

SECTION THREE: RELATIONSHIPS

CHAPTER 12 ANGER CONTROL OR PREVENTION?

WE MUST DISCOVER WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR INSIDE NOT OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES

We all have an inner peace we can learn to consciously access.

External rational thought creates external feelings.

Internal conscious thought accesses internal feelings.

SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE INVENTORY

1. Too much pressure causes stress and anger. True or False?
2. Teaching people to control their anger is of primary importance. True or False?
3. I feel angry because of what others do to me. True or False?
4. Some people have a lot of anger in them. True or False?
5. It is important to get your anger out. True or False?
6. People have thoughts which can cause them to feel angry. True or False?

DOES YOUR LIFE CONTROL YOU OR DO YOU CONTROL YOUR LIFE?

The answer is, "Yes".

At times our life controls us, and at times we control our life. Knowing the answer is not as important as understanding the question. The one leads to dysfunctional behavior, the other to a healthy life.

It is important to point out not all feelings are bad. It is OK to feel. First of all there are what might be external appropriate and inappropriate feelings, functional and dysfunctional, health and unhealthy, healing and sickening.. It is important to understand the difference

Hurt can be very functional. We can learn from it . Healthy anger is good.. We should feel angry when faced with racism, bigotry inhumanity. Guilt can be appropriate. There are some things that have been done we should be ashamed about individually and corporately. Expressing grief can be an act of healing at times.

On the others hand when we blame others for our hurt we become victims rather than victors. Raging at others makes us out rather than in control. Carrying unwarranted guilt causes us to become powerless rather than powerful. Grieving with out grace makes us reactive rather than proactive.

When our life controls us, we become powerless, out of control and a victim. This means that we are reacting to events from our past.

When we choose to move from a powerless position to a position of power, we regain control, and because we are proactive we no longer are victims.

People who believe that "events create feelings" will always be controlled by circumstances. Anger is a symptom of a person who believes an event causes the feeling. It goes something like this: "Because you did that to me, I feel hurt and I am angry with you. If you had not done that, I would not be angry so it must be your fault for doing that."

Some people try to practice anger control as if this was the problem. They try to manage their anger rather than trying to get into the peace. They are looking outside for something they already have on the inside, inner peace.

If they knew how to get into the peace, they would see things differently and act differently. If they don't deal with the pain, however, it will always kick them back into the anger.

THE TRUTH IS IN THE FEELING

One way of thinking is to get the knowledge to have the peace. A friend mine once said about his marriage that he could hardly wait to straighten it out so he could have peace. His real problem was, he needed to find the peace in order to straighten out his marriage. Alcoholics Anonymous does it this way. They ask for the peace (serenity) and then for the wisdom. The truth we seek is always in the feeling.

Some programs tell you to get your anger out. Trying to get the anger out is dealing with the symptom, not the cause. Unless the thought is dealt with, getting out the anger will do no good.

There are stories of people in therapy sessions who get out their anger by beating a pillow, hitting things, crying, screaming. When they are through the people in the group will say things like, "You did good. You got your anger out". Then some four weeks later the same person will be yelling, screaming, stomping and getting some more anger out. When does it end? Until the thought is changed, never.

Sometimes people just get tired of it. It's like building a callus over the thought. But it is still there, and there are many other roads for the anger to get out.

Denial is the other unhealthy way to deal with thought of pain. The problem this is the pain will always pop up some other place causing other disastrous neurosis. When it is hidden or disguised as something else, it will be harder to find.

CHANGE WHAT YOU ARE THINKING

Another technique that is taught to deal with the thoughts that create anger or negative feelings is to change what you are thinking. You change the negative thought to a

positive one. The problem is you have to remember all of the positive responses. Sooner or later there comes a time when a person can no longer remember the replies, and it breaks out in anger.

In the film, "The Unforgiven," Clint Eastwood plays the part of a hard drinking, woman chasing, gunfighter. He falls in love and marries a very gentle Christian woman. Unfortunately after two children she dies. He makes a vow that he will not live the old kind of life. In order to get enough money to support his children, however, he takes the challenge to go after some men who have brutalized other women. On his mission he is offered a drink and says, "I used to do that but I am not that kind of person any more."

Later, he is pressed to draw and shoot it out, but says, in effect, "I used to do that, but I'm not that kind of person any more." He is almost seduced by a prostitute, but again says he used to do that, but he is not that kind of person anymore. After the sheriff guns down his partner, he goes berserk, killing the sheriff and all of his men (including an innocent bystander or two) - all in all about twenty people. Thus the last five minutes of the film tell you he was still that kind of man. Nothing had really changed. He had just hit the limit to the power of positive thinking.

CHANGE THE WAY YOU ARE THINKING

The other technique is to change the way you are thinking rather than change what you are thinking.

When we go from external rational thinking to internal conscious thinking, we become proactive by pushing the "wonder button."

We have two basic buttons we can push: one is a "judgment" button, the other a "wonder" button.

As long as we have some kind of control, power and ability over the matter, our judgment works pretty well. But when we have to deal with something we have no control, power or ability over, we lose what we once had. We become judgmental and fall into insecurity. We get concerned about events or conditions that are out of control. We manifest anxiety, worry, or stress.

Feeling insecure creates fear, guilt and shame. Insecurity over what others might do creates anger, rage and unforgiveness.

We shift from the "judgment button" to the "wonder button" when we wonder what God will do. At the same time we move from ignorance into truth, from what we think we know or expect or control to what we really don't know, don't expect and don't control. We change from a sense of awfulness to a sense of awesomeness.

There is a basic difference between "conflict resolution" and "conflict prevention." Conflict resolution attempts to resolve the external conflict, while conflict prevention attempts to prevent the internal conflict.

People who practice external conflict resolution believe the external event is the cause of the conflict and attempt to resolve the circumstances. They believe the conflict determines their mood, that they feel angry because of what others have done, or hurt because of the circumstances, or guilty because they have failed.

They believe the real way to resolve conflict is to change the external conditions. If they can just stop others from doing what they are doing, they will not be angry. If they can just change the external environment, they will be happy. If they can just stop someone from failing, they will not feel guilty.

This kind of approach, however, will only tend to exacerbate the situation. The person will just become more disappointed if the circumstances don't work out the next time, or just feel more angry when others don't stop or just more guilty when they fail. People who feel angry every time they're let down will get out of control. Those who feel guilty when they fail will become powerless. Those who are frustrated and disappointed when circumstances do not work out as expected will become victims. And when this happens they become reactive rather than proactive.

The real solution is to prevent conflict rather than try to resolve it. The point is you can not stop people from offending others or from failing or from being in difficult circumstances. We need to learn how to handle ourselves in the midst of difficult times by changing our way of thinking. Only in this way can we handle our feelings of insecurity, of pain, of guilt, of rage, of unhappiness.

We must learn we don't have to feel angry everytime someone lets us down or guilty every time we let others down or hurt every time things do not work out the way we planned them.

The way to learn to do this is to raise our mood level with spiritual intelligence. By using our spiritual intelligence, we can feel secure even when we are let down, loved even when others are angry with us, and happy even when things do not work out as expected. Spiritual Intelligence enables us to get in control rather than out of control, to regain our power rather than becoming powerless, to be the victor rather than the victim, to become proactive rather than reactive.

TRIGGERS AND BUTTONS

The only way we can rid ourselves of these angry thoughts is to change our way of thinking. One way we can regain the love, joy and serenity is to recognize triggers and buttons.

First we need to recognize the existence of triggers. We all have our triggers we, others or circumstance might pull on us. Sometimes what we do or how we feel can trigger irrational, dysfunctional behavior from guilt to grief, from rage to addiction. We become powerless or out of control or reactive. We are victims.

When we can disarm the trigger, we regain a sense of power, control and sanity. We

become proactive and are no longer victims, but overcomers.

The key is to learn how to disarm the trigger. To do this we must identify the trigger. Some people have attempted to disarm the trigger by moving from the irrational to the rational. This is like giving people the answer to the math problem without the understanding of how to solve it. Once people learn the solution they can forget about trying to remember all the answers. Triggers are pulled by low mood thinking, blaming others or shaming oneself.

When we are in a low mood, our triggers can explode leading us to become irrational. We need to raise our emotional mood by going inside to find what we are looking for rather than outside. This calls for reflection rather than rationalizing.

That is where the buttons come in. Everyone has many triggers but only two buttons: a judgmental button and a wonder button. When we feel the trigger being yanked, we have a brief moment to figure which button we will push.

Push the judgmental button, and you have one heck of a fight on your hands. You will say things you regret and remember things the other person regretted to say. But if instead you push the wonder button, you begin to wonder what difference being in or out of the peace would make in a particular situation. And this leads to wondering what would be the best thing to do? Wondering what good thing is happening? Wondering what is the common ground where both can agree? Wondering if this is where we think we must go?

It doesn't take much time and it can save families.

All marriage arguments are caused by couples being in a low mood. Changing the mood from trying to fix one another to a mood of trying to appreciate one another will change the relationship.

You begin by disarming your own triggers from the past. You begin by spending five minutes a day raising your spiritual intelligence by becoming conscious of the Truths we have been talking about in these lessons.

EXERCISES FOR DISARMING TRIGGERS

These exercises can be plugged in to your personal life, your relationships, your business, parenting, school.

First, think of the event that you feel causes you the most anger because of something someone did to you. Begin by reflecting, "When I think of how the other person...lied to me ...did not keep promises ...would not listen criticized me...held back from me...blamed me...threatened me...did not talk to me...was not there for me... judged me other..

"I feel _____" = REACTING

As you are considering it, think of times you have felt more angry than at other times when you think of what they did. This is just a fact that calls for understanding.

"I feel more _____ one time than another." = REFLECTING

Now take it a step further and reflect on times when the mood you were in made a difference. When you were in a low mood you felt more angry and judgmental than when you were in a high mood.

"The mood I am in makes a difference." = REGAINING POWER

Next, understand the fact that you simply do not have to feel angry every time you think of what this person did.

"I do not always have to feel _____" = REGAINING CONTROL

Finally, consider the possibility of being in the peace when you think of what they did.

"It would be possible to be at peace." = BECOMING PROACTIVE

When you are able to work your way through these truths by taking them to heart, you will find that those other people will no longer control your anger. You will begin to gain control of your life.

Now check your answers and see if you have any change of heart.

RESPONSE TO SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE INVENTORY

1. Too much pressure causes stress and anger.

FALSE -Thought creates feeling not events. Stress is a mental illness.

2. Teaching people to control their anger is of primary importance.

FALSE -Teaching people how to deal with thoughts which create anger is of primary importance.

3. I feel angry because of what others do to me.

FALSE - If you think that way, you will always be out of control. Thoughts create feelings, not events.

4. Some people have a lot of anger in them.

FALSE -People have thoughts that can cause anger.

5. It is important to get your anger out.

FALSE -There is no anger in there, only thoughts that need to be changed.

6. People have thoughts which can cause them to feel angry.

TRUE-True, and they will always be powerless and out of control thinking like that.