

Review: Anger As Medicine Additional Resources

Why is working with the emotion anger and developing **HEALTHY** aggression one of the toughest things to unwrap? My personal sense: we are trying to teach/learn something that we rarely see modeled in a positive **POWERFUL** way.

EXPRESSION & CONTAINMENT (vs) EXPLOSION & VIOLENCE

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"... Anger is an emotion directly related to saying no. Of course he isn't saying we need to run around blowing our stacks every day, but he did emphasize the need to express anger in the right way. "Be angry, but sin not. For he that never is angry is worth little." But then, Cayce adds how important it is to have a container for that anger. "But he that is angry and controlleth it not is worthless." Note here that the control does not mean "suppression" but "proper direction." It's a crucial distinction.

Mark Thurston, The Essential Edgar Cayce. 2004.

IN THE NERVOUS SYSTEM & SOMATIC EXPERIENCING WORLDS, PETER LEVINE EXPLAINS TITRATION AS:

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"... (we) Use titration to create increasing stability, resilience and organization. Titration is about carefully touching into the smallest "drop" of survival-based arousal, and other difficult sensations to prevent retraumatization. I use the term "titration" to denote the gradual, stepwise process of trauma renegotiation."

Peter Levine, In an Unspoken Voice - How the body releases trauma and restores goodness. 2010.

Titration in Practice

- When we're practicing, experimenting and **LIVING** - we want to navigate our experiences so that sensations and **ACTIVATIONS** (arousals; stimuli; stress; etc.) settle on a case-by-case basis.

(In other words)

- Don't **FLOOD** the system.
- When starting out - when our **CAPACITY** is smaller, we want to aim to not let out too much **ENERGY** all at once.
- We want to **TITRATE** our experiences (and experiments) as much as we can.

Babies have this innate capacity in them:

- They might start to fuss, or look away, or stop engaging, when they've had **ENOUGH** stimuli.
- Another hallmark of **ATTUNEMENT** is being able to recognize this (as the caregiver) and support their natural rhythm of approach and avoidance.

Our Birthright: Healthy Aggression and the Energy of the Emotion Anger

- "That's **MINE!**" as the toddler grabs the toy from his brother. ("Share please." 'NO!')
- The baby that tugs on mom's hair while breastfeeding.
- The tiny punches of baby's mini fists on mom's face.
- Grabbing the dog's tail and pulling really hard!

THESE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THE BEGINNING “ENERGIES” OF HEALTHY AGGRESSION AND LIFE FORCE BEING FELT AND EXPRESSED.

- But, if the mom doesn't know how to **MEET** that energy in a caring and inviting, attuned and encouraging way, the baby won't feel met and she'll sense un-safety.
- Without consistent safety you get the slow **DECLINE** of life force energy expression. (Shutdown)
- The biological message is that of no **ACCEPTANCE**.
(And when a person doesn't accept you, especially your primary caregiver, you don't accept yourself.)
- That 'energy' of non-acceptance turns **INWARDS** to: Low self-esteem. Self-hate. **SHAME**. (More on this soon!)

Therefore,

To re-access the true **SELF**, one must tap into their **HEALTHY** aggression and wake up the life force energy that was shutdown (due to basic **SURVIVAL** responses) so long ago.

- The lessons of making **SOUND** via 'VOO' (or VOO-AHH), is to help spark up **LIFE-FORCE** energy in small (titrated) pieces.
- It (VOO/VOO-AHH) helps to **MOBILIZE** that deep visceral, biological, cellular knowing that YOU ('I') matter. And that you deserve to be **ALIVE**.
- This is very different from **ACTING** out or watching a movie that might spark 'produced' aggressive reactions and feelings of adrenaline.

CATHARTIC PRACTICES (TEND TO) TAP INTO THIS KIND OF ONLY OUTWARD EXPRESSION.

- We want to **CONNECT** to our internal sensation (emotion) and then move that energy and action **OUT**.

(Review Part 1 Handout!)

The Tricky Sticky Nature of Anger & Healthy Aggression Work

- It can be tough to imagine a **LIFETIME** of stored up anger and aggression coming out in one big bang! (Right?)
- A person will **STOP** their aggressive impulses and even just the **FEELING** of the anger energy (as they 'feel/sense/think' it might **HARM** others).
- And/or, a person might stop and not allow themselves to feel it because it was **UNSAFE** to express it in the past (or, the expression of anger they knew from the family system was explosive, abusive and terrifying).
- There is often immense **SHAME** coupled with these powerful life-force sensations and emotions.
- Another commonality: Having **ZERO** model for any kind of life-force expression (meaning, the environment was devoid of all emotion; shutdown and any sign of **WARMTH** or **AFFECTION** was the rule.)

HENCE **TITRATION**

Exploring Healthy Aggression - Lesson Review

- Anger is (often) associated with **TENSION** in the body and its musculature system (for the most part).
- Sometimes, we need to **CREATE** safe aggressive **EXPERIMENTS** to help **FREE UP** stored anger/aggression.
- Experiments for helping to free up this energy are, but are not limited to:
 - Accessing the **JAW** and facial muscles.
 - VOO and VOO-AHH are subtle entry points to unlock held aggressions.

"The jaw is the linchpin to anger." Peter Levine
 - Doing the VOO, and VOO-AHH with **MOVEMENTS** of the hands, feet, pelvis, eyes ... (whatever the impulse brings.)
 - Snarling the lip. Baring the teeth. Biting.
 - Growling, hissing sounds.
 - Pushing with the hands. Flailing the arms.
 - Stomping the feet. Saying NO! Saying STOP or STOP THAT!
 - Movements to hit, punch, scratch.

References: Visit Irene's YouTube Playlist on Anger & Healthy Aggression