

## Master Emotional Control *Arnold Sanow, MBA, CSP*

*“We are being judged by a new yardstick: not just how smart we are, or by our training and expertise, but also how well we handle ourselves and each other” Daniel Goleman, Working with Emotional Intelligence*

Being in control of your emotions puts you in charge of your destiny and increases the trust and respect you earn from others. Mastering emotional control gives you power – when you “lose it,” you lose your power too.

Whether we’re conscious of it or not, we decide every instant how to respond to the events of life, whether it’s an insult hurled our way, a rude gesture, or an embroiling conflict. While other people or situations may aggravate, irritate, instigate, frustrate, disappoint or dishearten us, ultimately we choose what to feel and how to respond. We’re completely in charge of our emotional responses. No one makes us feel anything; we do it ourselves. It’s our own thoughts that make us cross or us calm and centered.

When we feed ourselves anger- rousing thoughts, it activates a feedback loop, circulating more anger – all dependent on what we tell ourselves. If you think or say, “He’s acting like an idiot! He makes me so angry!” your body will respond to your verbal cues and kick the body’s defense mechanisms into high gear. Our thoughts and feelings create mental and emotional states which influence how we related to situations and people in them.

Our anger buttons might go on alert when a certain word is spoken, a particular tone of voice is used, or an eyebrow is raised in displeasure. Countless things activate anger based on how we believe others should be thinking, behaving or feeling. When people behave in ways that conflict with what we want, need or value our anger heats up.

Anger isn’t a “bad” emotion, however it produces bad feelings if not effectively managed. It leaves behind a trail of bitter feelings with powerfully destructive consequences, such as fueling hostility, resentment, and a desire for revenge. Anger is a natural human emotion that is experienced by everyone; it can be safely expressed without being aggressive or obnoxious

Avoid heated discussions. When we feel pressured, stressed or threatened, effective communication is often compromised. We may talk faster, speak at a higher frequency, or interrupt or rattle on as a means of dominating the conversation. These behaviors put others on red alert and they’re more likely to strike a defensive stance, with less willingness to listen or negotiate wit us.

When emotions heat up, switch to “cool down” self talk. This sends different messages to your brain, reducing the intensity of emotional reactions. It helps by changing your

physiological responses an corresponding emotional state; thinking “cool” brings down your internal emotional thermostat:

- I use my energy for solving problems
- Stay cool ... I’m keeping my cool
- I am focused on solutions
- We can work this out
- I can handle this calmly
- My intention is to create connection

*“When you live in reaction, you give your power away. Then you get to experience what you gave your power to” N Smith*

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