



Richard and Carla Patzke

Christian Ministry Concepts

P. O. Box 1822, Titusville, FL 32781-1822

An Affiliate of Christian Helplines, Inc. February 2, 2011

Helping the Walking Wounded Discover the Personal Reality of God's Love and Life Through Biblical Counseling

Anger = Power and Control In Relationships

(Some information quoted or adapted from material developed for the Wendy program at Brevard Community College).

Don, a 49 year old man, called for help to save his marriage. While he was at work, his wife packed all of her personal possessions, cleaned out the bank accounts and left. Later she obtains a restraining order because of his repeated anger rages and verbal abuse.



Marci, a 24 year old woman, is sitting in my office with bruises on her face and arms. Her lip is swollen. She has been with this man since she was 17, left numerous times only to return. She has three young children, no education, not even a high school diploma. She cries for help through her tears.

National studies estimate that 3 to 4 million women are beaten each year in our country.

- 31% of women surveyed admitted to having been physically assaulted by a husband or boyfriend.
- Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women between the ages of 15 and 44.
- A woman is beaten every 15 seconds (estimate). 95% of domestic violence is a male abusing a woman.
- Thirty percent of female homicide victims are killed by partners or ex-partners.
- 1,500 women are murdered as a result of domestic violence each year in the United States.
- 80% of violent juvenile offenders/adult prisoners came from homes where domestic violence occurred.
- 60% of the boys who witness domestic violence become batterers/are involved in other violent crimes.
- Girls who witness domestic violence often become victims of date rape/future victims of partner abuse.

Anger is One of the Leading Causes of Divorce

Anger is really a secondary emotion arising out of fear, frustration, hurt from unfulfilled expectations.

Fear - Expecting something bad will happen. Threat can be physical or emotional, real or imaginary.

Frustration - Not getting what we expected from people or from circumstances.

Hurt - The feeling of our personal worth being devalued when people don't treat us as we expect.

We are rarely ever angry for the reasons we think. Most anger contains unresolved elements from the past, including childhood traumas and other past disappointments that the current situation may remind us of. We can also become angry when we see traits in others that we dislike in ourselves. In addition, angry reactions are more likely when we are tired or under stress.

Nobody "Makes" Us Angry

Rather we make ourselves angry by the way we have learned to interpret events (usually negative).
Our reactions usually follow a pattern:

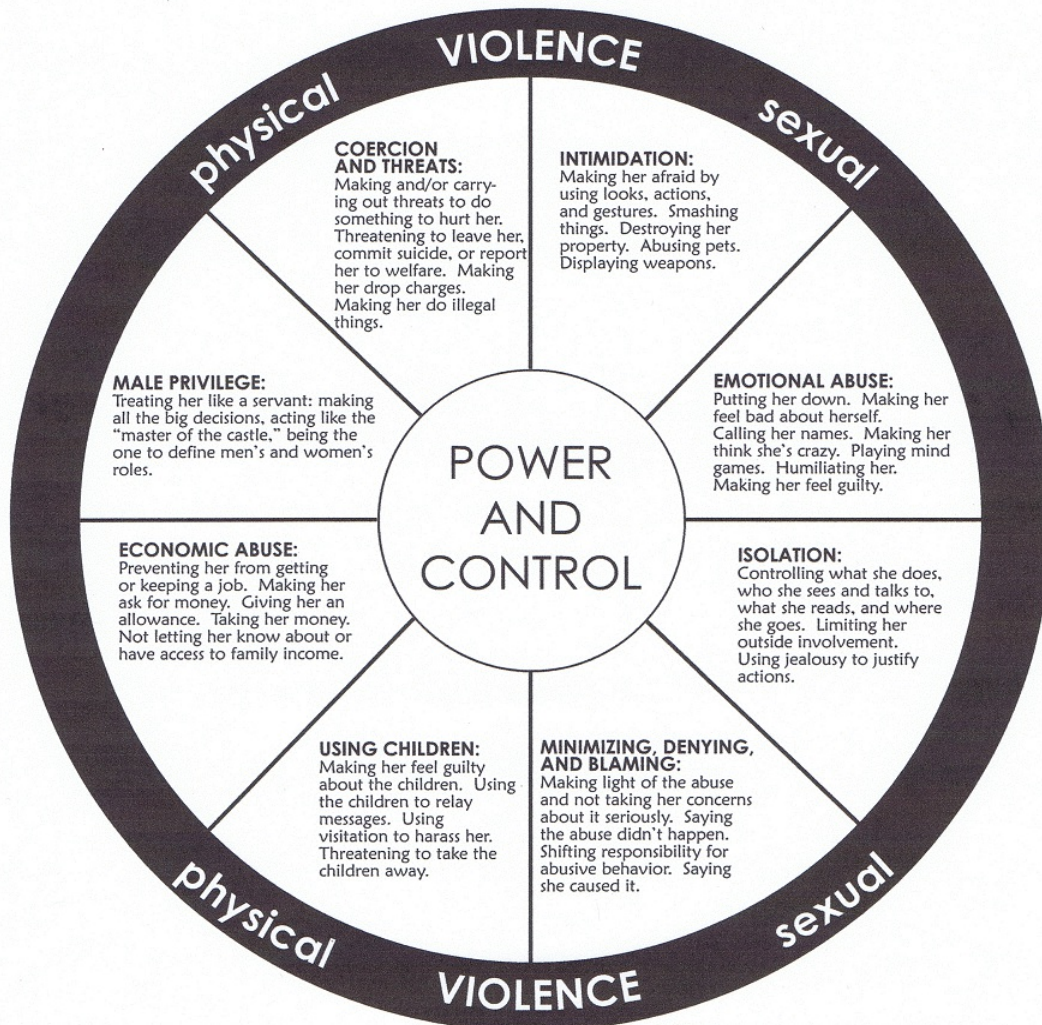
Event → Perception of Event → Interpretation (Thoughts) → Emotions → Resulting Behavior

Thoughts are very powerful, and are the trigger for both feelings and behavior. We can learn to trace our reactions back to the triggering negative thought, helping us to better understand our motivations. When we have learned to do this, negative patterns can be interrupted by analyzing our interpretations and "Reframing" any distorted assumptions and expectations we may have of God, others or even ourselves using God's Word as the source of truth.

POWER AND CONTROL WHEEL

Physical and sexual assaults, or threats to commit them, are the most apparent forms of domestic violence and are usually the actions that allow others to become aware of the problem. However, regular use of other abusive behaviors by the batterer, when reinforced by one or more acts of physical violence, make up a larger system of abuse. Although physical assaults may occur only once or occasionally, they instill threat of future violent attacks and allow the abuser to take control of the woman's life and circumstances.

The Power & Control diagram is a particularly helpful tool in understanding the overall pattern of abusive and violent behaviors, which are used by a batterer to establish and maintain control over his partner. Very often, one or more violent incidents are accompanied by an array of these other types of abuse. They are less easily identified, yet firmly establish a pattern of intimidation and control in the relationship.



Developed by:
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project
202 East Superior Street
Duluth, MN 55802
218.722.4134

Produced and distributed by:

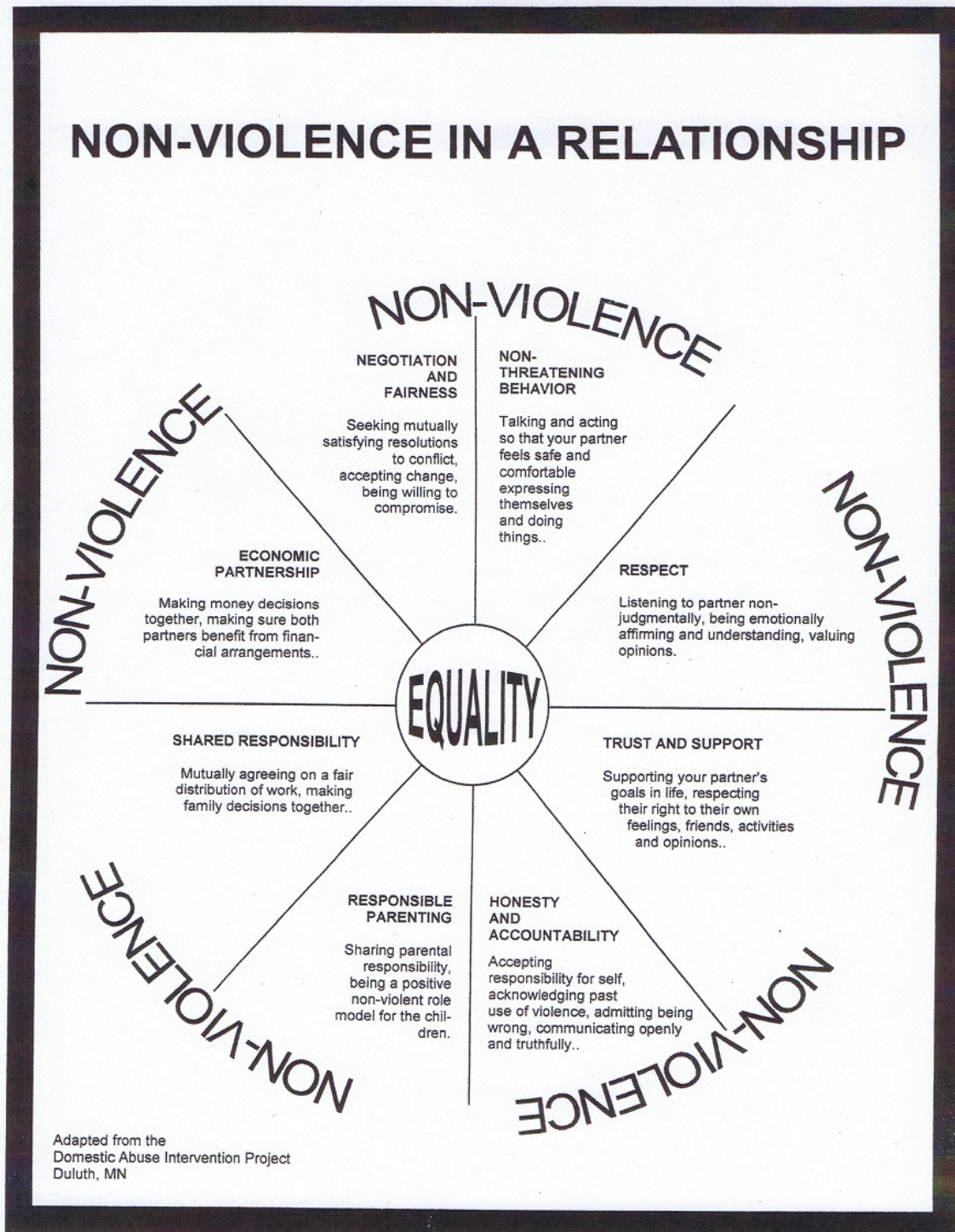


NATIONAL CENTER
on Domestic and Sexual Violence
training • consulting • advocacy
4612 Shoal Creek Blvd. • Austin, Texas 78756
512.407.9020 (phone and fax) • www.ncdsv.org

Self-Defeating Attitudes

Anger can result from certain self-defeating attitudes, such as the need to be right (along with the fear of being wrong), the need to control others, or the need for approval. Other anger producing self-statements include: "It's not fair", "I am entitled", "She did it on purpose", "I'll get even", "I'll do what it takes to get my way", and any judgment that contains the word "should".

Unresolved anger tends to distance us from others as well as from ourselves. We become negative toward the world and our sense of self-worth drops. We are unable to move forward, and so remain emotionally immature. In a relationship, unresolved anger leads to built-up resentments, which can be devastating to the relationship and almost impossible to overcome.



Guidelines To Help You Deal More Positively With Anger

Whether anger stems from the past or from the present, there are things we can do to deal with it more effectively. Anger is a natural emotion, and can be useful if expressed constructively (not just vented on someone else). *Anger that is not expressed (reasoned through with God, self and others) cannot be resolved*, and buried anger (un-forgiveness) never goes away. **But not all expressions of anger are healthy.** Clearly, those that lead to physical violence are the most dangerous, but sometimes our words are just as hurtful. **We must acknowledge the escalating nature of anger.** A minor irritation or frustration can turn into rage or aggression in just a few seconds. Try to intervene early in this progression, using these guidelines:

- **Recognize that you are angry** and seek to identify the cause (it often helps to write your feelings down, allowing yourself to feel the pain).
- **Think about it objectively**, assessing its logic and relative importance (also try to understand the motives of the other person).
- **Decide how you could express the anger without blaming** or attacking the other person (or yourself).
- **Ask yourself if you can let it go** (forgive them) and neutralize the angry energy with exercise or relaxation techniques (challenge yourself to see the hidden benefits - what have I learned?)
- **Talk (or use writing) to directly** and assertively approach the person who triggered your anger.
- **If you can't resolve the problem with a person, release your anger by surrendering it to God** through prayer, crying, exercising, and/or discussing the situation with a trusted friend. Avoid driving, alcohol, drugs, etc.

“But let every one be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”

James 1:19-20 NASB

Rules for Expressing Anger



1. **If you are excessively angry, separate yourself from the situation until you calm down.** Remember that it is not what you feel, but how you act that either helps or hurts others. Surrender your expectations to God (read Philippians 2:1-11, 1 Peter 2:21-25; 4:12-13).
2. **Describe the situation that is making you angry.** Be specific; state the facts. Focus on facts, not feelings. Write out what you want to say before you approach the person.
3. **State how you feel about the situation.** Speak calmly, using "I" messages. Don't attack or put the other person down. Pay attention to your tone of voice: reduce volume and intensity instead of increase it.
4. **Tell the person what you want him/her to do.** Be realistic and reasonable. Describe exactly which behaviors you want stopped and which you want continued. Recognize that you may need to make changes as well, and be willing to change for the benefit of the relationship.
5. **Tell the other person why you are approaching them.** Say exactly how their change in behavior will benefit you, and how it might also benefit them. Do not threaten.
6. **Regardless of how the other person responds, remember to forgive because** Christ first forgave us (Colossians 3:12-13). Love covers a multitude of offenses.