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Wise Mind

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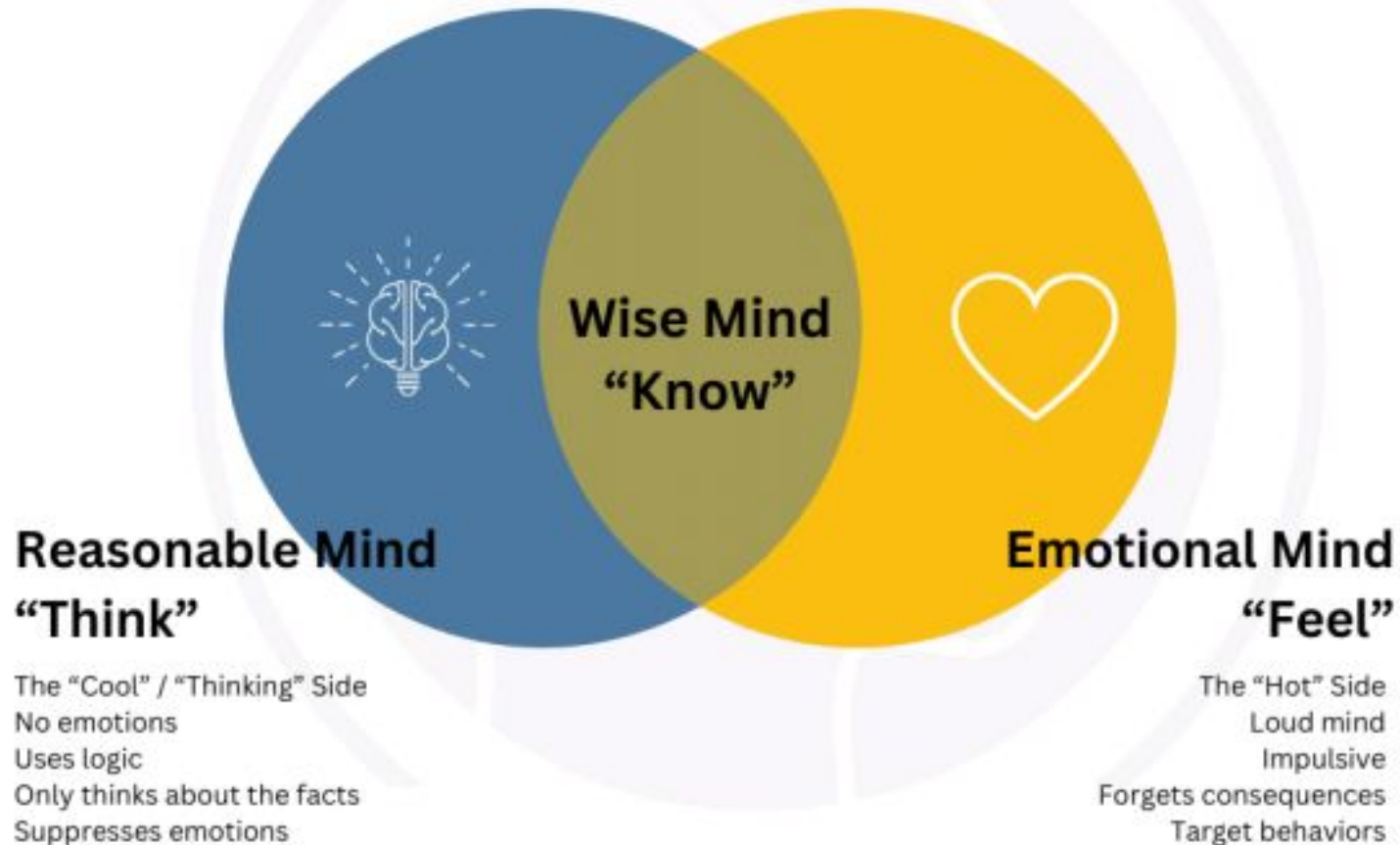
**Gina Simanek, M.A., LMHP, Shir Smith,
Rachel Brandenburg**



An Introduction to Your Wise Mind

Balance of Both Emotion and Reason

Where Does The Wise Mind Exist?



Goals of Wise Mind Training

- Live in the moment
- Cope with stress
- Regulate emotions
- Improve relationship

Weekly Wise Mind Lessons

- Qualities of a Wise Mind
- Mental Models
- Responding vs. Reacting
- The Ladder of Inference
- Acceptance of Others
- Anger
- Boundaries
- The 4 Basic Styles of Communication
- Healthy vs. Controlling Relationships
- Effects on Children who Live with DV
- Victim Mentality
- Life Laws and Strategies Behind Them

Mindful Practices Used by a Wise Mind

- Gratitude
- Positive Self Talk
- Breath work
- Journaling
 - Guided journal prompts
 - Mental Noting level 1
 - Mental Noting level 2
- Meditation
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - Imagery practice
 - Body scan

Qualities of the Wise Mind

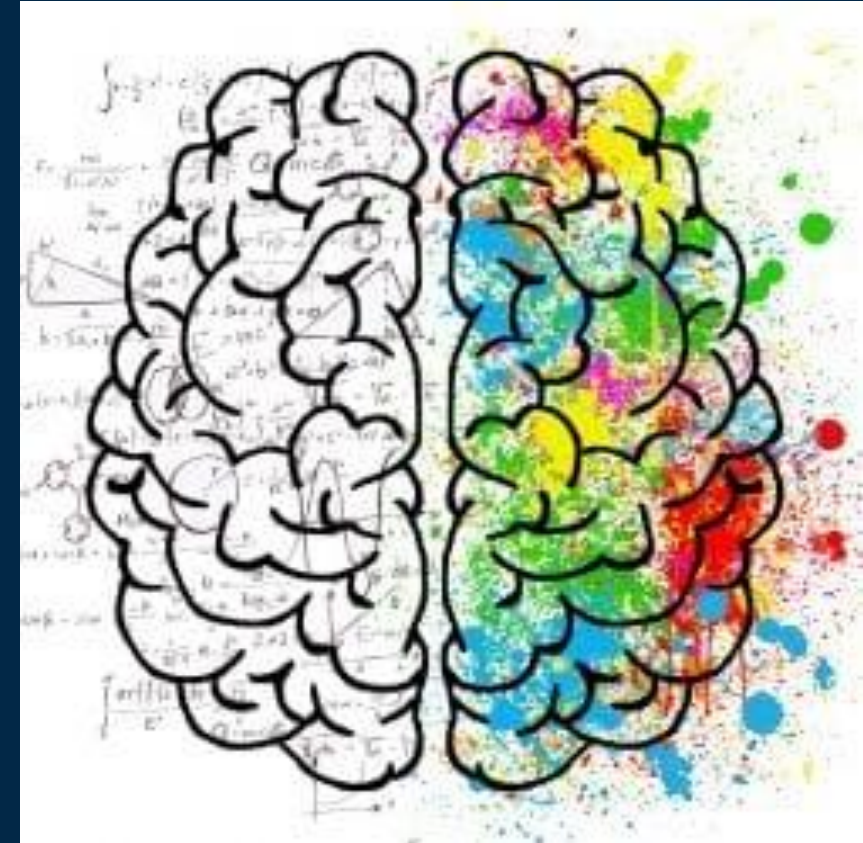
Two States of Mind

Reasonable Mind

A logical and rational state of thinking defined by facts and common sense. Essential to learning skills; you need to understand how a skill works and when to apply it. Helps you define a problem objectively and determine a solution. The more you learn and practice, the stronger the Reasonable Mind becomes.

Emotional Mind

A passionate, extreme, and intense state that makes rational, logical thinking difficult. Takes over when emotions control your thinking and behavior. Can also lead to out-of-control behavior, creating chaos, hurt feelings, and more problems.



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Wise Mind: Blending of Both

- Wise Mind utilizes mindful practices and helps us to bring together the logic of the reasonable Mind and the sensitivity of the emotional Mind to a serene state of Mind.
- By learning and practicing these skills, you will develop a Wise Mind that empowers you to change behaviors, emotions, and thinking patterns associated with problems in living, especially those causing misery and distress.



Qualities of the Wise Mind

- Calmness, courage, confidence
- Sees reality clearly, avoids all-or-nothing thinking
- Acts with awareness and willingness



Benefits of Mindfulness Practices

- Reduced rumination
- Stress reduction
- Boosts to working memory
- Focus
- Less emotional reactivity
- More cognitive flexibility
- Relationship satisfaction

Gratitude

Gratitude: the appreciation of what is valuable and meaningful to oneself.

- Gratitude letter:
- Gratitude conversation
- Gratitude journal:
 - Write down 3 things you are grateful for
- Utilize the following apps to track your gratitude:
 - <https://www.gratefulness.me/>
 - <https://the3goodthings.org/about>

Mental Models (Perception vs Reality)

What's a Mental Model

- Deeply-held beliefs shaped by experience of how the world works.
- What a person thinks is true, not necessarily what is actually true.
- An explanation of someone's thought process about how something works in the real world.
- A representation of the surrounding world & their perception of it.
- Shape how a person views their world & their behavior in it.



What Make up Mental Models

- Values
- Beliefs
- Experiences
- Concepts
- Our Environment
- Ideas
- Assumptions
- Images
- Language
- The Examples of Others Around Us

What's a Mental Model

- Mental Models can limit us to familiar ways of thinking and acting (or REACTING).
- Often, we are not even consciously aware of our own Mental Models or how they affect our behaviors.
- Perception ≠ Reality



Positive Self Talk

- Positive self-talk is a strategy that we can use to help us get through anxiety provoking situations.
- It helps us to break stress up and involves focusing on positive rather than negative statements.



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Self-talk Preparation

- As we are about to enter a situation or face something that we find daunting, we can help ourselves to prepare with positive statements such as:
 - “It’s not going to be as bad as I think.”
 - “It won’t last long and I can cope.”
 - “I am getting better and need to re-build my confidence.”
 - “If I do get bad feelings, I know they won’t last long and I can cope with them.”
 - “It’s better to go than not to go. Worry doesn’t help.”
 - “I might enjoy it if I go.”

Self-talk Coping

- In order to help us cope and stay in the situation, we can use positive statements such as:
 - “Concentrate on what is going on....not how I feel.”
 - “This is just anxiety; it is an unpleasant feeling, but I’ve never been ill.”
 - “Concentrate on what I have to do.”
 - “I know I am going to be OK.”
 - “The feelings always pass.”
 - “Relax and think positively.”
 - “One step at a time.”
 - “Anxious feelings are unpleasant, but not harmful or dangerous.”

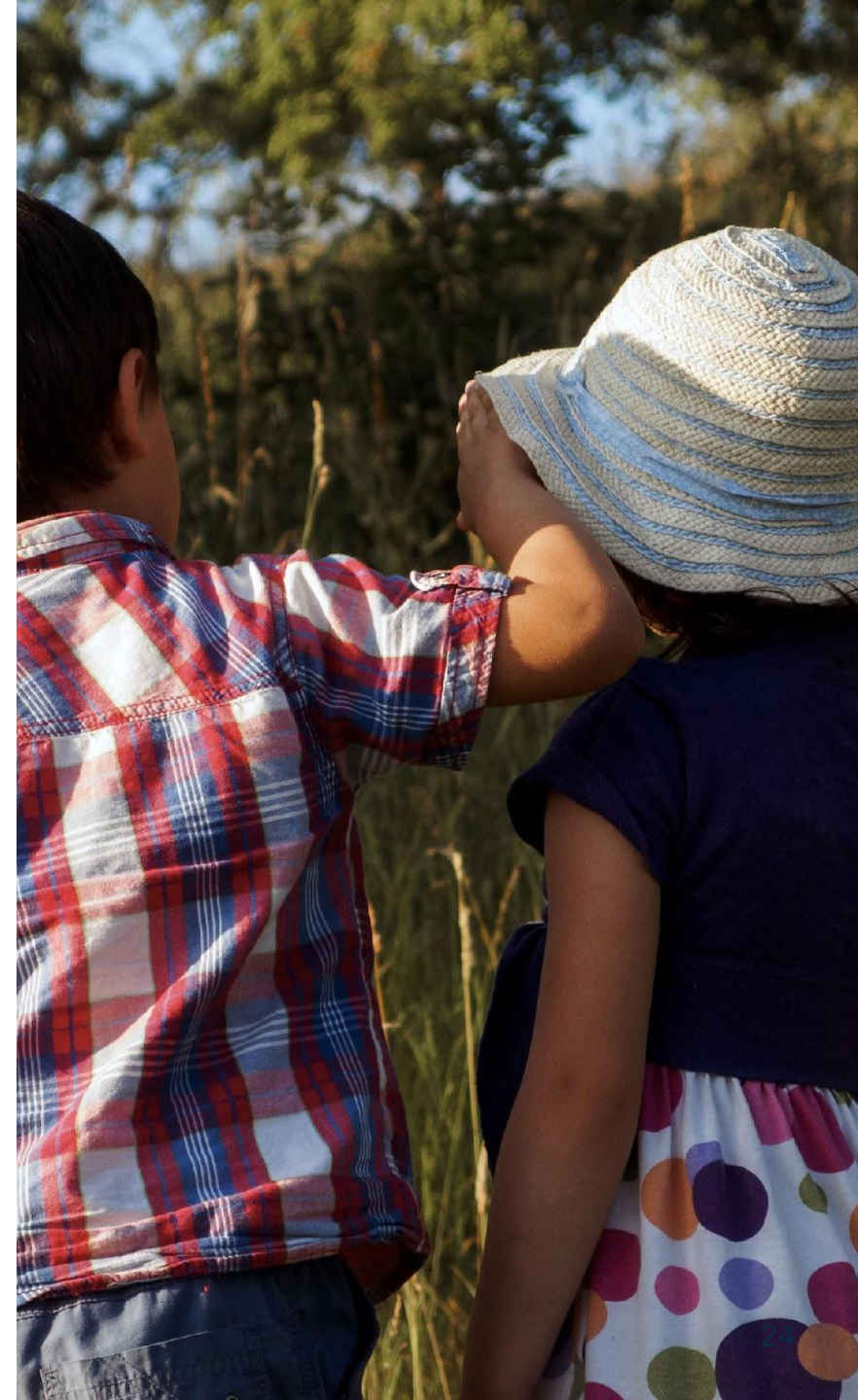
Self-talk Review

- Comments to help you review your achievement and give yourself praise:
 - “I coped with that.”
 - “I achieved that; I am getting better.”
 - “I handled that; it should be easier next time.”
 - “I can be pleased with the progress I’m making.”
 - “I did that well.”
 - “If I keep this up, I’m going to get really good at this.”

Responding vs. Reacting

Responding

- Responding: taking your time to consider how you will deal with a person or situation carefully
- When you respond, you control yourself and your behavior, not the other person.



Reacting

- Reacting is a knee-jerk, spontaneous response and is done with little or no thought.
- When you react, you give your control away.
- Top of the list emotion: Anger. Which means your buttons got pushed. They are your buttons. You are responsible for them.
- “React”- You hit me; I will hit you. You cheated; I’ll cheat. You made me mad; I’ll break your favorite doll. You yelled at me; I will yell back.



Feeling Triggered???

Ask yourself:

- 1. Is the action I am planning FAIR?
- 2. Who will BENEFIT from this action?
- 3. Would I be okay on the receiving end?



Reacting vs. Responding

- You have the choice to approach it mentally or emotionally.
- You have to learn when you react, you:
 - Refuse to listen
 - Emotionally speed up
 - Attack rather than address issues
 - Create confusion rather than add clarity
 - Take people down a negative road

Every time you react, you lose control of the environment and turn an opportunity into an obstacle for everyone involved.

Wrong + Wrong
≠
Right

Choice 1: REACTION (Broken Vase)

- Your first reaction is often a flood of emotions and thoughts
- Acting immediately may make others feel intimidated and uncomfortable
- Negative emotions won't fix the situation (the vase is still broken)
- An emotional reaction can escalate a small accident into a ruined date
- Creates a tense hostile environment for everyone involved
- Strong reactions can damage relationships and take time to repair

Choice 2: RESPONDING

- Responding is a positive approach
- You can choose an outcome in which everyone walks away feeling good simply by putting a bit of distance between you and the event, either time or physical distance.

Ask yourself these questions:

- Is this a big deal?
- Was it intentional?
- Is this worth ruining a relationship over?

Choice 2: RESPONDING

How to respond:

- 1. Space
- 2. Compassion
- 3. Tone
- 4. Let it go

Overreacting

- Overreacting can include anything from tears or a chip on your shoulder to a massive display of anger.
- Overreacting harms you. Acting out aggressively by hitting a wall may damage a person's hand, but negative emotions do even more damage.
- Overreacting can also injure your relationships with people.



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Awareness of Emotions/Thoughts

Awareness of Emotions:

- You need to know what is happening inside your head.
- Ask yourself: if the same situation happened to someone else, would the reaction be the same?

Awareness of Thoughts:

- You need to figure out what triggers or magnifies your thoughts.
- When someone reacts – it speaks volumes about them. If you overreact, it says volumes about you.

Breathwork

Techniques that help us focus on our breath!

- Helps calm you down and move your body and mind out of fight-or-flight mode.
 - Your sympathetic nervous system is responsible for your body's "fight-or-flight" response. It increases when you're stressed or in danger.
 - Your parasympathetic nervous system is the "rest-and-digest" part of your brain. It relaxes your body after periods of stress or danger.
- Breathwork your body's parasympathetic nervous system and help you de-escalate and de-stress.
- There are a variety of breathwork techniques you can try, all of them with a similar goal — to help you destress.

4-7-8 Breath Practice

- Place yourself into a comfortable but upright seated position, with your back straight.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a “whoosh” sound.
- Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of four.
- Hold your breath for a count of seven.
- Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of eight.
- That was one complete breath. Now, inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

The Ladder of Inference

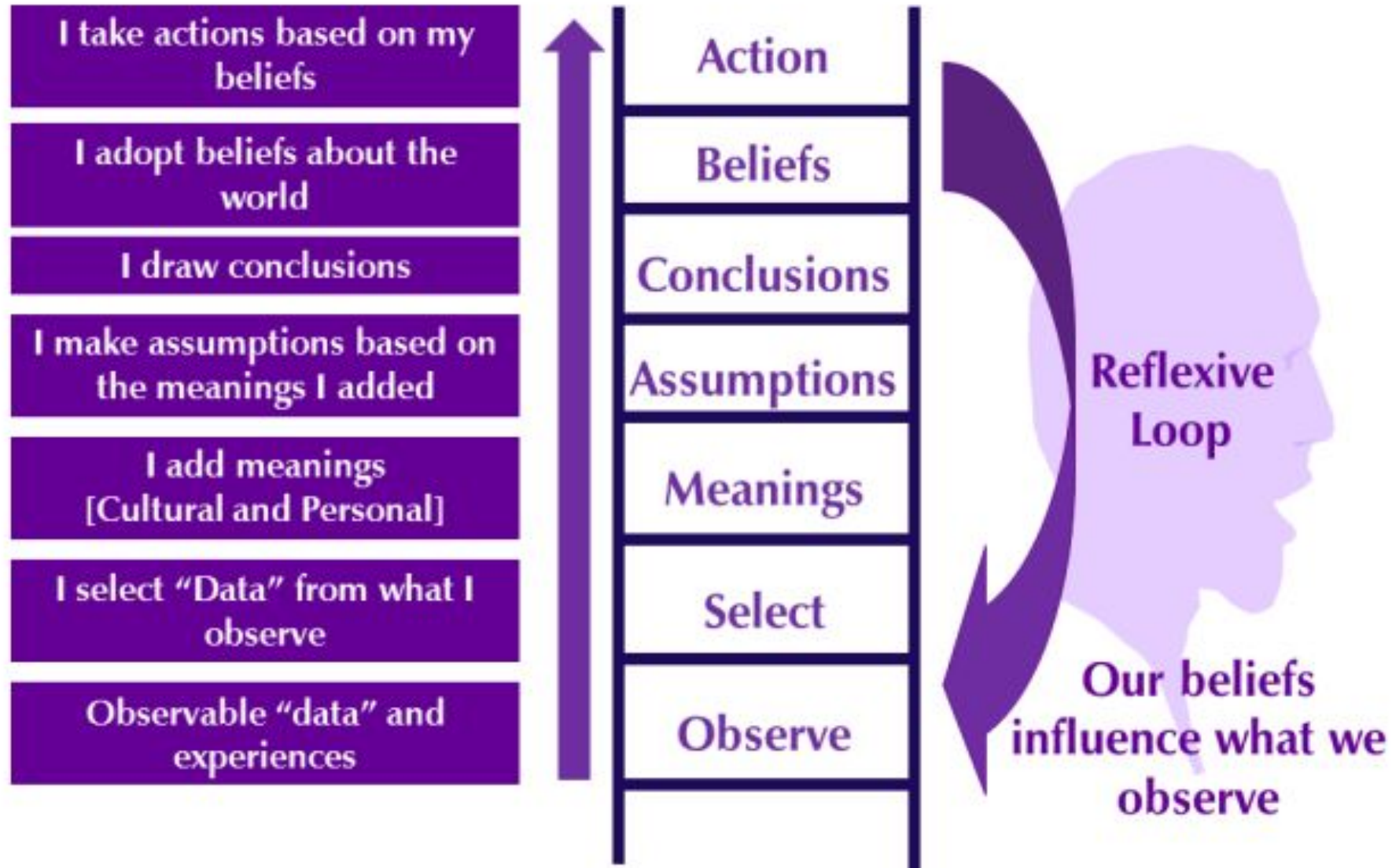
Let's Consider this Scenario



How the Ladder of Inference works

- **Observe data**
- **Select data** from observation
- **Add meaning** to data
- **Make assumptions** based on the meaning I have added
- Draw conclusions that prompt feelings
- **Adopt beliefs** about the world
- Believe some form of **action** is necessary

The Ladder of Inference



Wise Words to Consider

- “Consider how hard it is to change yourself and you’ll understand what little chance you have in trying to change others.” ~Unknown
- “What someone thinks of you is none of your business.” ~Unknown
- “We judge ourselves by our intentions. And others by their actions.” ~Stephen Covey
- “Judging a person does not define who they are. It defines who you are.” ~Kristen Stewart
- “Be curious, not judgmental.” ~Walt Whitman
- “Before you assume, learn the facts. Before you judge, understand why. Before you hurt someone, feel. Before you speak, think.” ~Unknown

Mental Noting – Thoughts

- Noting Your Thoughts
- Find a comfortable space you won't be disturbed
- Set a timer for 5 minutes
- Structure your observations as: "I am thinking about X"
 - Keep them short – don't analyze your thoughts

Examples:

- *I am thinking about how my work day went.*
- *I am thinking about my dog.*
- *I am thinking about the movie that I saw yesterday.*
- *I am thinking about the plot of the book that I'm reading.*



Acceptance of Others

Expectations

- Having expectations of others is dangerous.
- Expectations of others can lead to disappointment or resentment
- Be honest about unrealistic expectations (e.g., expecting others to act how you would)
- Take responsibility for how your expectations shape your emotions
- Ask yourself: Are you hurt because others didn't meet *your* expectations?

People Don't Disappoint; Expectations Do

- We expect others to behave how *we* think they should
- This projects our own values and needs onto them
- Others likely won't meet these expectations
- The result: disappointment—not from them, but from our own unmet expectations

Expectations Get us in Trouble

Why Expectations Cause Problems

- They're often unrealistic or unfair
- They're one-sided—we set them without agreement
- Others may not even know what we expect from them



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Try This

- Instead of having expectations, try making requests
- ASK for what you want rather than just expecting
- Give choice in your request. No choice feels like an order rather than a request
- Learn boundaries (week 7)
 - Negotiate your requests and release expectations

Remember...

You must try accept the things you cannot change,
and change the things you can!

Mental Noting - Experiences

- In this level, you will note your thoughts, emotions, observations, and physical sensations. Basically, you will note any experience that may arise in you.
- Don't analyze or judge your experiences
- Simply describe them as an objective observer
- Noting Your Experiences
- Find a comfortable space you won't be disturbed
- Set a timer for 10 minutes

Structuring mental noting experiences

- 1. I am thinking about X.
- 2. I feel the emotion Y.
- 3. When I think about X, the emotion Y occurs in me.
- 4. When the event X happens, I feel Y and my thoughts are Z.

Examples:

- *I feel nervous when I think about finding a parking space tomorrow.*
- *When I'm having an argument with my boyfriend (event), I feel extremely angry.*
- *I am thinking about how hard it is for me to meet new people, and that makes me feel sad.*
- *I feel irritable, and that makes me feel like arguing with my family.*
- *After my retirement (event), I feel very lonely.*



Anger

What We've Been Taught About Anger

- By age 5, many of us have already learned through observation, physical punishment, shaming or having love and affection withdrawal, that **anger** is unexpected.
- Anger is a learned reaction, not hereditary.

Learning Healthy Anger Expressions

First, we must understand what we have been taught about anger:

- How do you feel when someone is angry at you?
- What is the first thing you want to do when you realize someone is angry at you?
- Does your reaction differ depending on who is mad at you?
- Is it possible to be angry without yelling, swearing, throwing things, saying mean things, etc.?
- Can anger be expressed quietly?

Anger – the emotion

- Anger is an emotion and reactive to the way we are thinking.
- Emotions follow thought and are responders
- What you are thinking is usually what you are feeling.
- Anger is a choice.



5-Step Approach to Managing Anger

- These five steps are straightforward when calm but much more challenging to work through when angry.
- They will take practice, but will get easier with time.

Step 1

1. Tune into your feelings. (Self-Awareness)

- What got me angry?
- Why am I feeling this way?
- Put into words what is making you so upset so that you can act instead of react.



Step 2

2. Stop and think. (Self-Control)

- This is where you stop what you are doing or thinking about and give yourself time to manage your anger.
- You think about what you need to do before you do it.



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Step 3

3. Consider your options. (Think It Through)

- This is where you think about what might happen if.....
- Think of every reaction and what is most likely to occur.



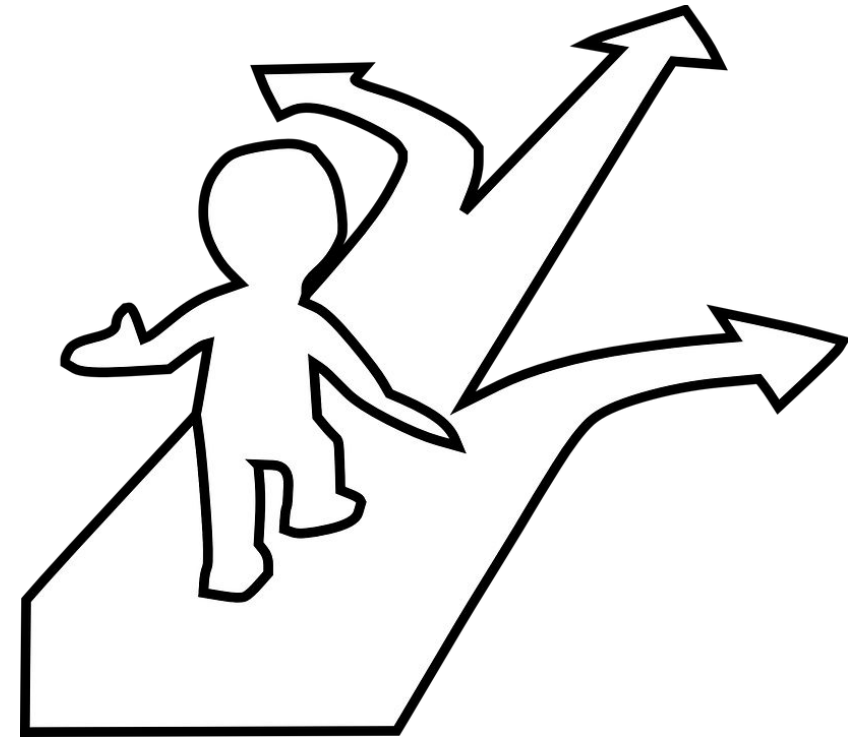
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Step 4

4. Make a decision.

(Pick One Of Your Options)

- Now, take action by selecting one of the options you listed.
- Once you choose your solution, then it's time to act on it.



Step 5

5. Check your progress.

- After the situation is over, think about how it went.
- How did you do?
- Are you satisfied with the choice that you made?



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Wise Words to Consider About Anger

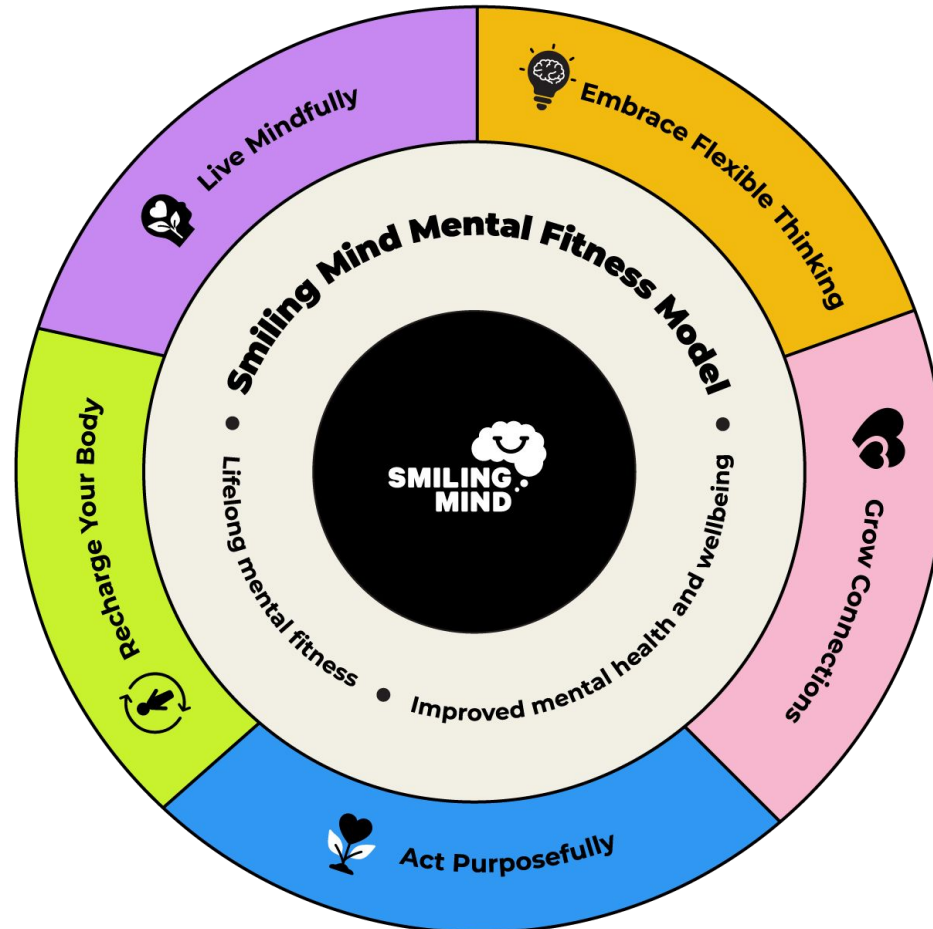
“Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.”

“Anger always comes from frustrated expectations.”

“If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow.”

Meditation Practice – Smiling Mind

- <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app/>



Boundaries

What is Respect

- Respect is listening without interrupting.
- Respect is taking other's feelings into consideration.
- Respect is keeping an open mind.
- Respect is agreeing to disagree.
- Respect is trying to understand other points of view.
- Respect is loving yourself.
- Respect is trust and honesty.

What is Respect

- Respect is giving each other space.
- Respect is nonviolence.
- Respect is direct communication.
- Respect is building a person up instead of tearing them down.
- Respect is friendship.
- Respect is not pressuring the other person.

Affirmations of Your Basic Rights

- Nobody has the right to know my mind or my business or to tell me what to think, what to feel or what to do.
- I have a right to my own thoughts, feelings, values, and beliefs.
- What I share with others about matters that concern me is determined by what feels right to me - not what they want.
- If people are abusive or disrespectful to me, I have a right to tell them so, to ask them to stop and/or to avoid them.
- I will not be abused or to be disrespected.
- I have a need and right to love myself, respect myself and to stand up for myself.



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Affirmations of Your Basic Rights

- I have a right to be who I am and to harmlessly live my own life regardless of whether others don't like it.
- I don't have to feel guilty for not behaving as others might want me to or for not giving other what they expect of me.
- I accept myself just as I am.
- I accept my right to my imperfection and shortcomings without guilt.
- I believe that we should do unto others as we would have them do unto us.
- I believe that if I am true to myself and live my truth, I will be okay.

Boundaries

- Learning how to set boundaries is a vital part of learning to own yourself, of learning to respect yourself, of learning to love yourself.
- If you never have to set a boundary, then you will never get in touch with who you really are, you will never learn to define yourself in a healthy way.



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The Three Parts Of A Boundary

Part 1	Part 2	Part 3
“If you...”	“I will...”	“If you continue this behavior, I will...”
<i>This is a description of the behavior you find unacceptable (be as descriptive as possible).</i>	<i>This is a description of what action you will take to protect & take care of yourself in the event the other person violates the boundary.</i>	<i>This is a description of what steps you will take to protect the boundary you have set.</i>
<i>These two parts are the actual parts of setting the boundary.</i>		<i>This third part is something you need to know for yourself, so that you know what action you can take if the other person violates the boundary.</i>

What Setting Boundaries are NOT

- Setting a boundary is **not** making a threat
- Setting a boundary is **not** an attempt to control the other person
- Setting a boundary is **not** a more sophisticated way of manipulation

Setting Boundaries

- Setting boundaries means that you are taking responsibility, being an adult and demanding equality and respect in a relationship.
- Setting boundaries is your right to say NO to those things that aren't right for you.
- Setting boundaries is learning to take care of yourself, no matter what happens, where you go or who you are with.
- Boundaries emerge as we learn to value, trust, and listen to yourself.
- Boundaries emerge from a belief that what you want, need, like and dislike is important.



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Clues to boundaries you need to set:

- Anger
- Rage
- Complaining
- Whining
- Feeling threatened, suffocated, or victimized

Tips for setting boundaries

- When you identify a need to set a boundary or a limit with someone, do it clearly, preferably without anger and in as few words as possible.
- You cannot simultaneously set a limit with someone and also take care of their feelings, they may be hurt, angry or disappointed with you.
- When you first begin to set boundaries, you may feel unfamiliar feelings such as shame and/ being afraid.
- Be prepared to follow through by maintaining the boundaries you set.

Tips for Setting Boundaries cont.

- You will be tested when you set boundaries.
- Some people are happy to respect your boundaries.
- A support system can be helpful as you strive to establish and enforce boundaries.
- You will set boundaries when you are ready and not a minute sooner.
- There is a satisfying side to setting boundaries - it feels good.

Maintaining Personal Boundaries

- Ask directly for what you want. This shows who you are to others.
- Be honest and truthful with yourself. This creates a sixth sense within you that lets you know when a relationship has become hurtful, abusive, or invasive.
- Be objective about others' behavior toward you without getting caught in their drama.
- Maintain a bottom line - a limit to how many times you will allow someone to say no, to lie to you, to disappoint you, or betray you before you will admit the painful reality and leave.

Journaling

Journaling can be a powerful tool for:

- Self expression
- Emotional regulation
- Cognitive rehabilitation
- Promoting a sense of control
- Personal Growth

Journaling Prompts

Self-Reflection Prompts:

- **How do I feel today?** Reflect on your current emotions and what might be influencing them.
- **What am I grateful for?** List at least five things you appreciate in your life and why they matter to you.
- **What is my biggest lesson learned this week?** Consider a recent experience and what it taught you.

Creative Exploration:

- **Describe yourself in three words.** Explain why you chose those words.
- **What are five things that make you unique?** Think about your interests, skills, and personality traits.
- **What's a dream you've always had but never pursued?** Explore what has held you back and how you might start pursuing it.

Journalling Prompts cont.

Future Aspirations:

- **What do I want to achieve this month?** Set a goal and outline steps to reach it.
- **What am I looking forward to?** Write about events or experiences that excite you.
- **How can I experience more joy in my life?** Reflect on activities or changes that could enhance your happiness.

Daily Reflections:

- **What made me smile today?** Capture moments of joy or humor from your day.
- **What challenges did I face today, and how did I handle them?** Reflect on your problem-solving skills and resilience.
- **What do I need most right now?** Consider your emotional or physical needs and how you can address them.

The Four Basic Styles of Communication

Passive Communicators will:

- Fail to stick up for themselves
- Allow others to infringe on their rights
- Fail to express their feelings, needs, or opinions
- Tend to speak softly or apologetically
- Exhibit poor eye contact

Aggressive Communicators will:

- Try to dominate others
- Use humiliation to control others
- Criticize, blame, or attack others
- Speak in a loud, demanding, and overbearing voice
- Not listen
- Interrupt frequently
- Have piercing eye contact and an overbearing posture

Passive-Aggressive Communicators will:

- Mutter to themselves rather than confront the person or issue
- Have difficulty acknowledging their anger
- Use sarcasm
- Deny there is a problem
- Appear cooperative while purposely doing things to annoy and disrupt
- Use subtle sabotage to get even

Assertive Communicators will:

- Feel in control of self
- Feel connected to others
- Feel competent and in control
- Express feelings and state needs and wants:
 - clearly
 - Appropriately
 - respectfully
- Communicate respect for others
- Listen well without interrupting
- Have good eye contact
- Speak in a calm and clear tone of voice
- Stand up for their rights

Let's Talk About Guilt

- Feeling of responsibility for negative things that happen to you or others.
- Feeling of regret for your real or imagined misdeeds.
- Sense of remorse for thoughts, feelings, or attitudes that were negative or non-accepting concerning yourself or others.
- Feeling of obligation for not pleasing or helping another.
- Feeling of bewilderment for not responding to a situation properly.
- Feeling of loss or shame for not having done or said something to someone that is no longer available to you.
- Accepting responsibility for someone else's misfortune or problem because of you.
- Driving force producing irrational beliefs that remain hidden from others.



Let's Talk About Fear

- Fear creates limitations.
- Fear feeds guilt.
- Fear lies and manipulates.
- Fear perpetuates worry.
- Fear distorts reality.
- Fear is a short-term motivator.
- Fear lets the imagination run out of control.
- Fear keeps us from making decisions.
- Fear causes doubt.

FEAR is:

- F: false
- E: evidence
- A: appearing
- R: real

Communication Tips:

- Figure out what you are sticking up for.
- Be ok with a bit of selfishness.
- Speak deliberately and with attention.
- Count to 10 before you speak.
- Make “no” your favorite word.
- Avoid excuses.
- Remember: You deserve to be respected!
- Master the art of body language.
- Don't leave it unsaid.

Meditation – Body Scan

- A practice involving scanning your body for pain, tension, or anything out of the ordinary.
- Benefits: improve sleep, pain, stress and anxiety
- [10 Minute Body Scan Meditation](#) (Titled 10 Minute Mindfulness Body Scan-Becoming Aware of Sensations on Youtube)
- [5 Minute Guided Imagery Meditation](#)



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Healthy Vs. Controlling Relationships

Controlling Relationships

Does your significant other....

- Lose their temper more than seems necessary?
- Jealous of your friends, family or time spent with them?
- Want you to spend all your time with them?
- Put down your friends?
- Need to know who you talk to and about what?
- Say hurtful things about your family?
- Blame others for everything that happens to them?
- Pressure you to give up activities not done with them?
- Make fun of things that are important to you?
- Break or throw things when angry?

Controlling Relationships cont.

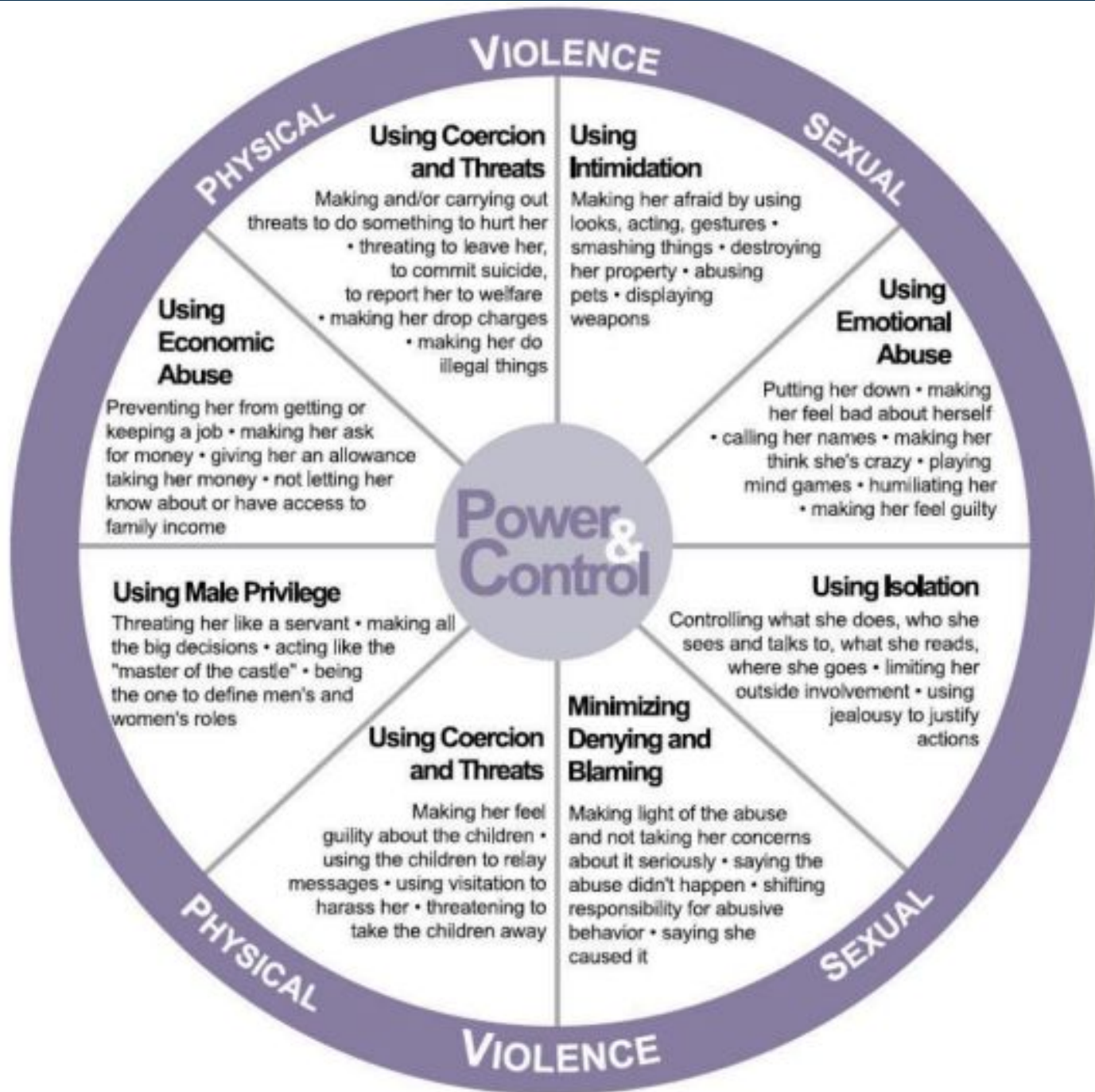
Does your significant other....

- Get angry if you disagree or say no?
- Drop in or call a lot when you are not together?
- Say “I love you” shortly after meeting them?
- Criticize everything you do?
- Embarrass you in front of others?
- Tell you they can’t live without you?
- Not trust you or anyone else?
- Accuse you of wanting to be with someone else?
- Have a poor relationship with mother/father?
- Ever mistreat a pet?

Controlling Relationships cont.

Do you ever:

- Feel guilty about things you never felt guilty about before?
- Feel like you can do nothing right?
- Think about every word you say or don't say?
- Act like a different person when you are together?



Characteristics Of Healthy Relationships

Trust:

- Building trust requires mutual self-disclosure by sharing things about yourself.
- As time passes, opportunities to test and evaluate that trust emerge.
- As confidence grows, the relationship becomes a great source of comfort and security.
- If you feel you must hide things from your partner, you may lack this essential trust.

Characteristics Of Healthy Relationships

Openness and Honesty

- What matters most is whether each partner feels comfortable sharing their hopes, fears, and feelings if they choose.
- Healthy couples don't need to be together all the time or share everything.
- Healthy boundaries in a relationship allow you to still do the things that are important to you, while still sharing important things with your partner.
- A partner with unhealthy expectations of openness and honesty might expect to know every detail of where you are and what you're doing, restrict who you can spend time with, or demand access to your social media accounts.

Characteristics Of Healthy Relationships

Good Communication

- One study found that a couple's communication style was more important than stress, commitment, and personality in predicting whether married couples would eventually divorce.
- Knowing how to argue and effectively resolve differences of opinion is more important than simply avoiding arguments to keep the peace.
- When conflicts arise, those in healthy relationships can avoid personal attacks and remain respectful and empathetic as they discuss their thoughts and feelings and work toward a resolution.

Characteristics Of Healthy Relationships

Give-&-Take

- It isn't about keeping score or feeling that you owe the other person.
- Give-and-take in a relationship is not always 100% equal.
- At times, one partner may need more help and support.
- In other cases, one partner may prefer to be a caregiver.
- Such imbalances are fine as long as each person is ok with the dynamic and both partners get the support they need.

Characteristics of Healthy Relationships

Mutual Respect:

- In close, healthy relationships, people have a shared respect for one another.
- They don't demean or belittle one another and offer support and security.



Ways of Showing Respect:

There are several different ways that couples can show respect for one another.

- Listening to one another.
- Not procrastinating or stalling when your partner asks you to do something.
- Being understanding and forgiving when one person makes a mistake.
- Building each other up, not tearing each other down.
- Creating room in your life for your partner.
- Taking an interest in the things your partner enjoys.
- Allowing your partner to have their individuality.
- Supporting and encouraging your partner's pursuits and passions.
- Showing appreciation and gratitude for one another.
- Having empathy for one another.

Characteristics of Healthy Relationships

Affection:

- Research has shown that the initial passion that marks the start of a new relationship tends to decline, but this does not mean the need for affection, comfort, and tenderness lessens.
- This passionate love eventually transforms into compassionate love, which is marked by feelings of affection, trust, intimacy, and commitment.
- It is essential to remember that physical needs differ for each individual.
- There is no “right” amount of affection or intimacy.
- The key to a healthy relationship is that both partners are content with the level of affection that they share with their partner. A nurturing partnership is characterized by genuine fondness and affection for one another, expressed in various ways

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Practice

- Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) is an actively engaging relaxation technique developed by Edmund Jacobson in the 1920s.
- It can be useful in reducing stress.
- It has a positive influence on depression and anxiety.
- Try it:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=intVpw4LhMY&t=28s>
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation (Titled Progressive Muscle Relaxation - A 5 minute Guided Mindfulness Meditation on Youtube)

The Effects on Children Who Live with Domestic Violence

How children are affected by DV

- Living in a violent home is deeply traumatic for children.
- These experiences leave lasting imprints on memory and development.
- Every part of a child's life is shaped by this trauma.
- Children in abusive homes are silent victims
- Long-term emotional, behavioral, and physical consequences

Early Warning Signs

As Early as Infancy:

- Failure to thrive
- Over-compliance and fearfulness
- Early signs of aggression or violence toward siblings or a parent



Emotional & Behavioral Effects

- Low self-esteem
- Poor impulse control
- Fear and distrust of close relationships
- Conflicted loyalty between parents
- Confusion over correct behavior
- Psychosomatic symptoms: stomachaches, headaches, anxiety
- Night terrors, bedwetting
- Suicidality at higher rates than other children



Cognitive and academic impacts

- Academic difficulties
- Frequent disruptions due to fleeing the home
- PTSD symptoms
- Difficulty concentrating or engaging in school



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Health & Safety Risks

- Poor general health
- Physical injuries from violent incidents
- Higher risk of abduction by abuser parent
- Higher likelihood of being victims of physical and sexual abuse



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Social and Legal Outcomes

- Four times more likely to be arrested
- More likely to abuse alcohol and drugs
- Increased risk of antisocial behavior
- Higher likelihood of committing crimes or sexual assault

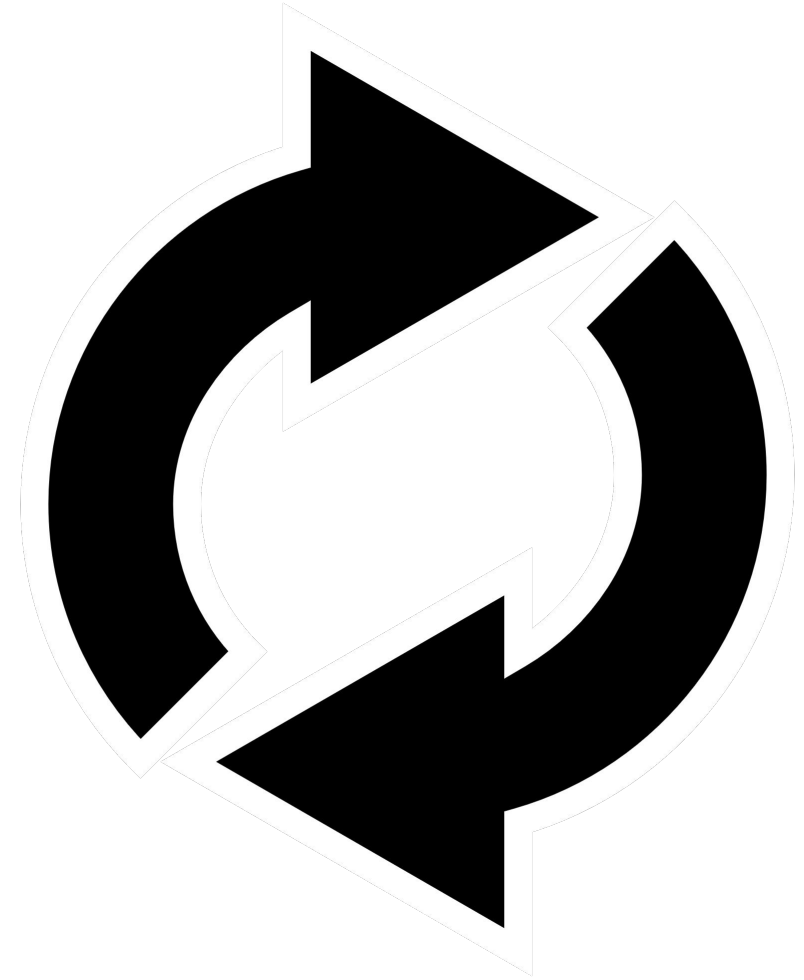


Homelessness and Instability

- Frequent displacement due to fleeing abuse
- Nearly 40% of U.S. homeless population are mothers and children escaping domestic violence

Vicious Cycle of Violence

- Exposure to abuse can normalize violence
- Without intervention, children may repeat abusive behaviors as adults
- Violence is learned behavior—but it can be unlearned



The Hidden Legacy of Anger & Trauma

- Anger may surface as bullying, rage, or interpersonal violence
- Difficulty forming healthy relationships
- Unseen emotional damage follows children into adulthood

Breaking the Cycle

- The cycle of violence can be interrupted
- Support, awareness, and trauma-informed care are critical
- Healing is possible with the right intervention

Hydration and Sleep

- Sleep:
 - Crucial for maintain mental clarity and reducing risk of cognitive decline.
 - 7 to 8 hours of sleep is important
 - Try this: go to bed and wake up around the same time, turn off all devices 1 hour before bedtime, make bedroom dark and cool.
- Hydration:
 - Regulates body temperature, prevents infections, and delivers nutrients to cells.
 - Improves sleep quality, cognition and mood.
 - Tips: Carry a reusable water bottle. Freeze water in freezer-safe bottles for ice-cold water all day. Choose water over sugary drinks. Opt for water when eating out. Serve water during meals. Add a wedge of lime or lemon

Victim Mentality

What Is Victim Mentality?

- A belief that the world is conspiring against you
- Constant gathering of “evidence” to prove this belief
- Difficult to see truth—because it’s always being resisted
- Common thoughts:
 - “Woe is me”
 - “Nothing ever works out”
 - “It’s not my fault”

Patterns of Victim Mentality

- **Condemning Self** – “I’m useless,” “Too many forces against me”
- **Separation from Responsibility** – Avoids ownership or solutions
- **Blame & Rationalization** – Blames others, justifies actions
- **Isolation** – Waits for change instead of taking initiative



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The Trap of Victim Thinking

- Victims feel:
 - Always right
 - Never responsible
 - Entitled to sympathy
- Belief: “Bad things always happen to me”
- This mindset prevents healing and personal growth

Breaking Free From Victimhood

- **You are not what happened to you**
- You are what you choose to become
- **Key Shift:** Take responsibility for your response
- “I can’t control what happens, but I can control how I respond”

Victim vs. Proactive Mindset

Victim Mindset	Proactive Mindset
Blames others	Takes responsibility
Focuses on what's wrong	Focuses on what can be done
Feels powerless	Believes in choice
Driven by environment	Driven by values

Signs of a Victim Mentality

- Avoids personal responsibility
- Constantly blames others
- Feels helpless and stuck
- Lives in self-pity
- Obsesses over the past
- Fixates on problems
- Uses “If only” or “What if” thinking

Remember...

- Victim mindset delays healing
- Healing starts when you stop waiting and start choosing
- Choose to respond intentionally, not reactively
- Your life is shaped by your responses, not your circumstances

Meditation - Guided Imagery

- A method for treating stress and anxiety in which one replaces disturbing memories with positive mental imagery.
- Sensory and contextual engagement are a key focus of this technique.
- Improves relaxation and reduces stress levels.
- Try this: [5 Minute Guided Imagery Meditation](#)

Life Laws and the Strategies Behind Them

Life Law #1:

You either get it or you don't.

- **Strategy:** Become one of those who gets it.
- Life is a strategic game
- Winners understand the rules, sharpen their skills
- Stay informed and avoid misinformation

Life Law #2:

Create your own space.

- **Strategy:** Acknowledge and accept accountability for your life.
- Your life is shaped by your choices
- Happiness is created, not accidental – setp out of the victims script
- Stop blaming, start building – Take charge with every choice you make

Life Law #3:

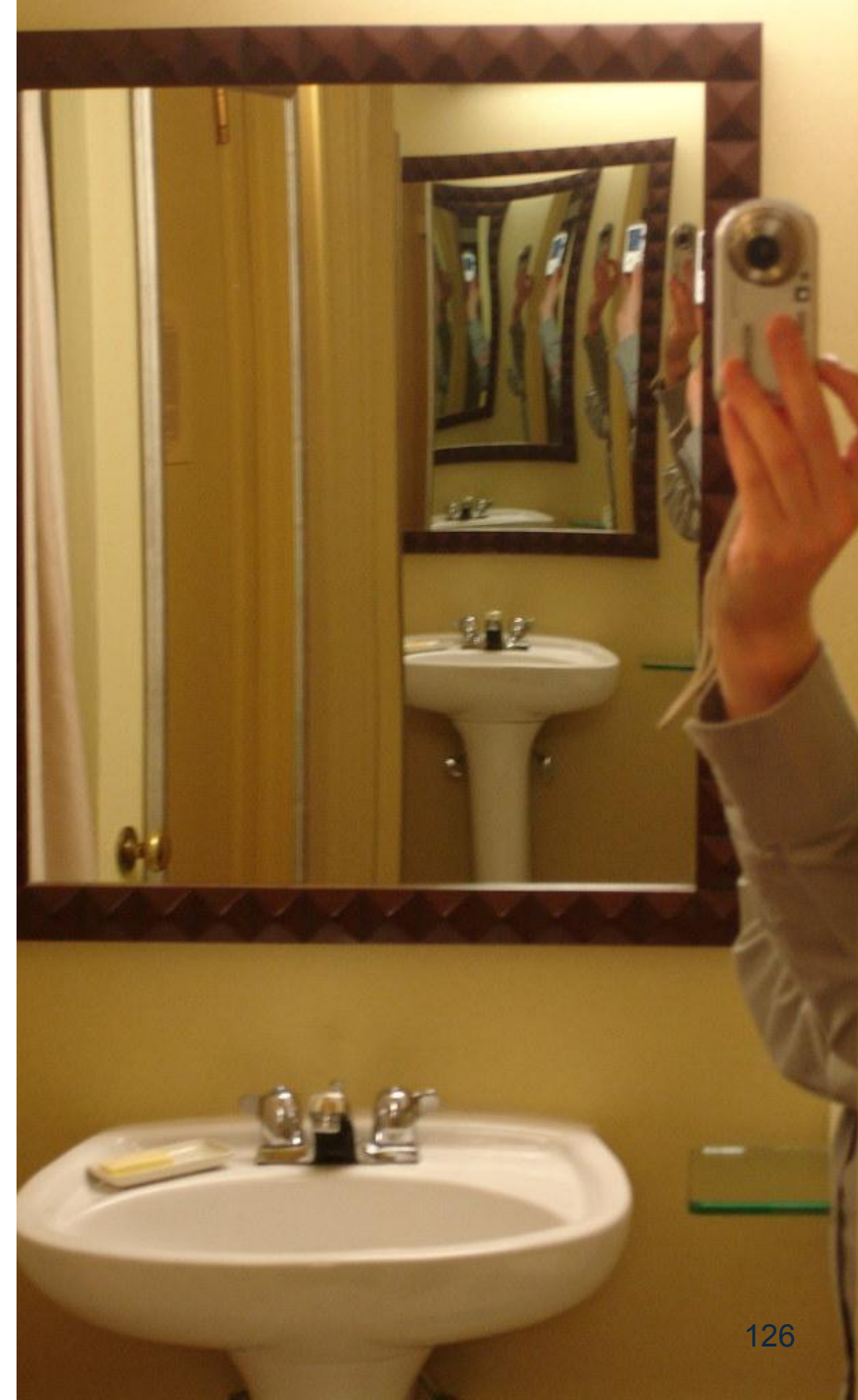
People do what works.

- **Strategy:** Identify the payoffs that drive your behavior and that of others.
- Behavior is driven by reward
- Use self-awareness to uncover motives
- Break unhealthy patterns by trying new responses

Life Law #4:

You cannot change what you do not acknowledge

- **Strategy:** Get real with yourself about life and everybody in it.
- Face the truth without excuses
- Awareness is the first step toward change
- Ditch the, "I can't!" and embrace the, "I will!"



Life Law #5:

Life rewards **ACTION**.

- **Strategy:** Make careful decisions and then take action
- Thoughts are great, actions are greater
- Pain fuels your growth story
- Step out of your comfort zone

Life Law #6:

There is no reality, only perception.

- **Strategy:** Identify the filters in which you view the world
- Perception shapes your world
- Challenge distorted thinking
- Update your inner lens with awareness

Life Law #7:

Life is managed, not cured.

- **Strategy:** Learn to take control of your life and hold on
- You're the captain of your life
- Build resilience and adapt to changes
- Use emotional regulation and planning



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Life Law #8:

We teach people how to treat us.

- **Strategy:** Own, rather than complain about, how people treat you
- Set clear boundaries
- Stop rewarding poor behavior
- Redefine unhealthy dynamics

Life Law #9:

There is power in forgiveness.

- **Strategy:** Open your eyes to what resentment and anger are doing to you.
- Forgiveness is for you, not them
- Let go of emotional baggage
- Claim emotional freedom

Life Law # 10

You have to name it before you can claim it!

- **Strategy:** Get clear about what you want and take your turn
- Clarity gives direction
- The universe needs your GPS
- Don't let your dreams go unclaimed!

GOALS

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time Based