

ANGER MANAGEMENT WORKBOOK



WHAT CAUSES ANGER?

The causes vary from person to person and from situation to situation.

Anger affects your body.

When you get angry, your body creates energy.

Here's what happens:

- Adrenaline and other chemicals enter your bloodstream.
- Your heart pumps faster.
- Your blood flows more quickly.
- Your muscles tense.

Everyone gets angry sometimes.

Handling anger well can help you:

- Overcome problems
- Reach your goals
- Stay healthy
- Feel better about yourself

But too much anger or uncontrolled anger can cause problems.

Examples:

- Problems in your relationships with family and friends
- Problems at work
- Legal and financial troubles
- Physical and mental health problems

Some common causes of anger include:

Stress

Stress related to work, family, health and money problems may make you feel anxious and irritable.

Frustration

You may get angry if you fail to reach a goal or feel as if things are out of your control.

Fear

Anger is a natural response to threats of violence, or to physical or verbal abuse.

Annoyance

You may react in anger to minor irritations and daily hassles.

Disappointment

Anger often results when expectations and desires aren't met.

Resentment

You may feel angry when you've been hurt, rejected or offended.

POORLY HANDLED ANGER CAN CAUSE MANY PROBLEMS.

Some people try to pretend they aren't angry. Other people feel as if their anger is out of control. They don't believe they can handle it.

Depression

Anger that's kept bottled up can affect your thoughts and feelings. You may begin to feel unhappy and lose interest in things you used to enjoy, such as hobbies, work, friends or sex.

Problems at work

If you blow up on the job, co-workers, supervisors and customers may develop a negative impression of you. Your career may suffer as a result.

Alcohol or other drug problems

You may use alcohol or other drugs to try to:

- Dull anger and other strong feelings
- Forget about the negative consequences of an angry outburst.

But using alcohol or other drugs won't solve any problems. And it usually results in more anger and problems.

But ignoring anger or giving up control over it can lead to:

Physical health problems

These may include:

- Headaches
- Sleep problems
- Digestive problems
- High blood pressure
- Heart problems

Poor decision making

Anger can make it hard to think clearly. You may have trouble concentrating or may use poor judgment. This can lead to car crashes, injuries and other problems.

Problems with relationships

If you can't control your anger, you may end up insulting, criticizing or threatening those close to you. They may respond with anger or resentment. Getting angry may also keep you from telling your loved ones how you really feel.

Low self-esteem

If you have trouble managing anger, you may feel bad about yourself. You may feel as if you have little control over what happens.

WHAT SETS YOU OFF?

Different things trigger a person's anger. Some common triggers are listed below. Check the ones that trigger your anger. Use the blank spaces to fill in your own triggers.

I feel angry when I:

- Think I am treated unfairly
- Am embarrassed
- Feel ignored
- Don't get credit for something I've done
- Have to follow orders
- Fail at something or don't do something well
- Feel helpless or out of control
- Get jealous

I feel angry when people:

- insult me
- criticize me or my work
- don't listen to me disagree with me
- don't work as hard as I do
- lie to me
- tell me what to do
- are rude or inconsiderate
- are late
- don't act or feel the way I think they should

I feel angry when faced with these events or situations:

- Traffic jams and encounters with other drivers
- Conflict at work
- Family arguments
- Child misbehavior or temper tantrums
- Waiting in line at the bank, store, etc.
- Financial problems
- Yelling or loud noises
- Mistakes or errors
- Wasted time
- Losing a game or a contest
- Name-calling or teasing
- Child abuse
- Prejudice toward anyone
- Mistreatment of animals

Once you're aware of things that set you off, you can work to change the way you respond to them.



KEEP AN “ANGER JOURNAL.”

Use these 2 pages to start your journal. Over the next several days keep track of things that trigger your anger.

BE AWARE OF HIDDEN ANGER.

Sometimes what triggers your anger isn't the only thing causing angry feelings.

What are your warning signs?

Think about how you feel when you get angry. Check the warning signs you often have when you get angry. Write in signs that aren't listed.

My warning signs are:

- Tense muscles
- Tight fists
- Clenched jaw
- Sweaty palms
- Racing heartbeat
- Fast breathing
- Trembling or feeling shaky
- Feeling warm or flushed
- Upset stomach
- Loud or mean voice

Talk with your health-care provider.

Certain physical and mental health problems, such as Alzheimer's disease or brain injury, may increase your anger. And handling anger poorly can lead to health problems. Talk to your health-care provider about your anger and how it affects you. Have regular checkups.

When you get angry, ask yourself:

Are my level of anger and my reaction out of proportion to the trigger?

Do you seem to overreact to minor annoyances? Perhaps there is something else on your mind that's making you angry.

Am I directing my anger at an innocent person?

Are you really angry with the person who triggered your feelings? For example, suppose you have a disagreement with your boss. It bothers you all day, but you say nothing. Later, you let your anger out by blowing up at your partner or child.

Am I taking something personally?

Learning to deal well with anger means learning not to take problems or arguments personally.

Is this how I usually respond in similar situations?

You may respond with anger in certain situations because that's what you've always done. You may have learned this behavior growing up. But you can change the way you react.

Am I trying to take charge with my anger?

Anger is a common reaction when a person feels as if he or she is losing control. But the best way to show control is to react calmly and manage your feelings.

HOW ANGER CAN HELP YOU

Learning to recognize and express anger appropriately can make a big difference in your life.

Anger can help you:

Reach goals

Trying to reach a goal can be frustrating. Frustration can lead to anger, which in turn can motivate you to work harder.

Communicate with others

Talking about your anger can help keep it from building up. You may release tension and enjoy better communication with family, friends and co-workers.

Solve problems

Anger is a sign that something is wrong. It may serve as a warning for you to think about your feelings and attitudes.

Handle emergencies and protect yourself

Anger can cause an immediate burst of strength and energy. This allows you to react quickly if you're in danger.

You can find ways to help anger work for you - not against you.

The results of uncontrolled anger may include:

Verbal attacks or physical assaults

You may lose control and attack others physically or verbally. For example, you may:

- Throw or break things
- Yell, insult or threaten
- Slap, shove, kick or hit.

Abuse

Tension and frustration may build. Family members may become your target, even if your anger has little to do with them. The abuse may be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Sexual

Other criminal behavior

Anger is often a driving force behind:

- Destruction of property
- Murder
- Other violent crimes

DEALING WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S ANGER

Here are some tips:

Keep your cool.

Don't answer anger with anger.

Remember that anger can lead people to say things they don't really mean.

Criticism, threats or name-calling won't help resolve the situation.

Don't take it personally.

Try to understand why the person is angry. His or her feelings may have little or nothing to do with you.

Listen to the person.

Sometime an angry person just needs to "blow off steam". Let the person express his or her feelings. Don't interrupt. Maintain eye contact to show you are listening.

Think of solutions together.

If you're having a conflict with someone, try to find solutions that you can both agree on. Do this only when you are both calm.

Don't take chances.

- If you're worried about your safety, get help right away. Try to leave yourself an escape path.
- If the person has a weapon, seek safety at the first opportunity. Don't confront or try to restrain him or her.

Meditation

This can help calm you and clear your mind of anger. Follow these steps:

1. Find a quite place. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes. Take slow, deep breaths.
3. Concentrate on a single word, object or calming thought.
4. Don't worry if other thoughts or images enter your mind while you are doing this. Just relax and return to what you were focusing on.
5. Continue until you feel relaxed and refreshed.

Deep-breathing exercises

These can help keep anger from getting out of control. Follow these steps:

1. Sit comfortably or lie on your back.
2. Breathe in slowly and deeply for a count of 5.
3. Hold your breath for a count of 5.
4. Breathe out slowly for a count of 5, pushing out all the air.
5. Repeat several times until you feel calm and relaxed.

TAKE STEPS TO GET BACK IN CONTROL

Start by taking a “timeout”:

Stop what you’re doing.

When you feel your anger warning signs developing and you start thinking angry thoughts, tell yourself to stop. This may help you calm down and think more clearly.

Try to relax. For example:

- Count to 10 or 100.
- Get a drink of water.
- Take a walk.
- Take several slow, deep breaths

Leave, if necessary.

If you are angry with another person, tell him or her that you need to take a timeout. Ask someone to watch a child or elderly or ill person for you, if necessary. Then go to a safe place to calm down. Avoid driving.

Return when you’re calm.

Once you’ve got your anger under control, go back and talk with the person or face the situation that triggered your anger.

Remember to calm down.

Think carefully before you speak. You’re less likely to say something you’ll be sorry for later.

Name the problem.

Calmly and clearly explain why you’re angry or what the problem is. Don’t yell, use insults or make threats. People will be less likely to consider your point.

Use “I” statements.

After you describe the problem, use “I” statements to tell the person how you feel. These statements focus on you and your needs, wants and feelings. They also help the listener avoid feeling blamed or criticized.

Identify solutions.

Say what you would like to change or see happen in the future. If you’re having a conflict with another person, try to find a solution together.

Get help if you need it.

Talk with a family member or friend if you’re having trouble expressing your anger constructively. Or consider seeing a counselor or other mental health professional. He or she can help you learn ways to express your feelings through role-playing and other methods.

Don’t hold a grudge. After a disagreement, be willing to forgive.



AVOID NEGATIVE REACTIONS, SUCH AS:

Not letting go

You may have trouble getting past your anger. You may remember painful events that occurred long ago. As time goes by, your anger may continue to grow. You may become obsessed with angry thoughts or hopes of revenge.

Keeping it bottled up

This usually makes you feel worse. Sooner or later, your feelings come out. And when they do, it may be in the form of an angry outburst. Holding angry feelings in may also contribute to health problems.

Blaming

Blaming others doesn't solve problems. You need to learn to take responsibility for your own feelings and actions – both positive and negative.

Responding to anger with anger

This may seem like a natural reaction, but it often makes a situation worse.

Remember – you can take steps to change how you react to anger.

It's important to know that:

Alcohol or other drug use may increase anger.

Using alcohol or other drugs to dull anger doesn't work. These substances may mask angry feelings – but only for a short time. And they often bring the opposite result. Alcohol and other drugs play a major role in many cases of violence.

You shouldn't use alcohol or other drugs as an excuse for angry or violent behavior.

The truth is, there's no excuse for losing control in this way.

Treatment programs are available.

Some treatment programs are designed to help people recover from an alcohol or drug problem – and learn to manage their anger.

Get help if you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs.

- Call the center for Substance Abuse Treatment's National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357).
- Look in the phone book for numbers of local self-help groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

Having a problem with alcohol or other drugs makes it harder to manage anger.

PRACTICE YOUR POSITIVE SELF-TALK

In the space below, write down several problems or situations that made you angry. Did you tell yourself a negative message? What positive message could you tell yourself if the problem or situation happens again?

Situation	Negative Message	Positive Message
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

CONCEPTS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is a part of life – it can be a positive part of life, an instrument of growth; it can be good or bad depending on how we learn to deal with it. Every time we interact with someone there is a potential for conflict because people's needs and expectations are almost always never the same. We can even feel conflicts within ourselves-and may displace these on to others unless we are careful. Small conflicts should be dealt with as soon as possible so they don't grow. Try to unearth and bring out hidden conflicts. Disagree with ideas or behavior, not people.

Feelings are important – dealing with how we feel and being able to express feelings (both positive and negative) in a non-destructive way is very important in dealing with others. Talking about feelings (either to the person involved or to someone outside the situation), getting enough exercise, healthy food and sleep, enjoying what you do, all contribute to preventing unnecessary or destructive conflicts.

Make the conflict a problem to solve together. This puts both of you on the same side of the problem rather than on opposite sides. Remember, there can be a lot of solutions to any one problem and everyone can win.

HINTS FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS:

TAKE TIME TO COOL OFF – issues can't be dealt with until emotions are worked through. In both individual and group situations, the long-term relationship is generally more important than the conflict. Also, the process of conflict resolution is as important as the content. A resolution where one party is the winner and the other party is the loser is no resolution.

THINK ABOUT THE PERSON AS A PERSON – this helps to break down role stereotypes.

KNOW YOUR AIM – knowing what is important to you in the conflict and stating it clearly makes it more likely that your needs will be met and that the conflict will be resolved.

Pearls of Wisdom

1. *Conflicts are solved when there is willingness to let go of being right, of being defensive, of being “in control.”*
2. *In order to get where you want to go, you first have to leave where you are. I am willing to be open to change today. To live in this world successfully, we need to become flexible, like the limbs of a tree, and learn to bend in the wind, all the while keeping a firm footing on the ground.*
3. *Today I am willing to dissolve all barriers between others and myself. The world would be more peaceful if we spent our energy taking down fences rather than putting them up. Every thought of blame, revenge, and justified anger creates a wall between others and ourselves.*
4. *Changing the thoughts in our minds can change our lives. Today I will do my best to remember that the solution to any conflict begins with changing the thoughts in my mind. If for any reason today we feel attacked, or victimized, we can remember that it is only our thoughts that ultimately hurt us. We can elect to change those thoughts at any given moment and choose to see things differently.*
5. *Forgiveness is giving up all hopes for a better past. We often keep alive our pain from the past and relive it as if it is still happening today. In reality, the incident will never change, only our perception of it will.*
6. *I am willing to forgive at least one person today that I am holding a grievance against. Our egos will do anything to keep us in conflict. We can choose to not listen to the voice of ego.*
7. *Justified anger never brings us peace of mind. I will remember that anger is part of our human condition and is nothing to feel guilty about. When I feel anger, I will do my best to honor it, to express it in healthy ways, and then to see no value into holding on to it.*
8. *Today I will look at my lifestyle and strive to change things in order that I may live a more harmonious life. Much of the stress we have is due to the fact that we have created very complex lifestyles for ourselves. Today is the day to simplify and take the complexities out of our lives.*
9. *Create an atmosphere where equality prevails, such as equality of personal worth, dignity, and respect.*

10. *Communication should be give and take, not give or take.*

11. *I win, you win.*

12. *Do things with people, not to them, or for them.*

13. *Perhaps one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves before talking is “are my words going to bring about joining or separation?” Many times our statements and questions to others are communications that attack and separate. Let us begin all of our conversations with the intention of experiencing joining with others.*

14. *The less defensive we are, the more we are able to help others discard their defenses.*

15. *Invite criticism.*

16. *We feel weak when we feel we have given our power away to others. Today, I will respect the power within me. When we feel fearful, we tend to give the control of our lives over to others to make decisions for us. The power of making decisions always is within us.*

17. *Practice being wrong.*

18. *The discrepancies between reality and our ideals will determine how satisfied we are with our lives and ourselves.*

*God, grant me the serenity
To accept things I cannot change
Courage to change the things I can
And the wisdom to the difference*

pick up from their “body language”?

Personal Development

ASSERTIVE VERSUS UNASSERTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Many people are concerned that if they assert themselves others will think of their behavior as aggressive. But there is a difference between being assertive and aggressive. Assertive people state their opinions, while still being respectful of others. Aggressive people attack or ignore others' opinions in favor of their own.

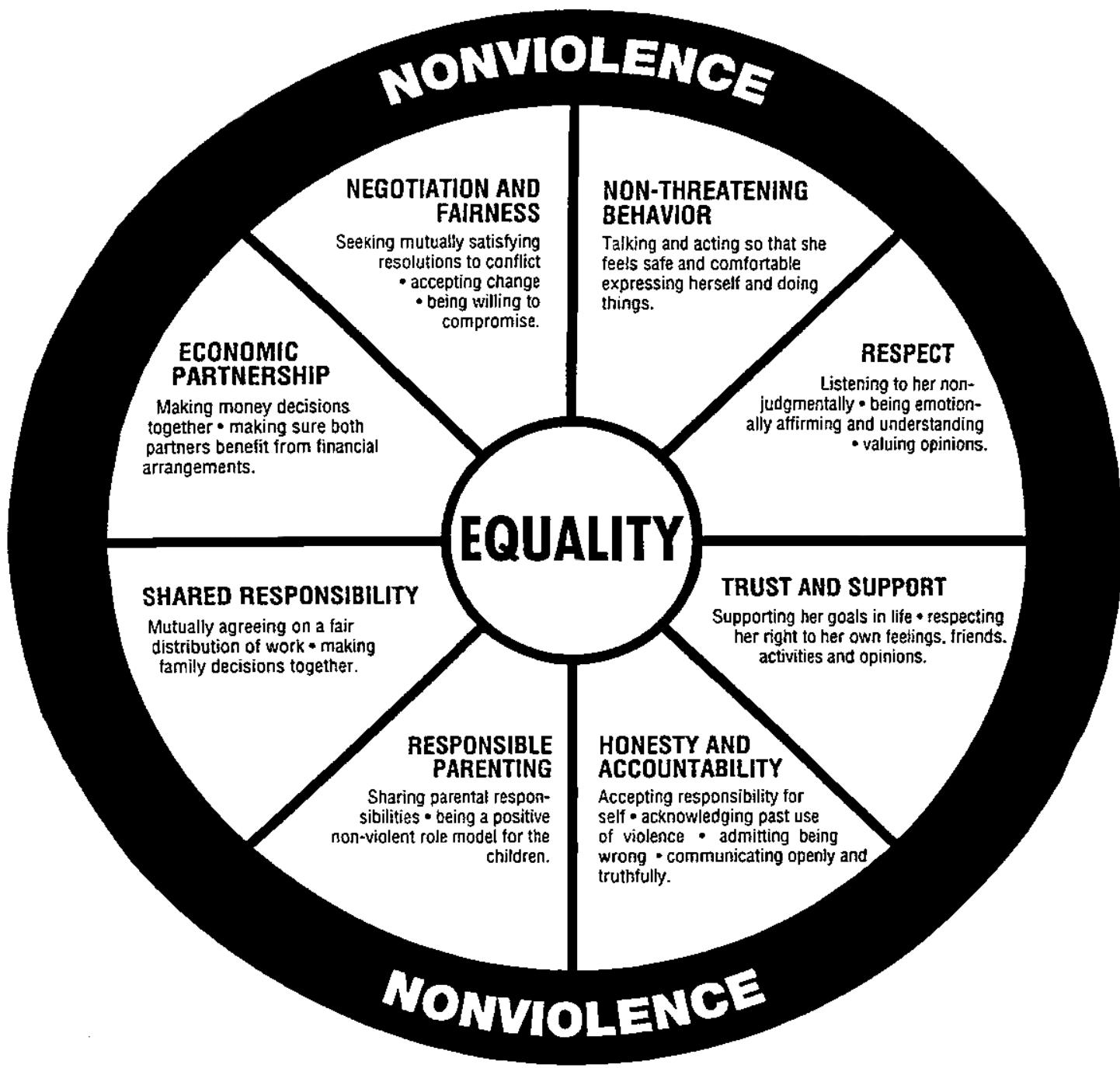
Passive people don't state their opinions at all.

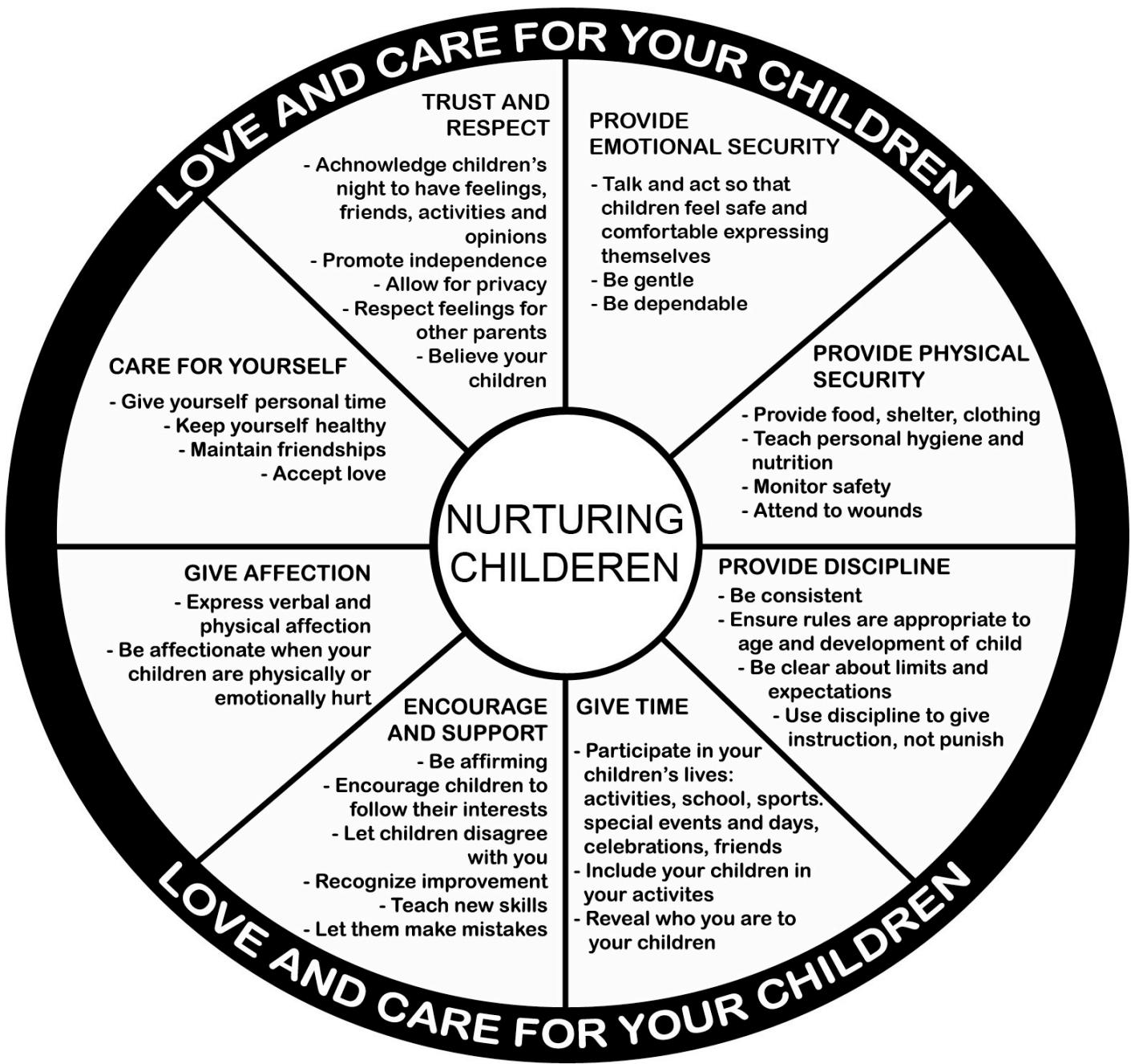
The chart below gives some examples of the differences between passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior.

Passive Behavior (The Passive Person) – Aggressive Behavior (The Aggressive Person)
Assertive Behavior (The Assertive Person).

The Passive Person	The Aggressive Person	The Assertive Person
Is afraid to speak up	Interrupts and 'talks over' others	Speaks openly
Speaks softly	Speaks loudly	Uses a conversational tone
Avoids looking at people	Glares and stares at others	Makes good eye contact
Shows little or no expression	Intimidates others with expressions	Shows expressions that match the message
Slouches and withdraws	Stands rigidly, crosses arms, invades others' personal space	Relaxes and adopts an open posture and expressions
Isolates self from groups	Controls groups	Participates in groups
Agrees with others, despite feelings	Only considers own feelings, and/or demands of others	Speaks to the point
Values self less than others	Values self more than others	Values self equal to others
Hurts self to avoid hurting others	Hurts others to avoid being hurt	Tries to hurt no one (including self)
Does not reach goals and may not know goals	Reaches goals but hurts others in the process	Usually reaches goals without alienating others
You're okay, I'm not	I'm okay, you're not	I'm okay, you're okay







Be careful of your thoughts, for they become your words.

Be careful of your words, for they become your actions.

Be careful of your actions, for they become your character.

Be careful of your character, for it becomes your Destiny.