Chapter 17 414

The “power and grace between nasty or nice” refers to the challenge facing each of us to find the balanced area that rests between being too nasty or too nice.

**Someone who is overly dependent is just as dysfunctional as one who is overly independent.**

People who believe that their emotions should always be expressed and routinely acted upon are at very high risk for doing great harm to their partners and ruining their romantic relationships. Emotions need to be expressed. There can be no emotional connection between people without that. But emotions also need to be contained at times. The belief that “if I feel it, I should act on it” is a dangerous one unless it is also tempered by a parallel belief that “**I must evaluate which feelings to express, how to appropriately express them, and which ones to contain.” Otherwise, we are nothing more than wild animals acting out our primitive impulses.**

Care is simple. It is kind. It is gracious. It is one human being seeing another human being and taking the time to acknowledge what one sees**. It is taking the time to listen without trying to fix, rescue, analyze, problem-solve, or therapize.**

**The health of a marriage depends on the balance of power and control within both partners, and between both partners. If I don’t control my impulses enough, I will overpower you. If you don’t exert your power enough, you will disappear.**

**There Are Always Reasons and Payoffs for Our Unhealthy Behaviors; Otherwise We Wouldn’t Engage in Them—Be Honest About What Those Reasons Are**

**Talking about feelings isn’t the same as expressing them.**

You know you are becoming a competent, healthy adult when you can choose what at times will be the exquisite pain and discomfort of fear, hurt, shame, loneliness, and sadness rather than hurt yourself, hurt others, or let others hurt you. the ability to self-regulate is especially important in the functioning of a healthy person, family, or society, and it is impossible to have deep relationships unless one can sit in the middle of one’s loneliness, fear, hurt, shame, and sadness without acting out.

Every human being is vastly capable of being both nasty and nice at various times throughout our lives.

Our capacity for forgiveness and our capacity to make amends are boundless, if we let them be.

What makes us spiritual beings is our ability to look back at what we have done to each other and to consider, with the wisdom of experience and age, how what seemed “normal” back then now seems cruel and inconsiderate; and then to have the chance to repair those wrongs or to forgive those wrongs done to us by others.

Self-esteem = competence and acceptance + belonging

# Power and control

Power is the capacity to influence.

Control can be defined most simply as a reciprocal to power, that is, as the capacity to restrain or regulate influence.

**People who have learned to combine grace and power spend the majority of their time engaging in neither of these painful patterns of behavior. They find ways to meet their needs and the needs of their families while remaining socially appropriate, respectful, and kind; while having personal integrity and decency; and yet the individuals involved remain powerful, competent, and effective.**

**The human experience of power/control is the experience of living as a self interacting with a world. . . . If control becomes excessive in a relationship, the opportunity for individual self-expression or self-actualization is reduced; when power dominates, the stage is set for competition and conflict. In human interactions that are positive and effective, a balance of power/control is achieved. The result is an experience of mutuality regulation is a shared endeavor. In the experience of mutuality, each individual can retain a sense of self-identity and worth while simultaneously feeling connected and even intimate with others as part of a larger relationship system.**

# Feelings

1. Primary feeling
2. Words that express varying degrees of that feeling
3. Evolutionary survival function of each feeling. (what are we feel to avoid/experience the feeling)

## Safety, warmth, comfort, and dependency

* /okay/good/peaceful/relaxed/calm/fine/trusting/free from anxiety
* Trust and hope

## Pain

* /hurt/damaged/wounded
* Avoid or recognize damage

## Sadness

* /sad/melancholy/depressed/down/blue
* Heal loss, grieve

## Anger

* /mad/angry/irritated/annoyed “frustrated”/ticked-off/pissed/furious/enraged
* Set boundaries, create energy to make change
* Violence and rage occur as a reaction to our own fear, hurt, and shame, and indirectly to our loneliness, sadness, or some combination of them all.
* The violence and rage that we perpetrate on others happens, not because of something the other person does, but because of something we do not do—that is, control ourselves.
* We respond very quickly to what is going on around us and inside of us.
* We’re going to feel what we feel whether we think we will or not.
* In most cases, once we feel the feelings, Homo sapiens have the great good fortune to be able to choose how we further respond because we have a neocortex.

**What distinguish a mature, intact, integrated person from a less fully developed**, perhaps wounded person. The capacities include the “ability to experience a wide range of feelings deeply,” the “ability to be alone,” and the **“ability to soothe painful feelings.”** The lack of this ability to soothe one’s feelings is implicated in a wide range of mental health problems, but nowhere is its presence as obvious as in addictions and disorders of impulse control, especially rage problems.

## Pleasure and joy

* /happy/ecstatic/enthralled/delighted/joyful/pleased
* “Wants” and identity

## Shame

* /shameful/embarrassed/ashamed/broken/dirty/bad/unlovable/defective/no good/worth less than others/better than others/superior/inferior/stupid/ugly/unworthy
* Accounability and spirituality

## Guilt

* /guilty/conscience hurts/remorseful/did something wrong
* Conscience drives us to correct our mistakes

## Fear

* /scared/afraid/terrified/petrified/worried/anxious/tense/nervous
* Wisdom
* Fear gives us wisdom. Being fearless means doing foolish things. Being courageous means doing scary things because they must be done, but knowing how scared we are when we do them.

## Loneliness

* /lonely/disconnected/alienated/separated/longing for relationship
* Embrace self, propel us into groups