

Practical Ways to Diffuse Your Destructive Anger

I have seen many wounded souls over the past decade while working with couples and individuals in both inpatient psychiatric hospitals and outpatient office settings. These wounds are at the core of their being. Many of these souls have experienced trauma in one form or another.

The person who has experienced a trauma has experienced this in all three levels of their being: spirit, soul and body. All three parts have been defiled, injured or neglected. If the trauma affects all three dimensions of a person, doesn't it make sense that the healing of trauma involves all three aspects of the spirit, soul and body?

I tell you this because some of you reading this will have people who may have hurt you significantly, and you have presumed to have forgiven them; however, the bullet is still inside. The muck and defilement are still surrounding it. That doesn't necessarily mean you didn't forgive them. It just means you haven't cleansed your temple yet.

The concept I am about to suggest to you may seem foreign or uncomfortable at first. My experience with cleansing the temple is nothing short of miraculous. I have seen sexual abuse survivors heal very quickly after this exercise. I have seen women who have been sexually betrayed by their Christian husbands suddenly be able to move through the stages of grief and forgiveness so much more quickly than those who refuse to cleanse their temple.

What I would encourage you to do is keep an open mind and try this exercise if you feel your spouse or others have injured you. After (not before) you do this exercise, you can tell if it has been effective or not.

1. Anger Letter

The first step in the cleansing of your temple is to choose someone on your list of people who have hurt you and write an anger letter to him or her (never send it). This is not a letter to suppress but rather let out all the thoughts and feelings of hate, disgust and anguish that has been robbing your soul. This letter is not an "I forgive you" letter.

2. Warm up

First, warm up your body. Take your bat (tennis racquet, sport bat) and hit your mattress or pillow first with small hits then medium, large and extra-large hits. I recommend you do this three consecutive times. Then warm up your voice as well. Using the word "no" along with the hits, speak out small, medium, large and extra-large "no's" while hitting. This may feel awkward, but removing this buildup of pain out of your soul and spirit feels almost like having a baby, so you want to be physically warmed up.

While you're warming up, you may want to make sure you are home alone, and I would also turn off your phone so that you are not disturbed.

3. Read the letter out loud.

After your physical warmup, take the letter you wrote to your offender and read it out loud. If your offender's name is "Toby", then you would read the letter out loud such as this: Toby, how could you have done this to me? I trusted you! ..."

Now of course Toby is nowhere around. You certainly don't need to do this with him or her around. You are simply in a room alone just reading the letter aloud.

4. Engage the anger physically and verbally.

After reading your letter you can put your letter down and pick up your bat. You can hit the bed or pillow and let "Toby"

symbolically have it. You can yell, scream or cry, but let the infection out that has been robbing you. You can symbolically tell him his secrets are not controlling you anymore, and he was to blame. You have no limits as to what you can say to your offender. For once, let go of all the control that is keeping this wound infected. Let it out!

This can last anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour. Usually your body will let you know when you are done putting this behind you spiritually, emotionally and physically.

You're worth getting it all out. Someone has given you something toxic. You have been unhealthy ever since and after you remove it from you, you will feel so much better.

Comments

When you do your cleansing the temple exercise, you should only work on one offender at a time. If you have been offended by three different people, then that is three different cleansing the temple sessions. *Do not* go into this exercise and do it once for all the different people who have offended you. Each "bullet" needs to be taken out separately.

If you have several people on your list who have caused you trauma prior to or during your marriage make a list of them somewhere. What I tell clients is to start with the least painful trauma and work your way up to the larger offenses. This way, you get better skilled at the exercise and will know what to expect.

Each person you work on may give you different experiences or insights. I've known some men and women who thought offender No. 3 was going to be the worst, and yet a lesser one actually was a much larger experience for them.

When you continue to carry all this pain inside, you protect yourself from being hurt and being intimate in the process.

As you have taken the time to read through this, you may have your own thoughts about it. If you feel you need to do this exercise for those who have caused you past pain that is now affecting your life and relationships, then try it.

Doug Weiss, Ph.D., is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart to Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the author of several books including, *The 7 Love Agreements*. You may contact Dr. Weiss via his website, or on his Facebook, by phone at 719-278-3708 or through email at heart2heart@.