

Work in Progress

Published monthly by Michele Crawford
Work in Progress is an electronic newsletter intended to assist individuals seeking optimum well-being.

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Work in Progress September 2007 Volume II Issue IX  
Feature Article: Coping with Other Peoples' Rage and Entitlement: Part Two

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In this Issue:

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- 1) Note from Michele
- 2) Feature Article
- 3) About Michele
- 4) Counselling Services

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- 1) Note from Michele

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Dear Reader

Part One outlined the significant ways you can absorb the anger of controlling people. Part Two addresses an alternative reaction: to deflect their wrath away from you and sometimes, even influence them to calm down.

Deflecting means a quicker return to normalcy for you; a calmer persistence to find resolution; satisfaction with your own improving communication skills; an enhanced possibility of being your needs and

wants being heard; health benefits; and virtually no rumination or other intrusive thoughts afterwards; etc.

The first step is to ACCEPT their anger and controlling style. Then you can make a plan. Acceptance does NOT mean you approve, agree or condone either their viewpoint or emotion.

Acceptance means acknowledgement of the other person's anger and related behaviour first which leaves you somewhat more composed. This more serene state of mind can be a start point. Without acceptance, you will be immediately upset and less able to deflect. You will probably absorb in some way because you believe they SHOULD NOT be acting or saying how they are in fact acting or saying.

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## 2) Feature Article: Coping with Other Peoples' Rage and Entitlement: Part Two

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1.) Before another person becomes angry, you were relatively calm and detached. Now, you feel anxiety, guilt, anger and or offended. Your fight or flight response has kicked in which may lead to health problems over time.

If you believe other people make you feel a certain way, (in other words: control your emotions), it would be a good idea to book an appointment with me. A point of fact is you choose your emotions based on your beliefs about what has happened.

If someone says something that you strongly react to, ask yourself:

"Is it a fact?"

Tell yourself (because it's true) "It's mostly about them," and

Ask yourself at this point (now that you have calmed down): "What are you going to do about it? Will it matter in a week? Will it help you in any way to be upset by it? Is it affecting your health in a positive way to be upset?" And so on.

Then, go back to the facts and focus on them rather than the other person's reactions. Go back to a focus on what's best for you and your health.

2.) You invest significant energy in trying to get the other person to understand your point or even listen to logic. Regularly, this discussion deteriorates into a futile argument.

You can tell by their voice tone and volume that they are not going to listen so if you do not want to argue you can simply say "I've listened to everything you said and I do not agree." Then STOP talking – a very difficult thing to do. Know that when they have calmed down, they may be willing to hear your viewpoint.

You can try what I call PET EXPRESSIONS. These are simple statements that are 1) comfortable for you to say, 2) short and intended to deflect their words and intent, 3) fit many different scenarios, and 4) with practice, you can say them even in moments when your emotions create that blank sensation that seems to empty your brain.

A possible list includes: (and remember, voice tone implies most of the meaning of words)

- How would that help?
- I never thought of it that way.
- Hmmmmm
- Really?
- Where is that written?
- Does that really work for you?
- Oh Oh

Or just make the most puzzled face you can manage... practice in the mirror.

3.) You take a before and during approach in trying to manage the other person's anger. Before, you walk on egg shells to avoid their wrath. During their temper, you try to calm them down and appease their mood.

If you are giving up your needs and wants because of a relationship with a controlling person, did you know that a significant cause of depression is nice-ism? When you give up your voice, the ensuing inward-turned anger and guilt, the ruminating, the stewing and re-living may develop into many forms of illness and cancers.

This would be a good time to learn assertiveness. There are many good books on the subject. In addition, I have found over the years that many people confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness.

I believe everyone has the right to not be yelled at by anyone else. Raise your hand, palm toward him or her, avoid eye contact and wait for him or her to ask what you are doing. Then lower your hand, resume eye contact and say: "If you continue to yell, I will leave the room" or adjust this statement to fit the circumstances.

The good news is you do not need to ever repeat this with the same person. If they yell again, just leave the room without another word. An aggressive response is to tell them to stop yelling or yell back. A passive response would be to allow it to continue or not follow through with ending the conversation once you are again being treated without dignity and respect.

When you are confronted with a person who is yelling, instead of saying calm down, acknowledge the evidence you see. Say "I hear it in your voice" or "I can see by the way you are sitting that you're angry" or "I can see you are upset." Most people will calm themselves down.

Acknowledging their anger is not an endorsement of anger. It is merely recognition of their emotion, which is usually what people are looking for anyway. Once they have that, their speaking tone is usually calmer.

If you have had a history of being reactive to other people's anger, then you will need to practice, practice, practice, practice until these strategies feel comfortable. You will need to make a plan of your responses and practice when you are calm. Then you are more likely to implement it in any heated situation.

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3) About Michele  
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Michele Crawford is a therapist who assists individuals who are struggling with trauma, anxiety or depression. Her passion for her work remains embedded in being able to connect with you in your suffering, helping you find real solutions no matter how complex the issue may be.

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#### 4) Counselling Services

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Are you prepared to live with more happiness, optimism, confidence, self-worth and hope? If your answer is "yes," then your next step is to contact me for a free 20-minute phone consultation. We can then discuss how I might best help you resolve your problems of Trauma, Depression and Anxiety.

The benefits of counselling with Michele include: significantly reduced stress levels, an optimistic outlook in life, increased confidence and hope.

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