

Recovery!

Westwind eating disorder recovery centre

Nov/Dec 2002

Volume #3, Issue #6



Anger

Healthy...or unhealthy?

Anger is an emotion that wears many faces. It can be a difficult feeling to handle well all of the time. People deal with their anger in many different ways, some healthy and some not so healthy. Anger is a gift and can help us keep a balance between giving and taking in relationships. A healthy relationship with anger consists of recognizing your anger, dealing with it and letting it go. In contrast, an anger problem is something that makes it difficult for you to handle your anger well. Some common examples of anger problems are stuffing anger, fearing anger or liking it too much.

Anger is a normal part of life. It often acts as a signal of another more serious problem. Anger should be expressed in moderation without a loss of control. The goal of anger is to solve problems, not to vent on someone. Anger works best when it is stated in a clear and understandable way and then relinquished once the issue is resolved.

Screening invitations for anger is an important skill to develop. Each day provides us with many invitations to become angry. For example, you may be driving in your car when someone cuts you off. Maybe your boss cannot seem to stop criticizing you, or you have tried to phone your doctor three times this week and he has still not returned your call! You could choose to accept every invitation that comes your way, in which case you would be angry all the time. A healthy perspective of anger means to choose to ignore the less important invitations and separate serious situations from mere annoyance.

Unhealthy Anger Styles

Masked Anger

One style of expressing anger can be referred to as masked anger. Anger is masked when people do not recognize their anger or the severity of it. One way of doing this is to practice **anger avoidance**. Anger avoiders wear a mask to hide their anger from

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Greetings!

Dealing with, feeling and expressing emotions is a very common factor in recovering from an eating disorder. Many girls find it difficult to pin point their anger and express it in an effective manner. We all experience shame and guilt at some point in our lives for some reason or another as well. This issue's articles will help you to better identify the cause of the negative emotions you are feeling and hopefully provide you with a few helpful strategies for dealing with them.

Do you ever get that mid afternoon food craving? Find out if your body really does need a little chocolate boost to make it through the day, or if your emotions are the true cause of your cravings.

This past year has brought many exciting changes to Westwind with the addition of Christy and Val to our staff. We have had a successful year once again, and have been blessed with many wonderful new clients. We hope your year was equally as rewarding as ours. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year in 2003!

Lynne Robertson

What's New at Westwind? Conferences

Valarie and Christy recently travelled to the United States for conferences on the topic of eating disorders and body image. Valarie attended the National Eating Disorder Organization Conference in Santa Monica, California, and Christy took part in the Renfrew Centre Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Both made contacts with other professionals and brought back great feedback, ideas and resources to Westwind.

Support Groups

Support group meetings are now being held every Monday evening at 7pm at Westwind. The group is peer run and offered free of charge to anyone struggling with eating disorders and body image issues, their family and friends. You can also join in the discussions on our on-line support group at <http://groups.msn.com/westwindeatingdisordersupportgroup>.

This newsletter is a publication of the Westwind eating disorder recovery centre, and is intended for general information only. It is not intended to provide personal medical or psychological advice, which should be obtained from a qualified health professional.

More information about Westwind can be obtained by calling 204-728-2499, or call toll free in North America at 1-888-353-3372. Check our web site at : www.westwind.mb.ca, or e-mail us at westwindedrc@mb.sympatico.ca. We are located at 458-14th St, Brandon, MB, R7A 4T3, Canada.

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others and from themselves. Sometimes anger avoiders are afraid of losing control of their anger, like a monster released from its cage. Sometimes they fear not being liked. They have learned that being nice, calm and safe cannot go with anger. They are often not open to the warnings of a dangerous situation and as a result can get treated as a door mat.

Sneaky anger is another form of masked anger. The anger sneak also wears a mask, one of confusion, procrastination and laziness. Anger sneaks hide their anger by not doing what they are asked and keeping their resentment to themselves. They gain a sense of control over their life by frustrating others. However, anger sneaks lose track of their own wants and needs and spend their time being resentful of what others ask of them. This often leads to boredom, frustration and unsatisfying relationships.

Paranoid anger is a third form of masking anger. These people hide from their anger by giving it to others. They assume that others are angry with them when they themselves are angry. They often fear that others are looking to attack them and end up spending a lot of time jealously guarding and defending what they believe is theirs. Paranoid anger provides a guilt free way of feeling anger - it is disguised as self-protection. Unfortunately, paranoid anger has many costs. People with paranoid anger are insecure, alone because they trust no one, and confused between their own feelings and those of others.

Explosive Anger

A second style of expressing anger is explosive anger. This anger is quick, exaggerated and sometimes dangerous. **Sudden anger** is one form of explosive anger and is characterized by loss of

control and quick rage. Like a surprise thunder storm that swoops in unexpectedly and leaves a mess that takes days to clean up. People who practice sudden anger gain a surge of power and a release of stored up feelings. This kind of anger can leave damage that is regretted later, once it is too late to take back.

Shame based anger, based on a poor self image, is also an explosive form of anger. Shame prone people often feel suddenly attacked and lash out defensively in return. When someone ignores them or criticizes them, they take it as proof that the person disapproves of them as much as they disapprove of themselves. They avoid their own feelings of shame and inadequacy by shaming, criticizing and blaming others. The trouble is that they often end up attacking the people they love which causes them to feel worse about themselves.

Deliberate anger, another explosive anger form, occurs when someone becomes intentionally angry to show that they will “go crazy” in their anger if they do not get what they want. This kind of anger is planned and purposeful. It lacks emotion, at least at first. They have learned that they can control others with threats and sometimes violence.

Addictive anger is used by people who seek the adrenaline rush that comes with an explosion of anger. For the anger addict, the rush provides them with intensity, excitement and a sense of power. Anger addicts do not learn other ways to feel good and become dependant on their anger.

Chronic Anger

The final style of anger expression is chronic anger. Those with a chronic anger

style stew in their anger for long periods of time and find it very difficult to break free from it. One form of this is **habitual anger**, where people have learned and formed a strong habit of anger. These people often become angry at small things that do not really bother them. They start their day grumpy, spend it looking for a fight, and end it even more grumpy. They struggle with ending their anger even though they are unhappy with it. The anger provides them with predictability and stability.

Moral anger, another form of chronic anger, locks people into endless crusades of justice. Those who practice this anger are confident in their righteousness and become angry when others disagree with them. They believe that their anger is for a greater cause and thus free themselves from the guilt of passing judgement on others. Their anger gives them a sense of superiority.

The last form of chronic anger is **hate**. Hate traps its members in an anger that will not easily release them. Hate is hardened anger which occurs when someone decides that another person is totally evil and unworthy of forgiveness. It begins as an unresolved and resentful anger and can continue indefinitely. People who hate, convince themselves that they are innocent victims, and create a world of enemies to fight with vigor and enthusiasm. Hate keeps you from letting go and getting on with life.

Healthy Anger

Expressing anger well includes not using your anger as an excuse to give up responsibility for what you say and do. Ending anger well means to let it go once it has served its purpose. It is easier to receive anger from someone when they are clear and specific about what behavior

was upsetting to them, what feelings it stirred and exactly how they want the behaviour changed. For example, a mother might say to her teenage daughter, "When you came home past your curfew I felt worried and frustrated and I want you to phone me the next time you are going to be late."

We are often required to deal with anger in the moment. We all have signals that alert us of anger feelings, and allow us to catch the anger when we are still in control. It is important to be aware of these signals. Some common anger signals include a flushed face, rapid heart beat or racing thoughts. It is sometimes beneficial to distance yourself from an angry situation for a moment to think about why you are becoming angry. "Am I being reasonable? Is it really this person or is it something inside of me that is overreacting to the situation? Is this worth getting upset over or can I practice being patient this time? Are there other reasons the person could be acting this way?"

Sometimes people become angry when they confuse a goal and a desire. A goal is something that cannot be blocked by anyone but yourself. A desire is something that you do not have the ability to control. Mowing your lawn by the end of the day is a great desire, but not a very good goal, because there are many possibilities that could block mowing the lawn like a rain storm or people dropping by. Anger often arises when we try to turn our desires from others into goals or expectations. For example, Billy might have a desire for his girlfriend Mary to phone him everyday and become angry when it does not happen.

Sometimes anger comes as a result of past hurts. Often when we are hurt we

do not want to forgive. Forgiving is not the same as forgetting. Forgiveness is the path to healing the hurt, not because they deserve it, but because anger leads to bitterness, to rage and eventually poisons your life with constant thoughts of revenge. When we ask forgiveness of someone or offer forgiveness, it is important to remember the difference between goals and desires. No one can control another person's response, but we can control what we choose to say and how we can benefit from the experience of forgiveness.

References:

Potter-Efron, P., Potter-Efron, R. (1995). *Letting go of Anger*. New Harbinger Publications, Inc: Oakland, Ca.

Face The Facts

How effective are the weight controlling behaviours of self-induced vomiting, laxative and diuretic abuse?

Vomiting only rids the body of 30-50% of the calories eaten and it never leads to sustained weight loss. The more you use this form of purging, the more efficient your body becomes at absorbing calories and the more food it will want. Vomiting causes serious damage to your body.

Laxatives and diuretics don't rid the body of any calories at all. The weight loss is only water, and only temporary. The body produces aldosterone and renin (anti-diuretic hormones) and releases them in response to lost fluid, causing water retention which makes your eyes, stomach and ankles swell and causes you to feel heavy. Laxatives also teach your bowels to be lazy and give you constipation, leading you to take more of them even though they make you feel bloated...a vicious cycle. Is it really worth doing these things to your body in order to look a certain way?

What are you Ashamed of?

Guilt, Shame and Eating Disorders.

Excessive shame and guilt are common problems for individuals with eating disorders. There are many ways that individuals may have been shamed as children. Some examples include: physical or sexual abuse, when parents aim disapproval at the entire self of the child rather than at the behaviour, when a child loses trust in their parents due to inconsistency in caregiving or neglect, or when a child feels that they cannot live up to the expectations of their parents.

What is Shame?

Shame is a feeling of being exposed and feeling self-conscious. When we feel shamed, we want to hide from the world. We want to escape the examination of self by a critical other. This critical other can be a significant other, or it can be a critical voice that we have internalized as our own internal judge. Shame is the feeling that the self does not live up to the expectations of significant others. Shame leads to feeling unworthy, bad and imperfect. It is often passed on through generations; parents with debilitating shame often create children with debilitating shame.

We have all experienced shame at some point in our lives. However, debilitating shame is a constant feeling of self-hatred. For people with debilitating shame, they do not make a mistake, they feel they are a mistake. Debilitatating shame is often covered up by one of two "masks". A person may deny and repress their shame and falsely appear egotistical. Alternatively, a person may work towards perfection as a way of compensating for perceived personal defects.

How is Shame Different Than Guilt?

Shame and guilt have often been confused and frequently the terms are used interchangeably. However, shame and guilt are actually very different concepts. Guilt is feeling badly for one's behaviour, while shame is feeling that the self is bad. Common thoughts related to shame are: "I am bad. I am worthless. How stupid of me." While common thoughts related to guilt are: "How could I have done that? What can I do to make amends for my wrongdoing?"

Normal vs. Debilitating Guilt

As with shame, everyone experiences guilt from time to time. However, some individuals suffer from debilitating guilt. With normal guilt, one feels relief from the guilt after amends have been made or after being punished. Whereas with debilitating guilt, no matter what punishment is experienced or what amends are made, the individual does not experience relief from the feelings of guilt. Some people try to deal with debilitating guilt by continually punishing or depriving the self. Of course, eating disorders are a prime example of the sort of self-deprivation that can be found with debilitating guilt.

Characteristics of Shame Found in Eating Disorders

- 1) Intense feelings of being inferior to others. Rather than feeling that one makes mistakes, feeling that one is a mistake.
- 2) Feeling extremely defensive when given negative feedback by others, even when this feedback is minor. With debilitating shame, there is no such thing as a minor mistake, it is all-or-nothing.
- 3) Constant apologizing and assuming responsibility for the actions of others.
- 4) Projecting one's beliefs about self onto

others by engaging in "mind-reading" that is not in one's favour.

- 5) Feeling ugly, flawed and imperfect. This often leads to a focus on clothing and makeup as a way of trying to hide perceived flaws.
- 6) Feeling ashamed to express normal emotions such as joy, fear, anger and sexuality.
- 7) Putting pressure on the self to do things perfectly or not at all. This can lead to procrastination and a fear of attempting new things.
- 8) Blocking feelings of shame through compulsive behaviours such as shopping, substance abuse, list-making or gambling.
- 9) Having caseloads rather than friendships. This is a result of feeling that it is not acceptable to have needs, so instead one concentrates on meeting the needs of others.

Reference:

Middelton-Moz, J. (1990). *Masters of Disguise: Shame and Guilt*. Health Communication Incorporated: Deerfield Beach, Florida.



What Are You REALLY Craving?

Sometimes it is hard to tell if it is really your body that is physiologically craving foods, or if you are emotionally craving them. How do we tell the difference between a biological craving and an emotional craving? How do we know when to eat the food we're craving or to search for the emotion that needs to be dealt with?



A biological craving doesn't go away, it is a physiological hunger that intensifies over time. Nothing will satisfy this type of craving except the craved food. While an emotional craving is not physiological, it does go away with time if you wait it out. The craving does not generally intensify over time, but the emotion that you are mistaking for hunger does. Doing something to satisfy that emotional craving, to fulfill the real need of your body, will cause the craving to disappear.

Biological food cravings can be satisfied with surprisingly small amounts of the craved food. When you satisfy these cravings you will be a happier person, when you don't the cravings may become uncontrollable. When you deny yourself of your biological cravings, you will most likely crave the food even more. With denial, the perceived need becomes, for example, a pound of chocolate instead of a piece.

Often the foods we crave are the specific foods our body is lacking. Being aware of your physiological hunger signals will give you the ability to satisfy your cravings. Hunger signals such as growls, pangs, and a hollow feeling, come from your stomach to inform you that your body needs refueling. Hunger signals can also come from your brain in the form of fogginess, lack of concentration, headaches and fatigue. One way to distinguish what your cravings really are caused by is to follow the hunger scale which rates the different levels of hunger and fullness.

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|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Extreme Hunger | • feelings of weakness, lightheadedness, irritability, or a constant focus on food, results from days of not eating |
| 2. Very Hungry | • stomach growls, hollow, empty and almost in pain, may feel weak and lightheaded |
| 3. Hungry | • beginning to feel stomach growls, and an emptiness, feeling like you need to eat soon |
| 4. Slightly Hungry | • noticing that the stomach is empty, but not feeling any unpleasant feelings |
| 5. Comfortable | • not thinking about or looking for food, feeling content, not hungry |
| 6. Politely Satisfied | • a small amount of food can curb hunger to get rid of the empty feeling |
| 7. Satisfied | • no longer wanting food, feeling satisfied that you've eaten enough physically and physiologically |
| 8. Full | • stomach is not starting to feel distended, you don't want to take another mouthful |
| 9. Uncomfortably Full | • stomach now feels uncomfortable, you ate more than you needed to feel satisfied |
| 10. Extremely Full | • feel stuffed full, you ate too much and felt out of control |

Take a look at the hunger scale. If you feel you are at a 5 or above, you aren't hungry, which means your body and brain don't need anything; therefore, if you are still craving something, it is not biological, it is emotional. If you are at a 3 or 4 your body is telling you it is hungry, this is a biological craving. If you are at a 1 or 2, your body is overly hungry.

When differentiating between biological and emotional hunger, the awareness of mood is equally as important as the awareness of hunger. Hunger always precedes biological food cravings, but not emotional cravings. You may be feeling sad, tired, anxious, stressed or angry if your body is biologically craving foods. Satisfying this craving will make you feel better. You might also be feeling sad, tired, anxious, stressed or angry if you are expressing an emotional craving. But, after eating the craved food, you'll probably still feel that way because the emotional need has not been met.

So, when you are craving a food, follow the hunger scale and ask yourself, "Am I really hungry?", "What am I feeling?", "Will food really help?" and "What do I really need?". For someone recovering from an eating disorder it is especially hard to identify hunger signals. It helps tremendously to adopt the method of mechanically eating three balanced meals, plus snacks, on a schedule every day. Over a period of time you will once again be able to identify when you are hungry. So, once you've identified that you are truly physiologically hungry, go ahead and satisfy that craving with a small amount of the food you are craving, chances are your body needs it!

Reference:

Waterhouse, D. (1995). *Why Women Need Chocolate*. Hyperion: New York, New York.

14 Carrot Gold Soup



- 4 cups low-sodium, reduced fat, chicken broth
- 1 cup coarsely chopped onions
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons grated ginger root
- 3 cups coarsely chopped carrots
- 1 teaspoon ground thyme
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 3-4 drops hot pepper sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Pour 1/2 cup of the chicken broth in a large sauce pan. Add onions, garlic and ginger root. Cover over medium high heat for 3 minutes.

Stir in remaining broth, carrots, thyme and orange juice. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low. Cover and boil gently for 20 minutes, or until carrots are tender.

Working in batches, transfer soup to a blender and process until smooth. Return to saucepan. Reduce heat to low. Stir in buttermilk, hot pepper sauce, and pepper. Do not let soup boil. Stir until heated through, about 2 minutes. Serve sprinkled with chopped fresh parsley on top and enjoy!

Carrots protect against cancer and promote a healthy immune system, good vision, healthy skin, hair, bones and teeth!

Reference:

Podleski, G., Podleski, J. (1996). *Looneyspoons*. Granet Publishing Inc: Ottawa Canada.