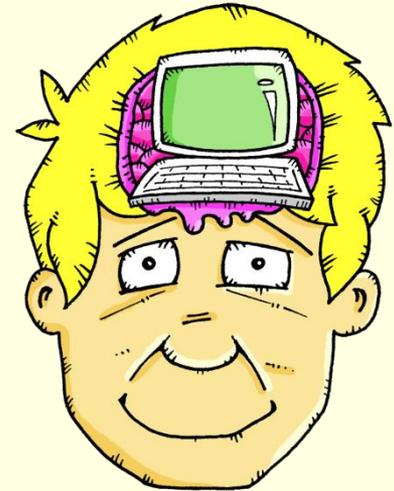
Personality and personality clash

- Personality clash occurs when one party has difficulty in relating to the other because their personality traits are very different. For example: the partner who is expressive and open and likes to talk things through sooner or later runs into problems with a partner who doesn't talk much or tends to withdraw when there are problems.
- When people are too alike it can also cause problems. For example: two people both tending to be controlling or emotional are prone to conflict.
- In contrast, when both partners are passive problems don't get resolved. The ever growing store of unresolved anger and hurt stamps can eventually freeze the relationship to death.

The structure of personality

Our personality is shaped by

- Genetically inherited characteristics
- Our 'Map of the World' [page 82]
- Our 'Life Script' [page 83]
- Parental modeling: the content of our Parent Ego State [page 39]
- The residual part of the child we were : our Child Ego State [page 46]
- The extent to which our Adult Ego State [page 44] is able regulate our Parent and Child Ego States.
- The resultant content of our 'Big Book of Right Ways' [page 81]



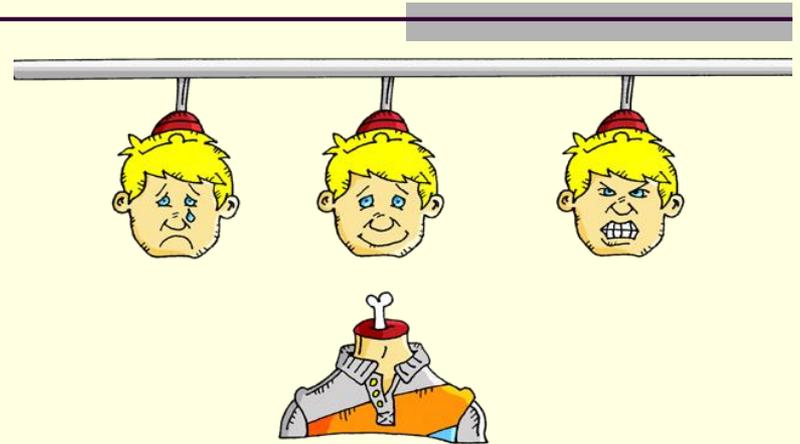
Personality Types

Personality - A Definition

'The combination of characteristics or qualities that form an individual's distinctive character'.

Although each of us is as unique as our fingerprints, we fall into personality groups with others with some similar characteristics and qualities. These different groups with similar characteristics and qualities are known as personality types [page 110].

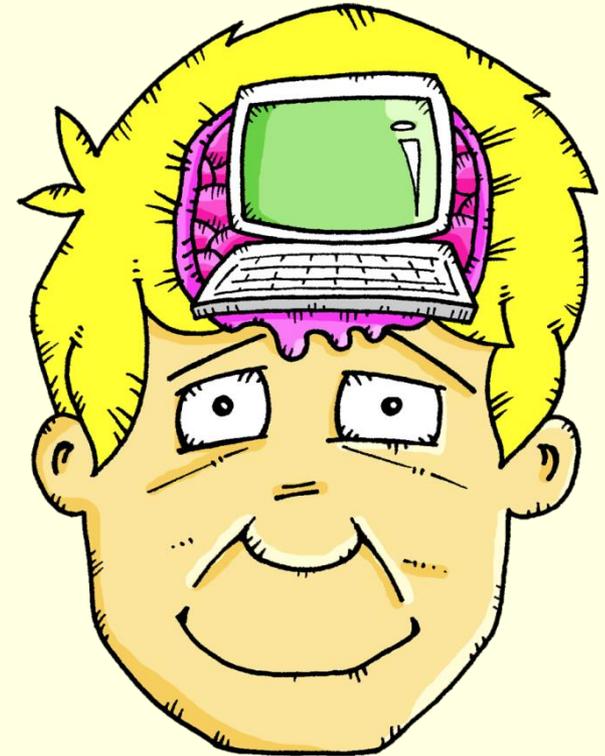
Behaviour change does not depend on personality change, but is much more difficult to maintain if it's not natural to the personality type.



Personality probably has a genetic element, but mainly develops early in childhood and is not easily modified in adulthood. Life Script [page 83] is an important part of personality which drives thinking, feeling and behaviour. Life Script can be modified in therapy.

Understanding Personality

- Personality is complex and is programming which drives our way of thinking, feeling and behaving.
- There are many theories about personality types. I am most influenced in my personal views by the work of Ian Stewart and Vann Joines, who identify six basic types of personality.
- None of the personality types is inherently good or bad - each type has both strengths and weaknesses.



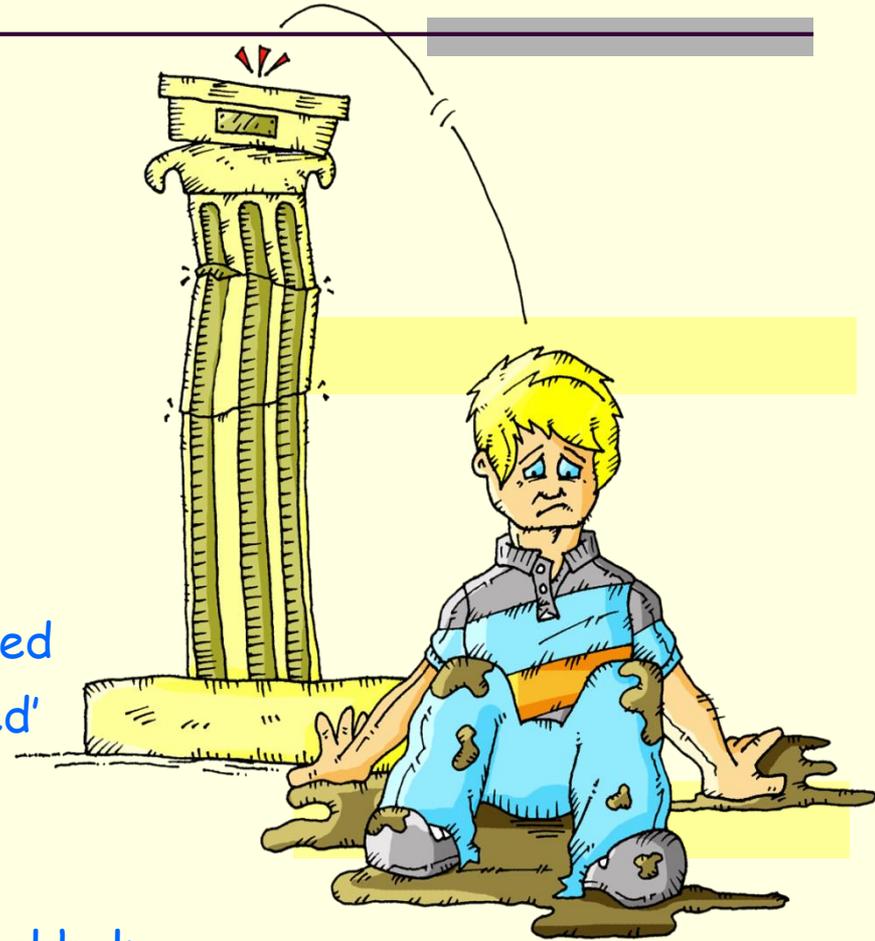
Want a personality transplant for your partner? Not possible, but.....

- Our personality is, in some respects, substantially 'hard wired', a personal development programme file which we can't easily edit.
- In the early years of a relationship personality differences are less of a problem, tending to be obscured by the love and excitement of the honeymoon years. Early warning signs of possible personality clash and behavioural difficulties are ignored.
- As the relationship matures, the differences become much more evident and can become a source of incompatibility and conflict.

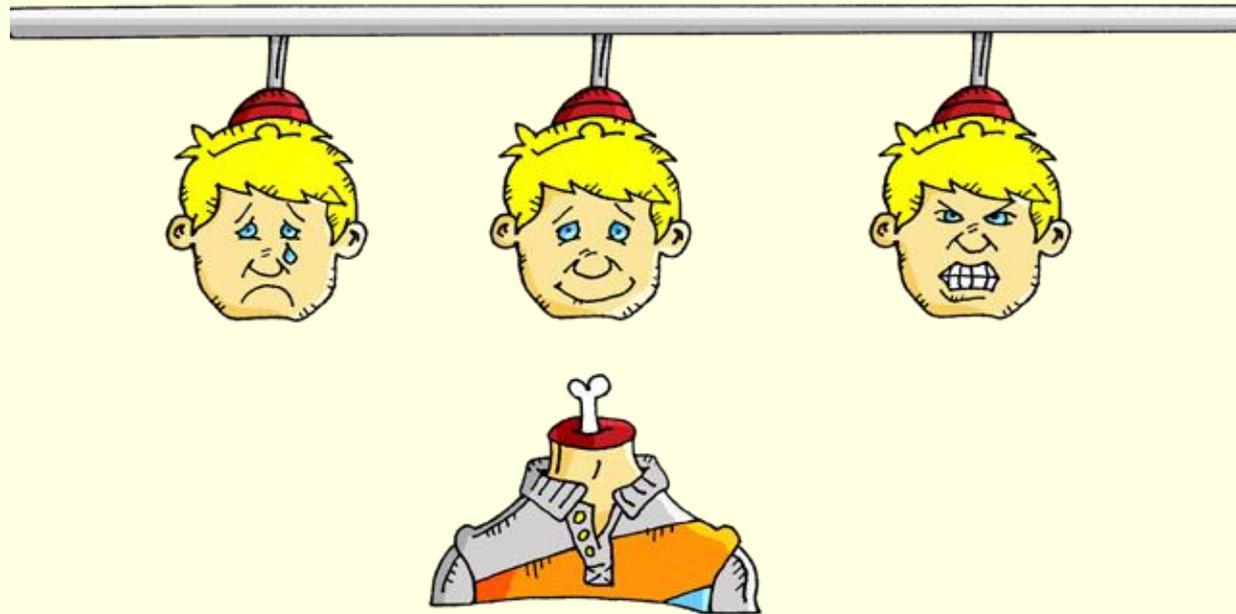
Although personality cannot be easily modified, if at all, behaviour can be changed with effort. It depends if the person has sufficient motivation and determination to change their behaviour.

'You are not the person I married'

- Where someone puts their partner on a high pedestal at the outset, difficulties arise when they fail to live up to expectations.
- There can be a hard fall from love and intimacy from which it's hard to recover. The failure to live up to expectations is sometimes expressed as 'You are not the person I married' or 'How could you do that to me?'
- Recovering from a fall from the pedestal will often need professional help.



Personality cannot be changed much..... but behaviour can!

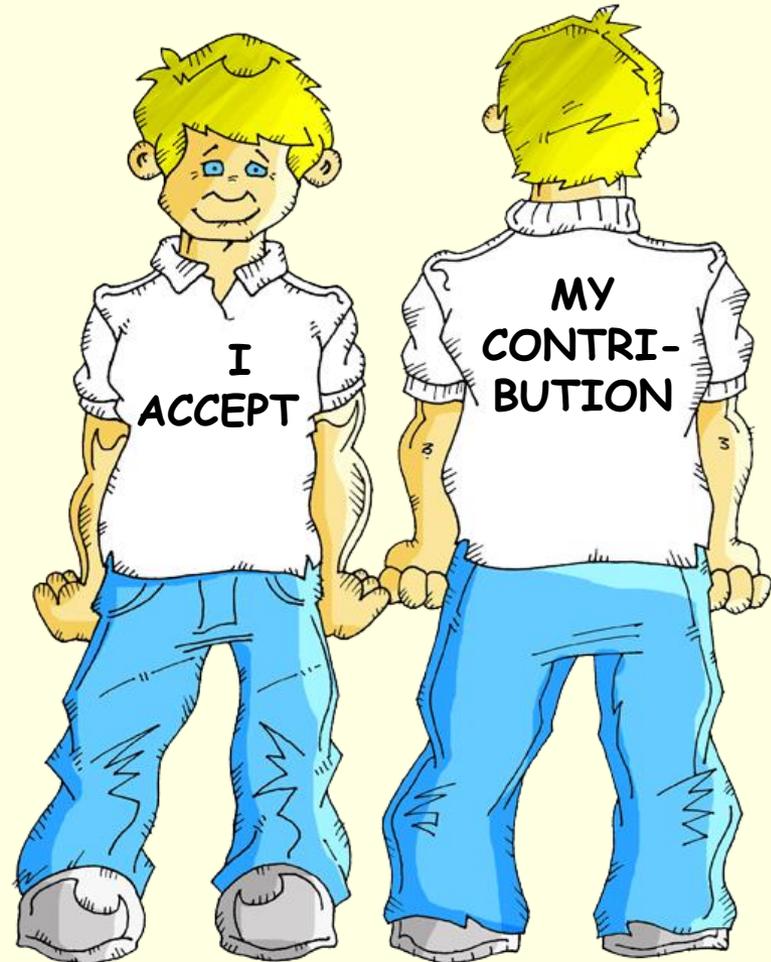


Personality type cannot be changed for a different personality type but, with sustained effort, some behaviour driven by personality factors can be changed - providing the person is committed to changing.

This is why the 'contract for change' is so important [pages 136 - 37].

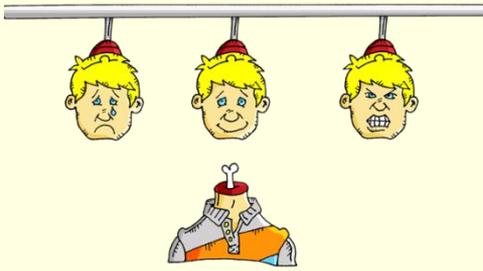
Changing your personality driven behaviour

- You can't just be you if your partner is not happy with the you you are - not if you want to stay together, that is!
- Personality transplants aren't available, but you can change some of your ways of thinking and your behaviour if you firmly decide.



Personality Differences Compatibility Test

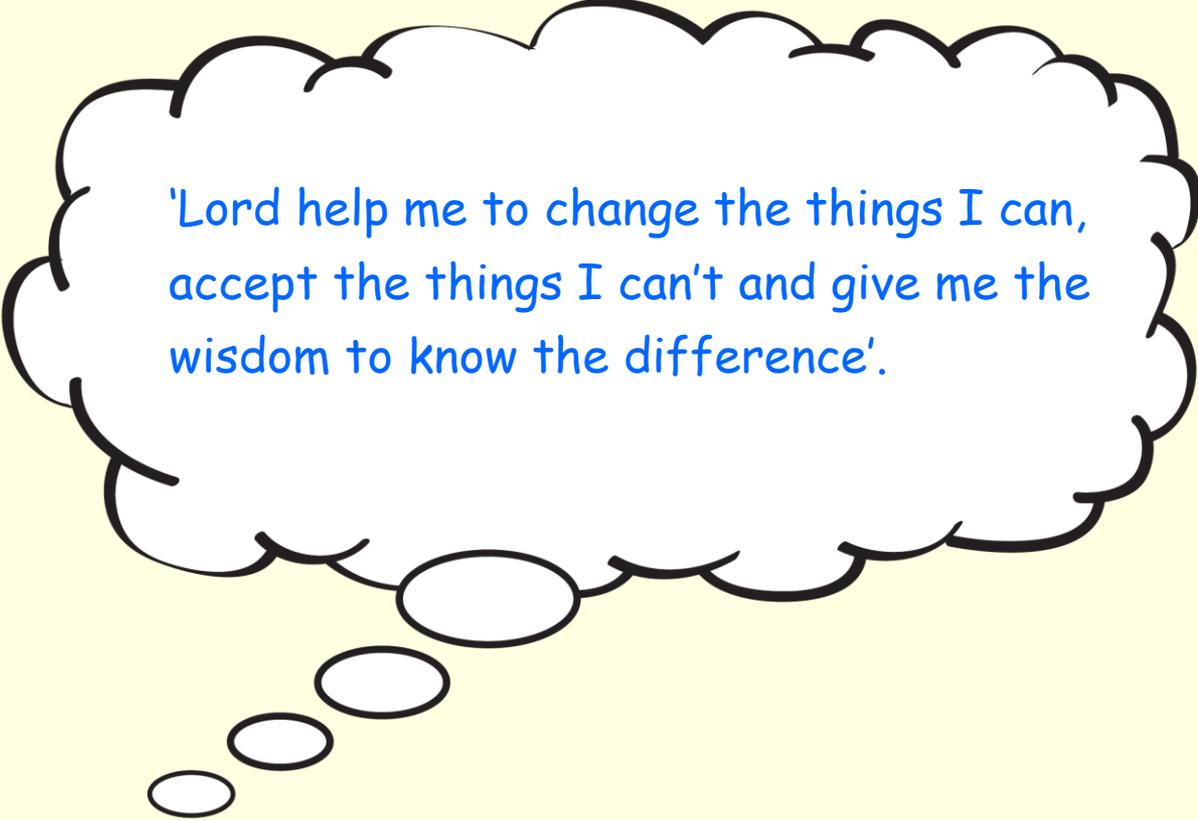
- I sometimes get clients to do a compatibility test. I invite them to list what they would like their partner to change about themselves.
- We then separate realistically achievable changes in behaviour from those personality driven aspects which are unlikely to change much e.g. low empathy, controlled, obsessive, perfectionist, sceptical, reckless, pessimistic, anti-social, stubborn, mean, selfish, not demonstrative.
- It's then for them to decide whether they can learn to accept and stop resenting, that about their partner which is deeply rooted in personality [and therefore unlikely to change] - or continue to fall out about what cannot be changed.
- **More often than not, the result of the test is very positive.** Couples learn to tolerate differences when they realise they are rooted in personality and not because their partner doesn't love them.



Change what you can, accept what you can't - or not

- Write down what you would like your partner to change.
- Then split realistically achievable changes in behaviour from those personality driven aspects which are most unlikely to change and you are therefore more or less stuck with.
- Decide if you can learn to accept, and stop resenting, that about your partner which is deeply rooted in personality and unlikely to change.
Maybe your partner is 'not perfect but good enough' ?
- In any event there is absolutely no point in allowing that about your partner which they cannot change to be a focus for your relationship.
- If you decide to stay in the relationship, accept what you cannot change, and work on changing what you can.

This ancient wisdom applies to partners too!



'Lord help me to change the things I can,
accept the things I can't and give me the
wisdom to know the difference.'

Six types of personality - The negative and positive aspects of each

Negative Aspect	Type	Positive Aspect
Excitable/over emotional	A	Enthusiastic/sociable
Obsessive/ritualistic	B	Responsible/reliable
Paranoid/pessimistic	C	Sceptical/analytical
Withdrawn/not sociable	D	Creative/individualistic
Passive aggressive/stubborn	E	Careful/determined
Antisocial/self interested	F	Charming/persuasive

[The A B C D E F labels are mine i.e. not part of standard theory]

- Each of us tend to be mainly a mixture of one or two, at most three, of the above types. Mine are B C and D. Which are yours?
- Which are your partner's? Better get used to them 'cause they aren't going to change much!

The unique colour of your personality

I think of each person's personality as being like a unique colour resulting from mixing a selection of common primary colours on the artist's palette - so much of this colour, so much of that colour, hardly any of that colour and so on. The end result is unique but derives mainly from only two or three of the original colours.



My way of thinking about Personality Types

- Each person's personality is a unique blend of common personality traits.
- Two or three common personality traits tend to dominate an individual's personality even though their overall personality is unique.
- In this way, two or three of the personality traits on page 110 will be most evident within your overall unique personality.



Living with passive aggression

- Some people have more than average passive aggressive tendency. They tend to avoid solving problems assertively and often have a great secret collection of anger and hurt stamps [page 57].
- Passive Aggressive Personality Types can be stubborn and obstructive. Often, they don't know what they want, but know it's not what you want. 'YES BUT....' is their favourite psychological game [page 61].
- In 'YES BUT' the lead player always has a reason why what's suggested won't work. They also play the 'You should know what I want without me saying' game.

Passive Aggression often comes from Child Ego State



Maybe the behaviour is rooted in unresolved anger and hurt- not personality

- Most often the passive aggressive behaviours result from unresolved anger and hurt not from personality type. The person is getting even by being 'bloody minded'.
- Initially, anger and hurt release techniques should be attempted.
- There is a good selection of anger and hurt release techniques starting on page 384.



Examples of passive aggressive behaviour

- Air of grievance/ chip on shoulder
- Cold freeze treatment
- Deliberate 'forgetfulness'
- Indecisiveness
- Obstruction [includes 'Yes but' game [page 113]
- Speaking quietly/mumbling
- Refusal to apologise
- Refusal to acknowledge partners point of view
- Refusing to explain why upset
- Stubbornness
- Not saying what they want to see whether they get it and being resentful if they don't.



Passive Aggressive Definition: Behaviour which impedes, or does nothing to help, problem resolution

The best way of getting on with Passive Aggressive personality types

Passive aggressive personality types are often reluctant to take the lead as this involves knowing what they want and being open about it. Yet when you try to take the lead they may launch into the 'Yes, but...' game [page 113]. Using controlling behaviour with passive aggressive types will lead to unproductive struggles.

To read more about personality types, including Passive Aggressive, read *Personality Adaptations* by Ian Stewart and Vann Joines.

If your partner has passive aggressive tendency:

The secret is to nurture them, be playful and encourage them to express how they feel and what they want.

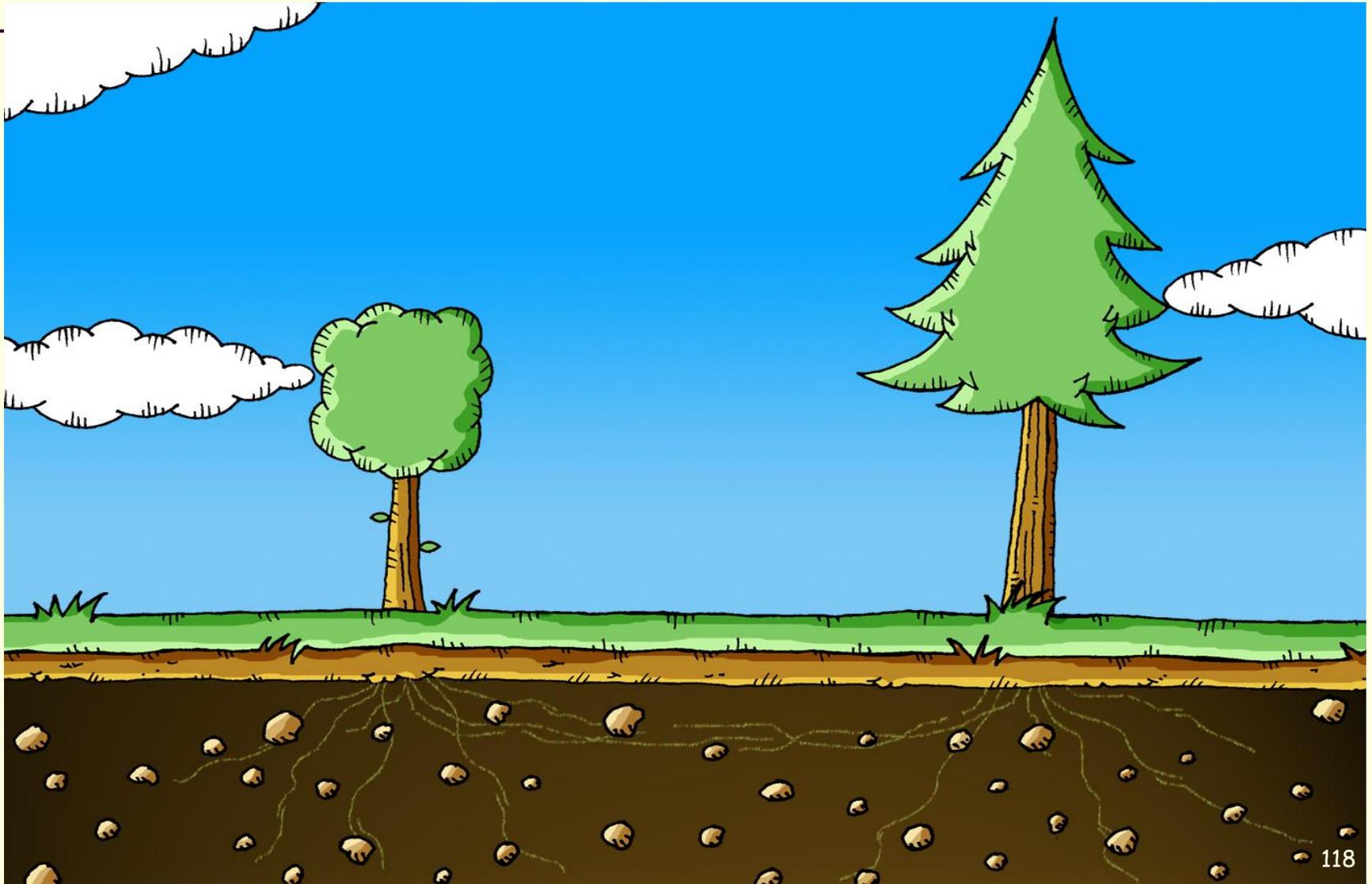
If you have passive aggressive tendency:

You need to decide to be more assertive [page 212], think about what you want and be prepared to ask for it.

Next - Living with a workaholic

- The origins of personality type are complex and the drive to behave in ways distinctive of the personality type very strong.
- So it is with the workaholic personality type too. However, as with all the personality types, changes in behaviour can be brought about given commitment and determination to change [see page 68].
- If your partner has this type of personality you have to be assertive [page 212], decide what changes in behaviour you want and negotiate.
- If your partner is committed to the relationship the negotiation should prove successful, but will require continuing assertiveness from you to make sure whatever you agree happens and no backsliding.
- If you are a workaholic, you need get a better work /home life balance. It's vital, however difficult, to schedule regular time together for you and your partner and defend it against competing bids.

The Workaholic relationship - too much space between the trees!



Part Four

Relationship Improvement Steps



Part Four

Relationship improvement steps

Also see
Pages 4 & 10

- Couples Counselling Page 121
- Working on improving your relationship 129
- Developing the right attitude 157
- Changing your partners behaviour by changing your behaviour 172
- Developing your listening & empathy skills 190
- Developing your assertiveness 212
- Important Do's & Don'ts 231
- Common relationship problems and how to handle them 252



You should talk seriously about couples counselling



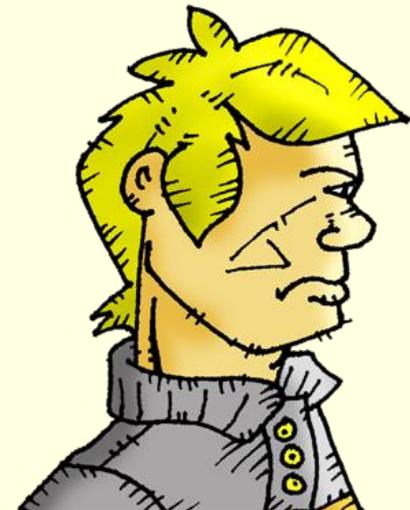
- Often, when couples come to see me they are not both sure that they want the relationship to continue. They have come to counselling to try to overcome their difficulties so that when the fog of conflict is cleared, each can make a decision based on, 'We have done the work. This may be the best it's going to be. Do we want to stay together?'
- In coming into counselling they have made the decision to work at overcoming their difficulties. **Have you?**
- If you hang back because of anger, hurt, resentment, fear of embarrassment or because you are waiting for your partner to fix things, you are stuck in the swamp of indecision: a '**Civilised Discussion**' is needed [pages 206 -207].

Stuck?

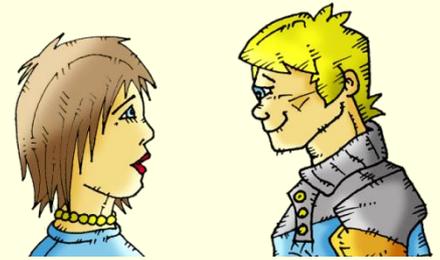
You won't save your relationship if you just allow it to struggle on. You need to **make a decision** whether to actively try to change things or not. Buying this book is a good start. It will also help you to assess whether you need professional help right away.



Some things you just can't solve on your own! If you can't discuss things in a civilised way [pages 206 - 207] you should seriously consider getting professional help soon.



The potential benefits of couples counselling



- Resolution of issues which have been damaging the relationship
- Learn to discuss things calmly instead of arguing
- Anger and hurt reduction: both parties get to feel heard by the other
- Identify and let go of destructive behaviours and ways of thinking
- Improve communication skills, especially listening skills
- Improve anger management skills
- Understand each other better and why you both react the way you do
- Learn to put the past in the past and move on
- Draw up a pact, an agreement about future behaviour

Each counsellor is unique and choosing a counsellor is one of the most important decisions you will ever make! To read more about choosing a counsellor please visit www.brianamartin.co.uk

Getting your partner to couples counselling or personal therapy

- If you have tried persuasion and failed, and can't get agreement to a Constructive Conversation [pages 206 - 207], you could write a letter to your partner explaining why you want to go to counselling. [It's harder to ignore a letter than a conversation].
- If nothing else works you may have to consider an ultimatum - counselling or else! This is risky to do and risky not to do! It would be a pity to finish up splitting because you didn't act decisively before it was too late.
- **Caution!** I really don't like texts and e-mails for this kind of message. They are too easily transmitted when half thought-through while your emotions are aroused and you are in no state to use diplomatic wording. Also, it's too easy for your partner to answer off the cuff without thinking it through. **Maybe draft your message and think it over for a week?**



Approach the gorilla in the corner of the room with caution

- Sometimes there are issues between couples which are not talked about, even though they are never far from mind and influence relationships.
- It may be a past sexual affair, some other past incident or something on-going which feels too difficult to talk about. It's as though there's a gorilla in the corner of the room which the couples pretend not to notice.
- An option is to try to get rid of the gorilla with professional help. If it's a past event, another option is to get it out of the room by locking it up forever in a Yesterday Box [page 321].



Couples in conflict should act sooner rather than later

Don't leave it too long before deciding if you need professional help! I find that couples often leave it until they have built up such a history of bad feelings that it is very difficult to repair the relationship.

Remember Humpty Dumpty! He should have got off the wall before he fell!



Working on improving your relationship

- How to get love, feel valued and be heard Page 129
- How hard are YOU trying to improve the relationship? 130
- Breaking the destructive cycle 131
- Contracting for change 136
- Getting your partner to accept their part in the problems 138
- Getting to the truth 144
- Healing the past 146
- Recovering from deep hurt 154



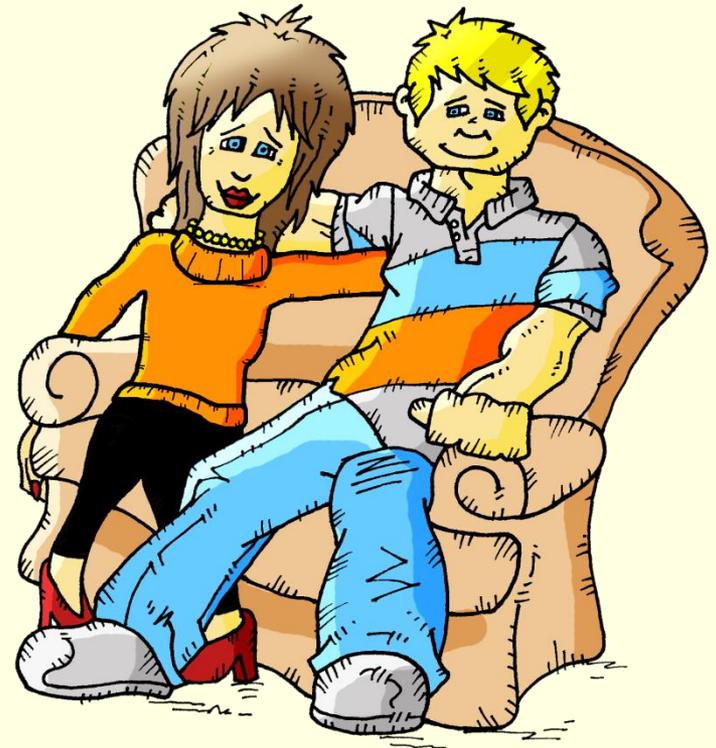
How to get love, feel valued and be heard

.....If you want love, show love.

.....if you want to be valued by someone,
show that you value them.

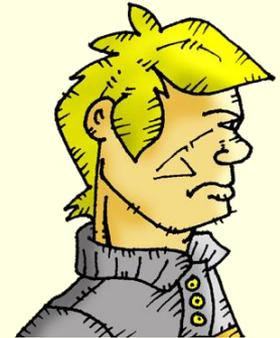
.....if you want to be heard by someone,
listen, empathise, hear, them.

If you are angry or hurting it is very likely that you find it impossible to be like this with your partner right now, but this is the formula for getting what you want. The need is to deal with any blocking anger and hurt as a priority [page 384].



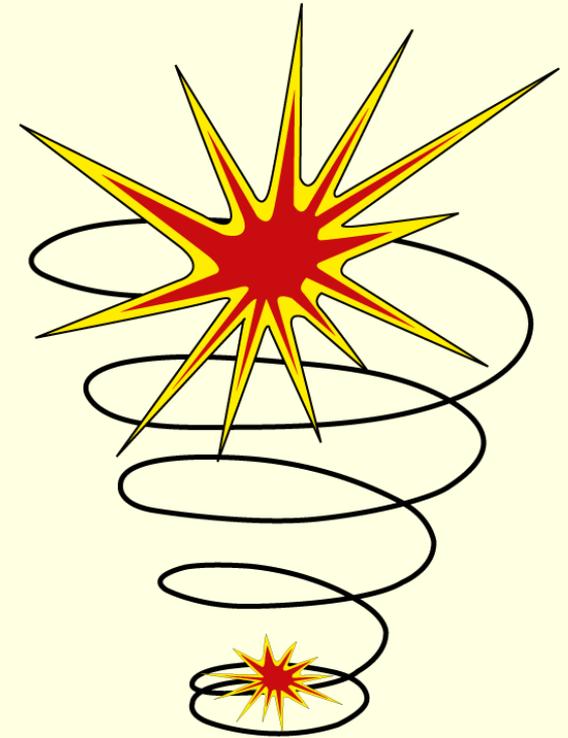
How hard are YOU trying?

- I know that what follows may be a very hard message if you have been, or are being, hurt by your partner, but the fact is that you, to some degree, are almost certainly inviting some of what's going wrong in the relationship.
- You may not have started the problems, but it's almost inevitable that you are now part of the on-going relationship difficulties.
- **How can I say this with such certainty when I don't even know you?**
- Because we human beings retaliate, in some way or other, when we are hurt or angry with our partner. We feel less than loving, less than empathic, more critical. We may be openly aggressive, or passive aggressive [pages 113 - 116].



Breaking the destructive cycle

- Hurt and anger leads to destructive behaviour which leads to destructive behaviour in response, which leads to a spiral of further destructive behaviours.
- It's like a slow motion version of the psychological game of Uproar [page 65].
- The spiral needs to be interrupted - a halt called to the game! One of you needs to take the lead in initiating a break in the cycle. *Why not you?*





You may be inviting the behaviour you are getting



- One of the key principles of TA [page 27] is that people respond from the Ego State [page 34] in which they are addressed.
- When you talk to your partner from Critical/Controlling Parent [page 41] you are talking to them as though they are a child. As a result they would tend to respond from one of the main Child Ego States - Adapted Child, Free Child or Rebellious Child [page 46].
- The Adapted Child response might be passive acceptance of what you say, the Free Child reaction might be 'Stuff you' and the Rebellious Child response might be to do the opposite of what you want.
- So when we talk to your partner as though they are a naughty child you are inviting them to react like a child. This is why critical and controlling behaviour usually fails to get the response we want.

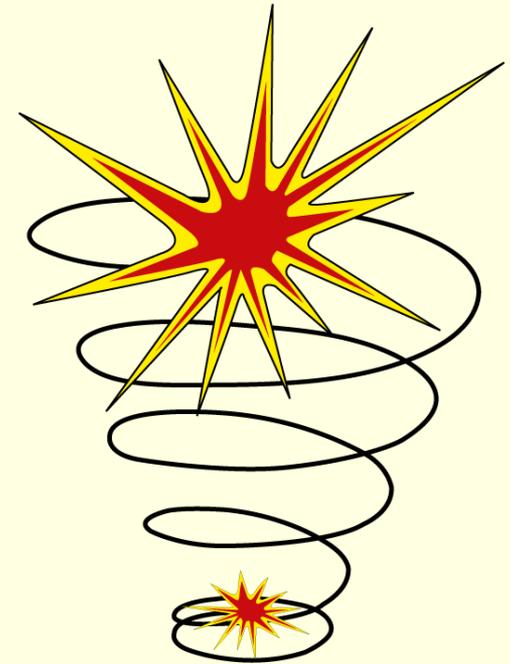
A Case example - how Morag invited the behaviour which upset her.

- Andy is laid back, easy going, enjoys his hobbies, doesn't do overmuch around the house and doesn't react to Morag empathically when she gets upset about something he has or hasn't done. He easily accesses Child Ego State and lots of mundane things which Morag finds important he doesn't.
- Morag is very focussed on what she wants to achieve professionally and on what needs doing around the house. She is working too hard and gets stressed.
- When she doesn't get the help, cooperation or empathy she needs from Andy she gets upset and slips into Critical/Controlling Parent Ego State.



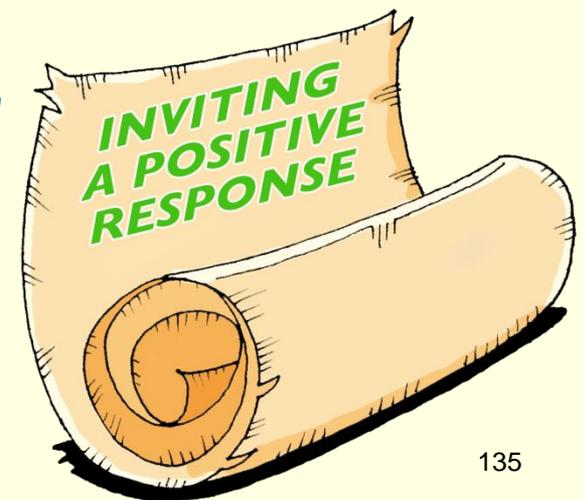
Andy finds himself unable to give Morag the response she wants

- Morag's process is disastrous for their relationship because Andy was dominated by his abusive mother. When Morag tries to control him and criticises him, he 'Rubber Bands' back [page 58] to the feelings induced by his mother, slips into scared Child Ego State [page 46] and can't express himself.
- Morag is infuriated by the absence of the response she needs, moves into the Persecutor position [page 62] and heightens the attack.
- A catastrophic spiral of 'Uproar' [page 65] is triggered time after time.

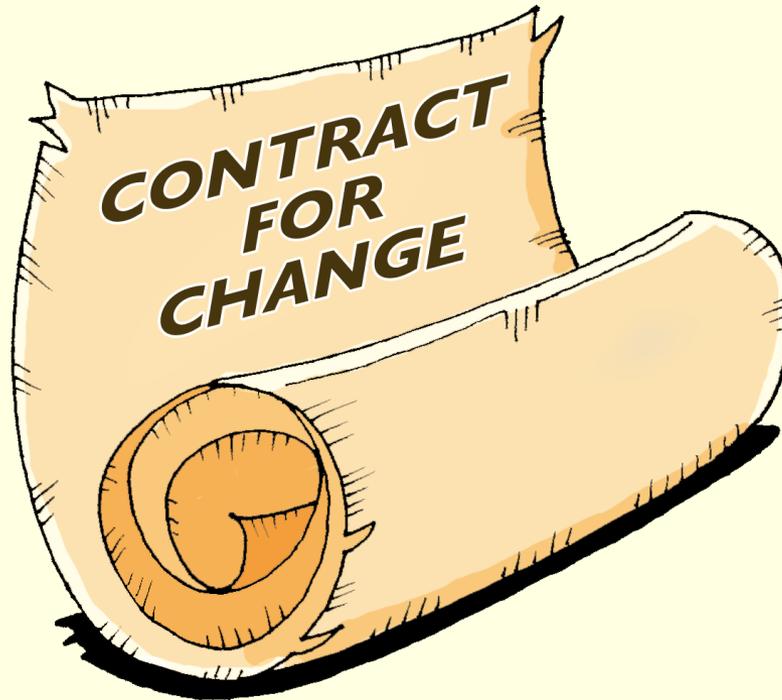


Invite a positive response

- When you change positively the way you are with your partner it opens the door to positive behaviour change towards you.
- Maybe you have been really hurt by your partner, so it's very hard to for you to accept that you need to take a share of the responsibility for the way the relationship now is.
- But I know, from my work with relationships in trouble, that destructive behaviours are never all on one side. The repair work is never all in the hands of one partner.
- So I invite you to consider what YOU are doing to invite the behaviour you are getting and to decide to change it.



Negotiate a contract for change and be prepared to contract in return



A 'contract' in this sense is a clear commitment by both of you to change in specific agreed ways

See also 'Contracting for a Civilised Discussion' on pages 206 - 207. This should help you agree a contract for change.

Contracting for change - getting your partner to agree to work on the issues

- You should be assertive [page 212] and discuss with your partner the changes you would like them to make.
- Say what you are prepared to change in return.
- 'Contracting for a civilised discussion' would be helpful [pages 206 -207]
- If you aren't able to discuss the changes needed you should consider couples counselling asap.
- There is some advice on how to get your partner to agree to couples counselling on page 125.





Getting your partner to accept that they are part of the problem 1

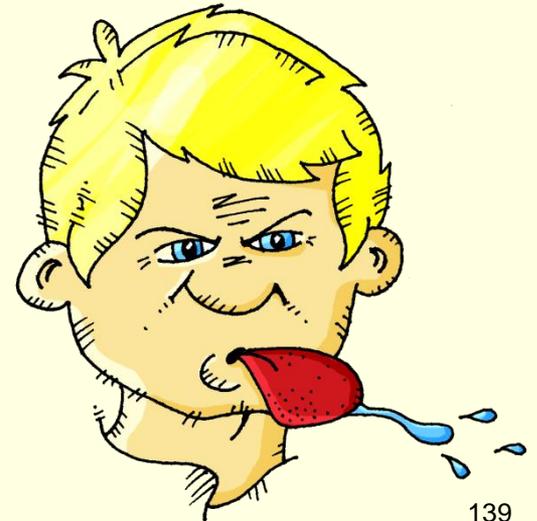
There are many reasons why people may refuse, or be unable, to admit that it's their fault too. Here are a few of the reasons which come up regularly in couples counselling:-

- They will not give their partner 'ammunition' to use against them.
- They believe that their behaviour is an irresistible response to their partner's behaviour. 'It's her fault, she is always winding me up!'
- They have subconsciously filtered the 'facts' and constructed a version of what happened that leaves them blameless.
- In their 'Big Book of Right Ways' they haven't done anything wrong.
- They are sheltering from the guilt they may feel if they admit to themselves that they are at least partly to blame.



Getting your partner to accept that they are part of the problem 2

- Most difficult to deal with in therapy is when the person's underlying ego is so fragile that their psychological defences block them seeing any defect in their own behaviour. Often this type of person will project confidence, but it's a bubble which admitting blame to themselves could burst.
- Attempts to penetrate their defence and get them to accept their contribution can result in a switch to another defence - rage or hurt, loss of trust in the therapist and an end to the counselling process.





Getting your partner to accept that they are part of the problem 3

- Getting your partner to dip into this book should be very helpful but, if you suggest it, they may think that you have found stuff to beat them over the head with: that you wouldn't be asking them to look at it if it didn't point the finger of blame at them.
- A typical reaction might be:-
'I'm not looking at it. Why should I? You're the problem, not me'.
- I suggest that, when you have identified some of the things which you have been doing which you need to change, you could say something like, 'I've read this book and I can see how I've contributed to what's been going wrong. I'd like you to look at it too and then we can talk about how we can change things'.



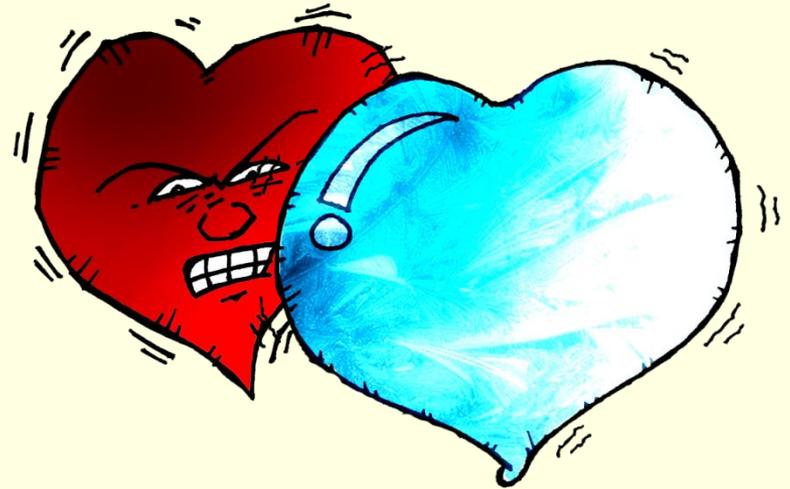
Getting your partner to accept their contribution to the problem 4

Some other options:

- Try for a 'Civilised Discussion' [pages 206 - 207] with the aim of getting your partner to look at this book.
- Write a letter about the problems as you see them and invite suggestions on the way ahead.
- Take care to avoid attacking your partner. Say, 'I feel.... [hurt, sad, angry' etc.] NOT, 'You have hurt me' or 'You make me angry'. These are accusations and will be defended.'
- You can also use the above approaches to persuade your partner to come to couples counselling with you [page 124]. A couples counsellor has a much better chance than you of getting your partner to see and accept their contribution to the problems.

When your partner won't tell you what's the matter

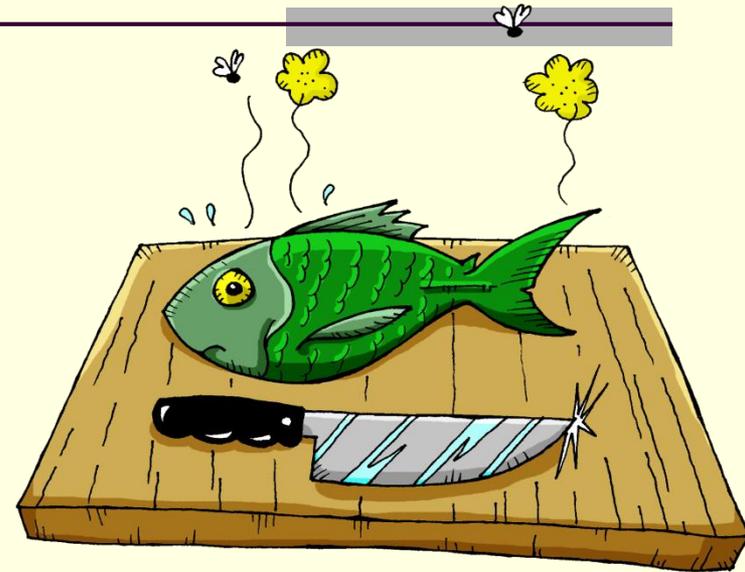
- When your partner feels hurt by you or is angry with you, they may react with cold anger [page 335] They won't tell you what's the matter, but you are aware of a definite chill in the air.
- This is passive aggressive behaviour [pages 113 - 116] and does nothing to solve the problem!
- It's also an invitation into the 'game' of Uproar [page 65].



Cold display
covering anger

Get the smelly fish from under the table and deal with it

- You could ask, 'What's the matter?', but this will reveal your lack of empathy and may result in the reply, 'You should effin know what's the matter' - in which case you haven't handled it quite right!
- Try not to let the freeze get to you. Don't react with anger or hurt. Be at your considerate best and try to work out what you may have done wrong and the best way to put it right.
- Make a list of everything it might possibly be. If all else fails and the chill continues, you will have to ask.
- Don't let the chill go on - it may turn into a deep freeze.



Falling out over two versions of the truth

When positive communication about an issue has broken down each party has their own version of events leading to the disagreement. The different versions each justify their own behaviour. They have both filtered the meaning of events [pages 91 - 97] to support their version; both absolutely believe that their version of what has happened is correct.

- They each have their own version of the truth.
- Without knowing it, they have each filtered the meaning of events to support their version.
- When their version is challenged they defend it because they believe it.
- If blamed or attacked they fight back.



It's almost unbelievable sometimes how different the two versions are; it's as though the parties are talking about different events.

If you have had a fall out with your partner remember....

1. They probably believe their version of the truth about what happened and what caused it.
2. They will have filtered the meaning of events to support their version [pages 91 - 97]
3. If you challenge their version they will defend it.
4. If you blame them, or attack them, they are likely to defend their position and fight back.

JUST LIKE YOU WOULD!

So, to make progress, you need to prepare, or you are just going to end up pouring petrol on the flames of old arguments.



Drawing a line on the past

You don't have to forgive your partner for what's happened to be able to move forward!

- Forgiveness is best, if you can, but most people initially find it impossible to forgive [page 149].
- I help them to move towards acceptance, 'what happened can't be changed and I am not going to throw away the future because of it', rather than forgiveness.
- Relationships can and do heal when couples decide to accept what's happened, 'draw a line', put the past in the past [stop playing Archaeology [page 67] and move on.



One Day At A Time

I wrote this at a time in when my life when I had to move on and put the past in the past. I found it helpful. I hope it will help you too!

Will you throw away the future reaching back into the past?
Living is so much harder when we lose each today in re-living past pain.
The bottle of life is no longer full, perhaps it never was,
But seeing that it's half full rather than half empty,
Can transform the way you feel,
Can transform the way your life is heading.

Decide to put aside yesterday, with its mistakes, regrets and pain.
Choose to live in today, in each moment.
You can survive one day at a time,
You can recover one day at a time,
You can build and rebuild one day at a time.

Every new day is the beginning of the rest of your life,
Will you throw it away reliving yesterday ?

Brian A Martin

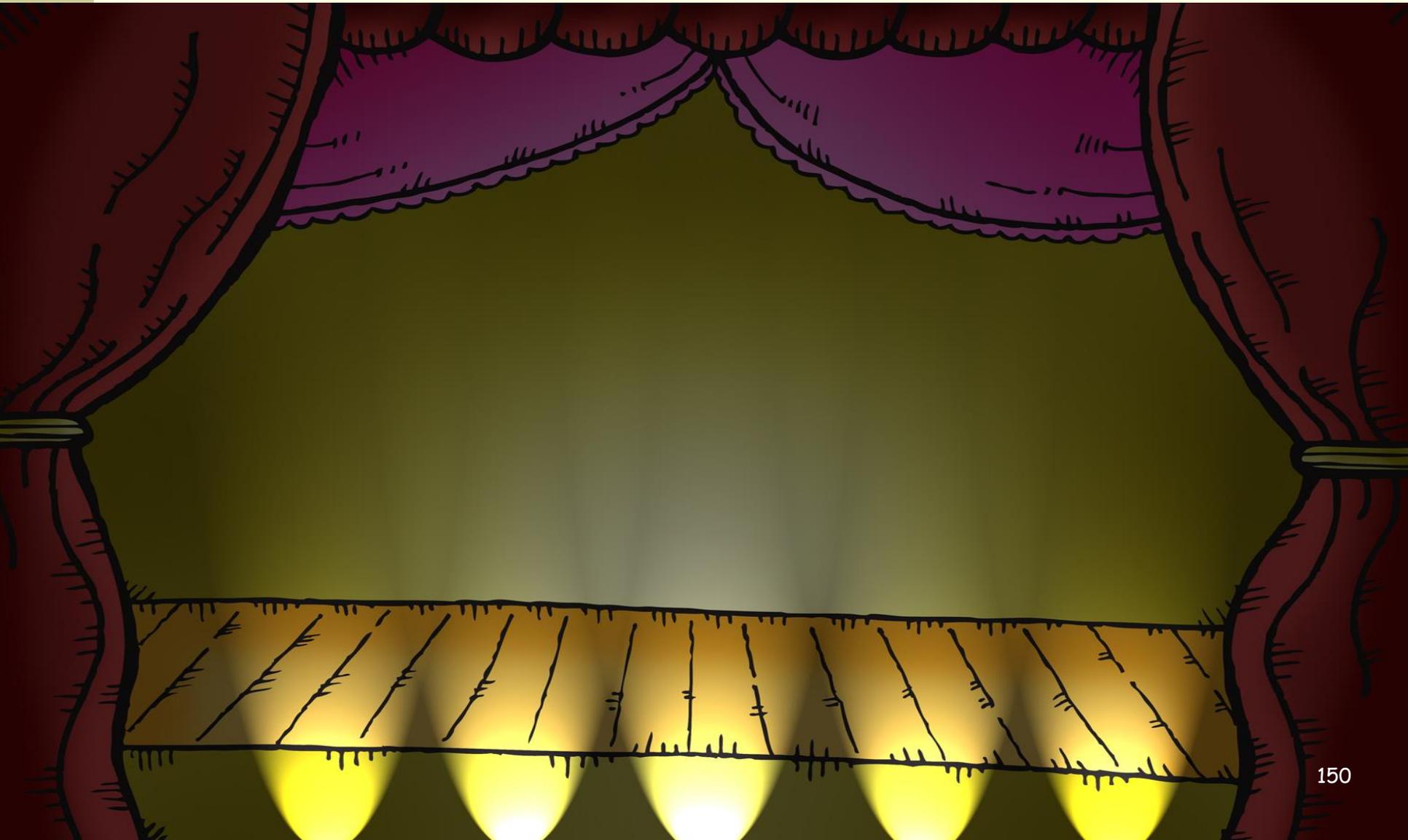
Are you ready to 'draw a line' and move on ?

- Make yourself comfortable in a place where you are unlikely to be disturbed, close your eyes and change your breathing to deeper, slower diaphragmatic breathing for five minutes [page 306]. Then imagine yourself sitting near the stage in an otherwise empty theatre.
- Imagine your partner walking to the centre of the stage.
- Visualise them standing there looking at you and say, 'I am ready to draw a line and move on'.
- If you feel OK when you say this, let them continue across the stage and leave via the opposite wing.
- If you do not feel OK when you say it, return them to the wing of the stage which they first entered from.
- Either way, the stage is empty again at the end of the visualisation.



At the end of this visualisation you should be clear whether you are ready to draw a line and move on.

You don't have to forgive to move forward providing you can learn to accept what happened and allow it to recede into the past [See Page 149]





If you want to talk about the past without making matters worse

- Do you feel that, despite what's happened, your partner is an OK person who you still want in your life? [pages 52 - 56]
- Your partner may have been responsible for the start of the problems, but when you think about what has happened, can you see how you have been contributing to keeping them going? [page 130]
- Can you put yourself in your partner's shoes?
Sit in a chair you wouldn't normally use, pretend to be them and explain it from their point of view [page 200].
- Can you imagine yourself handling a discussion without blaming or attacking? Test this by finding a quiet place where you will not be disturbed. Change your breathing to deeper slower breathing [pages 306 - 315]. Imagine the conversation, with you staying in control of you and handling the situation without responding to provocation.

It would be helpful if you can also answer 'yes' to the following questions

- Are you willing to take the lead in the role of peacemaker even though you didn't start the problems?
- Could you handle being unfairly blamed without retaliating angrily?
- Do you really want to hear and understand their point of view?

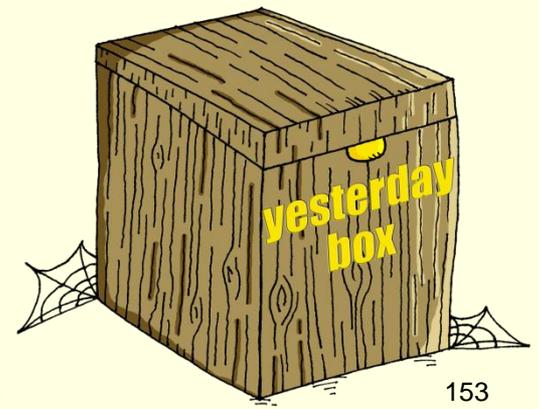
I know that this may initially seem very one sided. However, it holds the key to you being heard and understood [page 129].

- When you behave in such a conciliatory way and demonstrate that you want to understand their point of view, they are far more likely to want to hear and understand your point of view and how you feel.



If you decide that you aren't ready to talk things through

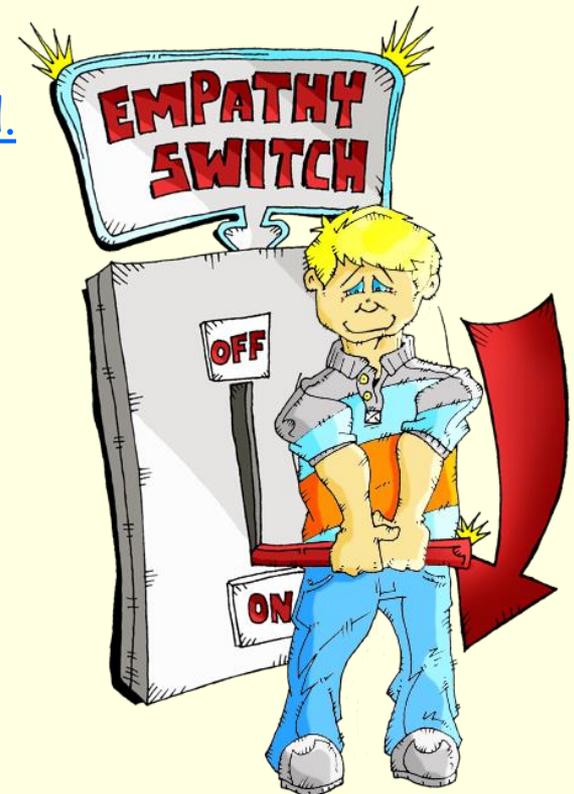
- Store the issues in your Yesterday Box for the time being [page 321].
- Alternatively, put the issues in your Tomorrow Box [page 317] from day to day until you feel ready to discuss them or transfer them to your Yesterday Box.
- In the meantime break the ice. Get talking again, anything low risk will do e.g. 'The cat's been sick again. What shall we do?'
- If you continue to feel unable to discuss what happened -
 - ✓ Use one or more of the anger and hurt release techniques [page 384]
 - ✓ Decide to draw a line and move on: decide that what happened happened and is not worth staying upset about [page 149]
 - ✓ Put the memories in your Yesterday Box
 - ✓ Consider professional help [pages 121 - 125]



If your partner feels deeply hurt by something you have done.....

- To be able to move forward you need to convince your partner that you understand, truly understand, and deeply regret, the hurt experienced.
- Don't defend or attempt to justify what you did. If you have your own issues in mitigation they should be separately discussed. Your partner will not hear you until they feel heard by you.
- A sincere heartfelt apology is a good start, but only a start. Be prepared to discuss repeatedly what happened and experience your partner's hurt and anger without retaliating.

Words alone won't do it!
Let your empathy and regret show.



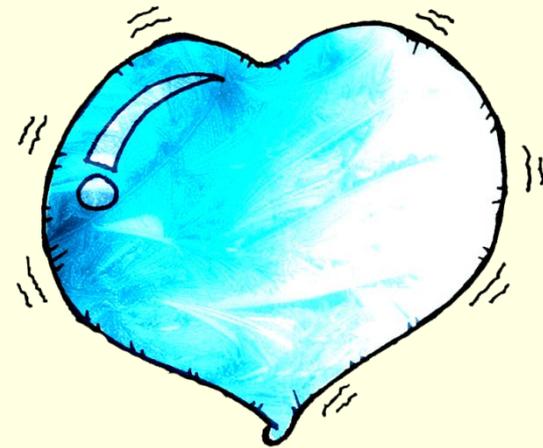
You will need to be very patient with the person you hurt

- I find that the perpetrator of the hurt often feels that they have done enough to mend things, but the hurt person is far from ready to let things go and move forward.
- I had one client who nursed her hurt and screwed up her relationship with passive aggressive retaliation, for 35 years. Her partner had apologised for something which happened when they were first married, but 'He has never convinced me that he understands how much I was hurt'.



When you are at fault

- A sign of emotional maturity is the ability to recognise when you are in the wrong, decide how to repair things and move forward.
- Don't expect the wound to be quickly healed, see pages 154 and 155.
- Humble pie doesn't taste good, but it's an essential dish at times.



Best start on thawing the ice before it gets any thicker!

Developing the 'right attitude'

The right attitude
to each other and to
the relationship.



The 'right attitude'

- What is the 'right attitude'? Page 159
- What's stopping you ? 160
- Stepping stones to the right attitude
 - Is your partner an OK person? 165
 - Don't play the Archaeology game 168
- Managing your reactions 170



I work with couples to develop this 'right' attitude

1. 'I want to let go of past hurt and build a better relationship'.
2. 'I accept that I am part of the problem and I'm going to work on me too.'
3. 'I love you: you are an OK person. I want to be with, even though your behaviour has been and sometimes is, not OK'.
4. 'Even when I don't agree with you I want to understand how you are feeling and why you are feeling that way'.
5. 'I will be assertive in raising things for discussion and encourage you to do the same.'



So what's stopping you having the 'right attitude'

Why
are
you
stuck
in
the
relationship
swamp?

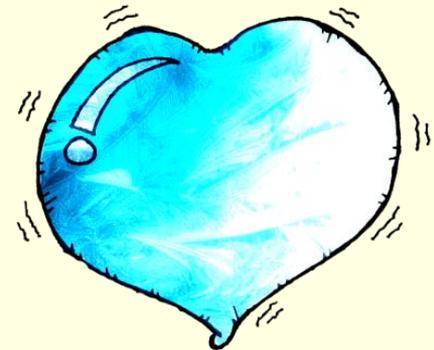


Angry and hurt? You may react 'No way' can I switch on that 'right' attitude'

- When couples start their work with me they usually arrive feeling angry and hurt. Sometimes the anger and hurt or in one direction, usually it's in both directions. Their negative attitude to their partner and to the relationship is stopping them moving forward.
- The fact that you are reading this book may mean that right now you are a long way from having the right attitude to heal your relationship because you feel angry and hurt.



Your angry behaviour may be 'hot' or 'cold' or a mixture of both.



Angry feelings and behaviour may be 'hot' or 'cold' or a mixture of both.

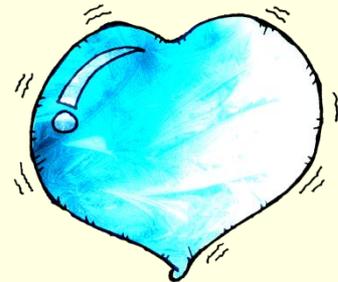
HOT RESPONSE

Aggressive, intimidating behaviour including verbally abusive rants.



COLD RESPONSE

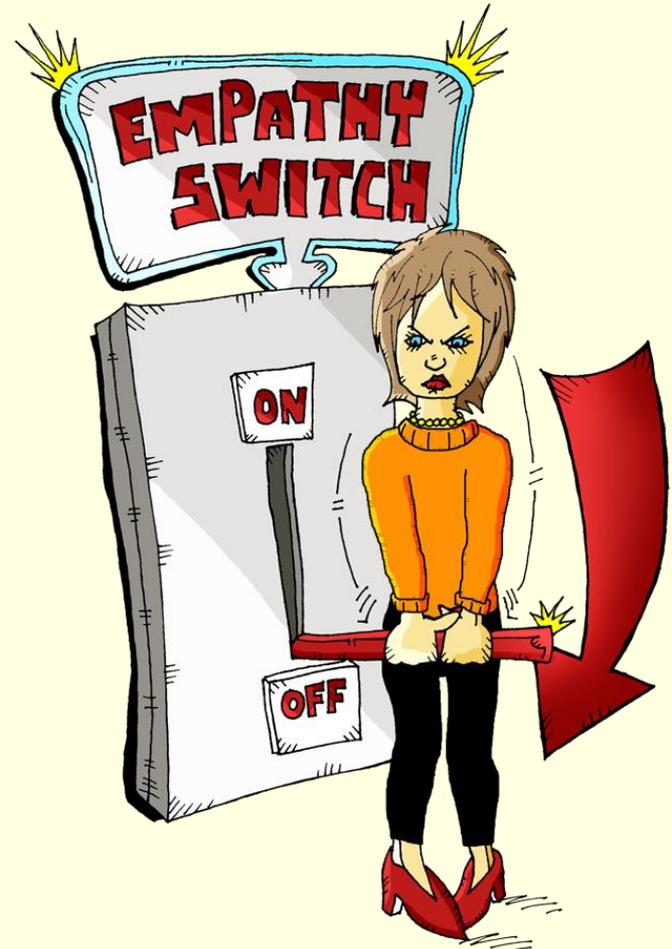
Pushing hurt and anger down inside. Fighting back in passive aggressive ways [pages 113 - 116] including being icy cold with the other person without explaining why.



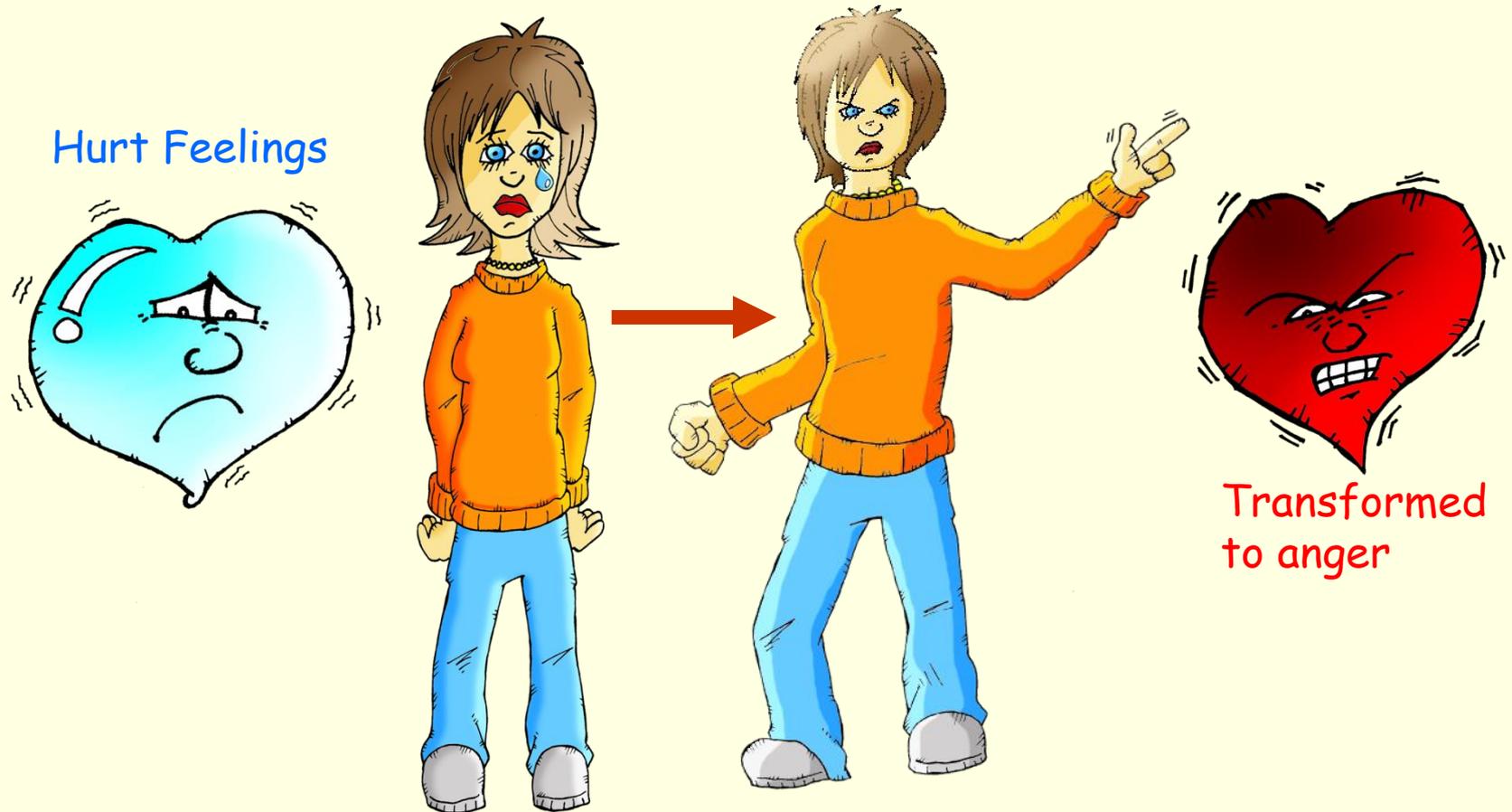
Or a mixture of both?

Odds are, unresolved anger and hurt is at the root of the problems

- If this is so, one thing is certain - your empathy switch is 'off', because that's what unresolved anger and hurt do - switch off our empathy switch and make us insensitive to the needs of the person we are angry with.
- They then become angry and hurt with us and a situation develops where both parties are being insensitive to the needs of the other. A 'hot' or 'cold' war develops and communication breaks down.



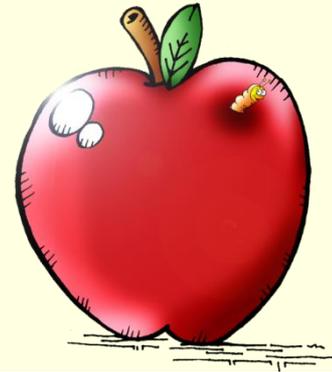
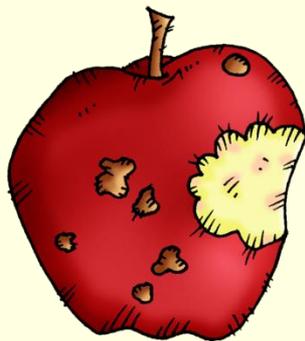
When dealing with anger look for the hurt behind the anger



Stepping Stones to the 'right' attitude

It will be a massive help if you can accept that your partner is an OK person who behaves badly at times, not a bad person
[pages 52 - 56]

Is your partner a good person who behaves badly at times or a bad person? A 'bad apple'.



Maybe your partner is 'not perfect, but good enough'?
A 'good apple' but flawed?

It will be a massive help if you think of your partner as an OK person

You're an OK person
deserving of my love
despite what you did.

Reject
the bad
behaviour
- not the
person

If you are able
to believe that,
you'll be able
to handle things
better than you
otherwise would.



Demonstrate love to be loved

How can you expect love if you don't show it?

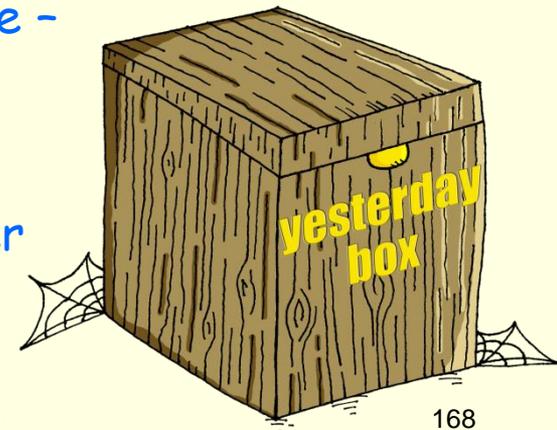
Alan & June came back to see me again. Their work in counselling the previous year had been successful and they had been getting on much better. A month earlier they had a fall-out about some issue or other. They had allowed the issue to be a black cloud over the relationship. Now she wanted to work on the fact that he was 'so grumpy all the time'. He expressed himself grumpy because she was 'always on to him about being grumpy'. They were both very busy people and I asked them how they had demonstrated their love over the last few months.

Awkward pause!

There are a thousand ways to show that you love someone, however busy you are, but planning time together and making sure it happens is essential!

Don't play the 'Archaeology' game - don't keep digging up the past

- One of the biggest blocks to couples moving forward is that they have not successfully worked through old issues. When they first start work with me they are often preoccupied with past hurt and want to keep digging up the past, stuck in a blaming loop.
- Until they have buried past issues they cannot move on. The door to the future will not open until the door to the past is closed.
- If you and your partner are stuck in replaying past stuff, you may need professional help in opening the door to the future - help in putting a new show on the road.
- First, try for an agreement to put that old stuff in a joint Yesterday Box and leave it there forever [page 321].



Emotional trading stamps

How we store anger and hurt -

- I wrote earlier [on page 57] about how we store anger and hurt then release it inappropriately, cashing the stamps in with 'over the top' reactions.
- Unresolved anger and hurt need to be released in ways that don't harm yourself or anyone else. How to do this is described in Part Nine starting on page 384.



Managing your reactions

The 'Anger Management Programme' is designed to help you control the way you react when faced with anger provoking situations and be able to choose what to do instead of reacting aggressively and angrily.

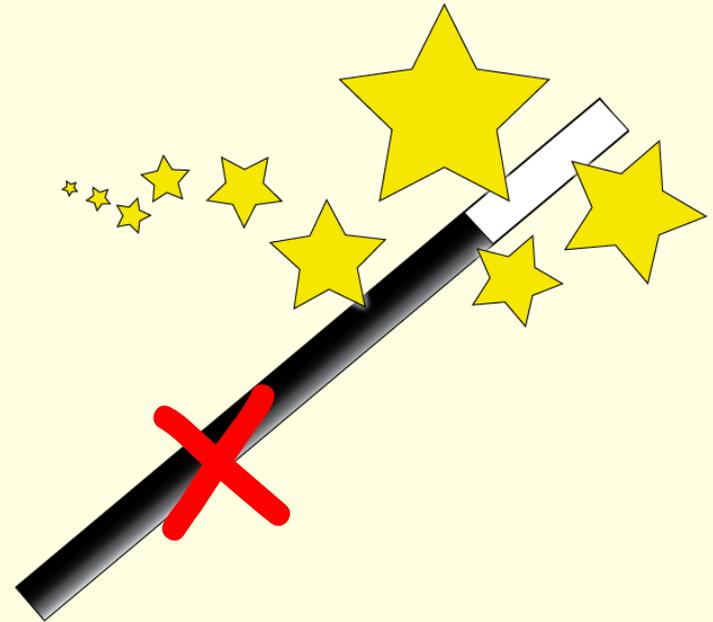
- Be better able to discuss things calmly, handle 'wind ups' and know how to defuse anger directed at you.
- Be able to release anger safely without hurting yourself or others.
- Be less stressed and able to calm yourself down quickly.



The Anger Management Programme starts on page 326.

Probably the most important message from 'The Anger Management Programme'

- People can wind you up, if you let them, but no-one has a magic wand to make you respond this way or that. You **always** have a choice how to react.!
- You can learn to choose how to react instead of reacting with angry autopilot.



I can't stress this too much! It's fundamental to angry impulse control.
HOWEVER WOUND UP YOU ARE,
IT'S STILL YOUR CHOICE ABOUT HOW TO REACT

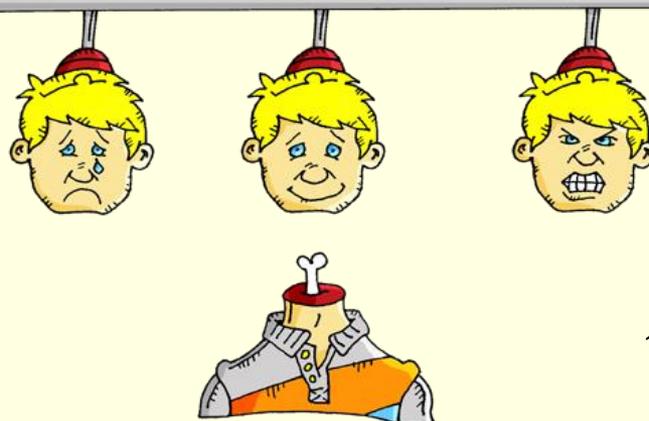
Changing
your partner's
behaviour by
changing your
behaviour



Changing your partner's behaviour by changing your behaviour

CONTENTS

- Taking responsibility for your contribution to the problems Page 174
- If you have an anger management problem you need to deal with it 177
- Don't 'kick the cat' 178
- Don't be abusive or tolerate abuse 179
- Don't let 'annoying habits' get to you 180
- Don't invite the behaviour you object to 181 - 183
- Stay out of Critical Parent 184 - 186
- Withdrawing the permissions you have given yourself to be critical 187
- If you feel you must criticise 188
- Stroke the behaviour you want 189



Taking responsibility for your contribution to the problems

Are you heaping all the blame on your partner?

When couples initially start work with me they tend to be blaming each other and discounting their own contribution to the problems.

I have separate individual sessions with each partner at which I confront their discount of their own contribution to the problems.

I ask.....

1. 'Are the problems 100% your partner's fault?'
[only once have I had someone insist that it's all their partner's fault].
2. Next question, 'So what's your contribution?'
3. Next question, 'Is it OK if we talk about your contribution too?'



Identify your contribution

After the introductory meeting, I see the partners separately to give each of them a chance to vent, let it all hang out, without the risk that their partner will get angry and withdraw from counselling before it's even started. I ask four questions:

Question One: What's wrong with the relationship?

Response: Lots of criticism of partner.

Question Two: What will your partner say when I ask them the same question?

Response: Confused and much shorter.

Question Three: What do YOU need to do differently to help get this relationship on track?

Response: Often an initial stunned silence, then at most two or three ideas.

Question Four: What's good about the relationship

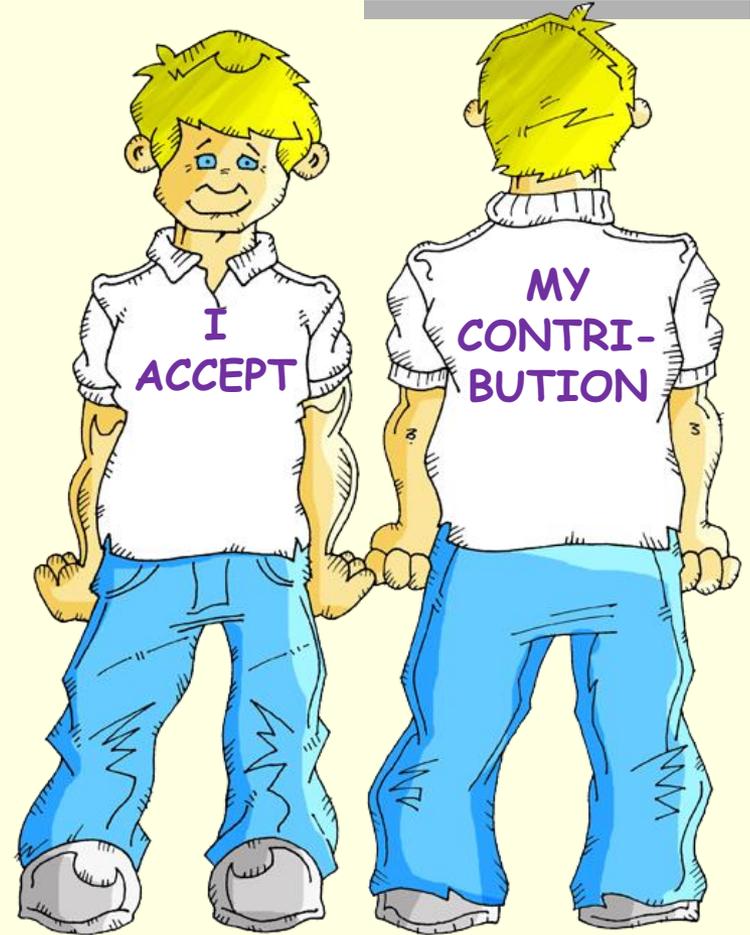
Response: Varies from 'Lots' to 'Not much'.



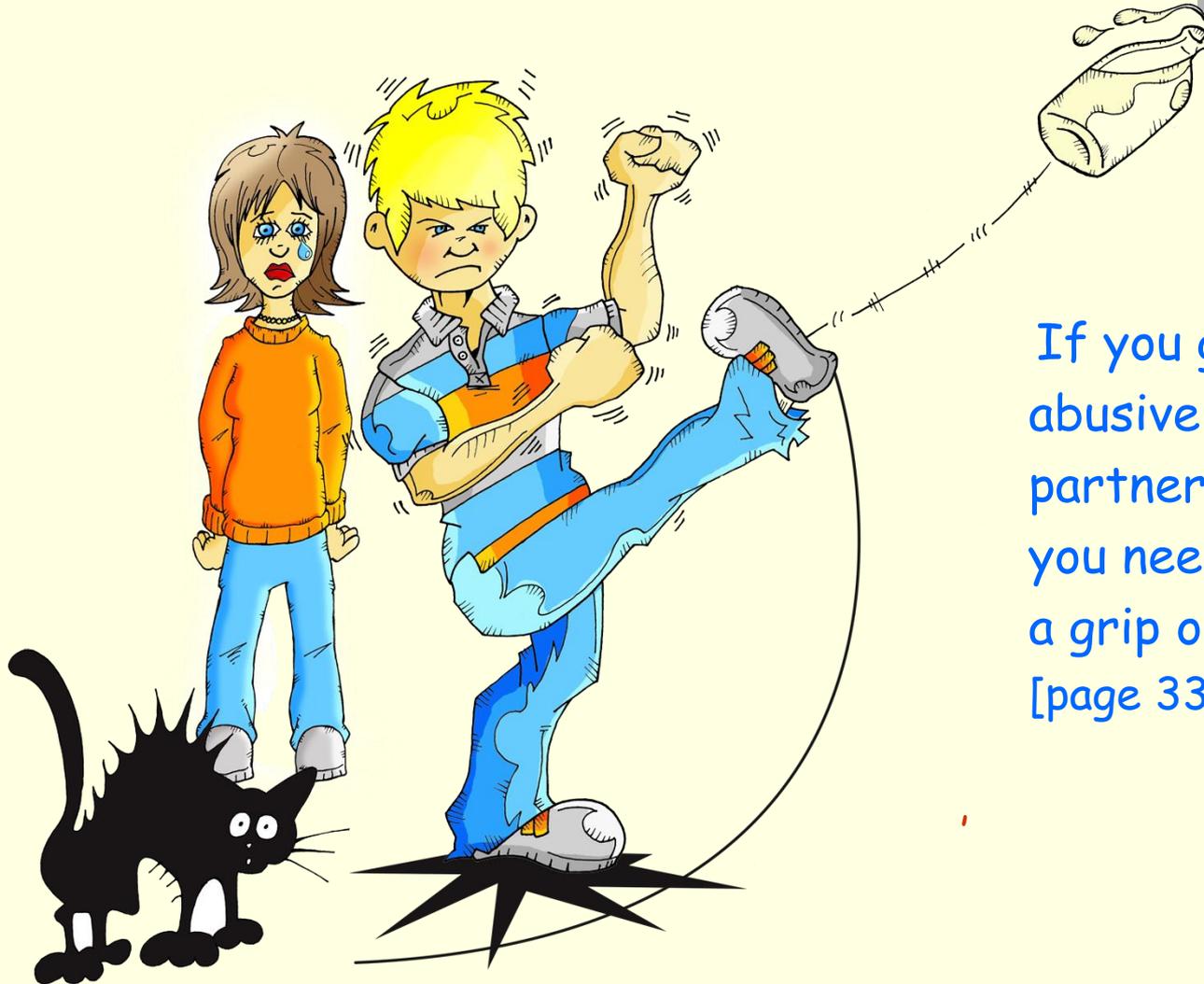
To break the cycle you need to take responsibility for your contribution

In all my time working with couples, and as a mediator in commercial situations, I have never, repeat never, found that all the fault lies with one party.

You need to accept that, however the problems started, you are almost certainly contributing to the present difficulties. You should decide what you are prepared to do differently to help improve the relationship.



If you have an anger management problem, you need to deal with it



If you get angry and abusive with your partner, the first thing you need to do is get a grip on your temper [page 332]

Displacement - or 'kicking the cat', is when we take it out on the wrong target



When we are angry or frustrated we may 'take it out' on our partner. Anger and frustration must be released, but not on the wrong target.

Maybe you sometimes take out your frustration on your partner when the real problem is elsewhere!? When you realise that's what you have done, find some way of putting it right as soon as possible.

Don't let your pride stand in the way - apologise at the earliest possible moment.

Don't be abusive or tolerate abuse



Biting chunks out of someone we want to care about us is not the most sensible thing to do, is it? And, as you are only too well aware, insults come back to haunt us - we have long memories! Insults are like toothpaste - once toothpaste is out of the tube it can't be got back in!

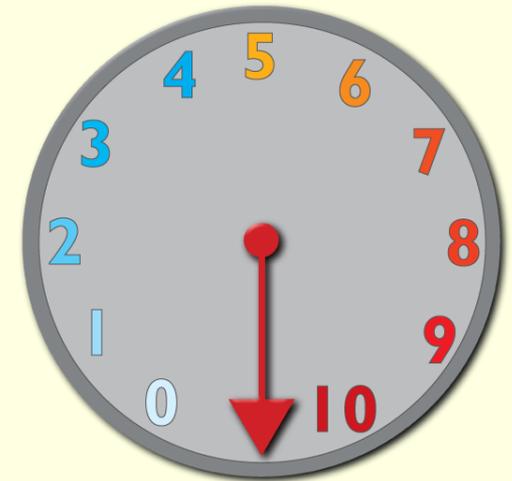
Don't insult your partner, even if they insult you. Focus on their behaviour, not on their character.

Try to repair any damage you have already done by using the approach on pages 154 - 156.



Don't let 'annoying habits' get you

- Your partner, like you, probably has some annoying habits? If so, you won't change them by nagging. Unless the habits are seriously unhygienic or unsafe, learn to accept them as minor imperfections in an otherwise OK person.
- Annoying habits don't have magic power to 'get to us' on their own. We give them their power!
- List any annoying habits your partner has: rate each of them on a scale of 0 -10. How significant are they really?



Expect the annoying habit to happen and be pleased when it doesn't, instead of hoping it won't happen and being irritated when it does.

You may be inviting the behaviour you object to



If you want someone to respond in an Adult 'sensible' way talk to them in an Adult 'sensible' way [Adult Ego State is on page 44].

- One of the key communication principles of Transactional Analysis [TA] [page 26] is that people respond from the Ego State which they are addressed in.
- This means that when we talk to someone as though they are a naughty child, we are inviting them to react like a naughty child. This is why critical and controlling behaviour usually fails to get the response we want.
- They may not always react like a naughty child - sometimes they will react from Critical Parent [page 39] with counter criticism.

Other ways in which we invite the behaviour we object to

- Feeling not heard leads to anger, frustration and hurt. Try to work on empathic responses to your partner's feelings. Remember, empathy doesn't mean agreeing, it means showing you understand, especially when you don't agree with what is being said! [page 191]
- Passivity [not challenging unacceptable behaviour] encourages replay. If you tend to be passive the need is for you to work on your assertiveness. [page 212]
- Passive aggressive behaviours all invite an angry response. If you have a passive aggressive tendency, try to resist your passive aggressive impulses [page 113 - 116].



Inviting the behaviour we object to

The prime need of someone who is angry and upset is - to feel heard.

If our reaction to their anger is to argue back, not listen or appear indifferent, they are likely to get madder and madder. Their need is for us is to understand and acknowledge their anger before we try to get our point across.

I asked one client what she did in response to her partners angry 'performances'.

She assured me that she did absolutely nothing to wind him up. 'I don't say anything. When he's in a tantrum, I just look at him as though he's barmie'.

She was surprised to learn how anger provoking her 'I'm not listening' response was.



Stay out of Critical Parent

I wrote about Critical/Controlling Parent on pages 39 - 43 and our 'Big Book of Right Ways' on pages 75 and 87.

- People with a strong Critical/Controlling Parent invariably carry a copy of their 'Big Book of Right & Only Ways'.
- This is an autopilot which guides them in relationship with others and includes permission to be angry with, aggressive towards, and critical of, those who do not consistently comply with the contents of their 'Big Book'.



This often damages and sometimes destroys relationships. It's also means that they are always issuing invitations into the game of 'Uproar' [page 65].

Staying out of Critical Parent needs conscious self-restraint

- People who spend a lot of time in Critical/Controlling Parent Ego State have great difficulty in changing their behaviour, even after they have taken the essential first step - deciding they want to be less critical and controlling.
- Self-awareness is key - noticing when they are about to be critical and resisting it.
- To help focus on this, I get clients to self monitor - how often they have resisted the impulse today, or made their point more kindly [from Nurturing Parent Ego State. Page 39]



The Impulse Control Technique in Part Eight [starting on page 375] will help you to be less critical if you so choose.

If you want to be less critical

- Learn to notice when you are in Critical Parent Ego State [pages 184 - 189].
- Use the Impulse Control Technique [page 375] to help you move into Adult Ego State [page 44] and express yourself assertively [page 212] or not at all.
- Stick to the 'facts' [pages 91 - 97] and keep your opinions to yourself.
- Watch your tone of voice! Critical Parent sounds very different to Adult.
- Withdraw the biggest Critical Parent permission of all, the permission to criticise! [pages 339 - 344]



Adult Ego State is the place to head for. Treat your partner like a naughty child and that's what you'll get!

Withdrawing the permissions to be critical you have given yourself

1. Make a list of situations where you have in the past given yourself Permission [pages 339 - 344] to be critical of, or angry with, your partner.
2. Cross out those Permissions which you decide to keep. Head up the list of remaining items, the ones you have decided to withdraw, 'I withdraw my permission to be critical and get angry with my partner when they
3. Invite your partner to do the same



If you feel you must criticise.....

- If you do find it appropriate to criticise occasionally, don't criticise the person that your partner is, criticise the behaviour.
- For example - don't say 'You are a rotten b"*# \$+%' say, 'Your behaviour is "*# \$+%'
- **This is an important parenting point too!** Don't tell a child 'You are naughty'. Say 'What you did is naughty'.



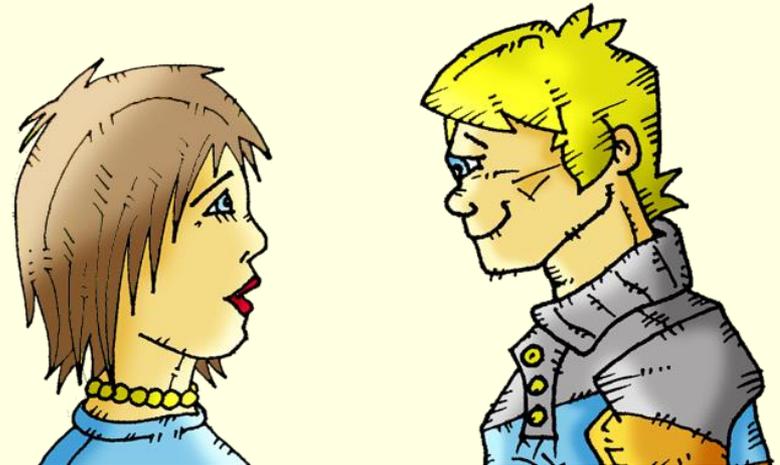
Instead of criticising what you don't want stroke the behaviour you do want

- Try to 'catch your partner doing things right' and say how much you appreciate it, instead of only noticing when they 'get it wrong'.
- 'I noticed you stopped putting your dirty socks in the bread bin. Thank you!'
- And when they do one of those around the house jobs you have asked to be done, make sure they are glad they did!



Developing your empathy skills

Without empathy
there can't be
a good relationship



Empathy & Listening Skills

- Listening skills self-assessment 192
- Defining empathy 193
- How we substitute anger for hurt 196
- Empathy & listening skills development 198
- The Number One behaviour of a good listener 199
- Understanding your partner's point of view 200
- Their information and yours is always incomplete 202
- It's vital to demonstrate that you understand 204
- Don't let your partner not listen 205
- Contracting for a 'Civilised Discussion' 206 - 207
- Uninterrupted speaking time 208
- Stay in the room with your angry partner unless its unsafe 210
- You can't listen and compose your response at the same time 211



Perhaps you are a good listener already?

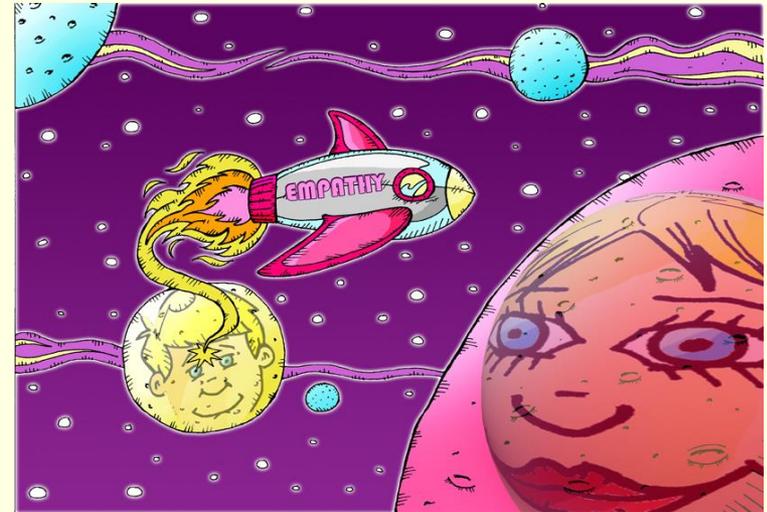


Tick those statements where you can be confident that 'Yes' is you.

1. I am good at giving undivided attention when my partner is talking
2. I don't decide how to respond until my partner has finished speaking
3. I don't switch to my topic until my partner has finished their point
4. I don't interrupt with well intentioned reassurance or comments
5. I ask follow-up questions to encourage my partner to continue talking
6. I try to understand my partner's point of view even when I don't agree
7. When my partner expresses different views to mine,
I try to understand how he/she got to think differently to me
8. My partner they would say that I am a good listener

Defining empathy

- 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.



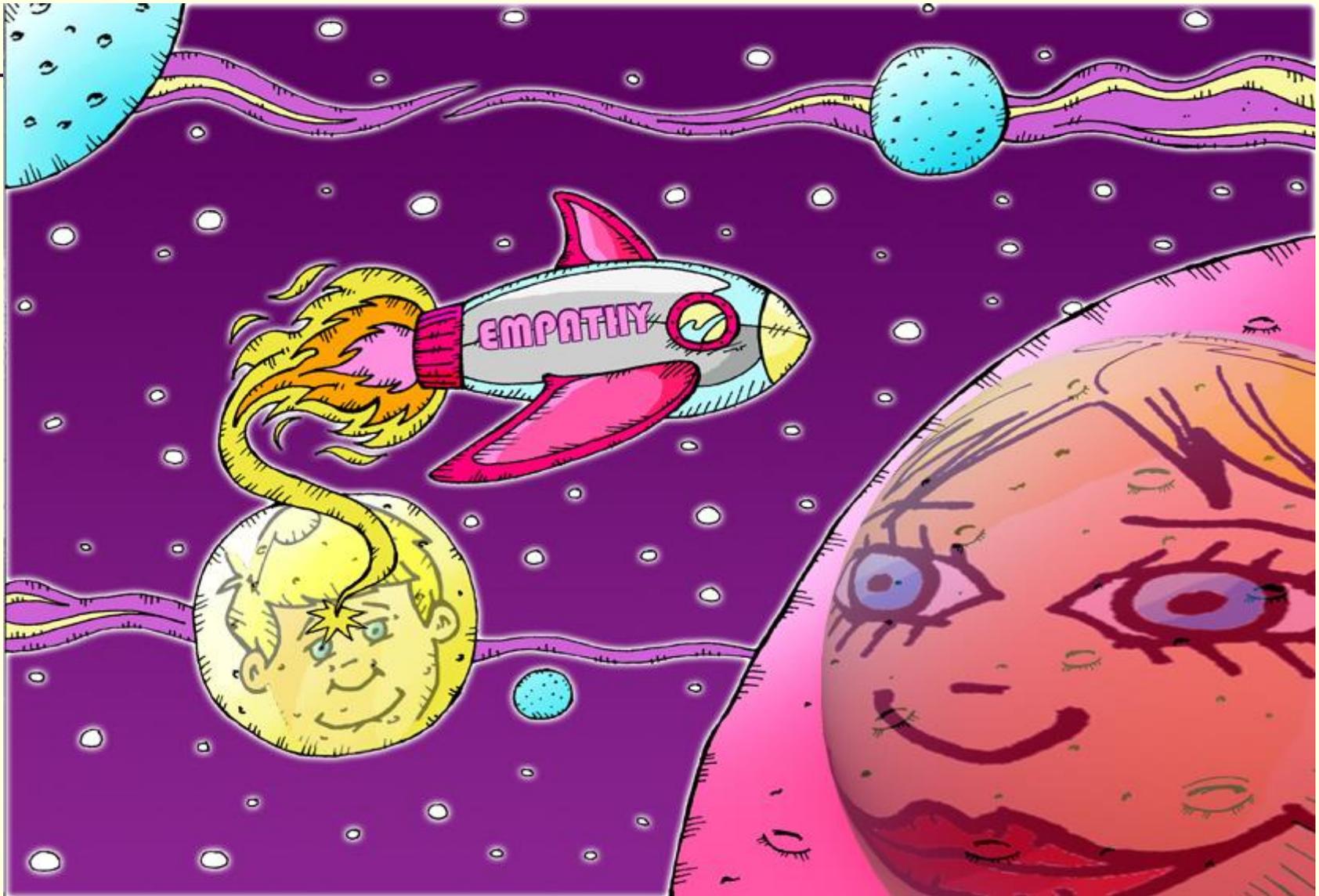
Empathy involves trying to get inside the other person's head, entering their internal world for a while and seeing things as they see them.

Empathy is how we travel between our world and the other person's world

- We are not on the same planet as anyone else [70 - 85] pages . We are each in a world of our own construction, resulting from our own unique personal development path in life.
- We each have a unique way of looking at things and experiencing things.
- To understand things from another person's perspective you have to journey to the inside of their head on the 'Empathy Space Probe'.



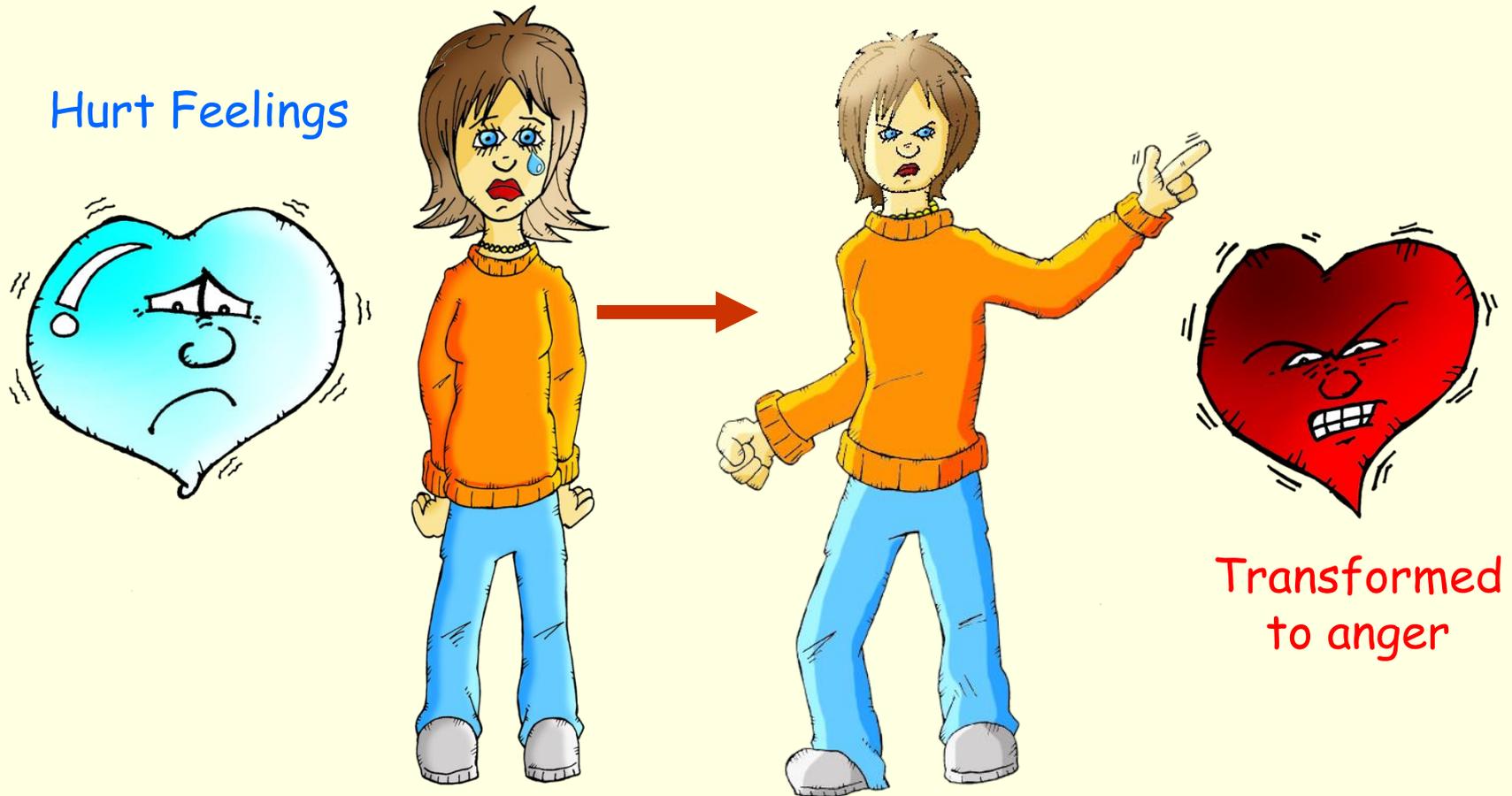
The Empathy Space Probe



When listening, remember how we substitute anger for hurt

- Anger is very often the emotion we unconsciously substitute when we are hurt, jealous, feeling anxious, frustrated or resentful.
- Often hurt is the authentic emotion, the 'real' emotion but, instead of feeling sad, we feel angry.
- Sometimes it works the other way round. Some people who 'don't do anger' cry when the authentic underlying emotion is anger.
- It can be very helpful to think about what hurt may be underlying the anger of others towards us [or our own anger towards others]. Then we can respond more appropriately by focusing on healing the hurt.

Look for the feeling behind the anger and respond to that - not the anger



Empathy and listening skills development starts with the right attitude

An empathic attitude.....

'Even though I may never see what happened the way you do, I want to understand your perspective - understand what you are thinking, how you are feeling and why you reacted in the way you did'

An empathy seeking attitude will also be evident in your tone!

Listen to yourself. Do you sound as though you want to understand? Or is there anger, frustration, criticism in your voice?

Occasionally, I have said to couples, 'You say you love each other, but there is no love in the way you talk to each other'. When they soften their tone the atmosphere in the therapy room changes too!



The number one behaviour of a good listener is.....?

Two men were standing at a bar having a pint. One was talking non-stop while the other listened intently, occasionally asking a question.

The listener finished his pint first, said 'cheerio' to the talker and left. The talker asked the barman, 'Who was that?'

'No idea', said the barman, 'Never been in here before!'

Why do you ask?' 'Fantastic conversationalist', said the talker.

All the 'fantastic conversationalist' had done was listen intently and let his interest show by asking questions! He was not 'on standby', bored [and boring] mode. He was actively listening, which took concentration and energy, and encouraged the talker to talk. He never said anything about himself!



Understanding your partner's point of view

.....become them for a while.

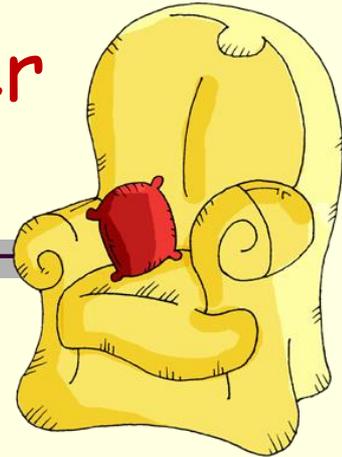
All you need is another chair, an interest in understanding your partners point of view and the place to yourself.

- Sit in the other chair and become your partner for a while.
- Explain things out loud, as you think they might explain them.
- When you return to your chair, spend a little time thinking what they need from you based on what you have heard yourself say.
- If you realise that your behaviour has been unhelpful, decide what, if anything, you are going to do about it.



Suspend
scepticism -
try it.
You may be
surprised how
much two chair
work can change
perspectives by
giving you
empathic insight

Swap places with your partner for empathy building

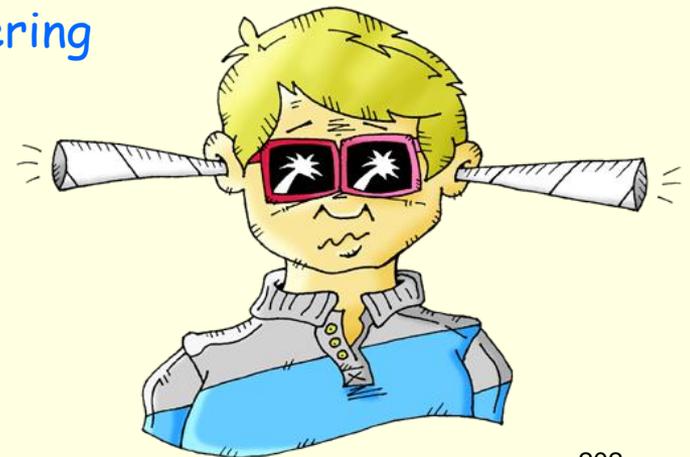


A really good way of building empathy is to swap places and talk as each other.

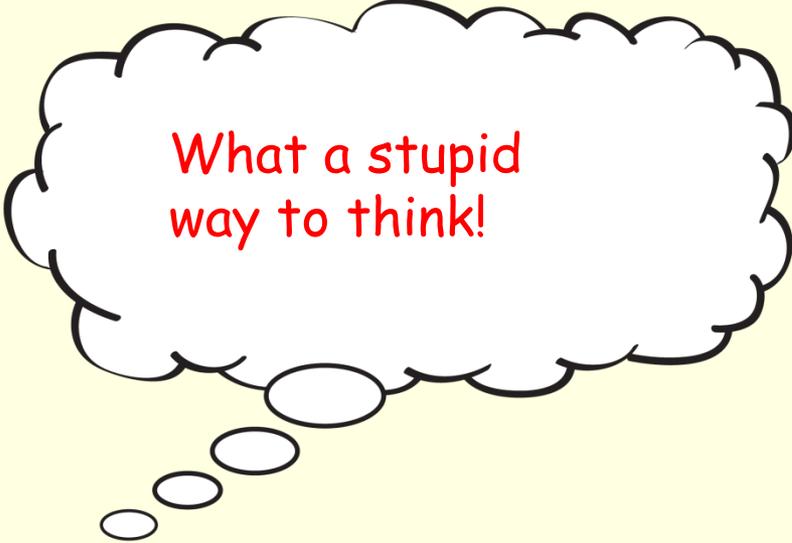
- In couples counselling I will sometimes ask the couple to swap chairs and speak from their partner's perspective. They initially find this difficult as they may previously have made little attempt to see things from their partner's perspective. Now they find themselves having to focus totally on understanding their partner's point of view so they can express it.
- Sometimes I ask the client to become their absent partner and I interview them. I well remember a male client who was very angry with his wife's behaviour towards him. In mid-interview with him playing his wife, he stopped, burst into tears and said, 'I have really failed to support her, haven't I? No wonder she is being the way she is'.

Their information and yours is always incomplete and different in some ways

- When you can't understand someone's point of view, remember, there is always an information gap between you.
- Ask yourself:
 - 'How did they get to think that way?'
 - 'What might they be taking into account that I don't know?'
 - 'What am I taking into account that they might not know?'
- Two people arguing are never both considering the same 'facts', because 'facts' are often an opinion, an opinion based on filtered and biased recollection of incomplete information. [pages 91 - 97]

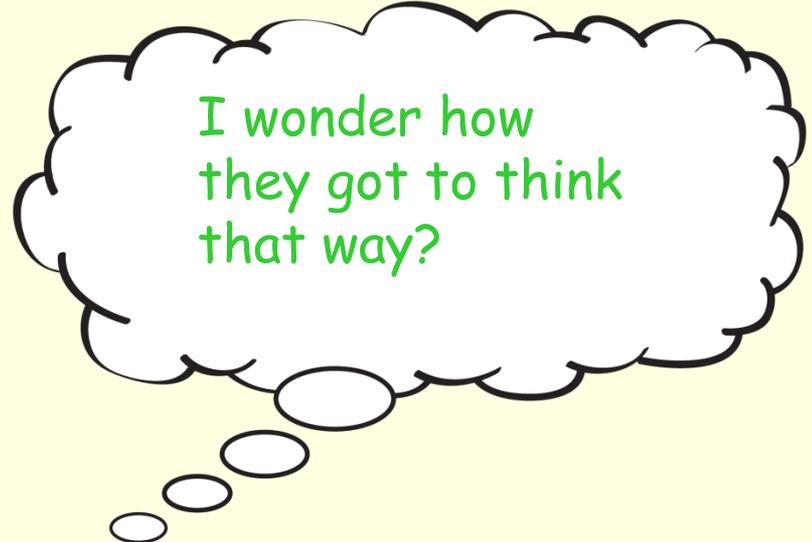


What are they taking into account that you aren't?

A white thought bubble with a black outline and three smaller circles leading to it from the bottom left. The text inside is in red.

What a stupid way to think!

JUDGEMENTAL

A white thought bubble with a black outline and three smaller circles leading to it from the bottom left. The text inside is in green.

I wonder how they got to think that way?

EMPATHIC

It's vital to demonstrate that you understand

- Until someone who is angry or hurt feels heard, they are deaf to reason. If you want to calm the other person and get your own point across, you are not only going to have to listen carefully, but also show that you heard, really heard, and understand how they are feeling.
- This can be achieved by playing back to the person what they have told you.
'So you are angry because I.....'
'You are feeling hurt because I.....'
- The link to read more about listening skills is on Page 420

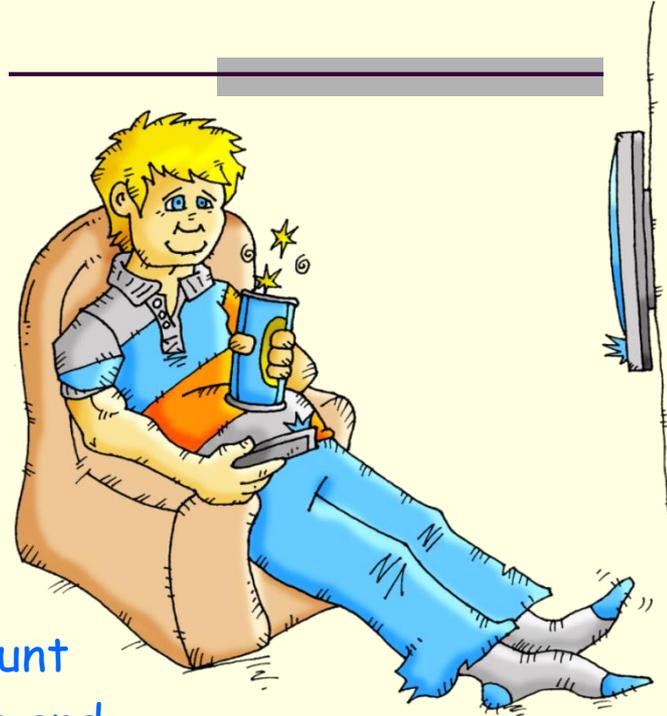
I don't agree with her, but how can I show her I understand?



Demonstrating that you understand how the other person feels is an essential and often overlooked aspect of good listening.

Don't let your partner not listen

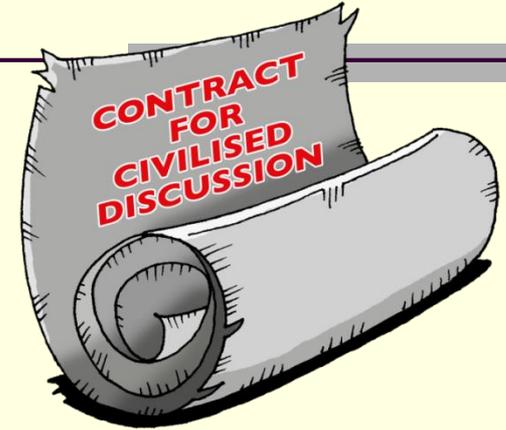
- Set aside dedicated talking time. This could take the form of a 'Civilised Discussion' [next page]
- Some struggling couples have regular progress review sessions.
- Don't carry on talking when it's obvious that your partner isn't listening. Be assertive. Confront auto-nod and auto-grunt behaviour by stopping talking in mid-sentence and holding silence until your partners notices.
- Stop talking if your partner is making notes, wait until you have their full attention again.



The right attitude is key to effective listening -
wanting to understand

Contracting for a 'Civilised Discussion'

- As you well know, when communication has broken down it becomes impossible to discuss issues without rapidly spiralling into Uproar [page 65], or some other game.
- A 'Contract for a Civilised Discussion' [next] is one way of trying to discuss things calmly.
- The 'contract' should have a '**TIME OUT**' clause. This allows either party to withdraw from the discussion, by prior agreement, for a period of minutes, hours, even days.
- When '**TIME OUT**' is used, it's conditional on the party requesting the '**TIME OUT**' to agree when the discussion is to be continued. It must not be used to avoid discussing issues, only to allow a cooling off period.



A 'Civilised Discussion' can be used to help you decide about Couples Counselling. Don't pile all the blame on your partner for needing counselling. It's about 'our problems' and 'helping us'.



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

1. The issues for discussion agreed in advance. No other issues allowed.
2. Location is a place where you can be alone and will not be interrupted.
3. TV and mobiles switched off. House line ignored if it rings.
4. No abuse or shouting. Prohibited 'wind up' words agreed. [page 246]
5. Both remain seated throughout.
6. Have a '**TIME OUT**' agreement [page 206].
7. Agree the 'Uninterrupted speaking time' length [page 208 - 209]
8. Try to avoid criticising by avoiding the 'you' word. Stick to how you are **feeling** without blaming your partner for how you are feeling. e.g. 'I feel angry with you' is OK, but 'You make me angry!' is a criticism and will be defended.

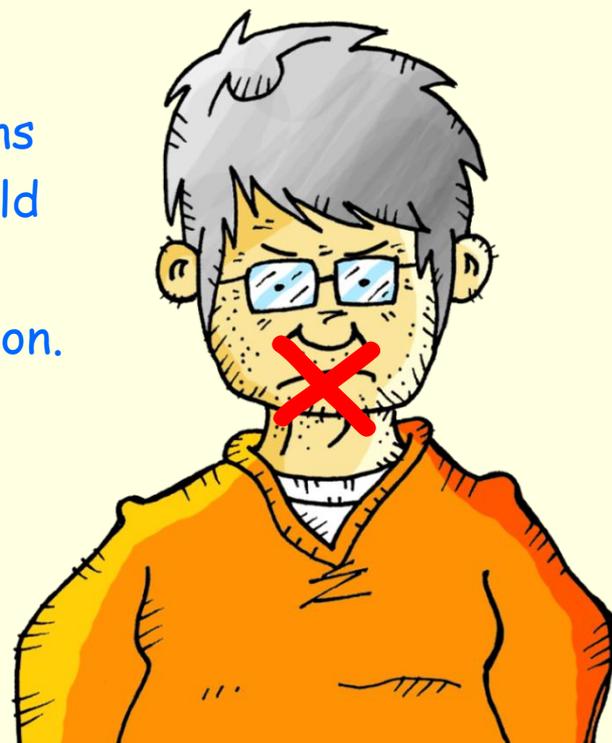
Watch out for your paranoid filter! [pages 91 - 97]. Check it out.

If you feel criticised, say so and ask 'Is that what you meant?'

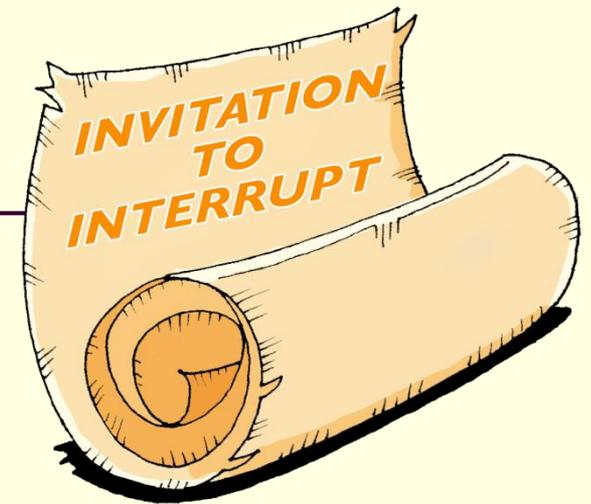
Or simply ask 'What do you mean?'

Uninterrupted speaking time

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



Don't invite interruption



The biggest problem with an uninterrupted speaking time agreement is that the speaker cannot resist inviting interruption.

This is what happens:

1. Person A has started their agreed five minutes uninterrupted speaking time when Person B pulls a face or shakes their head at something which has been said.
2. Person A cannot resist - 'What, why are you shaking your head, you know what I am saying is right!'
3. Person B accepts the invitation, responds to the question, and starts off on their own stuff. Uninterrupted speaking time has broken down!

Expect your partner's body language to signal disagreement with what you are saying: don't let it throw you off track: finish what you want to say.

Unless it's unsafe, stay in the room with your angry partner

- Take care before deciding to walk out of the room when your partner is angry.
- **When someone is angry their need is to feel heard.** Leaving the room can increase their frustration level and may provoke more extreme behaviour.
- It's a really good idea to allow a cooling off period with an agreed 'time out' [page 206], but leaving the room when it's not OK with the other person for you to walk away can be really frustrating for them and increase the spiral of anger.
- Use listening skills to convince your partner that you are hearing and trying to understand what they are angry about.



You can't listen and compose your response at the same time!

- A big block to effective listening is thinking about your response while your partner is still talking.
- Thinking that you will forget something you want to say in response may be a big problem too.
- If these are problems for you, have a pen and paper handy and jot down bullet points to remind you what to come back to.
- Make sure you understand the way they are feeling by asking follow-up questions. Think about your response only when you are clear why your partner is feeling the way they do.

Yes, but.....



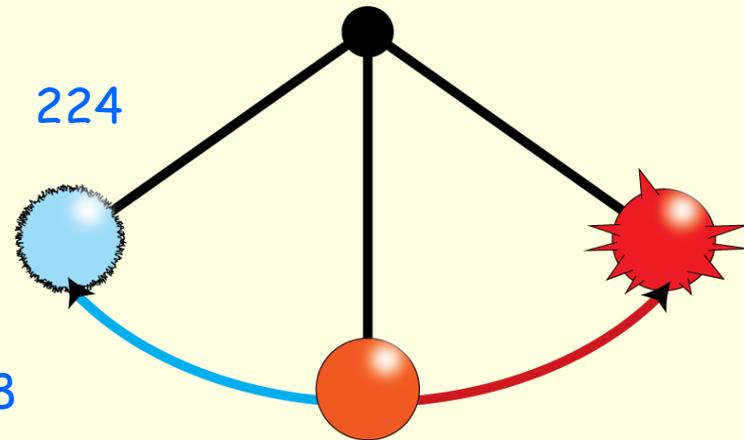
Developing your assertiveness is essential - because passivity is a threat



In working with couples,
I find that a root cause
of their problems can
sometimes be passivity,
lack of assertiveness,
by either or both
partners.

Assertiveness is essential: passivity can be a recipe for relationship breakdown

- Why passivity can be a recipe for relationship breakdown Page 214
- Difficulties caused by passivity 218
- The passive to aggressive pendulum 219
- Seven causes of lack of assertiveness 221
- A definition of assertiveness 222
- How to be assertive 223
- How assertive are you? Self-assessment 224
- Handling criticism assertively 225
- Assertively expressing how you feel and what you want 227
- Don't give up - use the stuck record 228
- Eight steps in becoming more assertive 229
- Free additional reading 230



Why passivity can be a recipe for relationship breakdown

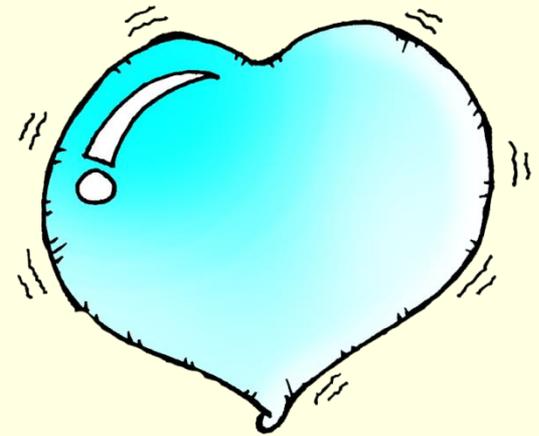
- Aggressive types are usually open about what they are unhappy about - the 'smelly fish', the problem, is on the table - not under it, out of sight.
- In contrast, passive partners tend to bottle up their issues because they don't know how to process them assertively. Problems fester, which often results in passive aggressive behaviour [pages 113 - 116], punctuated occasionally by 'over the top' explosions.
- Sometimes, however, the bottled-up anger simply results in the shutting down of loving feelings.



Assertiveness is often best, but it's also important to be able to let your anger show when justified [and safe!]

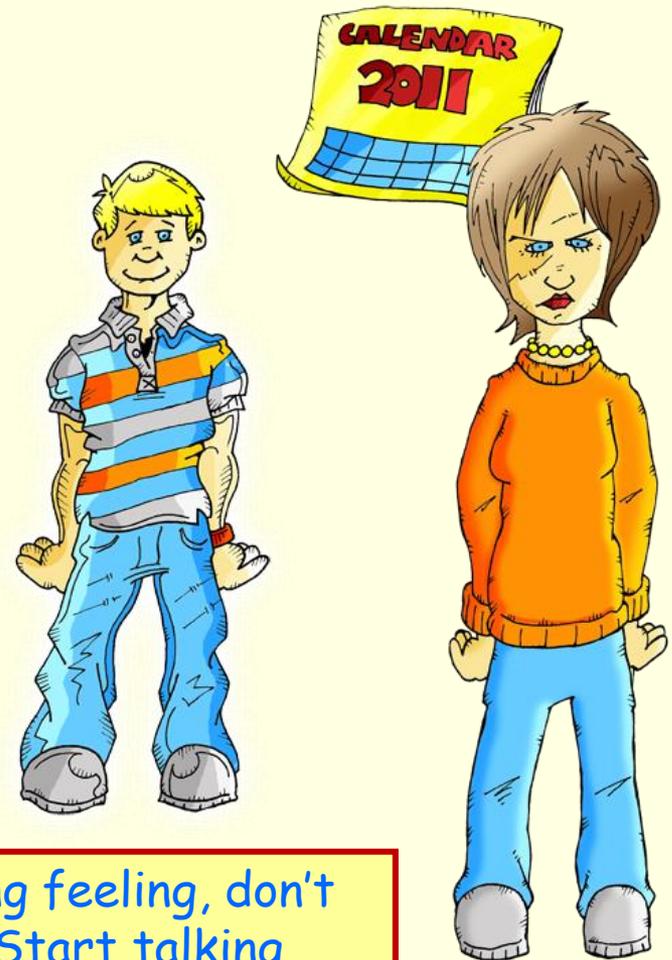
Passivity can result in the slow death of a relationship

- A passive person in a relationship will tend to be dominated by their partner. The passive partner does not strongly express the dissatisfaction they may have with the relationship or gives up when they don't get quick resolution of the issues.
- Issues are not put to rest and accumulate as a collection of internal anger and hurt stamps [page 57] which act initially as a coolant on the relationship. The coolant effect of the anger and hurt stamps can eventually lead to a numbing out, a shutting down, of loving feelings by the passive partner.
- Passivity can be like putting your heart in a bucket of ice cold water! After a while, the pain and cold is replaced by numbness.



Lost that loving feeling? Unexpressed issues may be the cause

- Often the passive person who has lost that loving feeling can't explain why they have fallen out of love. They only know that they don't feel for their partner the way they used to.
- In therapy, the passive person who has shut down can be surprised to discover that the problem is accumulated anger and hurt. They may say 'But I don't 'do' anger', to which my reply is normally, 'I know, that may be the problem'

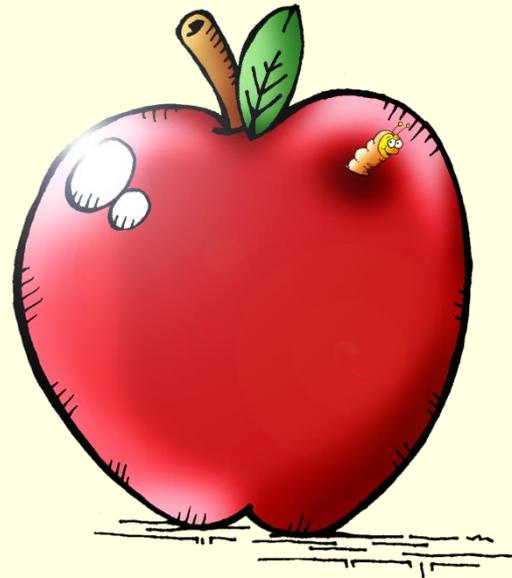


If you think that you have lost that loving feeling, don't despair - it may only be in the fridge. Start talking [pages 206 - 207] or get professional help.

Maybe your partner is not as flawless as you thought they were

Maybe it's turned out that your partner is not as flawless as you thought they were when you first got together, but perhaps they are still worthy of your love? **Not perfect, but good enough?**

It would be good to try to get the issues sorted ASAP, before they freeze the relationship to death.



Difficulties caused by passivity

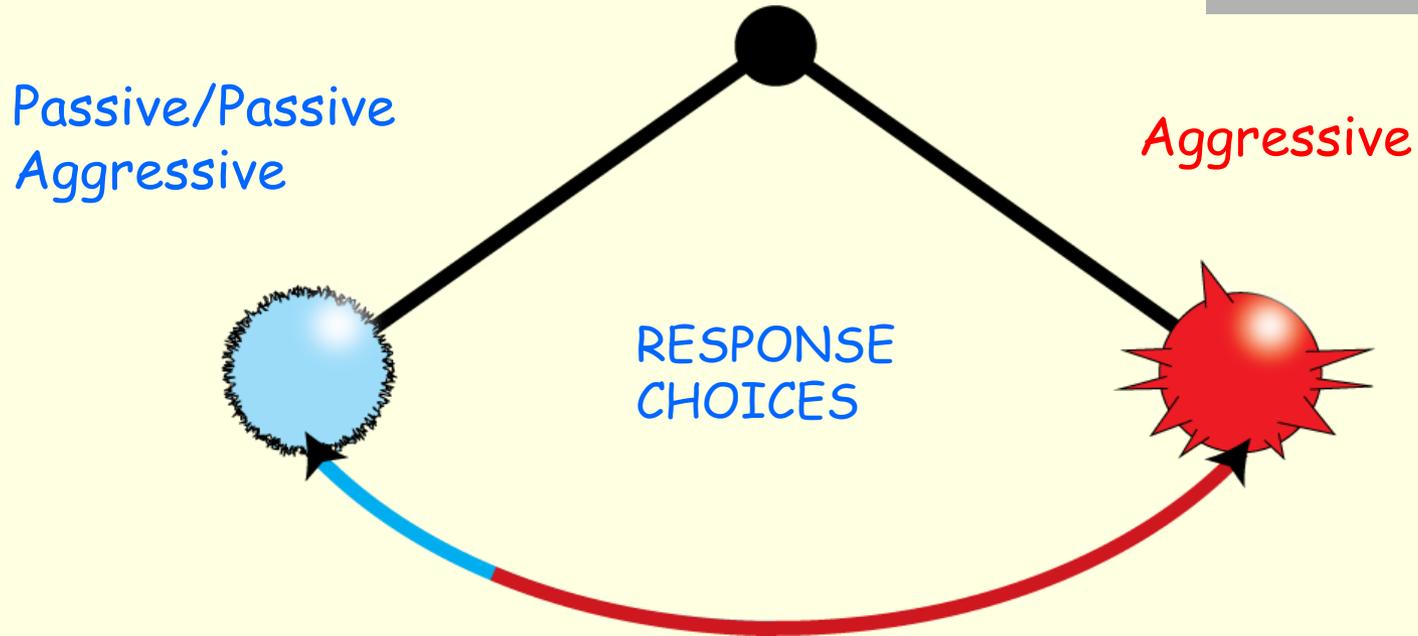
What happens when someone who is a passive type feels angry?

- Lack of assertiveness means that there are only two choices about how to deal with issues - either passive/passive aggressively or aggressively.
- Passive aggressive behaviour [pages 113 - 116] is often stubborn, rebellious or deliberately hurtful. The behaviour may range from deliberately doing things to 'wind up' the other person, including withholding affection and refusing to discuss what is upsetting them. Passive aggression is very damaging to relationships: it does nothing to solve the problems and makes matters worse.



Passive aggression comes mainly from Child Ego State [page 46]

The Passive to Aggressive Pendulum

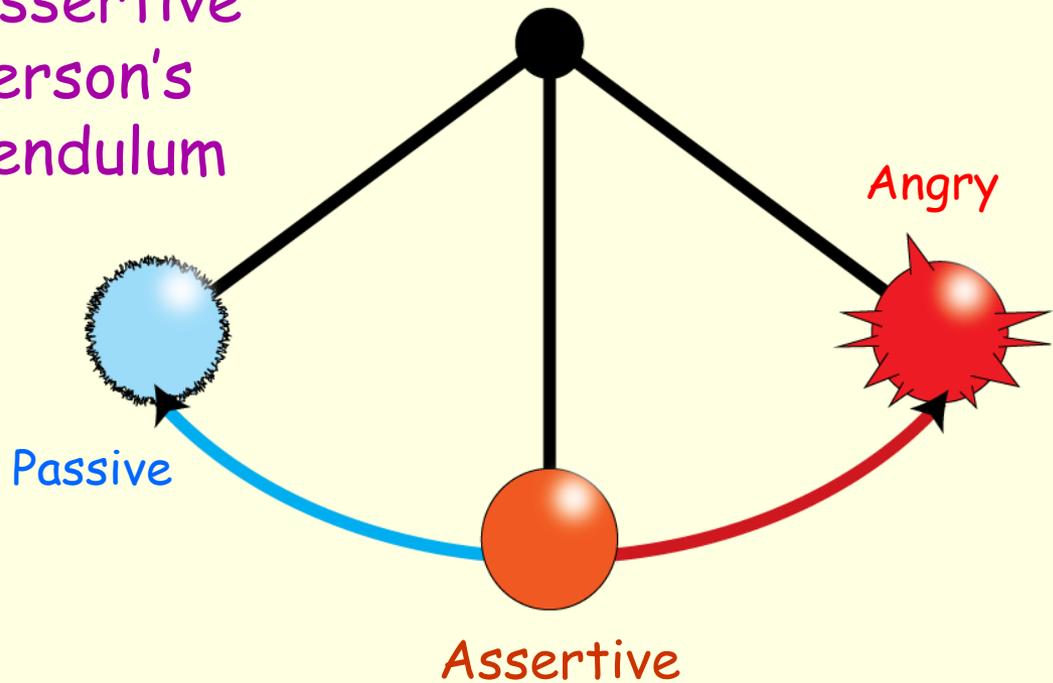


Passive people are often nursing deep unexpressed anger which they keep bottled up. Occasionally something will 'push them over the edge', which results in a rage and amazes their family, friends or colleagues at work, who are seeing an aspect of the person which seems totally out of character.

Couples need to learn to discuss issues assertively and without anger

It's your assertive right to also be passive sometimes, even angry when appropriate.

Assertive person's pendulum



Notice that when you are assertive you don't need to be passive aggressive. Assertiveness also means you can CHOOSE an appropriate response, passive, assertive or angry, depending on the situation.

Seven causes of lack of assertiveness

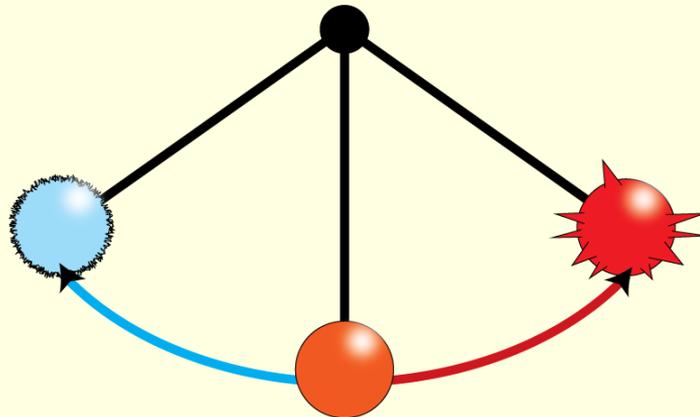
1. Fear of conflict or upsetting the other person
2. Justifiable safety fears around the other person's reaction
3. Underdeveloped assertiveness skills. Not knowing how to 'do' assertiveness [due to lack of practise in the past!]
4. Fear of embarrassment/rejection
5. Passive [or Passive Aggressive] personality type
6. Indecisiveness/not knowing what they want
7. Resignation - the person has given up trying to get what they want

Overcoming passivity is difficult and may need professional help, particularly if the cause is fear of conflict or fear of failure to please.

A definition of assertiveness

Assertiveness is:-

- Saying how you feel and what you think, in a non-aggressive way.
- Asking simply and clearly for what you want.
- Knowing what you want so you can ask for it.
- Enquiring when you are not sure what someone is thinking or feeling.
- Checking out what was meant before reacting.



Once you have learned how to be assertive, you're no longer stuck with the extremes of passive or aggressive responding.

How to be assertive [when it's safe to be open]

- Know What you want so you can ask for it
- Ask Simply and clearly for what you want
- Say How you feel and what you think in a firm but courteous way
- Say 'No' To what you don't want
- Stay calm Don't attack or blame
- Keep The focus on yourself - start sentences with 'I' not 'You'.
- Enquire When you are not sure what someone is thinking or feeling
- Check out What was meant before reacting





How assertive are you? Self-assessment

Tick the boxes which are you:

- I have no problem in asking for what I want and saying how I feel
- I don't let myself be put on: I say 'NO' when I want to say 'NO'
- I am comfortable giving my opinion and taking risks in being open
- I am usually clear about what I want
- I like to take the lead

If you can tick all five boxes and honestly say that you are not an aggressive person, then you are probably assertive enough!

The link to read more about assertiveness is on Page 420



Handling criticism assertively

The key to handling criticism assertively is to resist an immediate angry or hurt response. Use the Impulse Control Technique [page 375].

- A. Change your breathing
- B. Stay calm
- C. Decide how to react A, B or C

Preferably choose C1, C2 or C3.
Consult a trustworthy friend who can be relied on for sensible advice.

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. [page 411]

Choice C2 - let it go for now - use Anger Release techniques to process angry and hurt feelings later. [page 384]

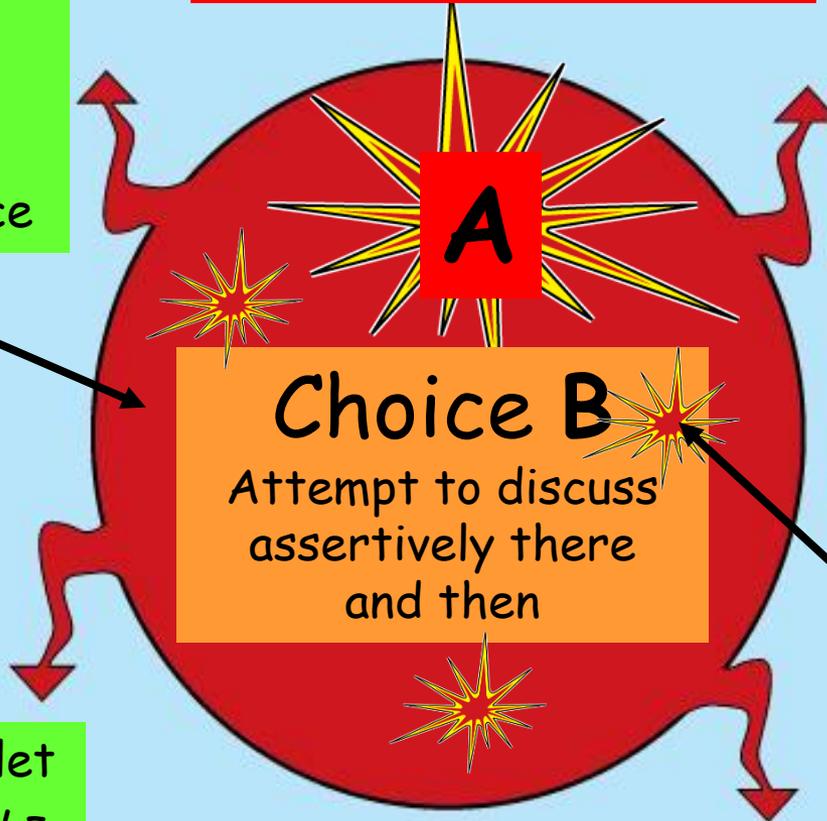
Choice C3 - let it go for now - discuss assertively later.

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 Loose

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 [Usually best!]

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

Assertively expressing how you feel and what you want

The D E S C Method

Describe the situation - stick to the facts as you see them

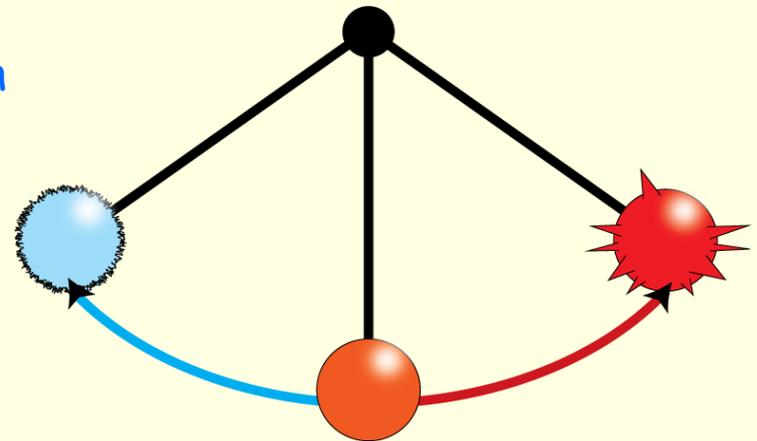
Express your feelings about the situation

Say what you would want to happen

If you don't get the response you want?

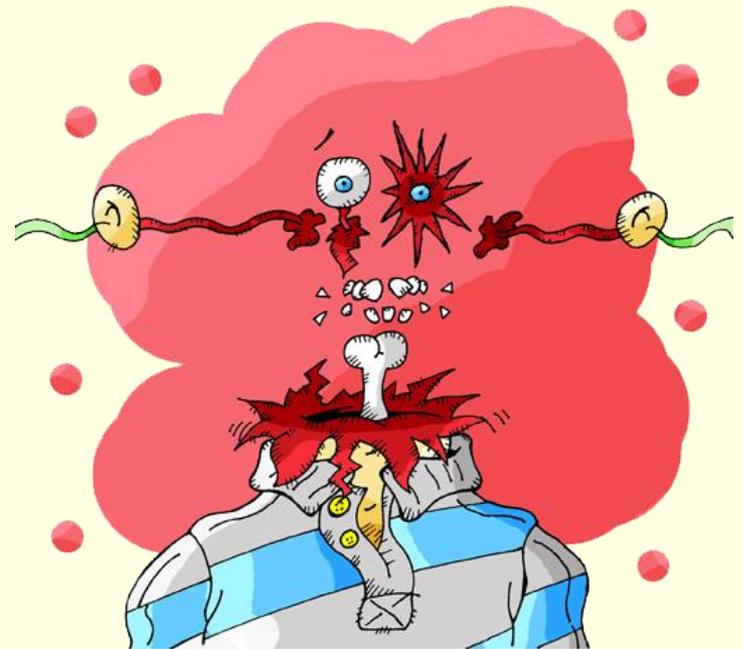
Use the **Stuck Record** [page 228]

C There is also an option to explain to your partner the **consequences** of you not getting what you want. Use the **consequences** option as a last resort and only when the risk of threatening is acceptable.



Don't give up - use the Stuck Record

- Every child knows how to use the Stuck Record!
- As you know, children ask repeatedly for what they want until they get it, or all hope is lost.
- That's what you need to do! Simply keep repeating more or less what you said the first time.
- Keep this up until you get what you want - or until your partner's head explodes.



Eight steps in becoming more assertive

1. Make the decision to be more assertive [essential first step].
2. Make a list of situations in which you intend to be more assertive.
3. Do the reading recommended on the next page.
4. Visualise yourself handling the situations on your list assertively.
5. Practise being assertive initially in low risk situations.
6. When about to be assertive in one of your listed situations, use the Diaphragmatic Breathing technique [pages 306 - 314]
7. Choose one of the situations off your list. and JDI [Just Do It] at the next opportunity.
8. Too scared? Work with a therapist on self confidence and on 'facing your fears' NLP techniques.



Free additional reading

The link to read more about assertiveness is on Page 420

The Chapter 'Difficult Conversations' includes self-help coaching on:

- Preparing for a difficult conversation
- Saying 'NO'
- Saying how you feel and what you want
- Handling criticism

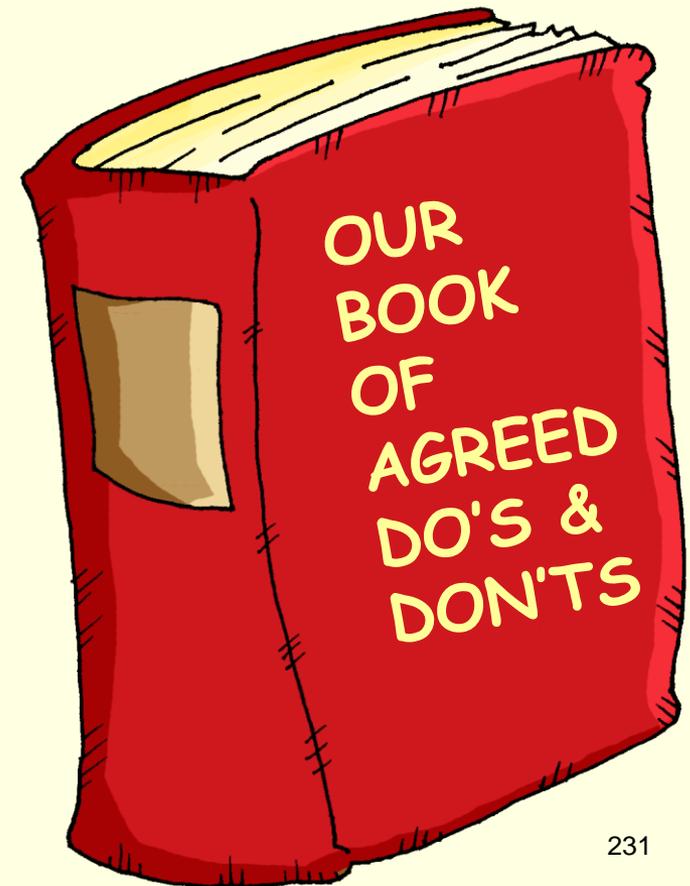
There is also a Chapter:

'How to Become More Self Confident & Assertive'.



Relationship Do's and Don'ts

Observation
of some
agreed do's
and don'ts



Do's & Don'ts

- Do's previously covered 233
- More Do's previously covered 234
- Don't get bogged down in your 'Big Book of Right Ways' 237
- Don't argue about the 'Facts' 239
- Try not to rely on compromise 241
- Try for Win Win solutions 242
- Don't play 'Archaeology' 243
- Don't play 'Uproar' 244
- Ban these 'Uproar' invitation' words 245
- Don't say 'You make me feel.....' 247
- Don't procrastinate - do those little jobs right away 249
- Don't discuss anything you are angry about unless..... 251

Don't
drink
alcohol
when
there are
issues to
discuss
[Page 235]





Do's previously covered

- Accept that you and your partner are in some ways living in different worlds [pages 71 - 87]. You are bound to see some things differently.
- Withdraw Permissions given to yourself to be aggressive [page 339]
- Learn to use the 'Not Now' Impulse Control Technique [page 375]
- Develop your empathy and listening skills: remember - empathy does not necessarily mean agreeing, it means understanding [page 190]
- Look for, and respond to, the hurt which lies behind anger [page 196]
- Learn to be assertive [page 212] and avoid collecting anger stamps by 'bottling things up' [page 57]
- Separate your partner from his/her behaviour.
Good person: bad behaviour or bad person? [pages 52 - 56]



More Do's previously covered

Contract for change.
Start by agreeing that you both need to change in some ways if the relationship is to improve [page 68]

Ask yourself - do I want this person to love me and care about me? If so, am I behaving in a way that will achieve it?
[page 90]



Identify your contribution to what is going wrong
[page 174]

Schedule some leisure time alone together - however difficult. Make it happen. Defend it against all competing bids
[page 167]

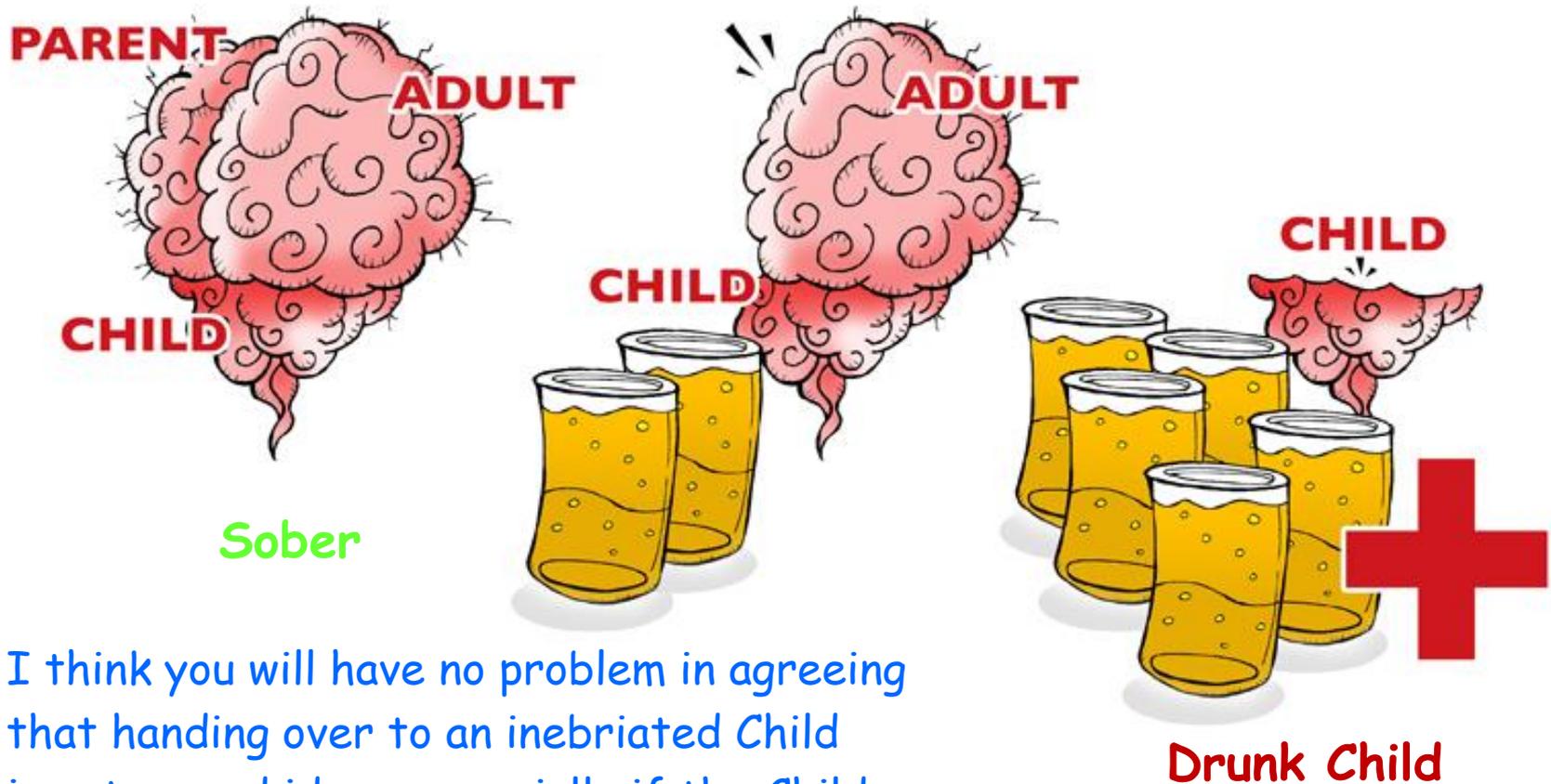
Don't drink alcohol when there are issues to discuss

- Excess alcohol switches off the Adult Ego State [page 44] without which Impulse Control techniques [page 375] are not available.
- Excess alcohol can often let loose a hurt and angry Child [page 46] or destructive Critical Parent [pages 39 - 43].
- The first couple of drinks may switch off the Critical and Controlling Parent in your head. Temporary freedom from those guilt-inducing shoulds and shouldn'ts, musts and mustn'ts and other critical and controlling messages - what joy!

However....



.....if you drink too much you may switch off your Adult Ego State and be left with a drunken Child or Critical Parent in charge of your behaviour

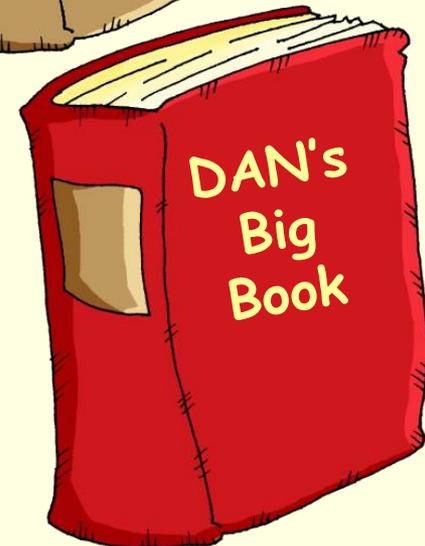
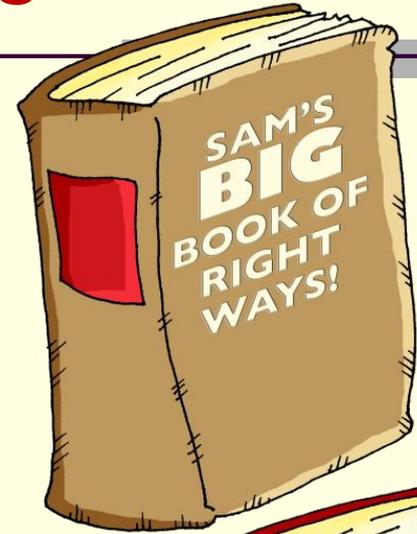


I think you will have no problem in agreeing that handing over to an inebriated Child is not a good idea - especially if the Child has a collection of Anger Stamps [Page 57]

Don't get bogged down in your 'Big Book of Right Ways'

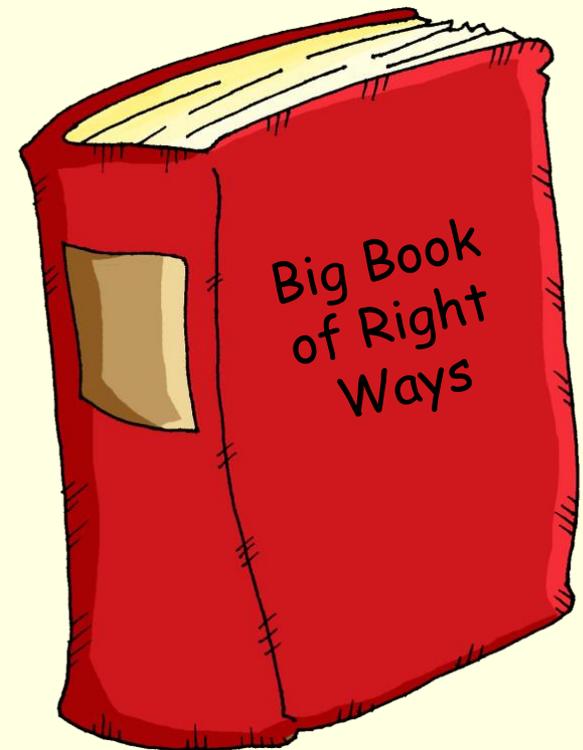
If you have decided to make a mission out of getting your partner to re-write part of their 'Big Book of Right & Only Ways' [page 87] and replace it with amendments from yours, you are in for a struggle. I suggest that you:-

- Decide to be tolerant and live with differences which are low on your 0 - 10 scale [page 411].
- Contract for a 'Civilised Discussion' [page 206] on 'Big Book' amendments high on your 0 - 10 scale.
- Try to understand why their 'Big Book' disagrees with yours. How did they get to think the way they do? How has your life experience led to different ways of thinking?



Modifying the contents of your 'Big Book of Right Ways'

- Adult life experience and growing self-awareness helps us change some of our beliefs about ourselves, others and the world.
- For example, we may rid ourselves of some prejudices, collect new ones and develop positive ways of thinking about ourselves which replace old self-limiting beliefs.
- Changing unhelpful aspects of our 'Map of the World' [page 82] and the 'Script' for life [page 83] we have developed in response, is a prime aim in counselling and psychotherapy.





Don't argue about the 'Facts'

- When your partner's version of what happened is different to yours, they may be lying to win the argument, but it's quite possible that they are simply recalling things differently and believe what they are saying.
- This is because we unconsciously distort what happens, selectively filter information, believe what fits for us, see what we expect to see and fill in missing bits [pages 91 - 97].
- The 'reality' we remember sometimes finishes up very different to the 'reality' our partner remembers.

In my work with couples, I sometimes have to invite them to accept that they have experienced and remember things differently. I get them to concentrate on what needs to happen to move forward, rather than keep trying to convince each other about the 'correct' version.

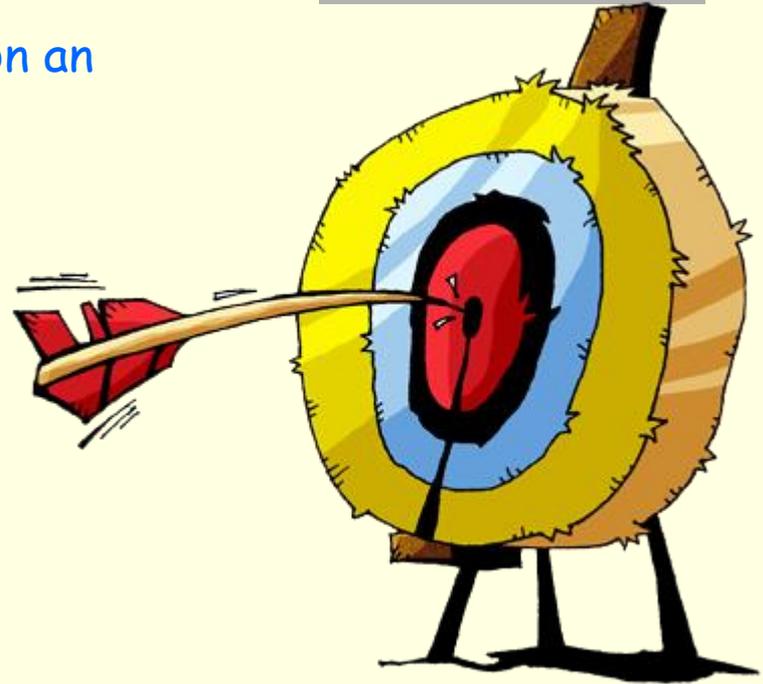
If you can't agree about something, agree to disagree and move on

- Don't try to win arguments: a relationship isn't a tennis match, it's a life journey together. Winners make losers. Losers look for chances to get even.
- Arguing usually doesn't usually change anything for the better. Each person strengthens their attack/defence as they try to win. Both finish up even more convinced than ever that they are right and even more afraid to lose face after arguing so strongly.
- Trying to get someone to change their position by arguing is like trying to get a sharp stick out of the ground by pushing down on it! It just gets more embedded.



Try not to rely on compromise

- If you hold on to conflicting positions on an issue, you are stuck.....
..... but compromise is when one or both parties give up something they want in return for something else.
- With compromise, one or both parties may finish up feeling short-changed.
- Your aim should be to find a solution where both of you get an acceptable alternative which you both feel OK about. This is the **Win Win** approach which mediators search for.



Try for Win Win solutions

- With a **Win Win** solution, either or both of you give up something you want in return for something else you want.
- If you can't agree to something your partner wants, what else can you offer as a consolation?
- What can your partner offer you in return if you give up something you want?

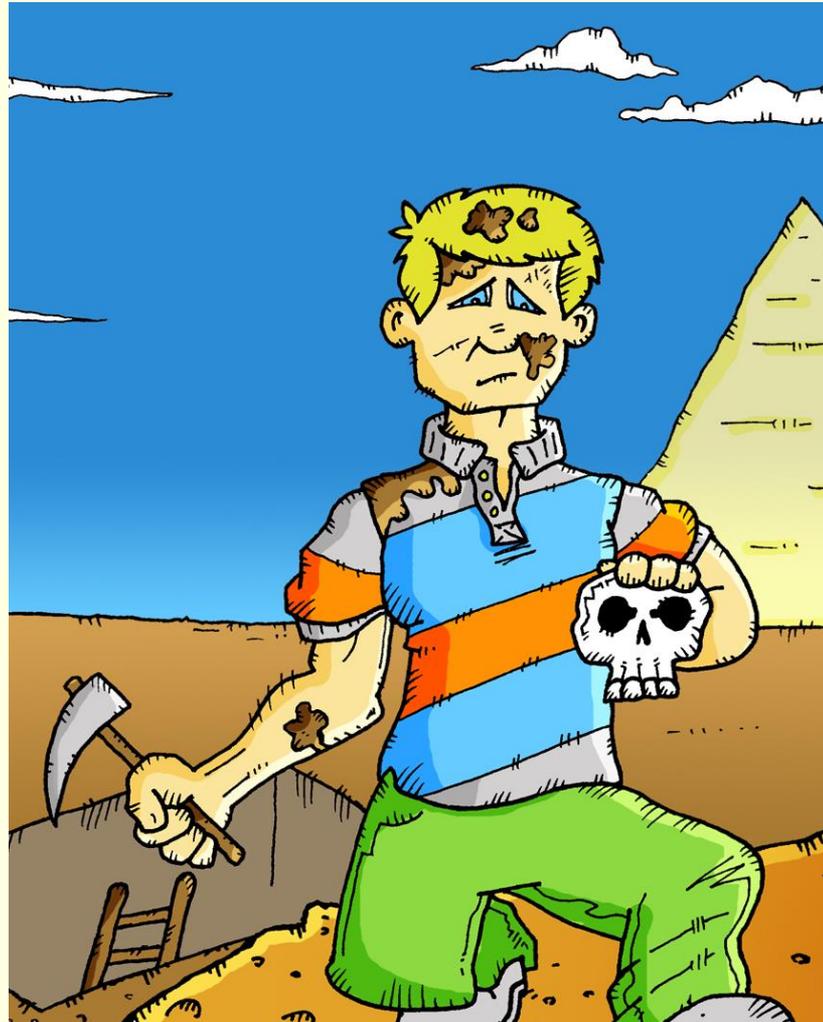


Mediation is all about finding Win Win solutions. If you would like to know more about mediation techniques please use the link on Page 420

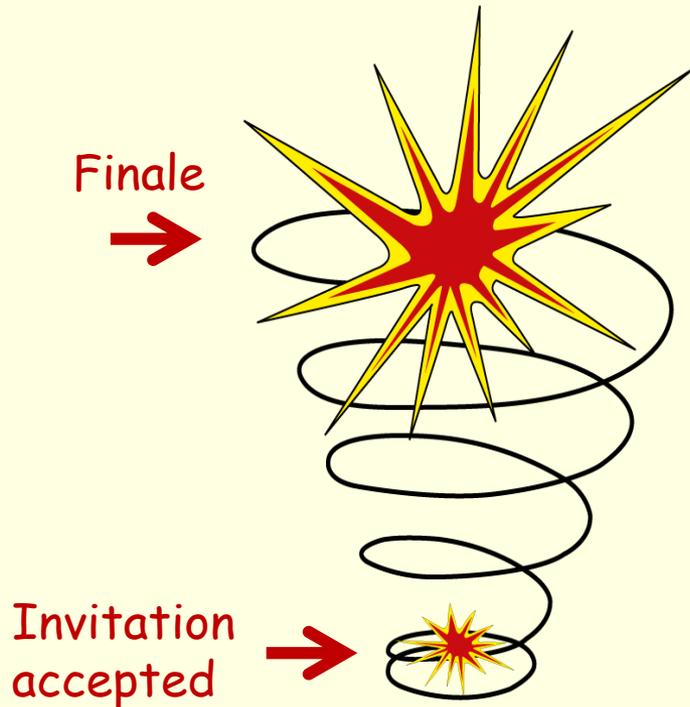
Don't play archaeology [See page 168]

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



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]

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.



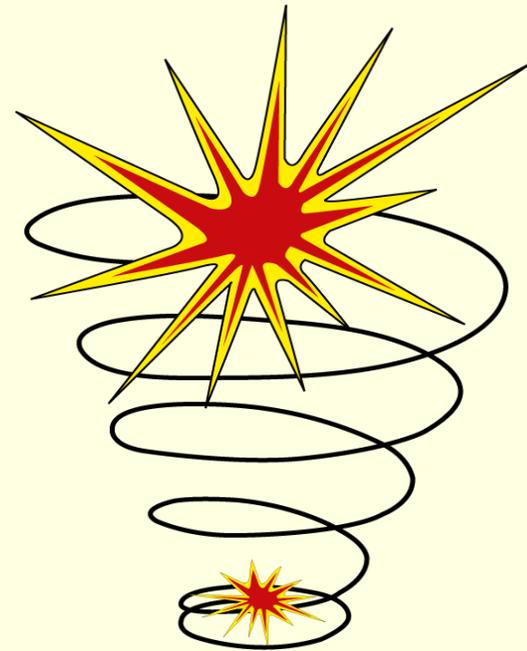
These 'special words' keep relationships in a blaming loop which blocks constructive communication.

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

Don't say 'You make me feel.....'

- Don't say, 'You make me[angry, sad, sickwhatever]'.
This is an accusation and will be defended. It's safer to express your feelings assertively. Say instead, 'I feel[angry/sad/upset]'.
- Nobody can disagree with how you are feeling! They can't say, 'No you don't', can they?
- Also, as you may have found out, something else capable of drawing a strong reaction is - mind reading, telling your partner what they are thinking.
'I know what you're thinking - you're thinking.....'
- Even if you are right, you have said something which is easy to dispute and which often causes irritation.



Don't procrastinate - do those little jobs around the house right away

- You may think this is a trivial point!? Believe me, it isn't! Time after time, in my work with couples, procrastination by the male partner in doing chores and tackling DIY jobs around the house has been a major issue.
- The female partner often interprets this as proof that her partner doesn't care for her.
- 'If he cared for me he would get on and do these things'. 'It would be one way of showing that he loves me!'
- For her it's like having a stone in her shoe. It gets more and more irritating until it's removed.



Don't procrastinate or resist just because your priorities are different

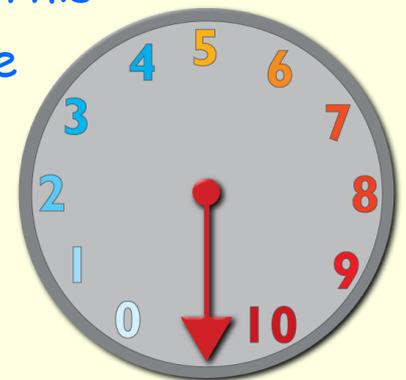
- **True story:** She thought the shrub in front of the kitchen window had grown too big. She had never liked it anyway! Now it was restricting her view of the garden. She wanted the shrub cut back. This was man's work!
- He didn't see it as a high priority and had not responded for over a year to her asking him to prune the shrub. Nor would he agree for her to get someone in to prune it because it was 'On my list to do' and 'We can't afford it'.
- In her shoes, you or I might have taken decisive assertive action and got someone in anyway! However she was passive and just kept resenting more and more, his lack of response.

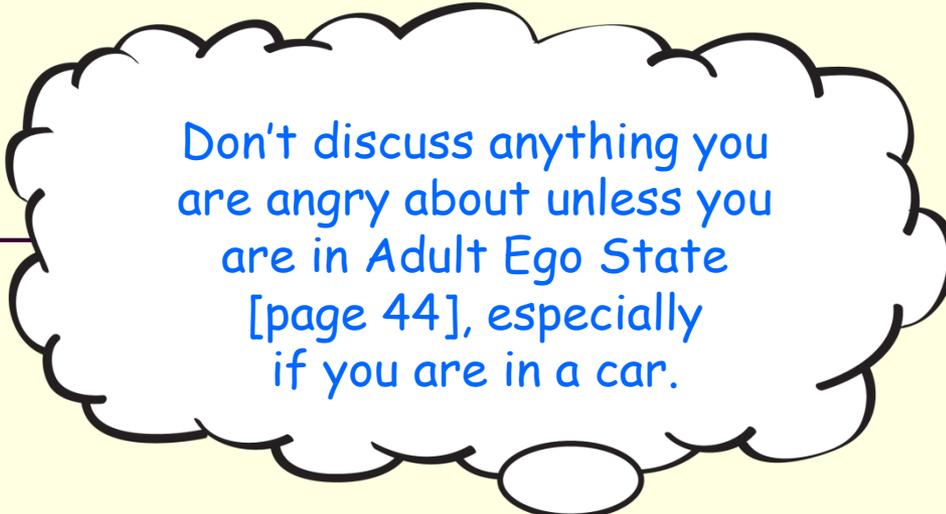
When your partners priorities should dictate

When the couple came to see me they had some really deep issues, but the fact that he was procrastinating about her obstructed view from the kitchen window meant the issue had festered up to an 8 out of 10 on her Scale of Importance [Page 367]

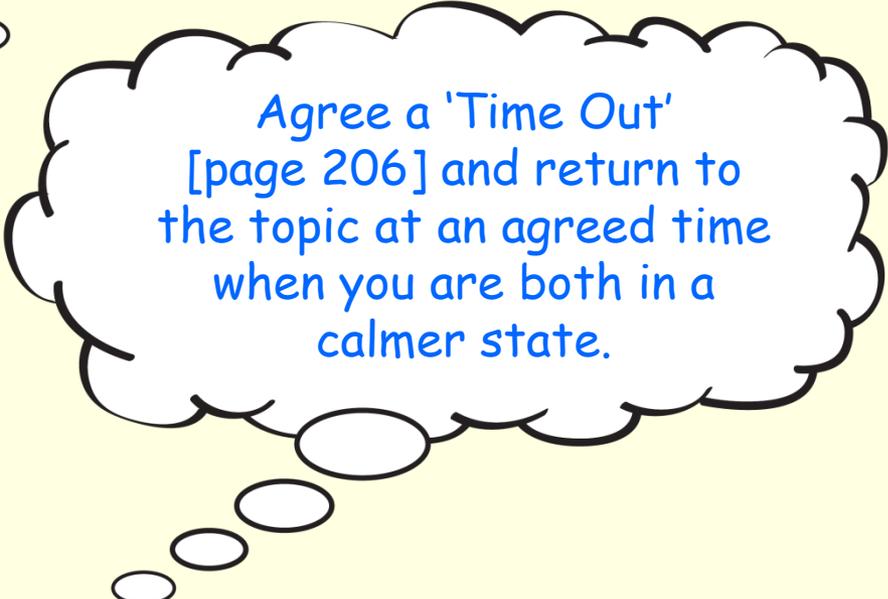
She was citing it as evidence of his lack of commitment to the relationship and his lack of care for her. It was clear that he couldn't see what all the fuss was about and the score on his Scale Of Importance was 1 or 2. He was letting his score [and his lack of empathy] decide his priorities.

The principle is: If what your partner wants is high on their Scale of Importance but not important to you, give in, shut up and get on with it! **JDI - Just Do It.**





Don't discuss anything you are angry about unless you are in Adult Ego State [page 44], especially if you are in a car.

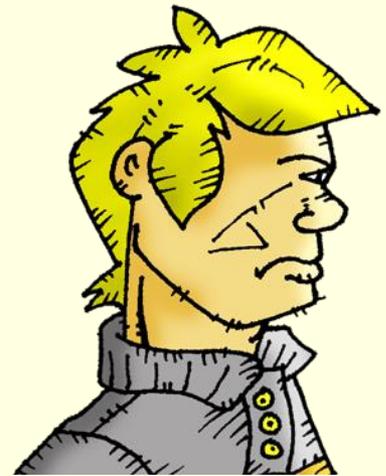
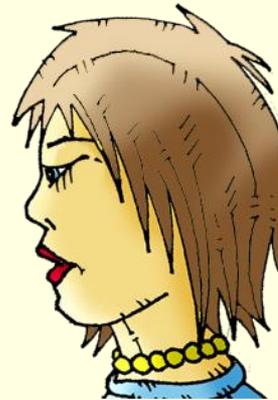


Agree a 'Time Out' [page 206] and return to the topic at an agreed time when you are both in a calmer state.



Other relationship problems regularly brought by my clients

Coping with
some of the
most common
problems



Other problems brought by my clients

[See page 8 for the most common problems brought by my clients]

- A partner who is verbally abusive 254
- Jealousy & what to do about it 255
 - Rational Jealousy 259
 - Irrational jealousy 260
 - Can it be tamed? Yes..... 262
 - How to handle my rational jealousy 263
 - Overcoming my irrational jealousy 264
 - Handling my partner's irrational jealousy 265
- When lying is OK 267
- Sexual fantasy 271
- Sexual dysfunction and how to overcome it 274



A partner who is verbally abusive

- If your partner verbally abuses you, your priority is to get them to withdraw the Permission [pages 339 - 344] they have given themselves to be abusive to you.
- If it's safe, take on the storm that may follow and put your hand up in a stop signal. Tell them, 'Stop! I am not putting up with that'. Refuse to continue the exchange until they adapt a more acceptable tone.
- If the abuse continues, simply repeat the 'Stop!' message and continue repeating it until they adopt a more reasonable tone.
- Think carefully before walking out of the room since this can enrage the other person and result in more extreme behaviour.



Don't add to your 'Stop' message. Don't get drawn into responding, defending or explaining. Simply repeat the Stuck Record 'Stop' message until you get the result you want.



Next - jealousy and what to do about it

- Reasonable trust is central to a successful relationship. The jealous person is prevented from trusting by a subconscious fear of being abandoned, a deep fear that their partner will find someone else more desirable and leave them.
- Sometimes, the jealous person trusts their partner, but is afraid that they will be seduced by someone they will come in contact with.
- Jealousy may be rational, or irrational, or a mixture of both. The jealous person is in emotional agony whenever their partner is, or could be, in contact with potential rivals. This leads to tantrums, displays of anger, constant interrogation and controlling behaviour.
- Jealousy is very emotionally painful for the jealous person and difficult to live with for their partner.
- It does not readily respond to Adult analysis i.e. the absence of any evidence to support the fears does not convince the inner Child not to be jealous.

The structure of irrational jealousy in Transactional Analysis [TA] terms



P

Critical of inner Child for 'being silly'



A

Knows there is no reason to be jealous



C

Inner Child. Scared of being hurt again

P = Parent Ego State

The Parent in your head. Critical of the inner Child's irrational fears and behaviour e.g. when irrationally jealous or phobic. Driver of low self esteem and guilt [amongst many other things!].

A = Adult Ego State

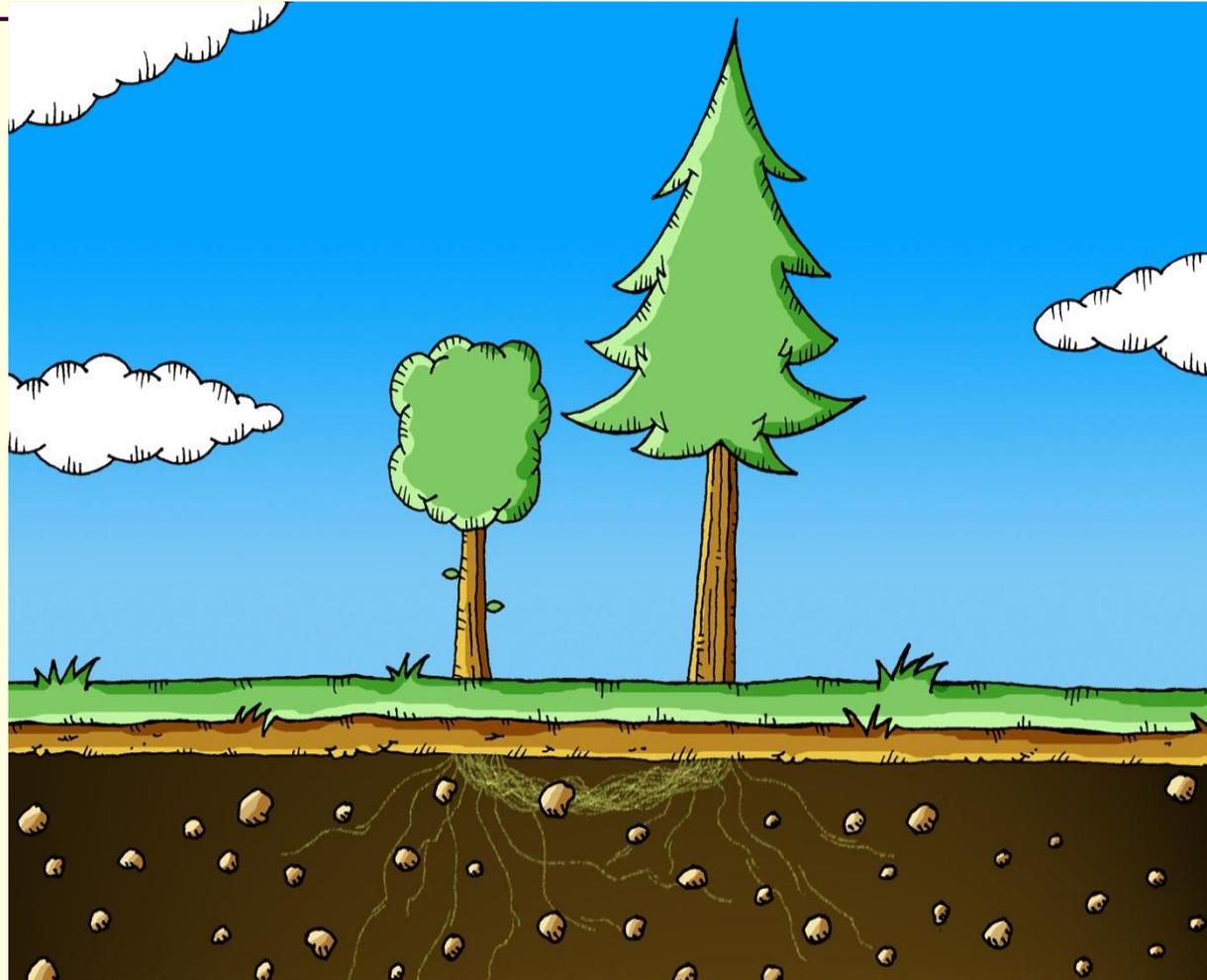
Rational, logical, analytical. Grounded in 'here and now' reality. Not jealous unless there is good reason.

C = Child Ego State

Custodian of irrational fears developed in childhood, including the fear of abandonment re-lived in the present in the case of irrational jealousy. Not easily influenced by Adult logic.

A healthy relationship - two trees but with one set of roots

A good relationship is one where there is space and independence too. This was captured perfectly for me by the priest at my daughter Sally's wedding. He talked about a good relationship as one where the couple are like two trees, each with their own light and space: two trees, but with one set of roots!



Another way of looking at a healthy relationship

'Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls....
Sing and dance together and be joyous:
But let each one of you be alone....
And stand together, yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak and the cypress grow not in each others shadow'.

Gilbran

Rational Jealousy

Rational jealousy. There is some reason for concerns about the partner's behaviour. For example, the partner suddenly starts taking more care of their appearance, goes out with friends more, sometimes comes home much later than expected, is sometimes vague about where they are going and who with. Sometimes the partner will stop leaving their 'phone around and start taking it with them when they leave the room - even to the toilet! The partner socialising with friends who are not in a stable relationship can also provoke jealous anxiety.



How to know if you may be being cheated on?
There is a list of possible clues on page 261



Irrational jealousy and it's causes

Irrational jealousy - is a deeply anxiety provoking, irrational, condition. The inner Child of the sufferer feel insecure about their relationship even though there is no evidence to support their deep fear of being abandoned. The jealous person feels uncontrollably anxious whenever their partner is, or might be, in the company of potential rivals.

What causes irrational jealousy?

Irrational jealousy is often rooted in some combination of:-

- Low self esteem [which means the jealous person can't believe that their partner will be able to resist the lure of others].
- Having been betrayed in the past
- Having betrayed others in the past
- Insecure relationships as a child e.g. parents splitting, abusive or neglectful parenting, sibling rivalry, betrayal by a friend.

How to decide if your jealousy is rational or irrational

Your jealousy may be rational if your partner ticks several of the following, particularly if the behaviour is new:-

- Keeps their mobile with them all the time, even in the toilet, or starts leaving it around more [because they have a secret extra 'phone].
- Starts being more interested in sex and wanting to try new things, or loses interest in sex.
- Develops a new hobby which means spending time away from you.
- Starts taking a lot more interest in appearance and hygiene.
- Starts spending more time on the internet.
- Becomes more moody
- Deletes all texts
- Rushes to answer the 'phone
- Goes out of the room to take calls

Remember - these are reasons to be vigilant - NOT proof

Can Jealousy be tamed?

Yes, very very slowly.....



- The ultimate cure is a long-term, secure, loving relationship.
- The attitude and behaviour of the partner will be a decisive factor in progress to cure [See page 266]
- Since earlier life experience is the root cause and driver of irrational jealousy, therapeutic help may be needed to heal the past and to help improve self esteem.
- The jealous person needs to learn self-calming and impulse control techniques [page 375]. Even though they continue to experience the pangs of intense jealous pain, they can learn to handle it and to manage their responses so they don't damage the relationship.
- The self calming and stress reduction techniques [starting on page 303] should be used.

How to handle rational jealousy

- If there is evidence that your partner cannot be trusted you should confront them with the evidence - if it's safe to do so. If it's not safe, you should escape the relationship as soon as possible.
- Unless the problem behaviour stops, staying with that partner will continue to be painful and could be seriously damaging to your self esteem. Painful though it would be, you should seriously consider the 'pain now instead of pain always' option and exit the relationship ASAP.
- Who knows, maybe the threat of being dumped would bring about a change in their behaviour?



Time to knock
this relationship
on the head?

Overcoming your own irrational jealousy

- Irrational jealousy responds, but responds slowly, to personal counselling or psychotherapy to build self esteem. If you suffer from irrational jealousy and you can find the money, you should start personal work with a therapist.
- However, the first thing to do is learn to control the behaviours which are damaging your relationship. The **self calming** [page 303] and **impulse control technique** [page 375] are designed to help you do just that.
- Always remember the key message in the anger programme - people can wind you up, but no-one and nothing can make you lose control.



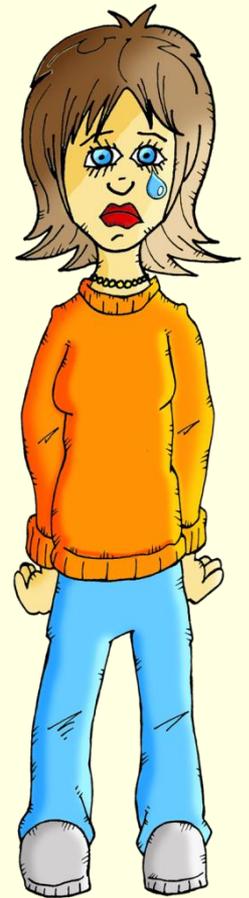
Use Impulse
Control and
Self Calming

Handling my partners irrational jealousy

- A partner's irrational jealousy is, amongst other things, very frustrating. Nothing said or done to reassure them has any lasting impact. Your empathy switch may eventually get turned hard to 'off'.
- **However, empathy is what is called for.** The jealous partner suffers real, uncontrollable, emotional pain driven from their subconscious. You may have felt jealous yourself sometime in the past. If you have, remember how that feels. Now imagine it as upsetting as you can. That's how it is for a jealous partner.
- Look on the irrational jealousy as a condition which is emotional agony for your partner. It's not responsive to Adult logic - knowing that there is no basis for the fear that you will cheat doesn't block it out.
- Your partner, when in Adult Ego State [page 44], may know that there is no reason to doubt you, but their inner Child is scared of being abandoned and cannot be calmed by Adult logic.

[continued on next page]

If your partner suffers from irrational jealousy [continued]

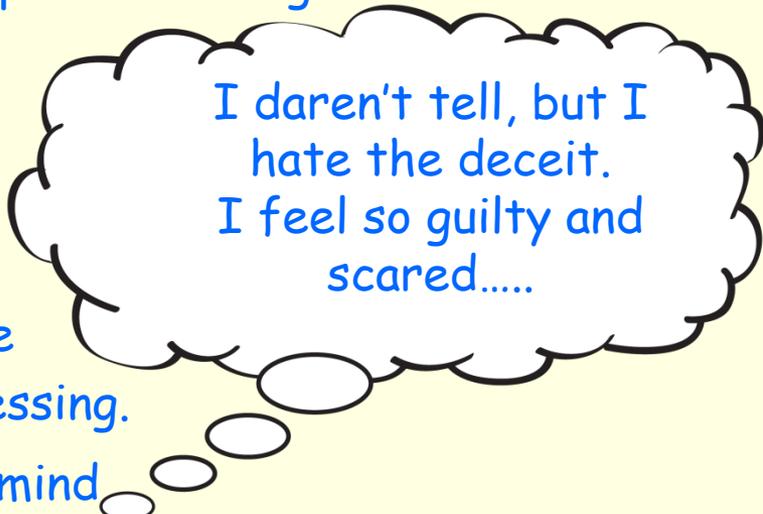


- You need to be loving, patient, supportive and reassuring and not resent that you have to do a lot of explaining until trust builds.
- You need to be open in everything you do and try to minimise doing things which your partner finds anxiety provoking.
- **Be predictable, don't do the unexpected.** If you're running late, call. If you say you will call, call. Do what you say you will do.
- Remember, that the longer you're together [and in the absence of any jealousy provoking behaviour by you] the more the inner Child of your partner will feel safe and more trusting.
- **Remember, your partners irrational fear is rooted in damage from their past. Your challenge is to give them the love they need and take care not to inflict further damage.**

Next - When its OK to lie!

'Better a lie that heals than a truth that wounds?'

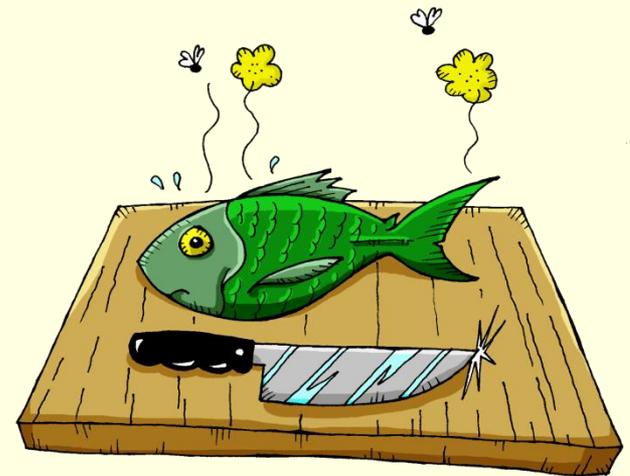
- Occasionally a client will confess to their partner a long held dark secret. This brings them relief, but their partner is devastated to find that they have been lied to for so long.
- If the truth would be devastating for your partner and there is little chance of discovery, I'd think twice before confessing.
- But can you 'get away with it' - bearing in mind that 'the largest number of people who can keep a secret is two - when one of them is dead'? Who else knows about your secret? For example, you may be able to rely on the discretion of a friend - until you fall out or your friend fancies your partner!



I daren't tell, but I hate the deceit. I feel so guilty and scared.....

The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

One thing that's clear to me, if you decide to confess, think very carefully before deciding to withhold key parts. Confessing to your partner that you have lied may take some getting over. If your partner later discovers that your confession was less than the full truth, the damage may be irreparable. 'I can't trust you. How do I know there isn't even more? What are you still holding back?'

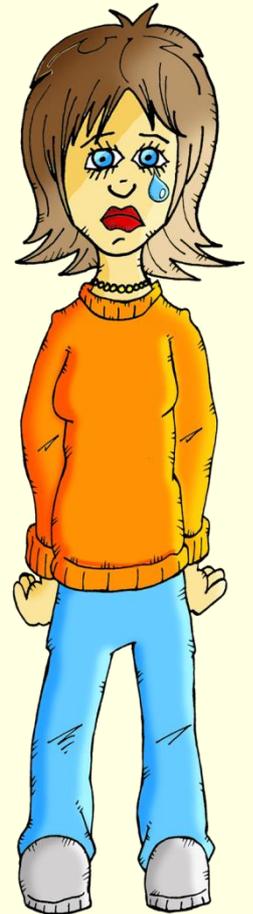


If you decide to confess it might be best to get the whole smelly fish on the table - or not at all!

Concealment

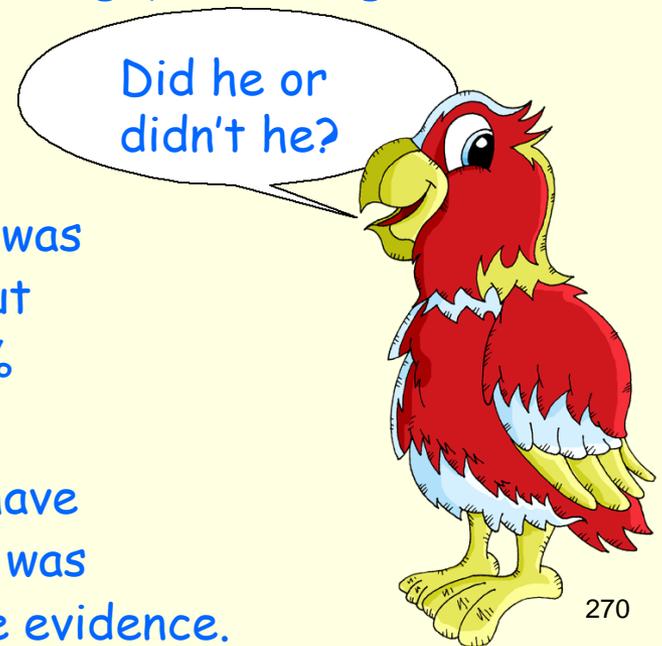
The client who hid her childhood abuse

- My client had been sexually abused over a long period of her childhood. She had kept the secret to herself for over 20 years. She was now experiencing difficulty in sexual relationships with her loving husband, from whom she had concealed the abuse. Natural acts of sexual love rubber-banded her back [page 58] to the trauma of her childhood abuse.
- He thought the bedroom difficulties meant she didn't love him, didn't want him. She couldn't bring herself to explain and the relationship was in trouble.
- The breakthrough came when, in personal therapy, she finally decided to tell him about the abuse. Once he understood why she was struggling to show love in the way he needed, they were able to work through their difficulties.



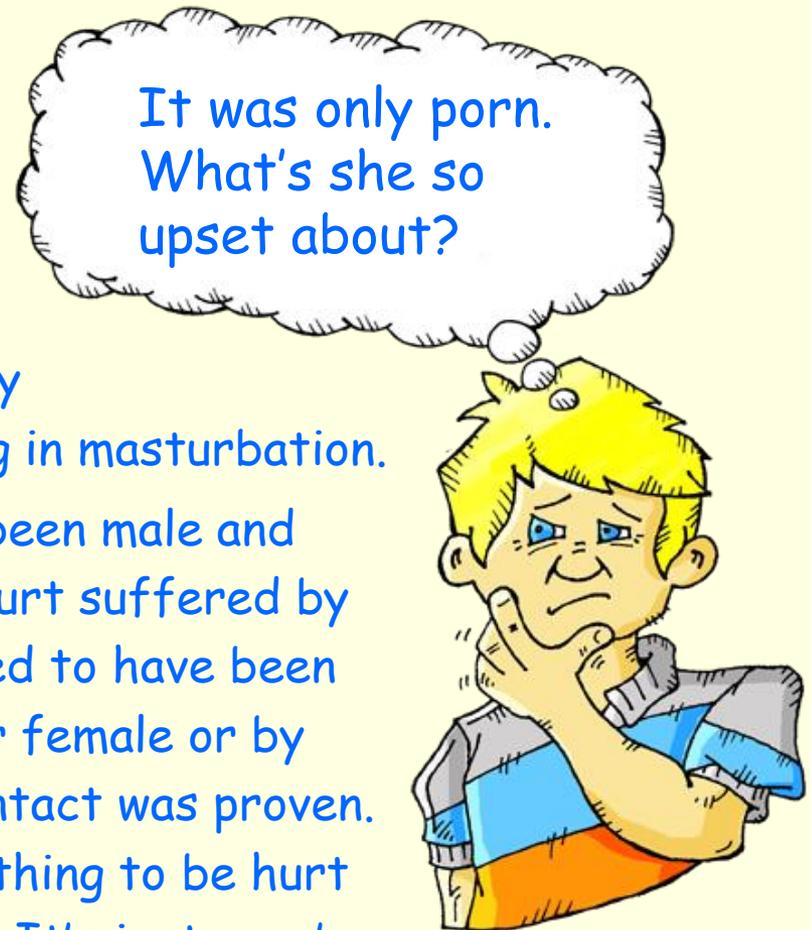
The client who lied to save the relationship - or did he?

- A woman the client admitted knowing had written to his wife and alleged that they had been having a sexual relationship for some while. She had given lots of detail to prove it - stuff she shouldn't have known unless there had been a sexual relationship.
- In the face of this apparently overwhelming evidence, he used the Stuck Record and in response to unrelenting questioning from his wife, repeatedly insisted, 'I don't know how she got the information but I have not had a relationship with her.'
- His partner said she 90% believed that he was lying. Despite it all, she still wanted him, but insisted that if the 90% ever became 100% she would leave him.
- He was in no doubt that confession would have ended the relationship. If he was guilty he was never going to admit it, however strong the evidence.



Sexual problems

- My work with addictions [apart from alcohol, nicotine, drugs, food and serial adultery] has mainly been about pornography and sexual chat by text, 'phone or online. Usually, it's all erotic fantasy without physical contact, but resulting in masturbation.
- My sexually addicted clients have all been male and often didn't understand the level of hurt suffered by their partner when they are discovered to have been enjoying sexual stimulation by another female or by a gay man, even though no physical contact was proven. Men often seem to reason 'There's nothing to be hurt about. There was no physical contact. It's just porn'.

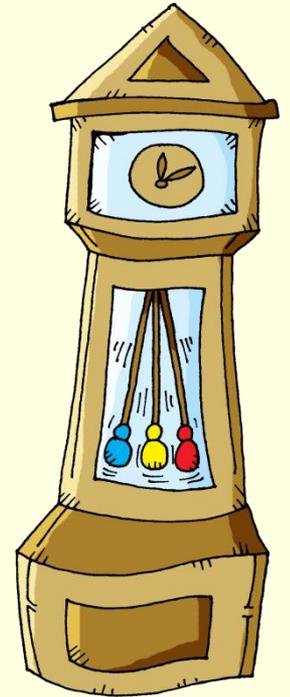


Working with addiction to sexual fantasy

- Usually the partner of the addicted male has accidentally uncovered evidence of his activities on his mobile 'phone or on the family computer. The partner's hurt and disgust with the images and content resulted in an ultimatum, without which my clients would not have undertaken therapy.
- With this type of problem, I work on the underlying issues, which is sometimes an unsatisfactory sexual relationship with their partner.
- I also use aversion hypnotherapy including vivid visualisation of the possible consequences of being caught again and the horror of the moment of being confronted with fresh evidence by their partner.
- I find that aversion hypnotherapy works with other addictions too.

Working with addiction to sexual fantasy

- Whether you are male or female, if you are addicted to sexual activities which your partner would be hurt or disgusted by, I suggest you make the decision to stop.
- You could also decide to work on your sex life with your partner. Maybe they will indulge you in [or even enjoy] some of your fantasies!?
- Be sexually assertive: know what you want and say what you want! If you find this too embarrassing, write it down and get your partner to write down their desires too! Then swap lists.
- Otherwise, find yourself a therapist experienced in this type of work. You will find that the initial embarrassment is soon overcome!



Time to do something about it!

UK porn sites get over 2.5 million visits a day!

Male Sexual Dysfunction

- Sexual potency is a massively important self esteem issue for males and usually very difficult for them to talk to their partner about. They are often fairly desperate, even suicidal, when they come to see me. Sometimes it's the survival of their relationship which is at risk.
- Sexual performance failure leads to a self-perpetuating anxiety loop. Failure leads to fear of failure, leads to failure. Whether the problem is erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation or inability to ejaculate in a timely way, the penis will not perform to anxious instructions.
- Porn films portraying gigantic penises and incredible sexual stamina have not helped. One of my teenage clients thought porn stars were normal and he was abnormal. He had become suicidal when a girlfriend commented on his 'abnormality' and spread it around college.

Are relaxation techniques the answer to sexual anxiety?

- In my experience, relaxation techniques often have limited impact because the man trying to let nature take its course by using relaxation techniques is reminded by his brain why he is trying to relax. This triggers anxiety and re-entry to the self-perpetuating anxiety loop.
- We humans just can't stop thinking about what we are trying not to think about because we have to remember what we are trying not to think about in order to try not to think about it! Got it?
Try not to think about your left ear!
What happened?

I have to think about it to be able to try not to think about it...

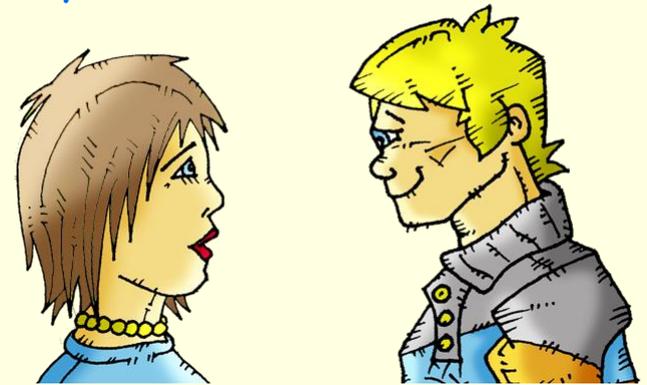


Techniques to overcome male sexual dysfunction

- I would definitely recommend working with a hypnotherapist who also uses NLP and EMDR techniques. My preferred hypnotherapy 'script' is about total focus on the partner during the sex act and when thinking about it. The idea is to use erotic thoughts and sensations to overpower anxiety by distracting attention from oneself.
- **Total focus means using all your senses** - focussing on how your partner looks during sex, how different parts of her feel to your touch, what she smells like, tastes like, moves like and the sounds she makes.
- NLP techniques such as the 'Swish technique' and 'The OK Rewind' are very powerful in combatting anticipatory anxiety. EMDR is brilliant at smoothing away anxiety attached to remembered sexual failure.
- Physical aids such as a penis pump should also be explored and medical help such as Viagra and testosterone supplement also considered.

Helping your partner overcome sexual dysfunction

- Sexual dysfunction is a very common problem suffered by millions of men. As the heading indicates, I see this as a joint problem needing a mutual approach. A good idea is to buy a book on the subject and both read it.
- Those experiencing sexual dysfunction need a lot of understanding and reassurance. They need:-
 - 'Permission to fail' so they don't dread failing.
 - Loving acceptance that the problem is anxiety, not inferiority.
 - Support in planning sexual practices which will be helpful.
 - Most important, they need to be able to talk about the problem with their partner.

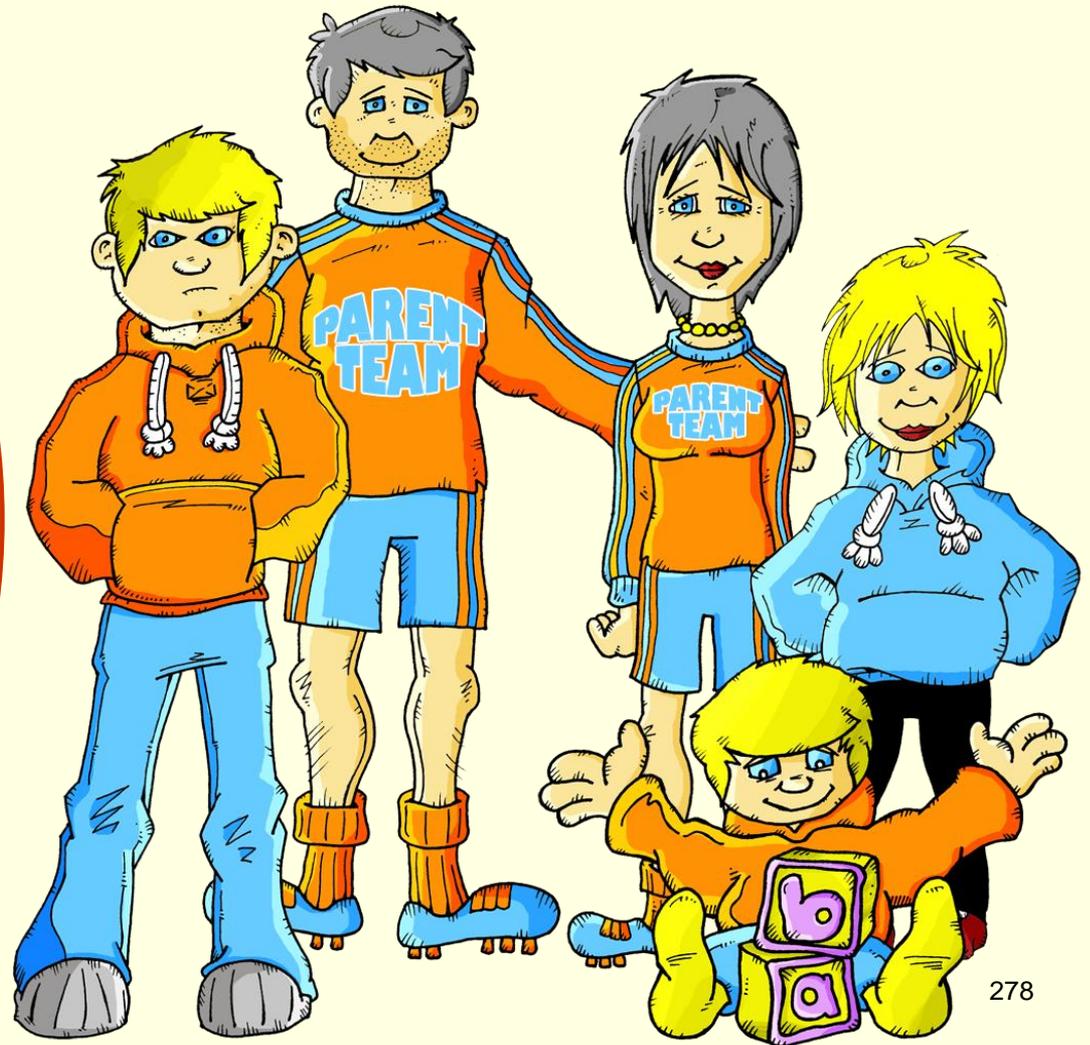


Criticism and complaining increase anxiety and make matters worse !

Part Five

Managing your children's behaviour

Successful
Parenting
- The
Ultimate
Challenge?



Managing your children's behaviour

- Introduction 280 - 286 Aim for a balanced approach 287
- Keep the child in an OK place: criticise behaviour, not the child 288
- Critical/Controlling Parent won't work in the long run 290
- Develop a parenting partnership 292
- Negotiate ground rules 294
- Have sanctions & rewards 295
- Be selective about which issues to confront 296
- Don't make empty threats 297
- Use the 'Stuck Record' 298
- Don't deal with issues while you are angry:
use the 'Not Now' impulse control method 301
- If you do what you have always done..... 302



If a child lives with.....

-criticism, it learns to condemn
-hostility, it learns aggression
-ridicule , it learns to be shy
-shame, it learns to be guilty
-tolerance, it learns to be patient
-encouragement, it learns confidence
-praise, it learns to feel good about itself
-fairness, it learns to be fair
-security, it learns to trust
-approval, it learns to like itself
-acceptance and love , it learns to
find love in itself and in the world.

Anon



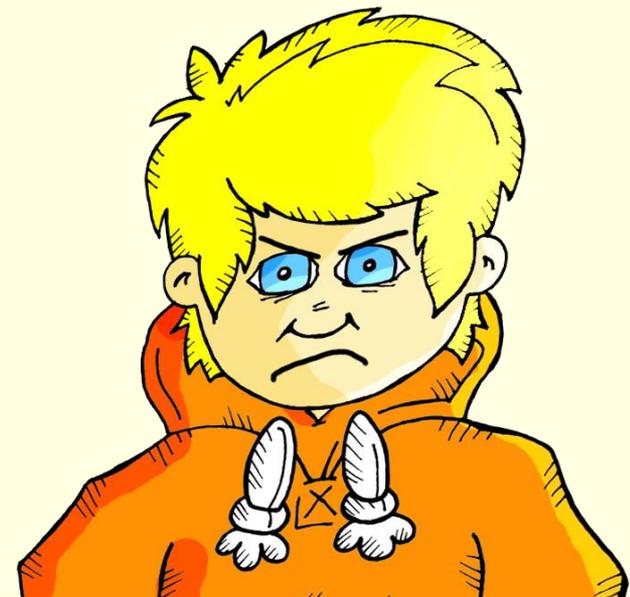
Successful Parenting - The ultimate challenge?

One of the most common problems which brings clients into my consulting room is the behaviour of their children, especially their teenage children, and disagreement between partners about the best way to tackle problem behaviour.



Coping with behaviour problems

- I'm the father of three grown-up daughters and have five grandchildren so far. Child development psychology has been central to my training as a psychotherapist and I have spent many hours in analysing the origin and treatment of my clients parenting stresses.
- As a result, I've learned a lot which it would have been better to have known much earlier in my life! What follows is what I now regard as some of the basics of good parenting practice.

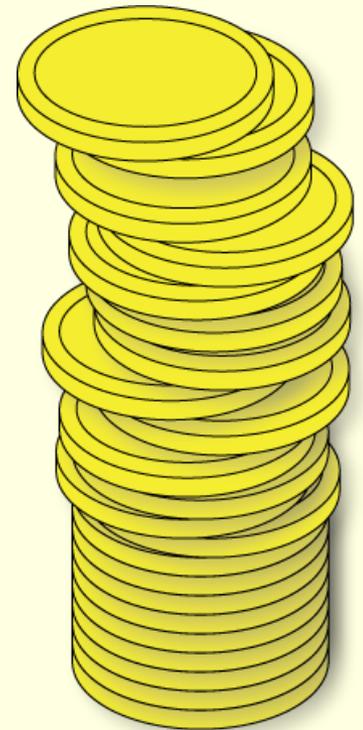


My experience of working with parenting problems

- Most of my work with parenting problems has been with parents of teenagers and children approaching teens. The disruptive behaviour has ranged from general rebelliousness, refusal to do almost everything asked, or to comply with reasonable rules and playing the psychological game 'Why should I, you can't make me'.
- Problems with older children include alcohol and drug abuse, work shyness, 'failed fledglings' [the grown up children who won't leave the nest [estimated at over 3 million in the U.K.], smoking around the house and offspring who resists all attempts to help them recover from social anxiety and agoraphobic tendencies.
- Often, the parents of children with behaviour problems are no longer together and the separated parents are inconsistent in their approach.

'Where did we go wrong?'

- Parents coming for help with the problem behaviour of their children often come with this nagging question, 'Where did we go wrong?'
- Eric Berne, the originator of TA, compared the development process of children to a pile of pennies. One out of line penny, one event, can skew the whole pile.
- Problem is, there are so many factors which can start things going wrong, not least that the child has had to interpret everything that happened, had to make sense of things [page 76] and has constructed a private version of the truth about their childhood.
- The reality they experience and remember and which has shaped them, may bear little resemblance to what was intended by the parents, or how they remember it.



How interpretation can skew the development process

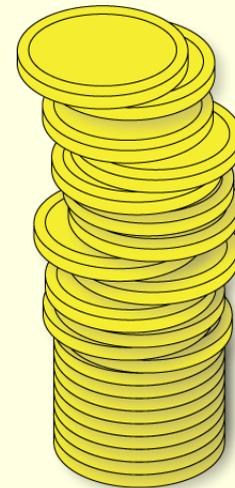
A small example; the child complains of feeling ill. Mum thinks, 'she is just trying to get out of going to school' and takes her to school despite her protests.

How will the child interpret that?

If she decides 'Mummy doesn't really love me or she wouldn't send me to school when I am feeling ill', how will that 'Mummy doesn't really love me' decision affect her development?

She may then start to unconsciously filter [pages 91 - 97] all future events for further proof that she is not loved, may even decide 'I am not loveable'.

Don't worry how your relationship with your child got to where it is - just focus on getting it as right as you can now.



Same parents - different outcome

Even if two people had exactly the same experience of life [impossible] their programming [pages 72 - 73] would not be the same because they have had to interpret [page 76] the meaning of their experience.

A story of twins: In psychotherapy circles, a story is often told of the mentally ill mother of twin boys. One day she told the children, 'Don't look down on me because of my illness - both of you will finish up in a psychiatric hospital'. She was proved right, both boys did finish up in a psychiatric hospital. One as a patient, the other as a consultant psychiatrist!

This is an example of how even twins brought up together develop their own unique personality and programming.

Achieving a balanced approach: Not too soft: not too tough

- My aim in advising on parenting issues is to achieve a balanced approach, an approach which is neither too controlling nor too liberal: love and support balanced by respect for the rights of others, including parents and the rest of the family.
- In my experience parents suffering child behavioural problems have got the balance wrong. They are either too tough or too soft.
- Even more problematic - one is tough and the other soft - very confusing for the child and providing endless possibilities for manipulation of the parents [especially when the parents are separated].



Keep the child in an OK position

- As the struggle develops, it's easy to forget at times that the child is an OK young person who sometimes [maybe often] does not behave OK.
- Keep the child in an OK position. Feel love, show love, be tactile.
- If you handle a situation badly [maybe in anger] apologise.

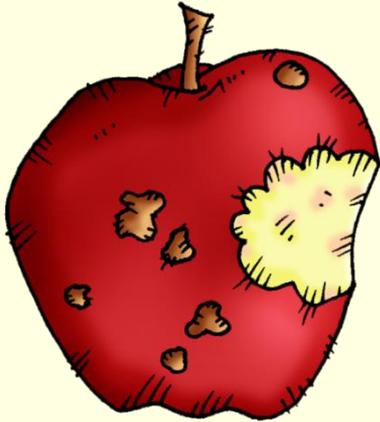


An OK young person
who doesn't behave
OK sometimes

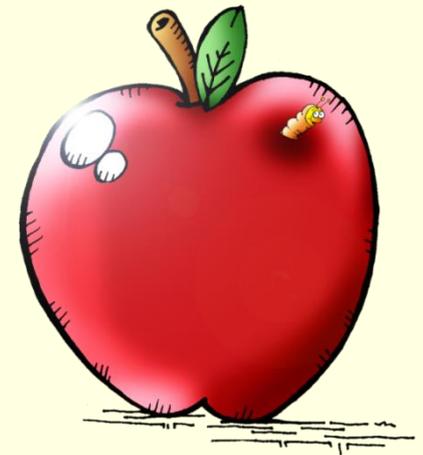


NOT A bad child

Good apple: bad behaviour? Or a bad apple?



If you can keep in mind that the child is an OK young person who does some things which are not OK [rather than a 'bad' child] you will be able to handle things much better.



Critical/ Controlling Parent won't work well in the long run



- The belief that children should obey parents without question, underpins the Critical/ Controlling Parent Ego State [Pages 339 - 343 and 184 - 189]
- The extreme consequences of over-controlling parenting is, on the one hand, breaking the child's spirit or, on the other hand, the child deciding not to be controlled and the onset of a struggle for control.
- The Critical/Controlling Parent may finish up with a model, well behaved, passive, child for the time being - but, will the passive child be able to get it's needs met in it's relationship with others? Will the child be able to 'stand up for itself' out there in the real world.
- And what will happen when the child becomes a teenager and discovers that parents can no longer supervise them most of the time?

The range of possible consequences of over control

To grow up as responsible, emotionally healthy, adults, children need development space, need room to grow, need to learn from the consequences of their own decisions and mistakes.



Rebellious
teenager



Shy
Teenager

Develop a parenting partnership

It's essential that you and your partner try to agree how to handle the parenting issues which come up. If you don't the child will exploit the differences between you and choose the most permissive option.

- Discuss the issues when the child is not around and agree how to handle them.
- Don't disagree in front of the child.
- Back up your partner. If you disagree talk about it later.
- Don't compete for the child's affection by conceding what your partner won't.
- Don't fight within earshot of child.

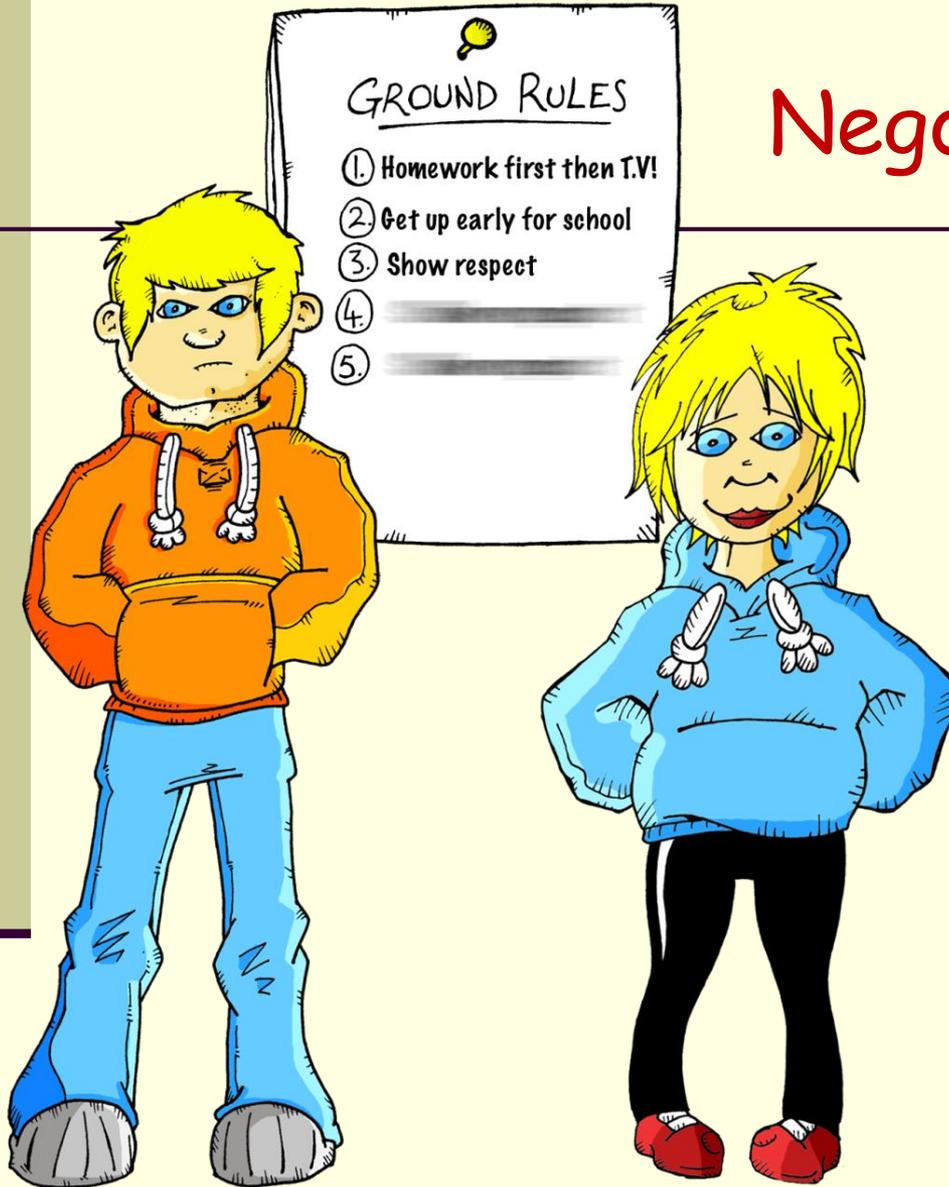


If you and the other parent are separated

- It's particularly difficult when the genetic parents are no longer together. The custody parent with whom the child lives may be trying to be firm with the child on specific behavioural issues, but the other parent wants to win the child's love and undermines the custody parent by being 'soft' on the issues.
- Often, when there is a relationship breakup, mom and dad cannot or will not develop a parenting partnership, sometimes even competing for the loyalty of the child by being more permissive than the other and criticising each other to the child.
- Separated parents should be determined to suspend their differences for the good of the child and agree how to handle the parenting issues which inevitably come up.



Negotiate Ground Rules



A common practice is to have a set of rules which are on display for easy reminding.

If you impose the rules they will be much more difficult to get compliance with than if you sit with the children and negotiate, get their agreement.

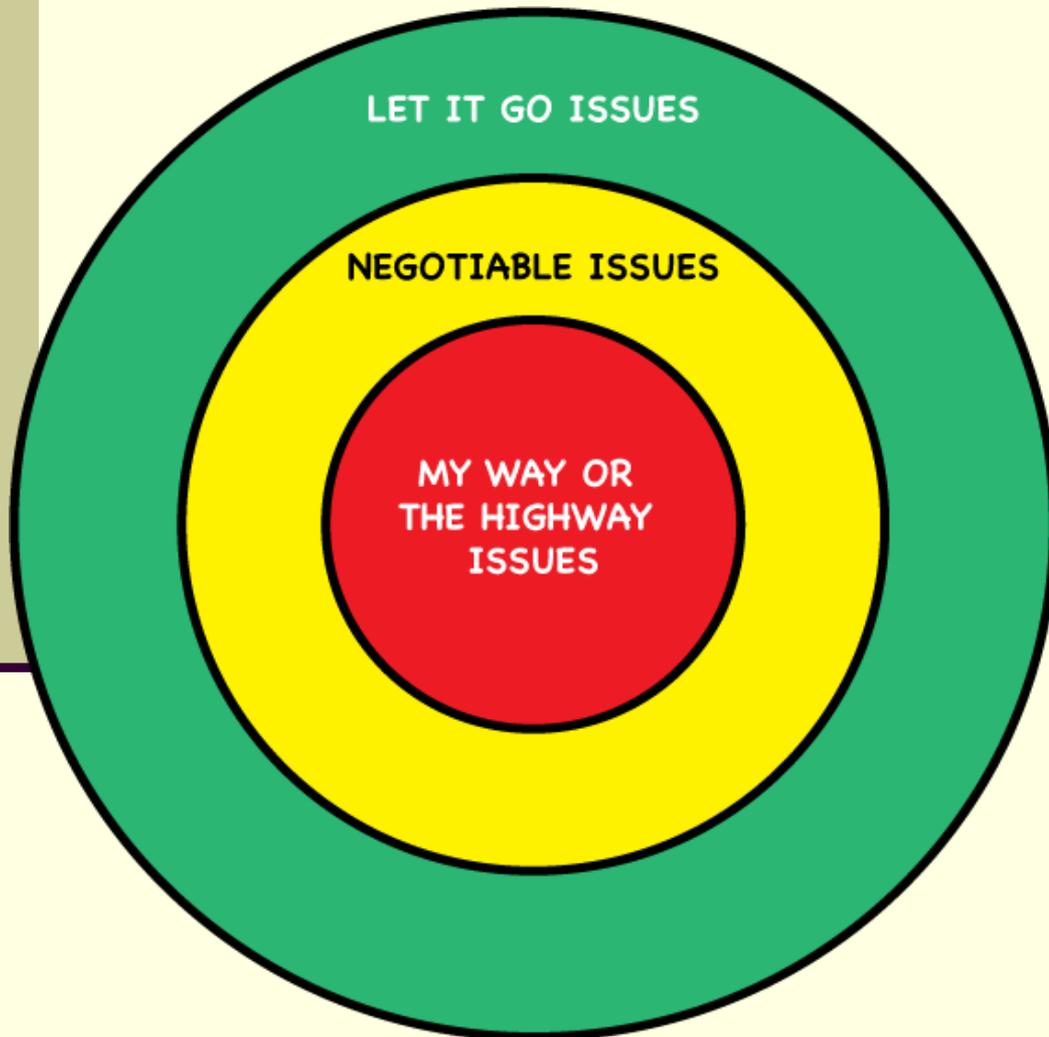
It's much more powerful to be able to say 'That's what we agreed' when there is resistance and non-compliance.

Have sanctions & rewards

- Alongside the ground rules there need to be clearly understood and consistently applied sanctions and rewards. What is the reward for compliant behaviour and what the sanction for non-compliance?
- Sanctions need to be understood in advance by the child and fair - commensurate with the 'offence'.
- Be careful to 'avoid over the top' punishments which seem unfair to the child e.g. taking away their phone for a whole week when a day would make the point.



Be selective about which issues to confront



In achieving the balance between controlling and latitude, be selective about what to ignore, what to permit and what to resist.

List the issues and decide which category each falls into.

Over-controlling parents have most issues in the red zone and very few green items.

Don't make empty threats. Stick to your guns - unless you are wrong!

- The child's behaviour may get worse for a time as they test your resolve on the new ground rules. You mustn't soften at this stage.
- If the sanction is, for example, to stop pocket money for a month don't give in even a day early. If getting up late means no lift, you have to accept the consequences of no lift. If taking away their mobile for a specific time is the sanction, do it. If being grounded is the sanction, do it! However, early release from a sanction may sometimes be the reward for exceptional good behaviour.
- *A very small example of how not to do it.* Granddad told his three year old grandson in the garden centre - don't touch that [toy] or you are going straight home. Grandson ignored him and picked up the toy. Did granddad take him home? No! How much notice will grandson take of granddad's threats in future?
- *Be careful what you threaten. Unless you are prepared to carry out the threat you are making future problems.*

Don't give in - use the Stuck Record

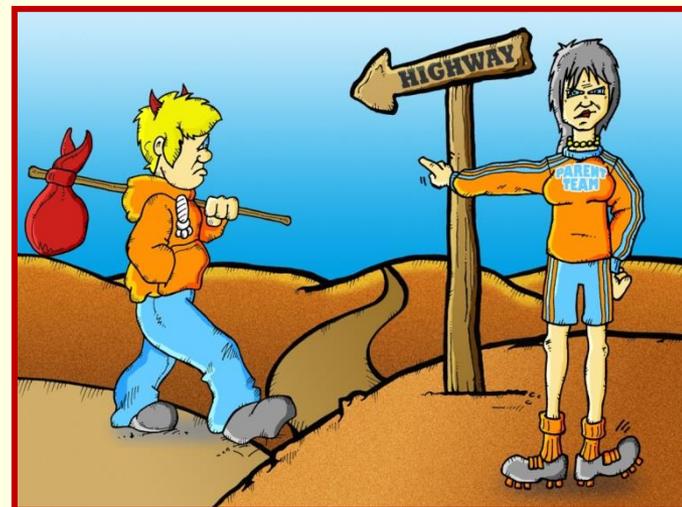
- Every child knows how to use the Stuck Record! They ask repeatedly for what they want until they get it, or all hope is lost.
- To use the Stuck Record, simply keep repeating what you said initially. Keep this up until the child gives up. Don't let them wear you down!
- However, one client told me she was in her twenties before she realised her father had never said 'No' to her. All her life he had been using 'yes, but not yet' or 'yes, but not now' .



The ultimate threat - exclusion from the family home

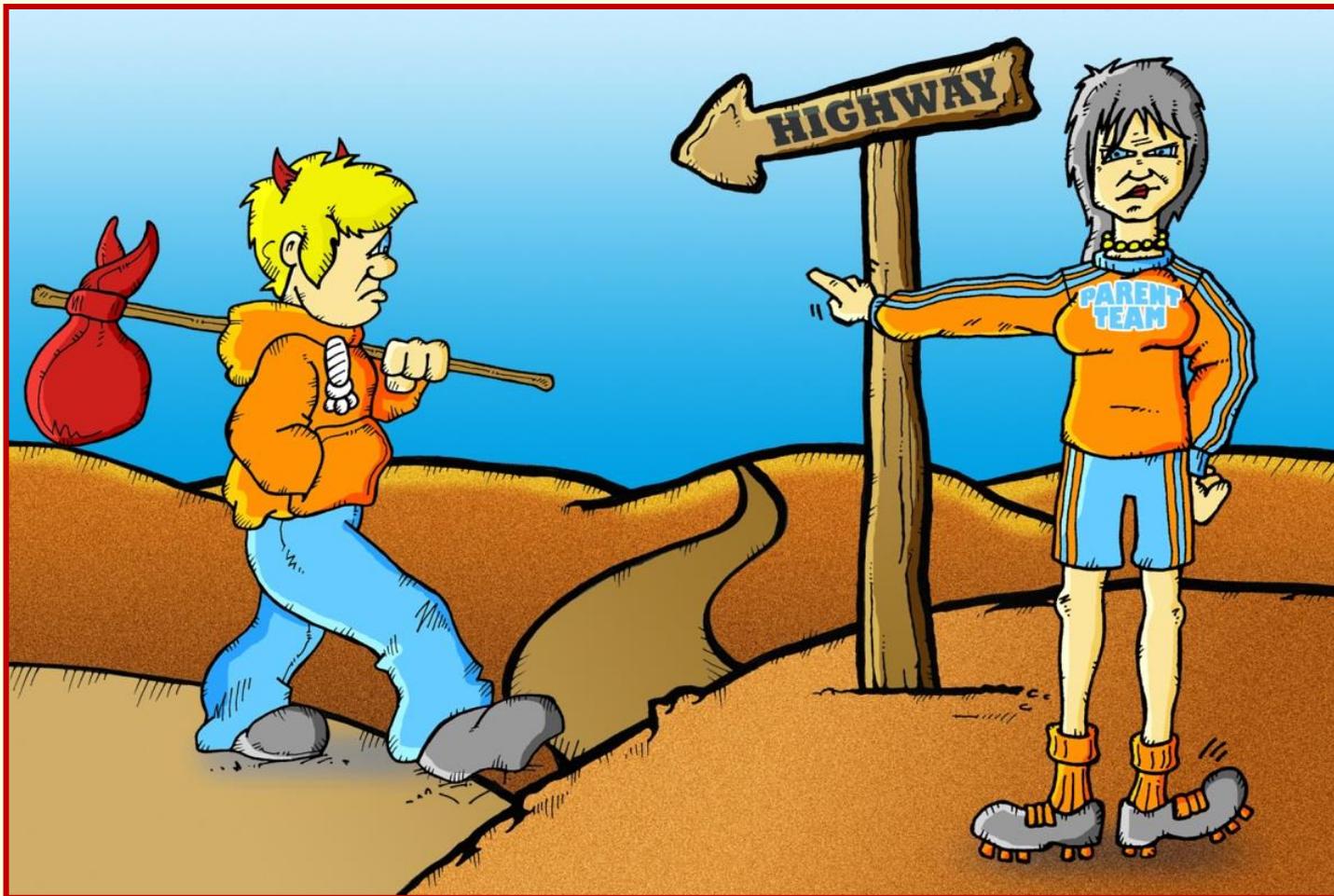
This is, for most parents, a difficult threat to carry out. The occasional monster who is wrecking the family environment with their behaviour, is still loved, still mummies baby. The desire to nurture and keep safe remains very strong, despite it all. Sometimes father is prepared to exclude the child, but mum can't stand the thought.

Remember - don't threaten it unless you are able and ready to do it!



In my experience, unless you are prepared to carry out this ultimate threat, you are stuck with the unacceptable behaviour. Maybe there is a relative who can help out? Or an estranged other parent?

If you do choose to exclude the child as a short [?] sharp shock



Get the message right. 'We love you and want you back when your behaviour is acceptable'.

Don't deal with issues while you are angry

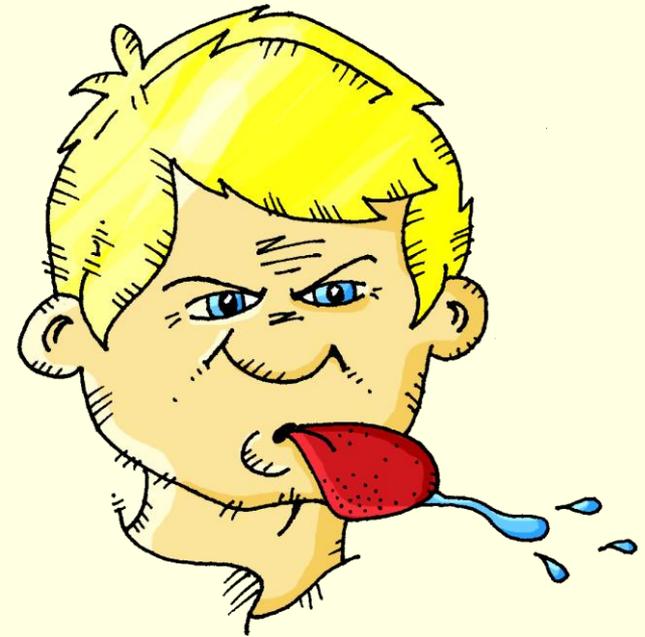
- The Anger Management Programme [page 326] has at its heart, an Impulse Control Technique [page 375], a key feature of which is the concept of 'Not now'.
- This means that you never react while angry, rather decide 'Not now' and deal with the issue when you are calmer and have decided the best way to respond.
- Children are capable of 'winding us up' but how and when we react is always up to us.



Unless the child is in imminent danger, the 'Not Now' Impulse Control Technique [page 379] is an essential tool in managing the relationship with the child.

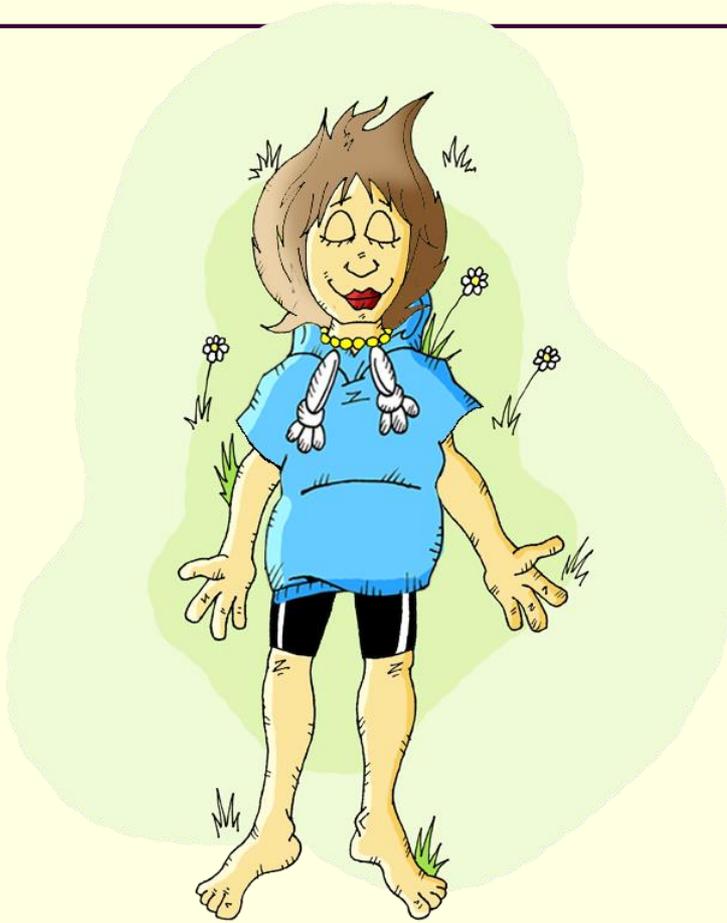
If you do what you have always done, you'll get what you've always got!

- Maybe you are thinking, 'We have tried some of those things and it didn't work. It caused such a lot of trouble that we were forced to give in'.
- If that's so, it maybe that the thing you have to do differently is - stick at it until you get the result you want.
- Be prepared for the uproar which may result from your confronting the problem behaviour and hold your ground.
- Which is best? Stormier water for a few weeks or months, or remaining stuck with the problem behaviour?



Remember the theme 'Love you, but your behaviour is unacceptable'.

Part Six



Self Calming
&
Stress
Reduction

When angry or hurting, self calming capability
is fundamental to self control

Self calming & stress reduction



- Four steps to self calming capability 305
- Diaphragmatic Breathing 306
- Anchoring a calm state 310
- Impulse Control preparation 316
- Thought stopping: stopping obsessive thoughts and worries by using:
 - A Tomorrow Box 317
 - A Yesterday Box 321
 - A Filing Cabinet 324

Four steps to self calming capability and stopping the 'Uproar' game [pages 244 -247]

1. Learn to use a change in breathing as a self-calming 'anchor' when feeling angry, tense or hurt [pages 306 - 311] .
2. Prepare to handle your anger Triggers [page 358] calmly using the breathing change relaxation technique in 1 above.
3. Be able to change your mood by having a peaceful place [pages 312 - 314] which you can instantly visit in imagination.
4. Learn to use thought stopping techniques [pages 317 - 325] to get unwelcome thoughts and memories out of mind.



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.'

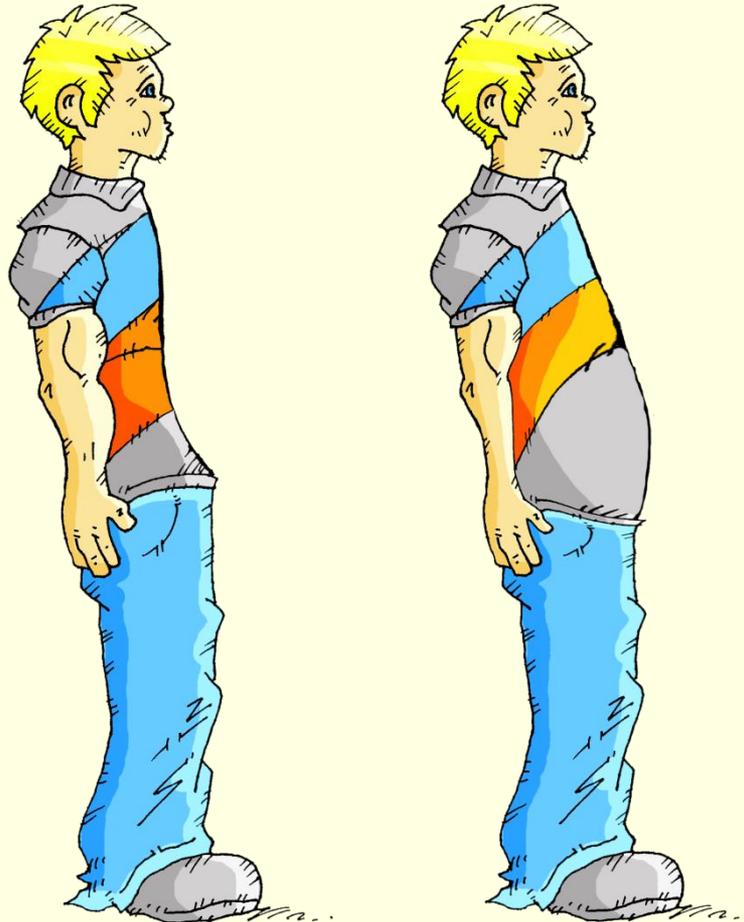
In Diaphragmatic Breathing you fill your lungs from the bottom up by pushing your tummy out as you breathe in deeply. This allows the lower part of your lungs to fill first.

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

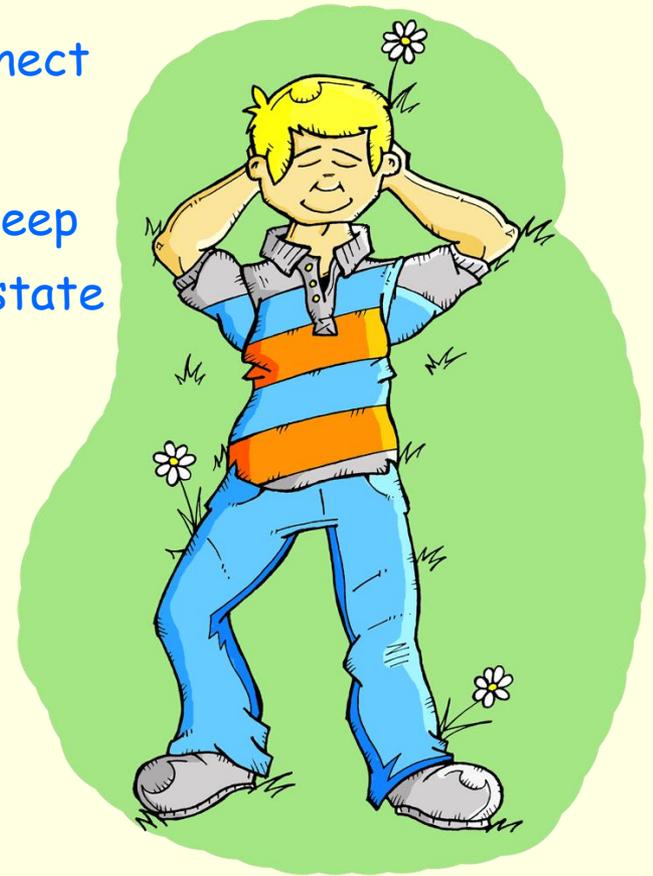
1. Lie down and make yourself comfortable. Put one hand on your chest and the other on your diaphragm.
2. Slowly take a deep breath, pushing your diaphragm/tummy out. Feel your diaphragm rising and not your chest. Count to three before breathing out.
3. Breathe out fully, feeling your diaphragm fall. Pause for 3 seconds before breathing in again.

Repeat steps 1 - 3 for at least five minutes each time you practise. Practice every day until you can feel yourself becoming calm as soon as you change your breathing.



Using Diaphragmatic Breathing to 'Anchor' a calm state

- An 'Anchor' is a physical thing you do to connect with a pre-programmed mental state.
- In this case, the Anchor is Diaphragmatic Deep 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 I

1. Put on a beautiful piece of music.
2. Settle yourself comfortably and switch your breathing to Diaphragmatic Breathing.
3. 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.
4. Each time you breathe out let go of any tension you are holding in your body. Feel yourself relax more and more with each cycle of your breathing.
5. Practise this two or three times a week for 20 minutes or more.

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

Intensify your Self Calming Anchor II

Have a 'peaceful place' key word

1. Choose a time and place when you are unlikely to be disturbed [usually at home, lying on your bed or in an armchair where you can recline with your head supported].
2. Put on a piece of beautiful peaceful music, make yourself comfortable, switch to Diaphragmatic Breathing and imagine that you are in a beautiful, peaceful place.
3. It may be a real place, a place from the present or past or it may be a place you create in your imagination. It may be a place from a film or book. All that counts is that you can imagine it vividly.



Intensify your Self Calming Anchor III

4. Now imagine you are actually there in that peaceful place, inside your own body, looking out through your own eyes. Imagine everything about the place - the bold colours, the softer colours, the sounds. Imagine any aroma, any fragrance that goes with that place. Imagine the whole scene around you. Notice what emotions you are feeling. Imagine the clothes you are wearing in that peaceful place and the contact of your clothes on your skin.
5. Enjoy that place for a while. Then imagine moving to a different position in your peaceful place and enjoying it all over again from a new perspective. Then give the place a name which, when you say it, will remind you of the place and connect you in an instant with the feelings you get when you imagine being there.

Using your Self Calming Anchor

1. Whenever you feel yourself getting 'wound up':
2. Change your breathing to that deeper, slower, diaphragmatic breathing.
3. Say the name of your peaceful place to yourself.
4. Allow yourself a few moments to calm down and enjoy the feeling you will get.



Diaphragmatic Breathing isn't just for tension reduction. You should also use it to heighten the joy of special moments when you feel good.

Use your Self Calming Anchor every hour to give yourself a treat & reduce stress

- Deep relaxation while listening to a CD or iPod track is really effective in lowering the general level of stress, so you should be determined to make the time.
- However, most people find it difficult to make the time to listen to a relaxation CD or iPod track regularly.
- The Diaphragmatic Breathing method of self calming can be used anytime, anywhere, without anyone noticing.



Enjoy two minutes of self-calming breathing a few times every day.

Essential Impulse Control preparation

Visualise anger triggers while self calming

Part One:

Make time to practise this
at home

Make yourself comfortable, select one of your anger Triggers [page 358], change your breathing to Diaphragmatic Breathing [page 306] and imagine yourself handling the situation calmly using the 'Not Now' impulse control model [page 332].

Part Two:

Practise this when out and
about

If 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.

Also use this method to prepare how you want to be when entering each of your Red Zones.

Thought stopping - stopping obsessive thoughts and worries I

1. If you are obsessing about something recent that you are angry or hurt about, you will find it helpful to be able to put it out of mind for a while until you have 'cooled down'.
2. Make yourself comfortable, close your eyes and imagine a beautiful handcrafted box made of the finest polished hardwood. Imagine what it would feel like to run your fingers over the smooth lid of the box.
3. Then open the box and notice that it is empty and lined in beautiful velvet of a colour of your choice. Imagine what it would feel like to run your fingers over that velvet.



See also
Page 325

Relief from angry thoughts [continued]

3. Now close the box and imagine that while the box was open something magical has happened. Inlaid gold lettering has appeared on the box. It says, 'My Tomorrow Box'.
4. Imagine the size and style of the inlaid gold lettering. Imagine running your fingers over that inlaid lettering. Notice how skilfully it's been done - so skilfully that if you closed your eyes and ran your fingers over the lettering, you wouldn't be able to feel it.



Your Tomorrow Box [continued]

5. The beautiful 'Tomorrow Box' is yours.

It's for you to store any thoughts and worries which serve no useful purpose in your having them today.



How to use
your
Tomorrow
Box.
Next Page



Using Your Tomorrow Box

- Whenever an angry or hurt thought comes into your mind, a thought which serves no useful purpose in your having it today, put it in your Tomorrow Box for the time being. It really is as simple as that!
- Tomorrow you may find your anger or hurt has dissolved overnight. If not, you can get the thought out and decide what to do about it - or you can leave it in your Tomorrow Box until the day after.
- However, if the thought requires some action by you today your Tomorrow Box won't take it until you have done what needs doing today!

Stress Relief

You can put all sorts of thoughts or worries in your Tomorrow Box!

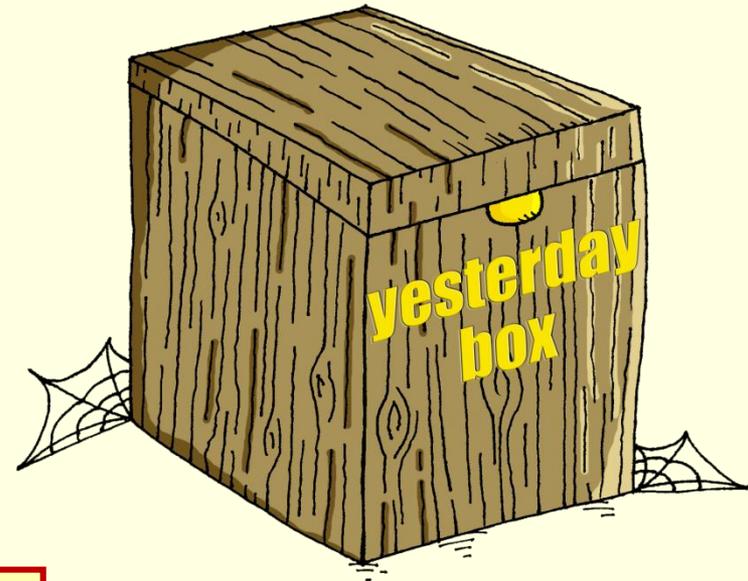
You will find it's amazing - much bigger on the inside than the outside.

You can even put people and events you don't want to think about in there!

Stopping disturbing memories

A Yesterday Box for disturbing memories

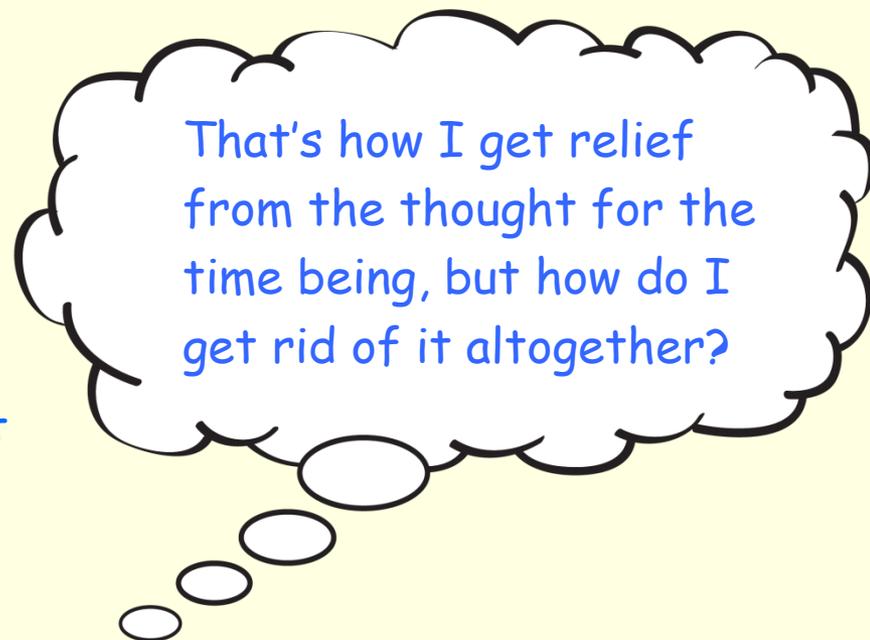
- Use a Yesterday Box for memories which you want some relief from.
- To acquire your Yesterday Box go through the same visualisation as for the Tomorrow Box.
- Simply substitute a different kind of box, perhaps a box of rough construction with a few cobwebs.
- Imagine the lettering 'Yesterday Box' appearing on the box while you are looking inside it.



See also
Page 325

The only snag with your Tomorrow Box and your Yesterday Box is....

..... you get temporary relief, but you don't process, don't deal with, the angry or hurt thoughts you put in there. As you will read again later [page 355], it's very important to process anger and hurt, otherwise it will make it difficult to control your stress level and reactions.



Angry and hurt thoughts should shrink with the passage of time. If you are still having to keep putting your angry and hurt thoughts in your Tomorrow Box or Yesterday Box day after day, you should consider how best to process them [see page 384].

Why the 'Tomorrow Box' and 'Yesterday Box' bring relief

- My work with clients over the years has consistently demonstrated that our brain is wired to hold onto a bad memory or obsessive worry unless it's processed in therapy. The harder we try, the more the memory persists. Therapists say 'What we resist persists'.
- As I wrote before and as you probably already know, when we try, for example, not to think of a pink elephant with yellow spots, it's impossible. Impossible because we have to think of it in order to try not to.
- However, our brain seems OK about shelving a bad memory or obsessive thought temporarily if we keep it safe, not try to get rid of it. That's why the Tomorrow Box and the Yesterday Box work - we are keeping the thought safe, not trying to be rid of it!

Stopping worrying thoughts II

'The Filing Cabinet'

The Tomorrow Box is for temporarily putting out of mind short term issues which are likely to come up within days or weeks.

There is a thought stopping techniques for longer term worries about what may happen in future, worries which serve no useful purpose in occupying your mind today and which can safely be put out of mind for a month or more.

This is called 'The Filing Cabinet'.

See also
page 325

The guided visualisation audio of 'The Filing Cabinet' can be found at <http://audio.angermanagementprogramme.co.uk>

Task Four: Master self calming: listen repeatedly to Tracks 2,3 and 4

- Track 1 Introducing the tracks following
- Track 2 Self calming breathing [page 306]
- Track 3 Anchoring a relaxed state [page 310]
& Peaceful Place visualisation
- Track 4 Impulse Control Preparation [page 316]
- Track 5 Stopping worrying thoughts I [page 317]
- Track 6 Stopping worrying thoughts II [page 324]
- Track 7 Stopping disturbing memories [page 321]
- Track 8 Deep Relaxation Music



To download these tracks FREE please visit:
<http://audio.angermanagementprogramme.co.uk>

Part Seven



If you are thinking about hurting yourself or someone else,
you should get professional help right away

The Anger Management Programme

Contents

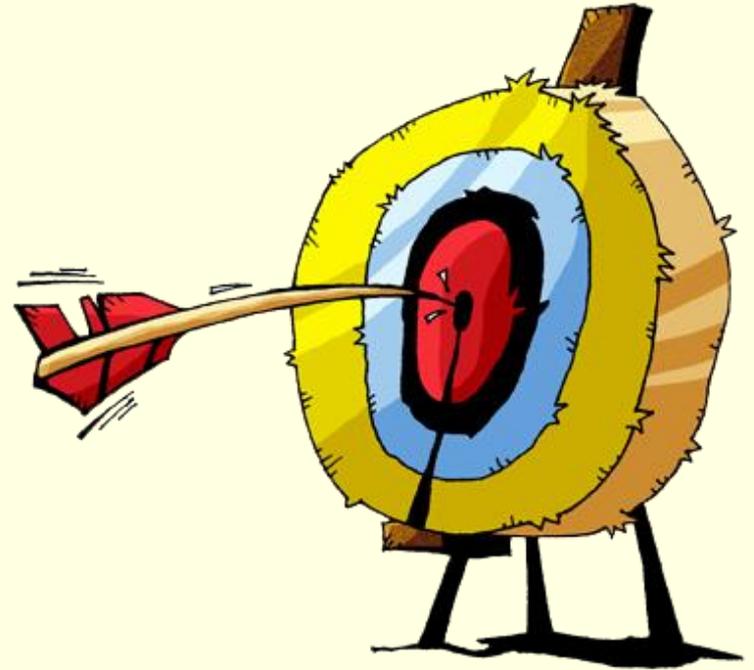
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- Steps to successful Impulse Control 332
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 - Step 3 Take responsibility for how you react 345
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- The ABC Impulse Control Technique 375



On successful completion of the Anger Management Programme

You'll.....

- 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.



Learning to understand and interrupt your anger process

The Number One Priority of the programme is to provide an Impulse Control Technique [page 375] to give you control over angry and aggressive responses .

The good news is that you undoubtedly have the ability to control angry impulses [everybody does!]. This programme teaches how to use that ability.

IMPULSE
CONTROL

IS NUMBER
ONE

1

PRIORITY

Anger Management or Anger Therapy?

- There is no clear line between Anger Management and Anger Therapy because learning Anger Management is, in many ways, therapeutic.
- **Anger Management** is about resisting and overcoming angry impulses. It's priority is behavioural change.
- **Anger Therapy** is about what's underlying anger from the past or in the present. Anger Therapy is about emotional health, about coping with the causes of anger and processing 'unfinished business' from the past.

I often find that one or both of the partners need to do personal therapeutic work to overcome issues which are stopping them improving the relationship.

Understanding your anger process: some of the key points which follow

- We have a last-minute warning and can choose not to 'lose it' [page 372]
- Alcohol switches our impulse control switch to 'OFF' [235 - 236]
- We give ourselves 'Permission', even plan, to be aggressive [339 -344]
- We store anger and hurt stamps [57] and 'rubber band' back to old feelings which may have been 'forgotten' [58 - 59]
- Breathing to and from the diaphragm is soothing [306]
- We can stop obsessive thoughts and memories [317-324]
- Assertiveness is one of the main keys to anger resolution [212]

ALSO

How we can use humour
to reduce anger
[370 - 371 & 412 - 414]



The steps to Impulse Control

What's involved:

- Accepting responsibility for angry reactions [page 345]
- Making the decision to change the way you react [338]
- Identifying the situations you have reacted angrily to in the past [page 339 - 344 & 349]
- Deciding how you will handle those situations in future [page 366 & audio track 4 page 374]
- Using the recommended Impulse Control Technique [page 375]
- Releasing pent up anger and hurt safely [Part 9 page 384]

Learning 'instant' self calming and stress reduction methods is a key part of Impulse Control.



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

- Anger is OK, it's one of the core natural 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 unexpressed and unprocessed 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 the anger release techniques described in Part Nine [page 384], but rage is more likely to need counselling or psychotherapy too!





How do you respond when angry or hurt?

HOT RESPONSE

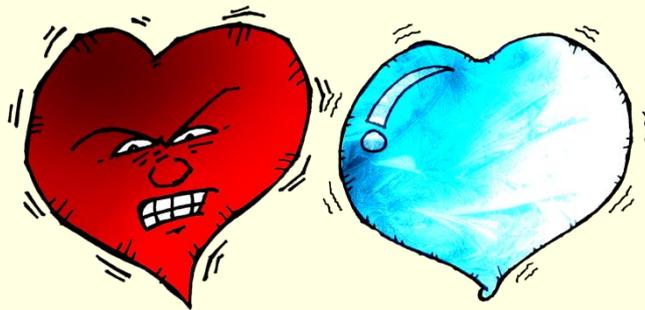
Aggressive, intimidating behaviour including verbally abusive rants



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



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



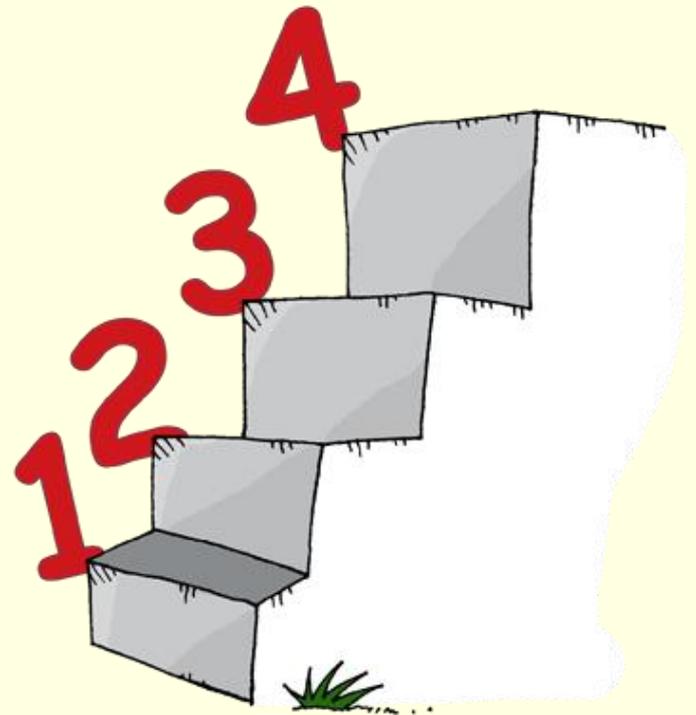
The steps to successful impulse control

Step One: Make the Decision to take control of the way you respond when angry, frustrated, annoyed, anxious, hurt or afraid [Page 338]

Step Two: Withdraw the permission you have given yourself to be angry in certain situations and with certain people [Pages 339 - 344]

Step Three: Take responsibility for your aggressive reactions [Page 345]

Step Four: Learn to interrupt your anger process using Self Calming breathing [Page 306 - 315]



It's not magic - you need to do the preparation work!

- It's no good just reading this programme! For it to be effective you need to follow the change preparation steps and use the methods described.
- Since the aim is to change your habitual ways of responding angrily in some situations, knowledge alone will not do it - you need to practise the new ways of thinking and behaving.
- If you wanted to learn how to walk a tightrope or juggle or write a computer programme, it would be no good just reading about it, would it? You need to practise putting your new knowledge into action.

The programme isn't magic -
you need to do the work.



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, annoyed, hurt, anxious or afraid you are stuck as you are!

Determination to change is fundamental to success in changing!



Step Two: Withdraw the Permissions you have given yourself

It may sound strange, but the fact is that you have so far given yourself permission at a subconscious level to behave aggressively in certain situations and with certain people.

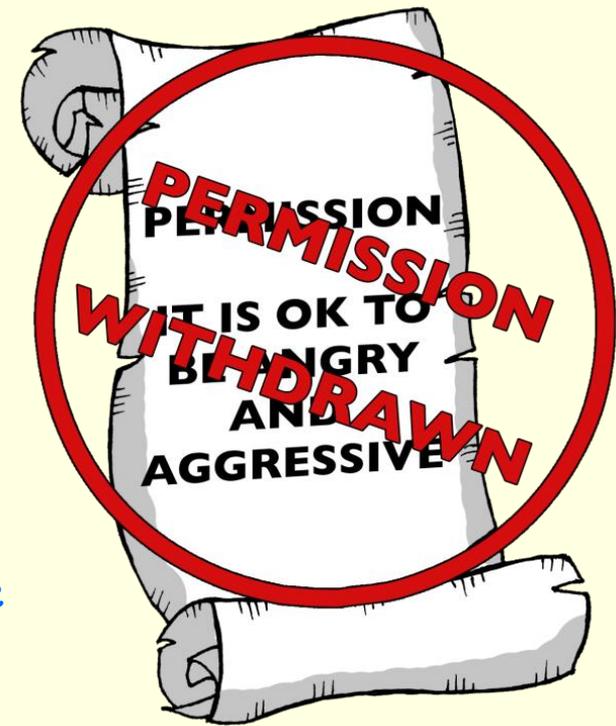
You don't do it with everybody - so you do know how to control your aggression when you choose.



Did your parents use anger and aggression around you when you were a child? Often that's where the subconscious permission came from.

Withdrawing those Permissions

- 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 denied 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 everyone!



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 something 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 it,
but that's how you experienced it?
In other words, sometimes it's your
interpretation, not what they meant,
and you have taken it wrongly!

Take a look at pages 91 - 97
'Filtering and distortion'

Best to 'check it out'
before you decide
how to react! Always
think about it before
reacting. Sometimes you
can ask calmly, what do
you mean?'

Don't reinforce anger Permissions with rehearsal of angry responses

This old joke makes the point well!
Dan needed a ladder for a DIY job. 'Bill next door has got a ladder', thinks Dan. 'I'm sure he won't mind lending it to me, he's a very helpful bloke'. As he walks down his garden path on his way to ask Bill, a thought crosses his mind. 'What if he does mind, what if he refuses?' As he walks up the path to Bill's front door he finds himself starting to get angry at the idea that Bill might refuse, 'after all I have done for him'.

By the time he rings Bill's doorbell he is coming nicely to the boil thinking about the possibility that Bill may refuse. He rings the doorbell. Bill answers in his usual friendly way, 'Morning Dan, how are you today?' Dan replies 'You can stick your effing ladder up your backside'.

Don't rehearse angry responses

Even optimists do it sometimes, but paranoid and pessimistic people do it more.

Don't rehearse aggressive behaviour.

Plan and visualise yourself handling situations calmly using the Impulse Control Preparation audio track [Track 4 page 374]



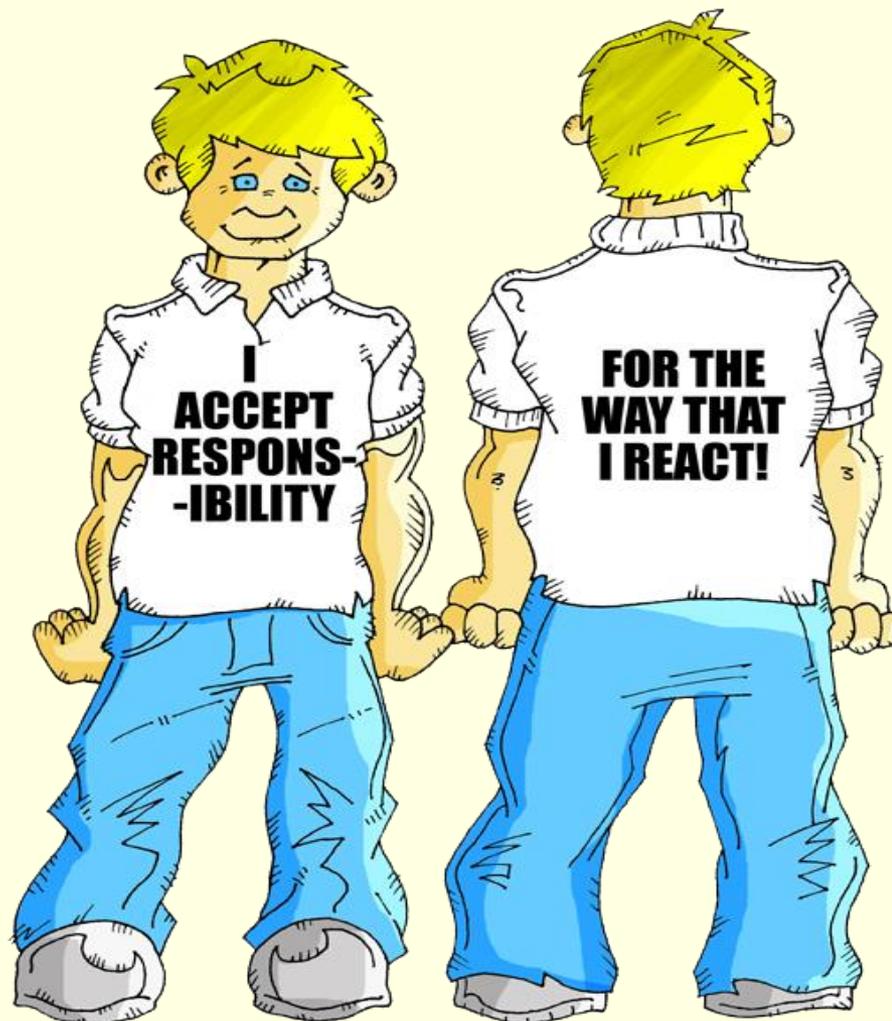
Step Three

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 Four

You need to get rid of at least 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'.

Major False Belief Number One



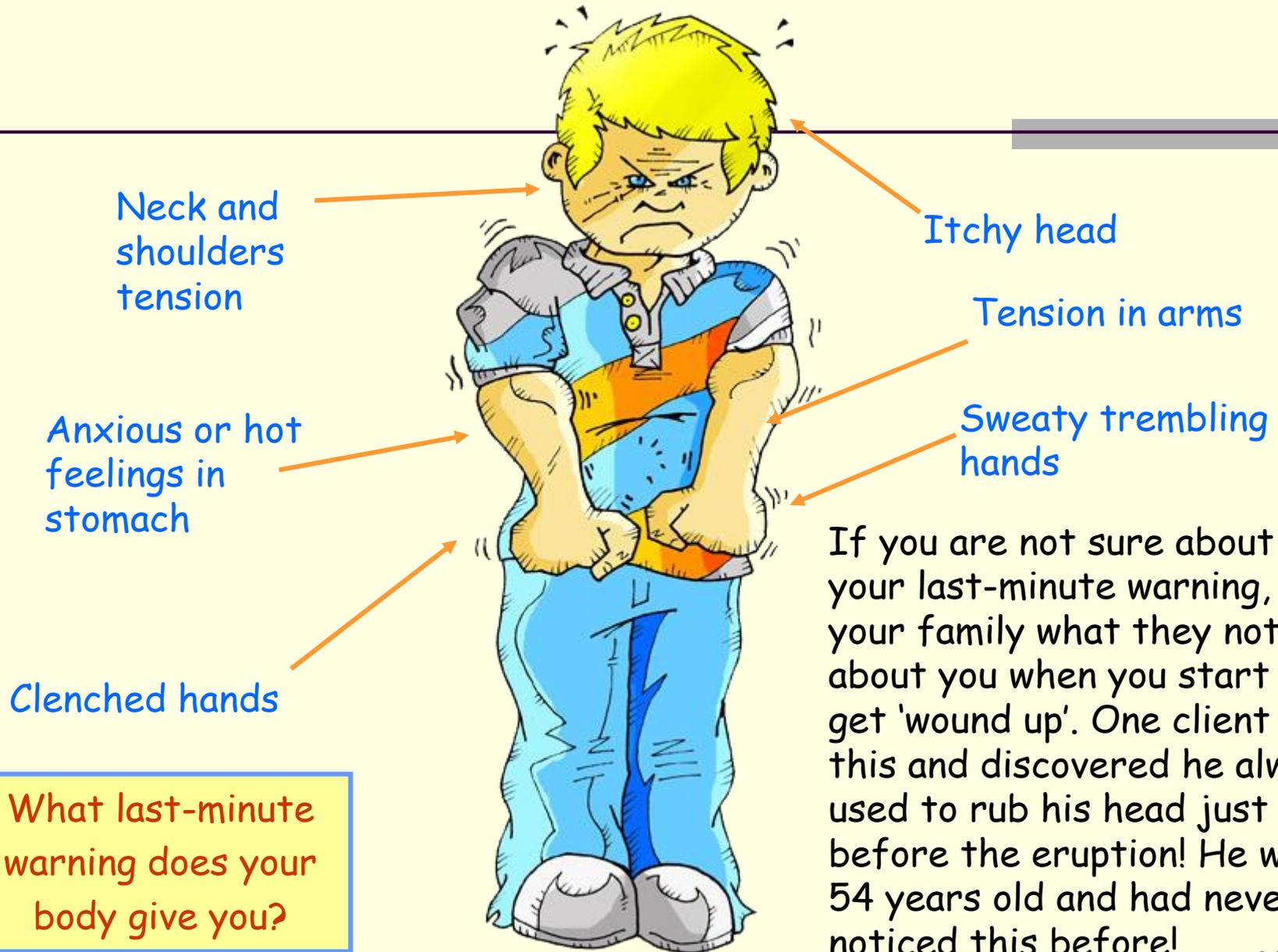
'My angry response happens in a flash.
I don't get a chance to control it'.

This is not true!

Your body ALWAYS gives you a last-minute warning [page 372] when you are on the edge of 'losing it'. You have just not been noticing the warning - or ignoring it!

IT'S ABSOLUTELY VITAL TO YOUR SUCCESS ON THIS PROGRAMME
THAT YOU LEARN TO NOTICE THE LAST-MINUTE WARNING
YOUR BODY GIVES YOU.

EXAMPLES OF LAST-MINUTE WARNINGS



Neck and shoulders tension

Itchy head

Tension in arms

Anxious or hot feelings in stomach

Sweaty trembling hands

Clenched hands

What last-minute warning does your body give you?

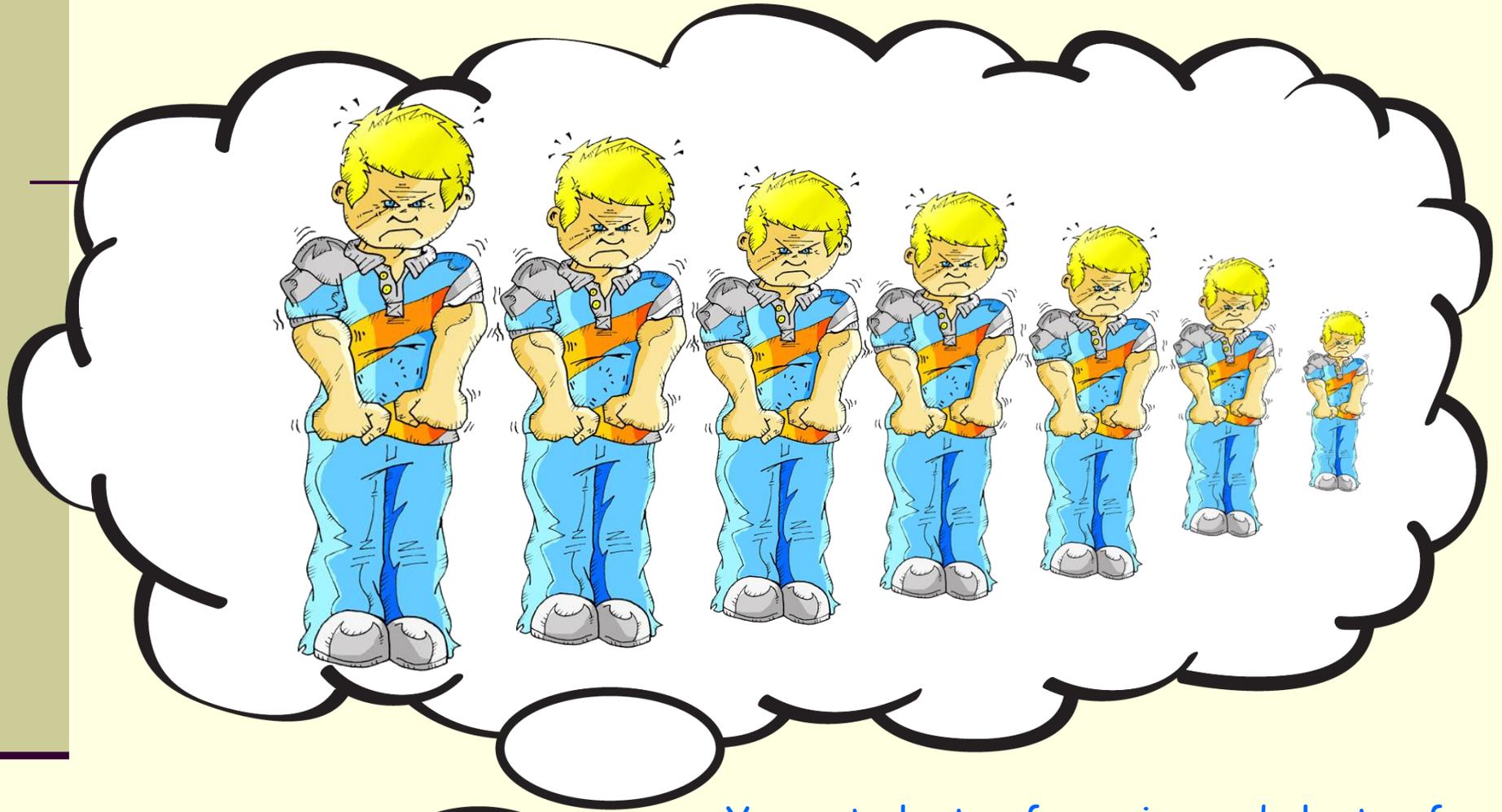
If you are not sure about your last-minute warning, ask your family what they notice about you when you start to get 'wound up'. One client did this and discovered he always used to rub his head just before the eruption! He was 54 years old and had never noticed this before!

You also get long-range warnings - triggers that are predictable

Far from being instant, your anger triggers [page 358] are almost totally predictable in advance.

- The situations which lead to your angry and hurt feelings are mainly predictable and could lead to angry and hurt feelings when they happen later today, tomorrow, next month, next year.
- This is because the situations in which you are likely to react badly are the same situations you have reacted badly in before. Your angry responses are nearly always a replay!
- The list of Permissions given earlier [339 - 344] will include some of your predictable Triggers. Your family should be able to help you identify others.

You already know when you are likely to react badly in future and have all the time you need to prepare to handle things better.



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.

Major False Belief Number Two

'People and things cause
my angry responses'

This is not true!

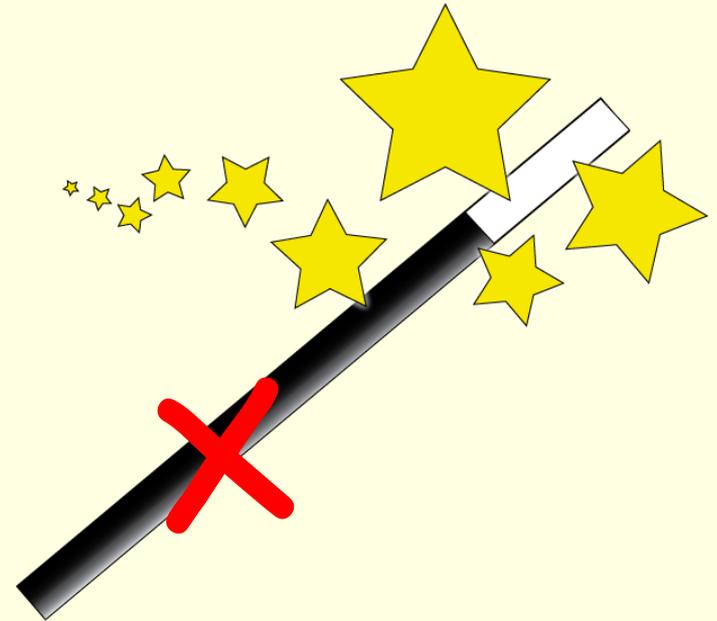


Of course, the things people say and do and things that happen, can give rise to angry feelings and can 'make you angry', but no-one has a magic wand to make you REACT in an angry way.

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

No-one can make you respond this way or that. You always have a choice!

- No-one has a magic wand that they can use to force you to react in this way or that.
- You can learn to choose how to react instead of reacting with angry autopilot.



I can't stress this too much!
It's fundamental to angry impulse control.
However wound up you are, it's still your choice how you REACT.

Step Five:

Learn to interrupt your anger process

- Accept that you have choices when feeling angry and know what those choices are.[Pages 379 - 381]
- Be able to make use of your choices instead of an angry autopilot reaction.

The Master Key to impulse control.....

.....is using your last minute warning [pages 347 - 348] to notice how close you are to your reaction flashpoint and choosing how to react, instead of leaving your angry autopilot in control.

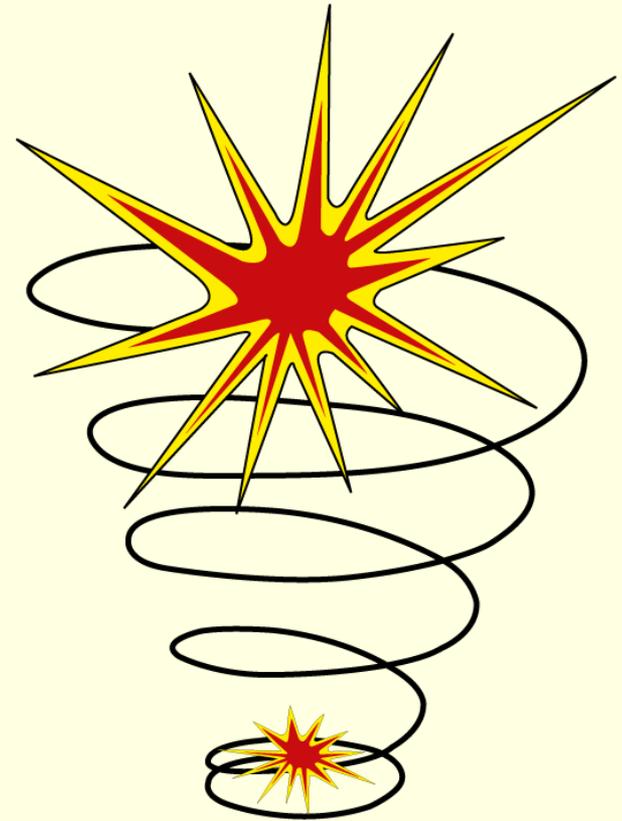
The ABC Impulse Control Technique

[Pages 375 - 383] expands on your choices - your response alternatives instead of an angry autopilot response.



Stopping the spiral of anger

- The spiral of anger can be fast, taking just a few seconds, or slow building over a period of days, weeks, months and even years. Sometimes, it starts to build with a single incident in the past which was not resolved and has festered.
- Apart from learning how to control angry impulses you can learn later [Part 9 page 384] how to stop the spiral building.
- The key is to 'nip it in the bud' - act to defuse it sooner rather than later.



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

- Anger Management is not about suppressing anger - in fact, in some ways, it's the opposite!
- Yes, it's about resisting your angry autopilot reaction, but it's also very much about learning to be less easily angry and releasing your anger and hurt in ways which don't hurt yourself or anyone else. In fact, safe anger release is absolutely essential.
- If you 'bottle up' anger and hurt 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.



Ways of releasing anger and hurt safely are covered in Part Nine starting on page 384

Anger Therapy may also be needed

You may need to work with a therapist if, at the end of the programme, you are still:

- Struggling with angry impulse control
- Still feeling angry or hurt about events from the past
- Continuing to have bouts of inexplicable rage
- Unable to express yourself assertively

If you are thinking about hurting yourself or someone else you should get professional help right away.



Essential Impulse Control Preparation Tasks

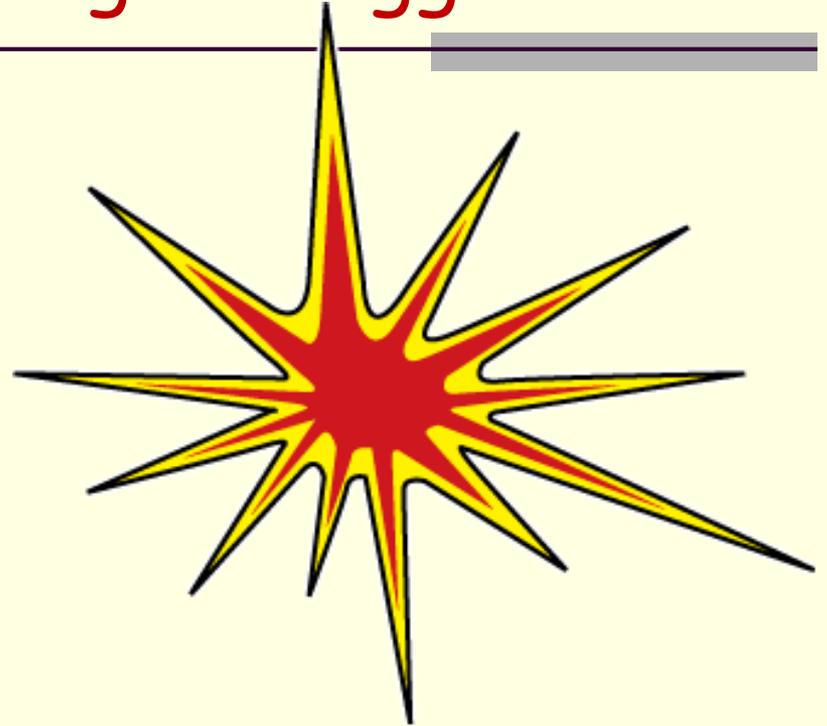
- Task 1. Identify your 'Anger Triggers' - anger flashpoints [pages 358 -359]
- Task 2. Identify your 'Red Zones' - anger high risk situations [360 - 365]
- Task 3. Learn to heed the last-minute warning from your body [347 - 348]
- Task 4. Learn the diaphragmatic breathing method of self calming to help control your reaction to anger triggers and lower your overall stress level [pages 306 - 315]
- Task 5. Understand your choices when feeling angry or hurt and feeling like lashing out and knowing what to do instead [pages 379 - 381]



Preparation Task One

Identify Your Anger Triggers

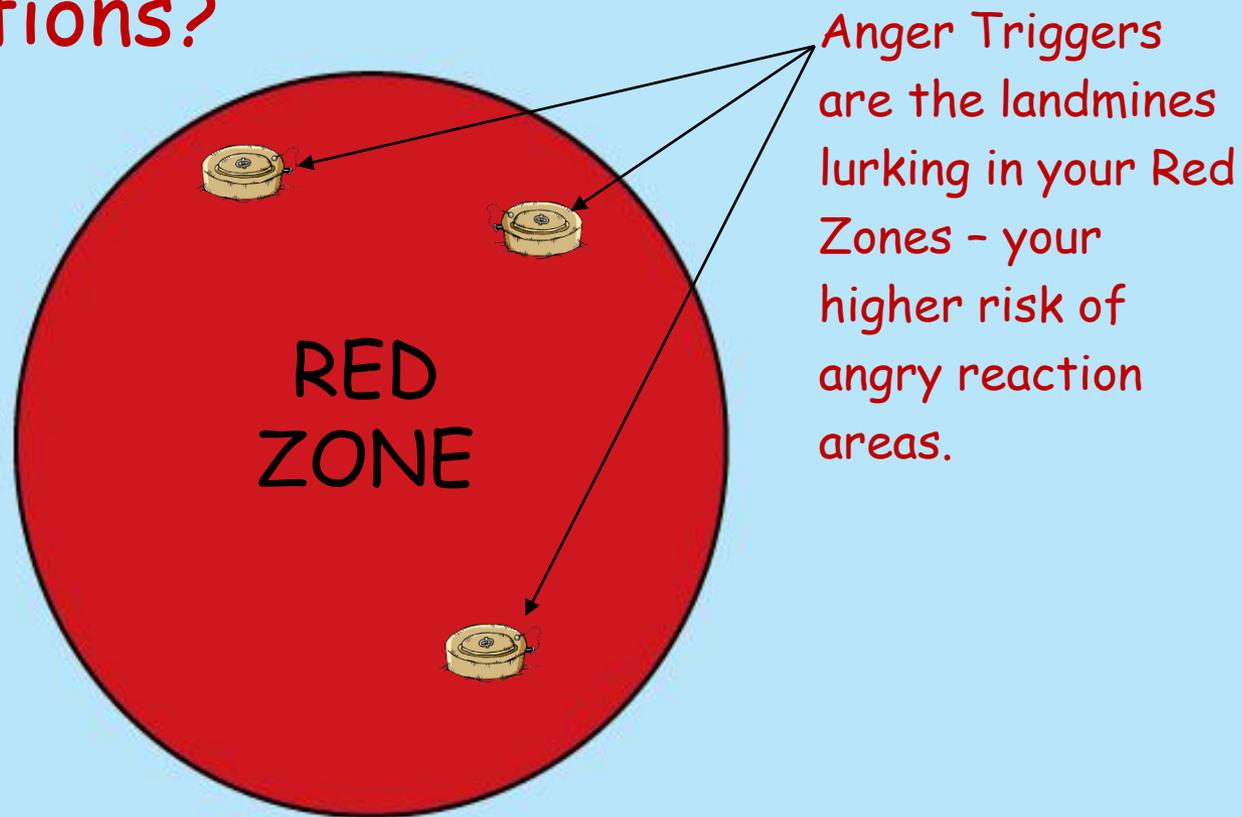
- You already know your anger triggers. They are the things that you have reacted to in the past. The things which you have so far given yourself Permission to react angrily to.
- You could start by checking yourself out against the list of 'Permissions' earlier [pages 339 - 344].



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.



Anger Triggers are the landmines lurking in your Red Zones - your higher risk of angry reaction areas.

OK ZONE

Preparation Task Two

Make a list of your 'Red Zones'

Where,
when
and
with whom,
are you most likely
to get angry?

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



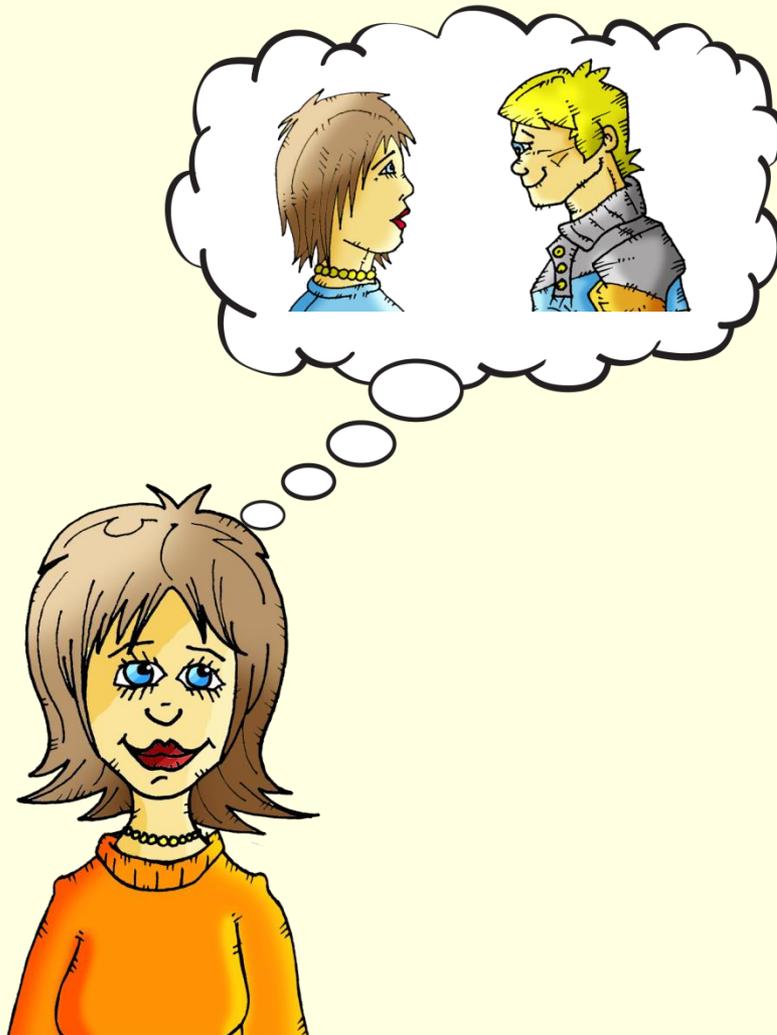
Where,
when
and
with whom
do you tend
to get angry?



Red Zones
are places,
situations
and people
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 [page 366].
- **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

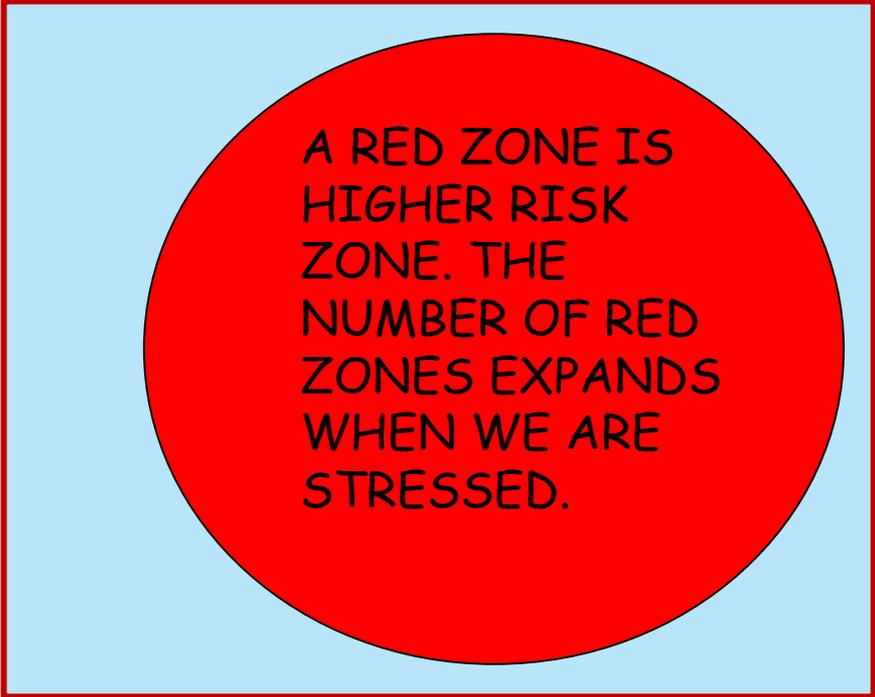
- Any place or situation where you have 'lost it' in the past.
- When driving and late.
- When doing a job you don't want to do.
- When with certain of your partner's relatives.
- Any time you risk being refused what you want.



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.



A RED ZONE IS HIGHER RISK ZONE. THE NUMBER OF RED ZONES EXPANDS WHEN WE ARE STRESSED.

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.

Preparing how to respond differently in future

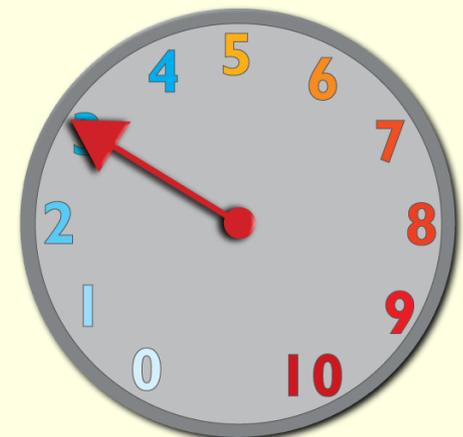
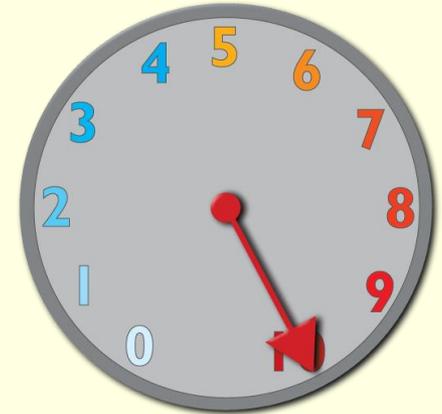
1. Make a list of your anger Triggers.
2. Think about each of the Triggers and decide how you want to respond to each in future.
3. Imagine yourself responding to each Trigger in the way you want to [audio track 4 page 374]



By identifying your specific anger Triggers in advance and by deciding how you want to handle each of them, you will be able to be on your guard and use your last-minute warning [pages 347 - 348] to remind you to choose what to do instead of automatically reacting angrily if you hit a trigger.

Reduce the power and number of Triggers

- We all 'make mountains out of molehills' sometimes. Look at the Triggers you have written down and 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 have been letting bother you. You can stop them getting to you in future by simply deciding to not let them and visualising yourself staying calm instead.
- A good tip is to expect the irritations to happen and be pleased when they don't - instead of the other way round.

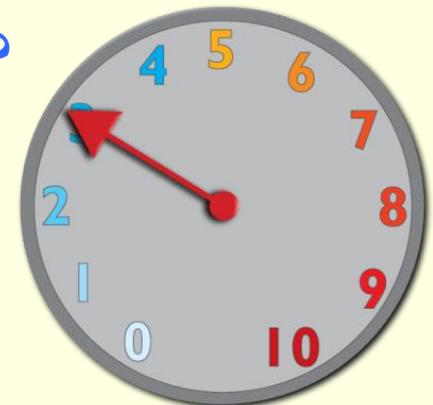


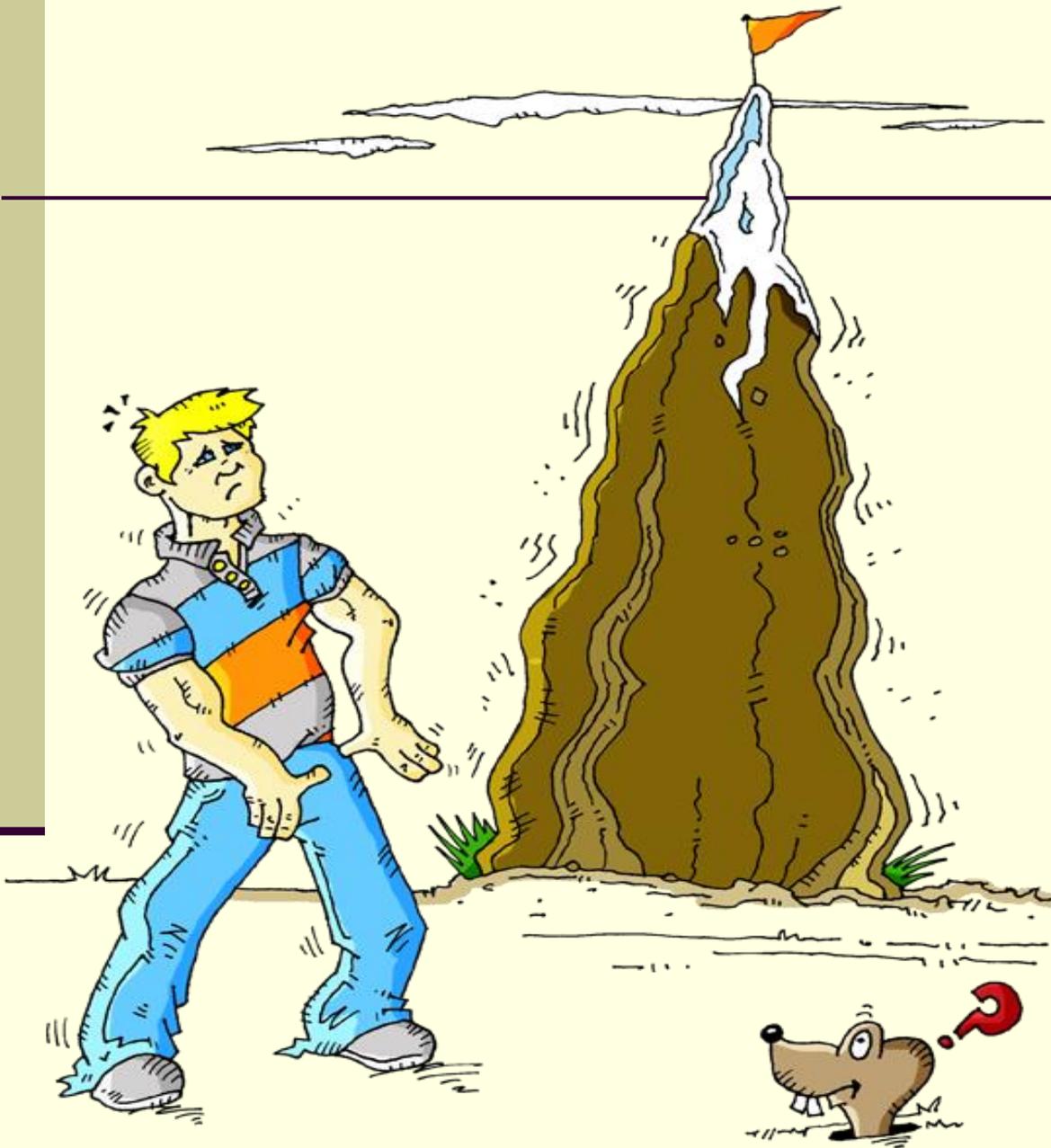
How important now?

- 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 remember leaving the office after being criticised and imagine finding that someone had run their car keys down the side of her new car. What score was that? 10! And the boss criticising her? Now 7.
- 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.





We all make mountains
out of molehills
sometimes.

Try to keep small
irritations small
using the 0 - 10
Scale of Importance!

Reduce the size of Triggers using humour

When you think about what another person may say or do you can reduce the score 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 and imagine doing something slapstick.

Don't do it!
Only fantasise doing it!



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

Example: A client was getting angry about what her ex daughter-in-law might say if she ever came to the 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 and think about how she might respond assertively, rather than angrily.



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

Preparation Task Three

Identify your last minute warning

- You may think 'My reaction is unpredictable, explosive, it happens in an instant'. This is a false belief.
- 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 - or ignoring it!



- Itchy head
- Tension in neck, shoulders or arms
- Sweaty, trembling or clenched hands
- Anxious or hot feelings in stomach
- Feeling weak in knees

What is your last-minute warning?

It's absolutely vital to learn to notice your last-minute warning

- How does YOUR body tell YOU
'I am on the edge of responding angrily'?
- Learning to notice the last-minute warning is an absolutely vital part of the Impulse Control technique. It gives a last chance to decide what to do instead of an angry autopilot reaction.

The ABC Impulse Control Technique [page 375] describes how to use your last-minute warning to give you control over angry impulses.



What physical sensations do you get when you are on the edge of 'losing it'?

Task Four: Master self calming: listen repeatedly to Tracks 2,3 and 4

- Track 1 Introducing the tracks following
- Track 2 Self calming breathing [page 306]
- Track 3 Anchoring a relaxed state [page 310]
& Peaceful Place visualisation
- Track 4 Impulse Control Preparation [page 316]
- Track 5 Stopping worrying thoughts I [page 317]
- Track 6 Stopping worrying thoughts II [page 324]
- Track 7 Stopping disturbing memories [page 321]
- Track 8 Deep Relaxation Music

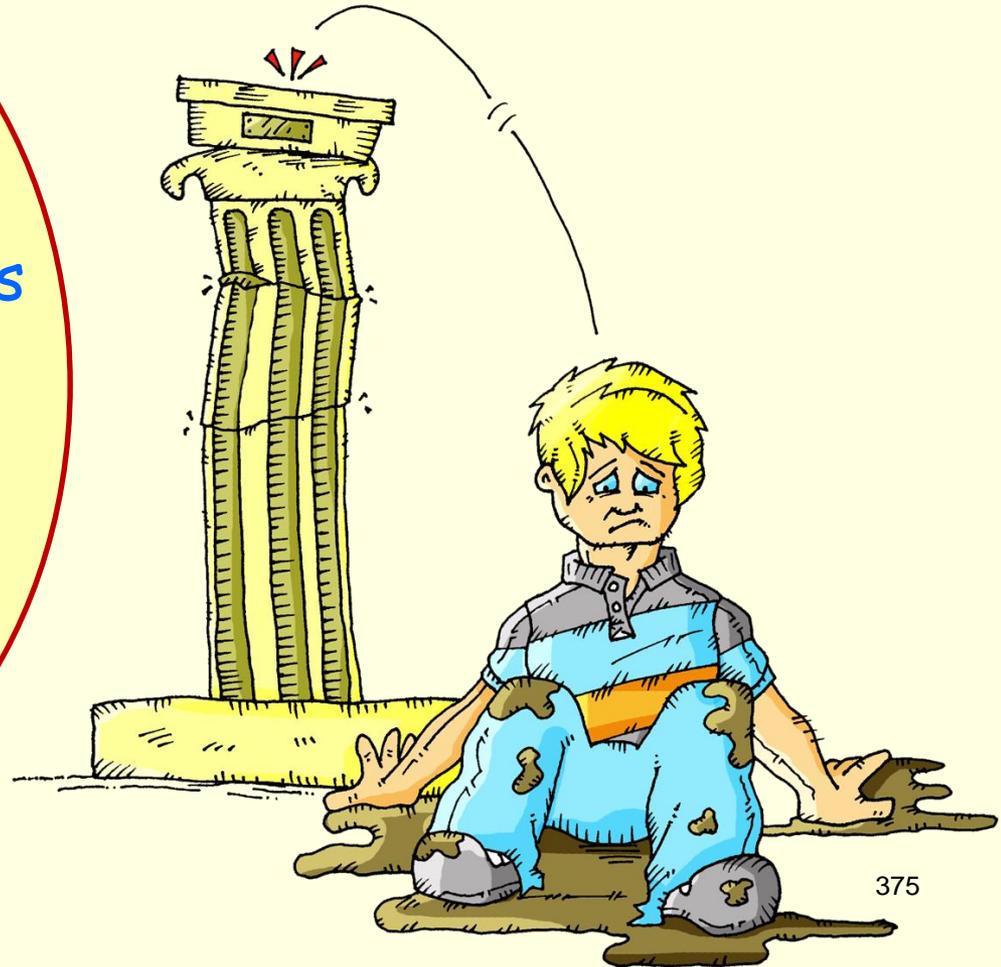


To download these tracks FREE please visit:
<http://audio.angermanagementprogramme.co.uk>

Part Eight

The ABC Impulse Control Method

- Impulse Control
- The ABC of choices
- What to do with unresolved angry feelings



Have you completed your preparation?

Before proceeding to the next stage it's essential that you can answer 'Yes' to the following four questions:

1. Have you identified the Last-Minute Warning your body gives you and practised noticing it? [Pages 347 - 348]
2. Have you mastered Diaphragmatic Breathing and the ability to feel calm simply by changing your breathing and saying your Peaceful Place key word? [Page 312 - 314 & 325 Track 3]
3. Have you listed your Red Zones and decided how you want to handle yourself in each Red Zone in future? [Pages 360 - 365]
4. Have you listed your Anger Triggers, decided how you want to handle each Anger Trigger in future [Page 366 & Audio Track 4 on page 374] and used the Impulse Control Preparation method for each of them.



Tasks 1 - 4 complete your Impulse Control preparation



Only when you can answer 'yes' to all four of the questions on the previous page have you developed the full capability to use successfully the Impulse Control Technique. Don't skimp your preparation if you want to master impulse control.

Impulse Control

First - when entering a Red Zone



When entering a Red Zone [page 360] use your Self Calming Technique

1. Change your breathing to deeper, slower, Diaphragmatic Breathing [Page 306 - 315]
2. Say your 'Peaceful Place' key word to yourself [page 312 - 314 and audio track 3 on page 325]
3. Notice that you have begun to feel calmer.
4. Remember how you planned to be [page 316] when in that Red Zone should you feel an angry reaction building up.

The Impulse Control Steps when you hit an Anger Trigger

1

Notice
yourself
feeling tense
and the
last-minute
warning from
your body
[page 347].



2

Switch to Diaphragmatic
Breathing [page 306] and
say your 'Peaceful Place' key
to yourself [page 310].



3

CHOOSE
A or B or C

Impulse Control

Next step - choose A B or C

- A** Let your angry/hurt reaction autopilot take over - blow it!
- B** Be assertive [page 212]. Discuss what's bothering you there and then. [Maybe a good idea for later, but you are not likely to be in the right frame of mind to do it well while feeling angry].
- C** Choose '**NOT NOW**'. Decide to be passive for the time being, 'let it go' for the moment and deal with it later when you feel calmer.
Highly recommended.



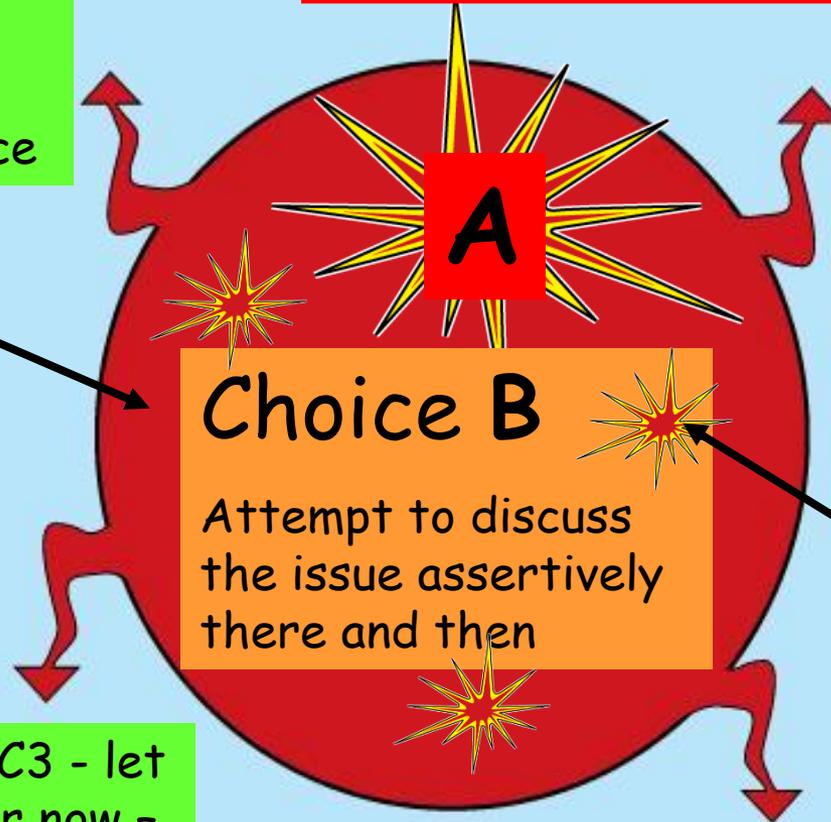
Maybe put the issue in your 'Tomorrow Box' and decide how to deal with it tomorrow? [Page 317]

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 your 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 the issue assertively there and then

TRIGGERS

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

Choice C [BEST] 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

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.....



If staying calm leaves you with feelings of anger, resentment, frustration or hurt

The feelings left over need to be dissolved. Main options are:

- Assertiveness - choose the right moment later to raise the issue assertively with the other party. [Page 212]
- Use the anger release techniques described in Part Nine to dissolve the feelings. [Page 384]
- Work with a therapist.

In the meantime, you could put your thoughts and feelings into your **Tomorrow Box** [pages 317 - 320] or your **Yesterday Box** [page 321] for the time being.



Part Nine

Freeing
Yourself
From
Anger &
Hurt



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

Releasing anger and frustration safely: 10 safe anger & hurt release methods

- Introduction: Anger & hurt release is essential 386
1. The assertiveness method of anger and hurt release 397
 2. Vocal methods of anger release 400
 3. Write an angry letter you will never send 403 - 404
 4. Accept responsibility for your contribution 405
 5. Shrink the upsetting memory 406
 6. Hit an inanimate object to release angry energy 407 - 409
 7. Release angry energy with exercise 410
 8. Shrink the importance of the incident with the 0 - 10 scale 411
 9. Fantasise harmless revenge 412 - 414
 10. What to do if you are still left with angry and hurt feelings 415
- Anger Management Programme Self Review 416
- 

Anger & hurt release is essential

- On page 57 I described how we store anger and hurt as emotional trading stamps, which we then cash in inappropriately with 'over the top' reactions to Anger Triggers.
[Pages 358 - 359]
- Unresolved anger and hurt is also a major factor in stress. It needs to be released in ways that don't harm yourself or anyone else.



Anger Stamps need to be processed

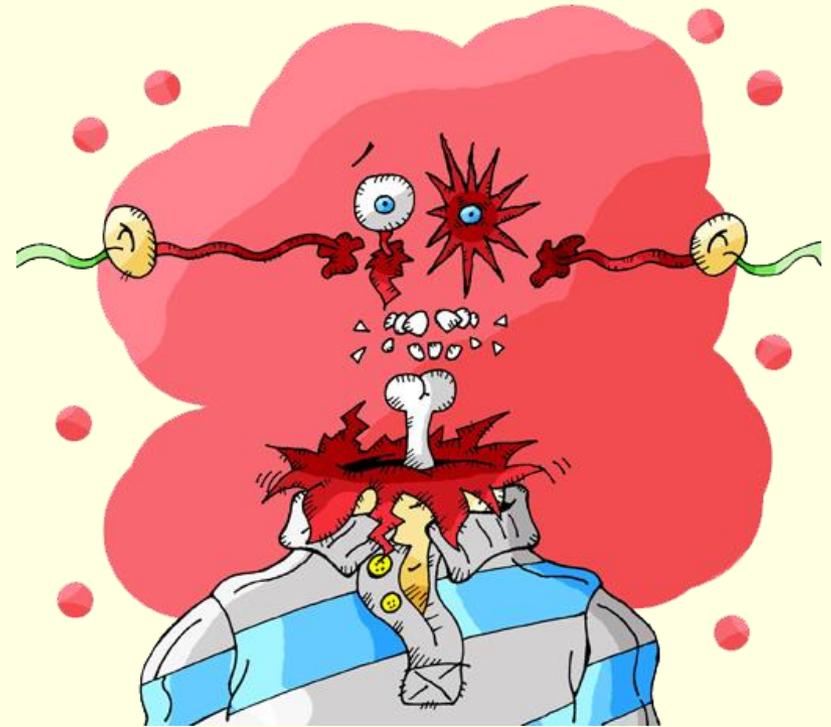


If you don't process anger stamps you have already collected and learn how to avoid collecting new ones, you will often find it very difficult to resist 'over the top' reactions.

Anger Stamps

- When we hang on to Anger Stamps something called Rubber Banding happens and we use the stamps as fuel for here and now anger. This is explained more fully on page 58.
- If you collect enough Anger Stamps and don't dissolve them your head may explode! #

Not really !



Artist Barry got a bit carried away with this one!

THE CUP OF POISON



If you can be decide to 'let it go' it's much healthier for you.



- Hanging on to anger is like sipping from a cup of poison so that the possibility of revenge is kept open.
- 'If I let it go, it means they have got away with it', is the thought that keeps anger intact.
- That possibility of revenge comes at a high price! It's a poison which increases stress, impairs ability to manage anger and damages both physical and emotional health.

The client who wouldn't let his anger go

John was very angry with someone who had double-crossed him, cut him out of a deal and cost him a lot of money. It had happened a year previously. His anger was torturing him. He had even investigated hiring someone who could 'kneecap' the person for him, shoot him in the kneecaps, so he could get even. We worked most weeks for six months. At the end of the six months his anger seemed undiminished [although he was no longer planning the hit on the guy who had cheated him].

Why wouldn't he let his anger go? Because he felt that letting his anger go, stopping sipping from his cup of poison, would mean that the other person had 'got away with it'.

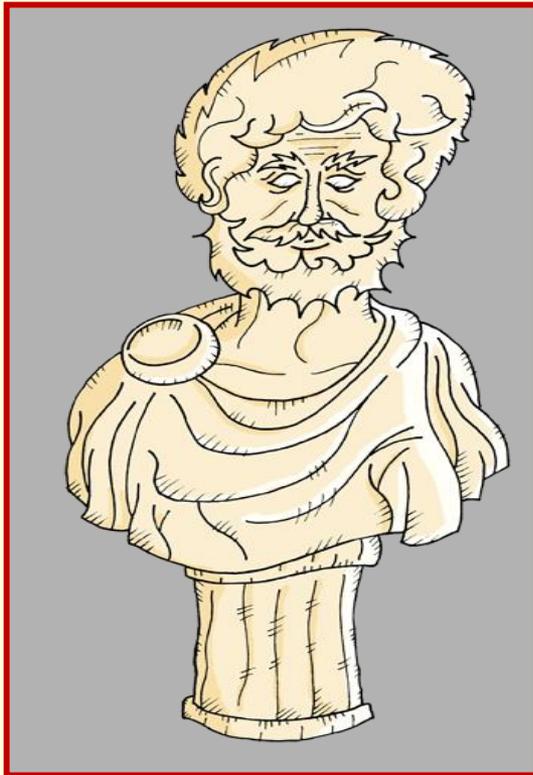
? Who are you hurting ?

- I find this over and over again in my work with clients: they have been hanging on to their anger, in some cases for decades, because 'if I let it go it will mean that they have got away with it!'
- Who are you hurting when you hang on to anger, when you continue to sip from that cup of poison?
- Rid yourself of stored up anger stamps using the anger release techniques described later in this part of the programme or by working with a therapist.



To be free of old anger and hurt you have to first make the decision to let it go. Until you make that decision you are stuck.

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

Don't kick the cat!

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

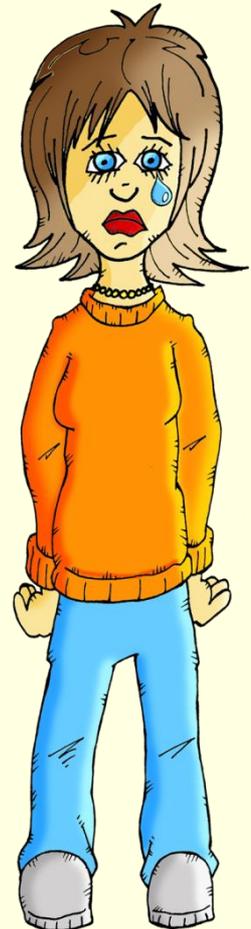
'DISPLACEMENT' or
'KICKING THE CAT'

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?



Release of anger is essential, but it must be without harm to yourself or others

- By 'harm' to others, 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 taunts.
- 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!**



Remember Epictetus



Right Time, Right Place,
Right Way, Right Reason,
Right Length of Time,
Right Person.



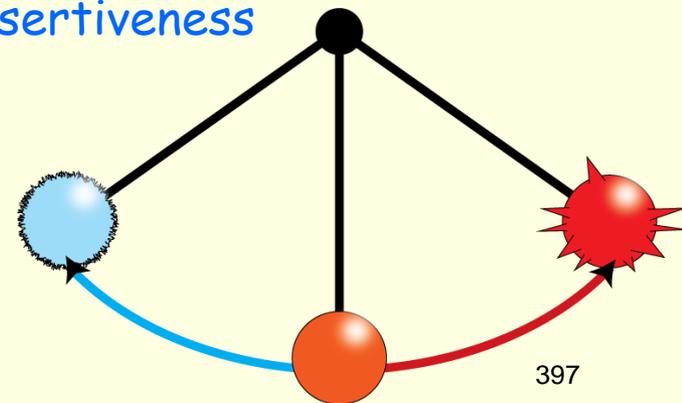
Safe anger and hurt release methods

- Now follows a selection of safe anger and hurt release methods, including the assertiveness option.
- I find that some clients 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.



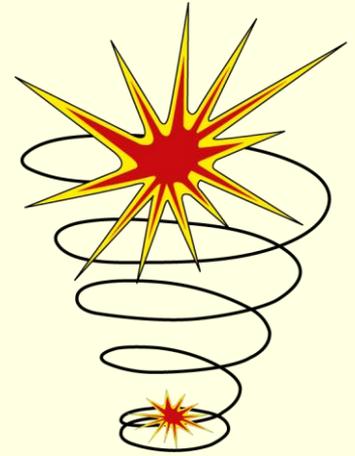
1. The assertiveness method of anger and hurt release [Read about assertiveness on page 212]

- 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 for you 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.



However, its hard to write a letter which won't risk making matters worse

It's extremely difficult to write a letter which will not be experienced as critical and blaming by the other person. If reconciliation is what you hope for it, you may find that your letter will have the opposite effect!



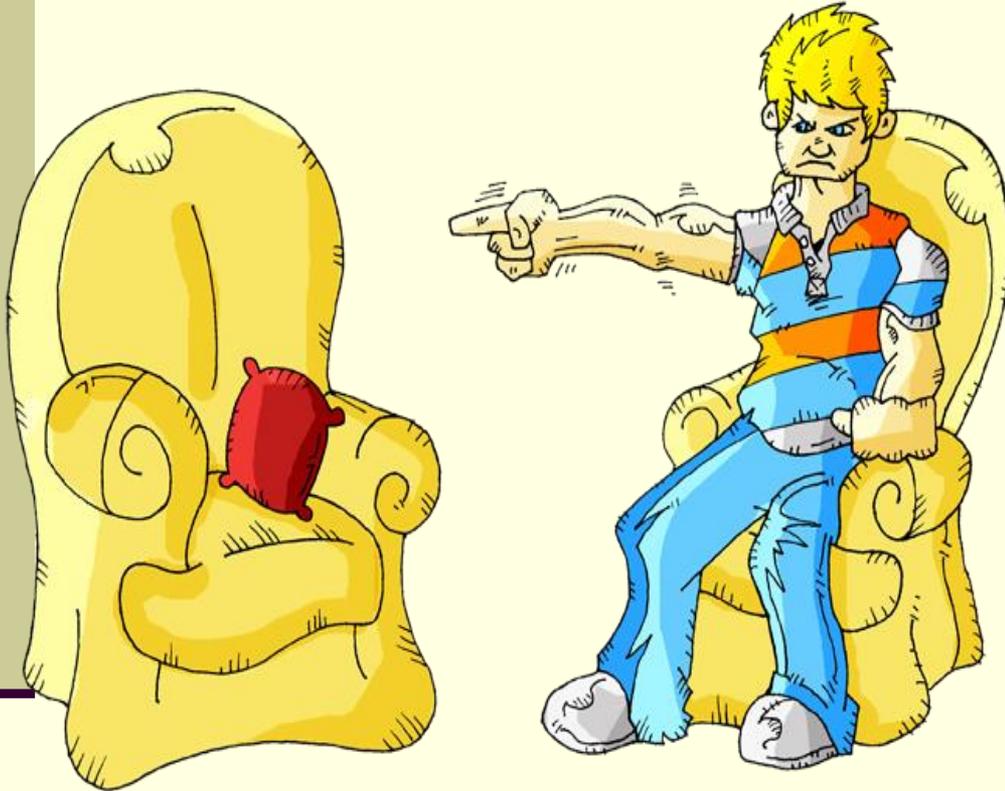
If it's impractical, unsafe, too risky or you don't feel able to face up to the other person, choose one of the other anger release methods described here. For example, you can write an angry letter you will never send.

If you find it difficult to be assertive you should work on it. [Page 212 onwards]

- Lack of assertiveness is usually a big problem because passivity leads to unresolved anger, frustration, resentment and passive aggressive behaviour [Pages 113 - 116].
- It's really important to learn how to be assertive when appropriate.



2. Vocal methods of anger release

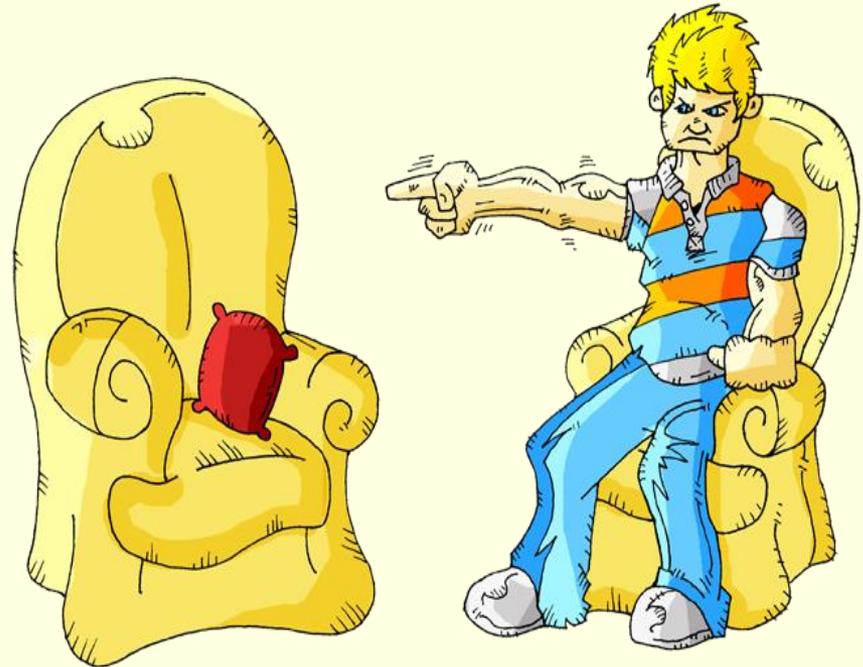


The Two Chair method of anger and hurt release has been used for many years. Choose a time when you have the house to yourself, put a cushion on the other chair and let rip. Say everything you would like to say to the other person, but to the cushion instead. Let your anger out: foul language is essential!

You can also use Two Chair work for the release of grief and sadness. You can have a conversation with anyone you choose, living or not!

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.



It's OK to talk to yourself out loud....but not in the street

- Talking to yourself out loud helps to release feelings.
- Ranting is very good, including lots of swearing.
- Rant at a 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 the 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!



3. Write an angry letter you will never send

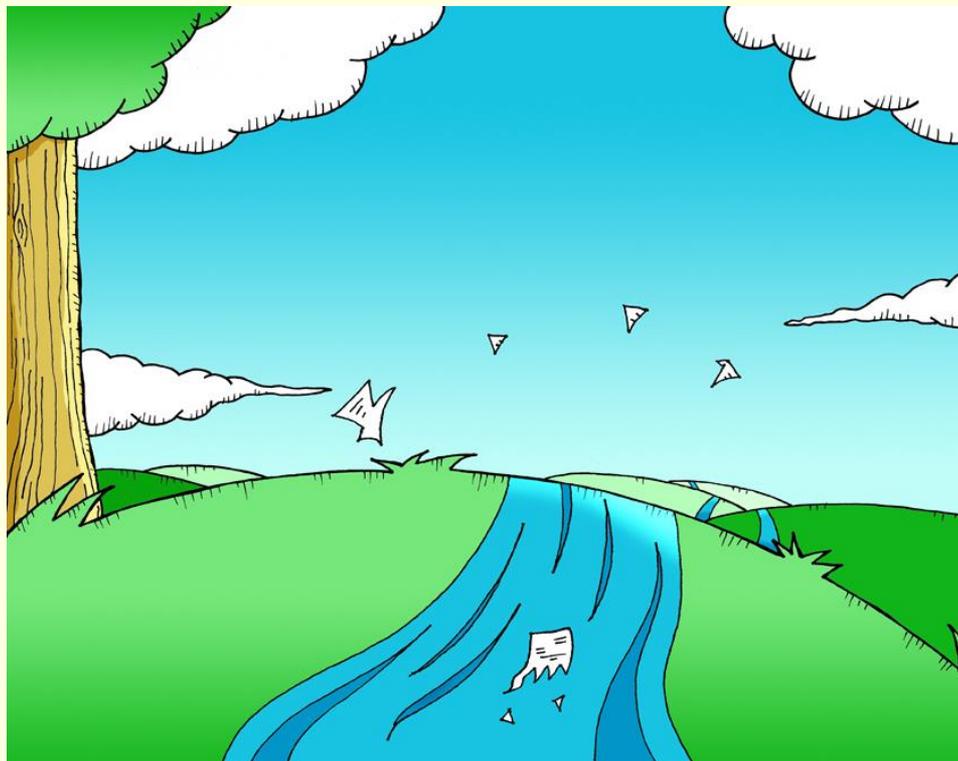
This is the written version of the Two Chair method. Instead of voicing your anger or sadness, you write the other person a letter you will never send. The letter should not pull punches. You can combine the Emotional Letter technique with Two Chair work by reading your letter to the cushion on the other chair and letting your feelings flow as you read.



Artist Barry misunderstood when I asked him to depict an angry letter and a sad letter !

Let your anger and sadness float away with the fragments of the letter

When you are ready to let your anger and sadness go, you can go to a stream, tear the letter into bits, throw the bits into the stream and as the pieces are carried away, imagine your feelings of anger and sadness being carried away too.



Alternatively you could burn your letter and bury or scatter the ashes.

Or, tear the letter up and flush it down the toilet. It's optional whether you use the toilet before you flush the letter away!

4. Accept responsibility for your contribution [Page 174 - 176]

- 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, that may be necessary.
- The problem is that our 'Empathy Switch' is in the 'Off' position when we are angry with someone and we won't let ourselves see their point of view.
- One way to turn the empathy switch back to 'ON' is to sit in a chair you don't normally sit in and pretend to be the other person.
Tell the story as you think they might see it.
- You may not feel like doing what I suggest. In fact, it may be the last thing you want to do but, if you can manage to do it, your angry feelings should become less painful [see pages 190 - 201]



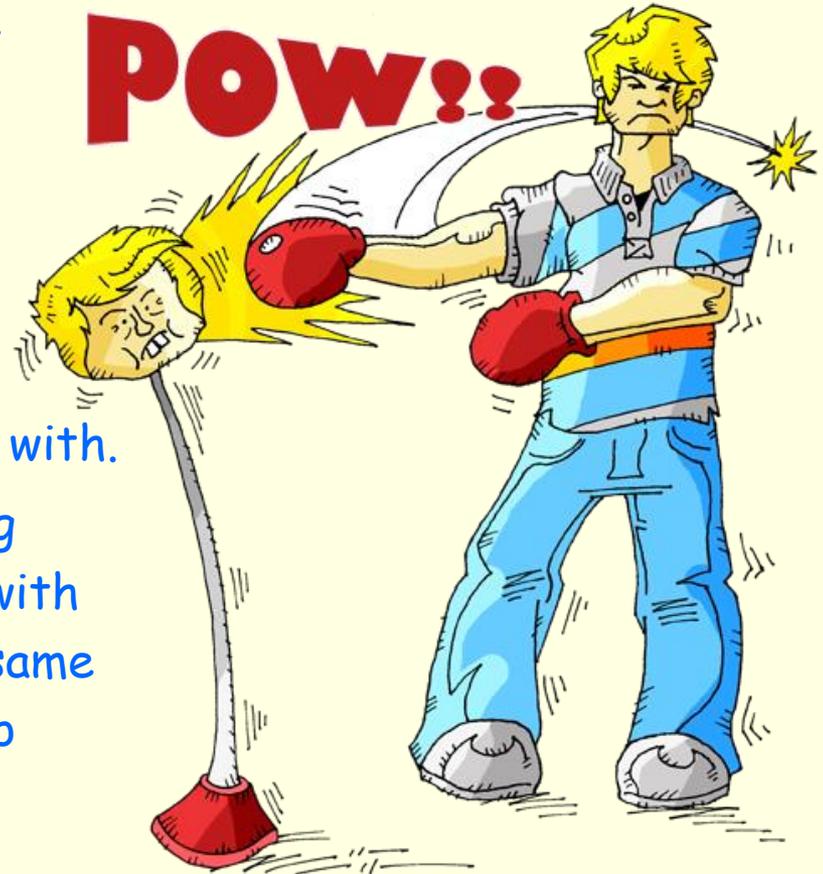
5: Shrink the upsetting memory

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



6: Hit an inanimate object to release angry energy

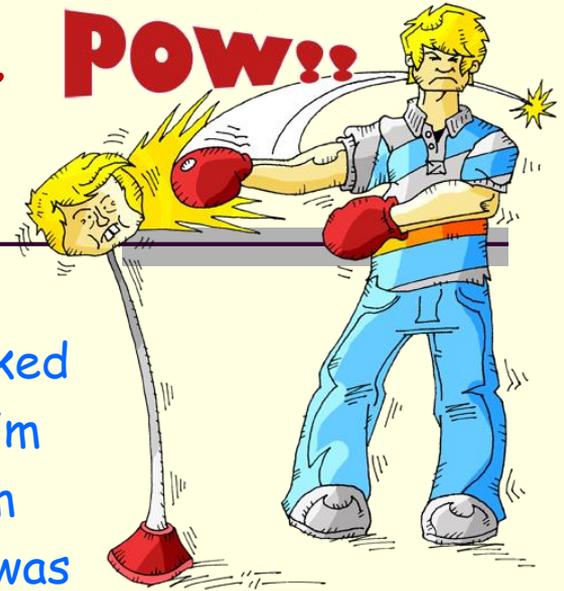
- Releasing your anger on an inanimate object is very effective! How about buying a punch bag!
- When hitting the punch bag, it's essential to get some venom into it. The punch bag should become someone or something you are angry with.
- You can also release anger by putting a cushion on your lap and 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**

An example of the effective use of a punch bag

POW!!



One particular client always comes into my mind when I teach the punchbag approach. He had been carrying painful anger towards his childhood sexual abuser for many years. My client was a gentle person and at first resisted my punchbag suggestion. He was afraid to let his anger out 'in case I can't stop and go and do it for real'.

Eventually he asked a friend to let him use his home gym when the house was otherwise empty. Punching and ranting until he was exhausted proved transformational and he found the relief from his anger that he was wanting. He no longer felt the need to 'do it for real' to his abuser.

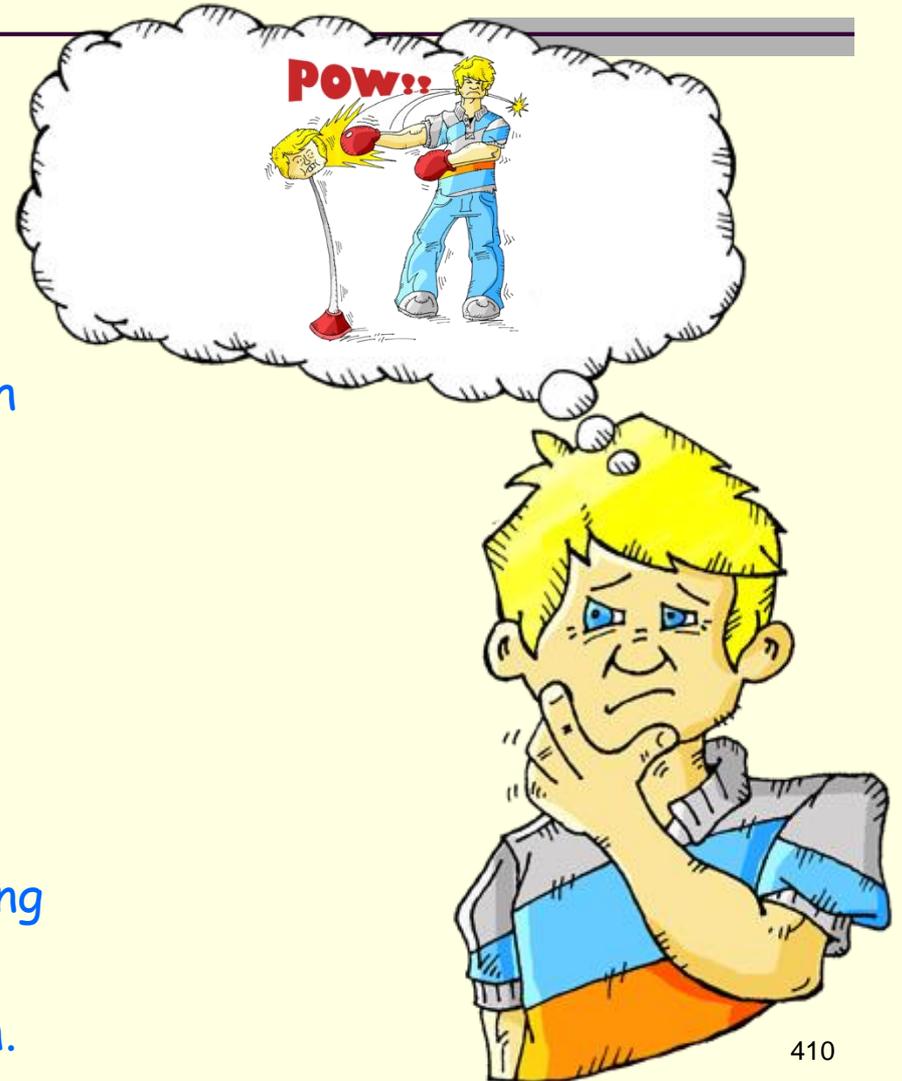
ANGER RELEASE METHODS



When you are feeling angry, but not angry with anybody in particular, you can release angry energy by thrashing a tree with a length of hose, or hammering nails into a piece of wood, or throwing raw eggs at trees.

7: Release angry energy with exercise

- If you are physically able, vigorous exercise and sport are good ways of releasing angry energy.
- At the gym there may be a punch bag [see page 407] and the opportunity for an exhausting exercise circuit.
- 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.



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

- You met this 0 - 10 scale in the preparation stages of the Impulse Self Control model.[Pages 367 - 369]
- It's very useful to use after the event too. 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:
2 = 'Not worth
bothering about'



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.

9: Fantasise harmless revenge

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

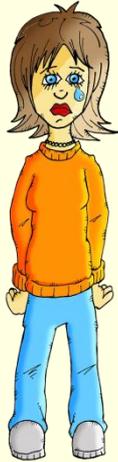
IF YOU FIND
YOURSELF PLANNING
TO HURT SOMEONE
IT'S VITAL YOU GET
PROFESSIONAL HELP
RIGHT AWAY



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

Harmless fantasy as anger release

Example: A client had serious problems with her partner's critical onslaughts. She couldn't handle it and used to bite the back of her hand until it bled. I suggested fantasy release of the frustration.



We came up with the idea that she would fantasise arranging with a local farmer to tip a trailer-load of steaming cow dung over his beloved car and imagining his face when he saw it.

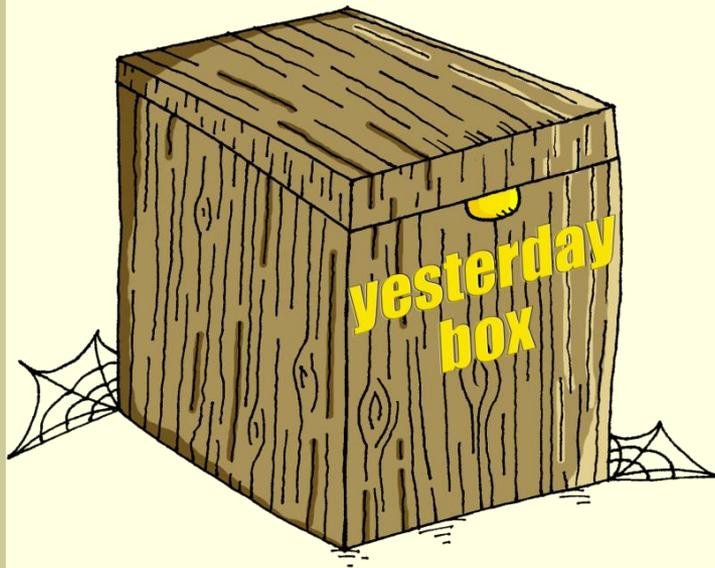
A week later.....

When the client returned a week later I asked her how she had got on with her fantasy. She had enjoyed it a lot, but said 'I came up with an even better fantasy. When he is going on at me now, I imagine a big red clown's nose on him'. Great!

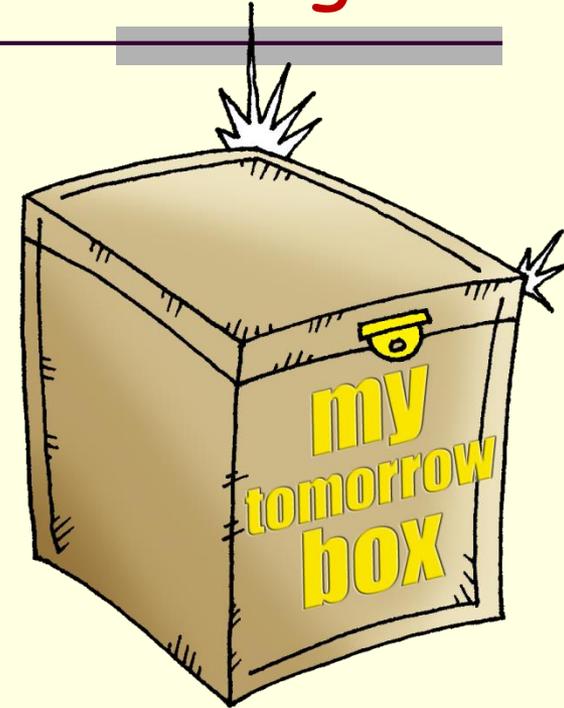


Humourous fantasy works! It seems the human brain can't hold conflicting core emotions about the same issue. What you can laugh at you can't remain angry about'. It's impossible to stay angry at what you can also make amusing!

10: What to do if you are still left with angry or hurt feelings



Put the issue into your Tomorrow Box [pages 317 - 319] or Yesterday Box [page 321] for the time being.



If the feelings persist, you should consider working with a therapist. For advice on choosing a therapist you can read the article on my website 'Choosing a Therapist'



Anger Management Programme Self Review - How are you doing?

PAGE

1. Noticing the Last-Minute Warning your body gives you? 347
2. Calming yourself down using Diaphragmatic Breathing? 306
3. Visualised how you want to be when entering each Red Zone? 316
4. Visualised how you want to handle each of your Anger Triggers? 316
5. Consistently using the ABC Model to handle Anger Triggers? 379
6. Some things that used to bother you a lot, bother you less?
7. Do you feel generally calmer, more in control of yourself?
8. Have you dealt with old Anger Stamps? [Page 57]
9. Has anyone commented on the way you have changed?
10. Are you pleased with your progress? **IF YES....** Great!

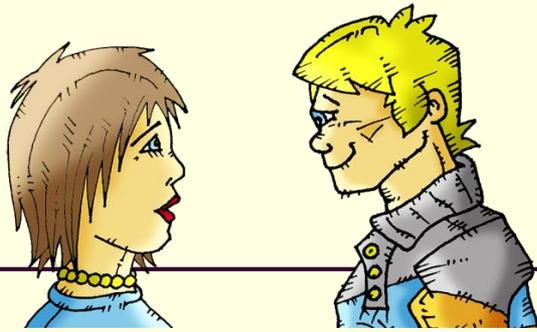
IF NOT....You need to re-visit the relevant parts of the programme - or consider getting professional help.

Relationship Progress Monitor

How are you doing?

You can
check
progress
by
re-visiting
Page
Eleven





Happy with your progress?
Congratulations, keep it up!

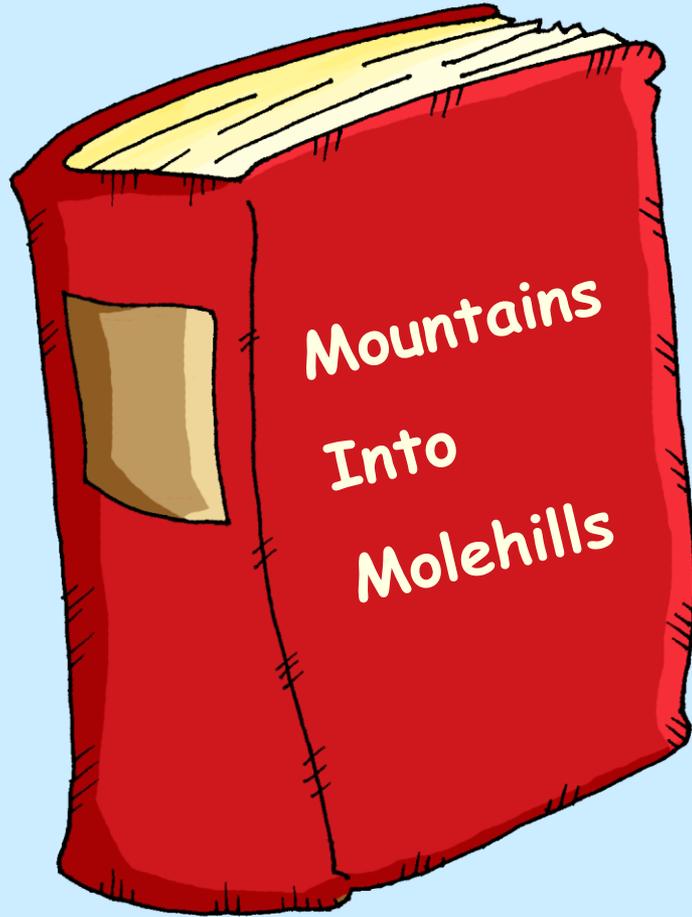
If not.....

You may need to consult a therapist to complete your work if, after using the techniques in this book, you are:

- Still experiencing relationship difficulties
- Struggling with impulse control.
- Scoring low on the 'Anger Management Programme' self review [Page 416]
- Feeling angry or hurt about past events
- Unable to express yourself assertively.
- Unable to enjoy the relaxation techniques.



Another self-help book: Free to read and download



Optional
Further
Reading



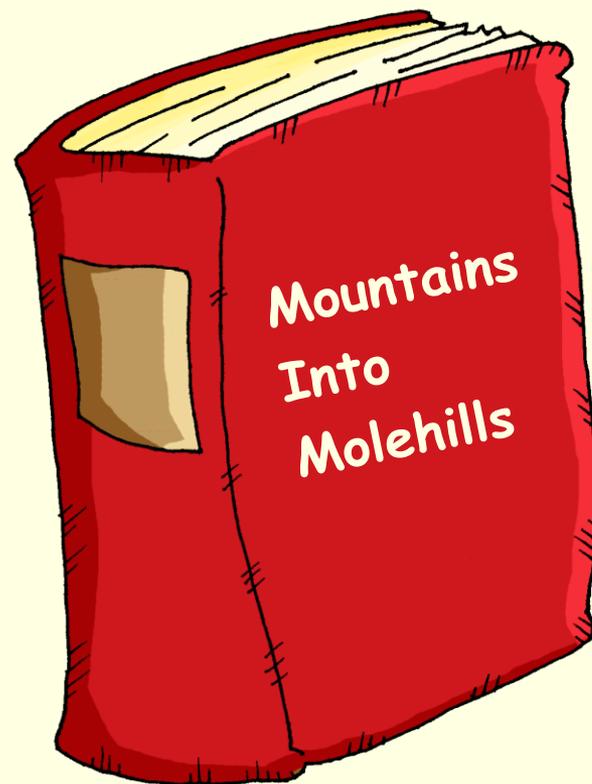
To read and download please visit: <http://selfhelp.brianamartin.co.uk>

Personal Development

Free optional reading online

If you would like to read more about:

- Counselling Skills
- Listening Skills
- Empathy
- Assertiveness
- Stress Management
- Mediation
- Rapport Building Skills
- Emotional Intelligence



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

Each of the articles listed above also has a further reading list.

Free reading on my website

If you would like to know more about:

- Choosing a Therapist
- Personal Counselling
- Couples Counselling
- Psychotherapy
- Hypnotherapy
- Phobia Cure
- EMDR
- Mentoring & Personal Coaching



Please visit my website at: www.brianamartin.co.uk
where you will find much more information on each topic.

NOW FOLLOWS

THE
A TO Z
OF
RELATIONSHIP
IMPROVEMENT



BITE SIZED RELATIONSHIP ADVICE ON
OVER 100 TOPICS

HEALING YOUR RELATIONSHIP

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