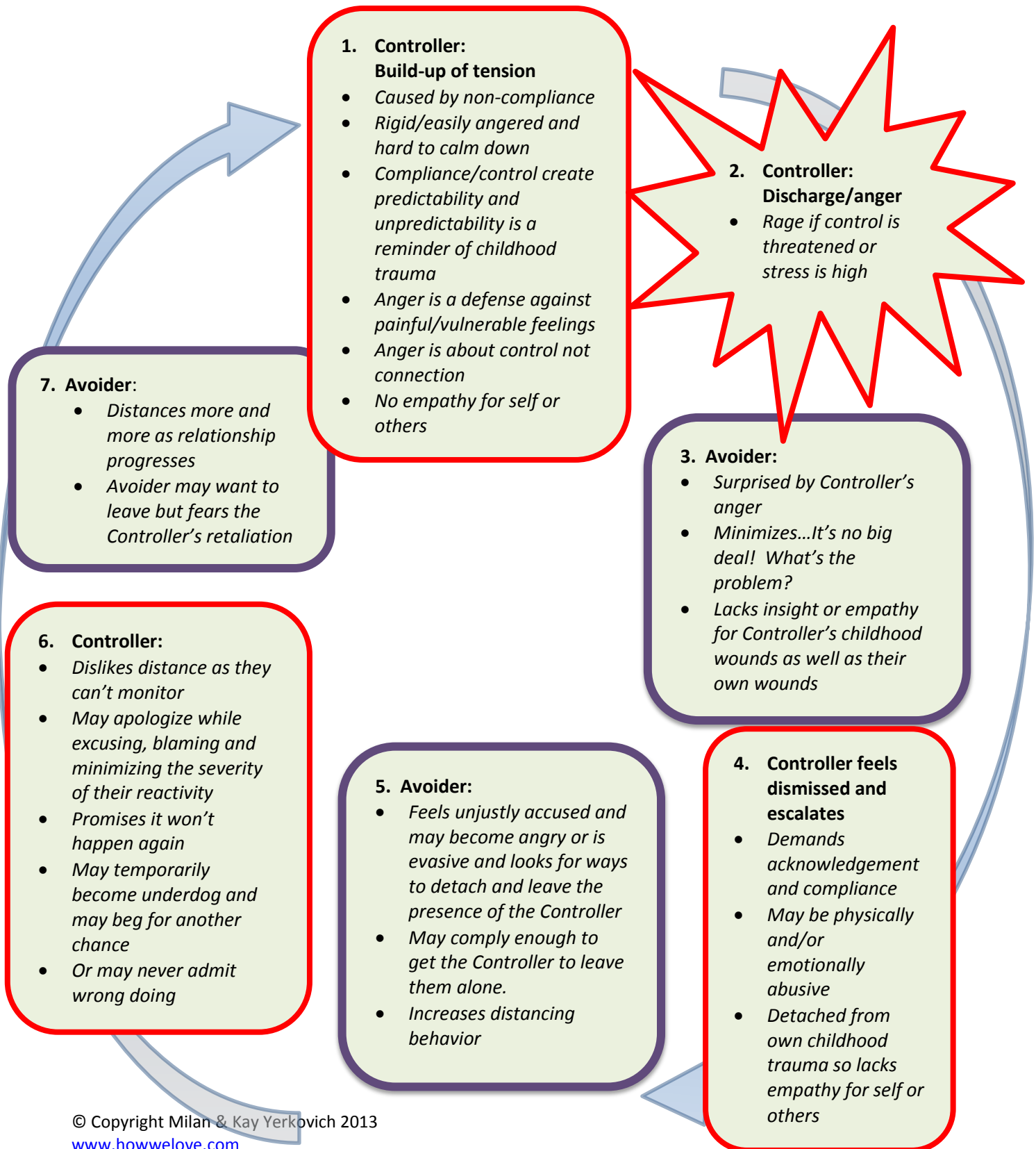


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Attachment Core Pattern Therapy™ Interventions

Controller & Victim

The CONTROLLER

- Growing up, I experienced a great deal of intense anger and stress from a parent(s) or sibling(s).
- No one protected me from harm when I was growing up so I had to get tough and take care of myself.
- Life has taught me to either “be in control” or “be controlled.”
- If I wasn’t in charge, nothing would get done.
- Sometimes I try to control my temper but I feel too angry to stop.
- My spouse couldn’t survive without me.
- People would probably describe me as intimidating.
- I rarely feel any emotion except anger and sometimes guilt if my anger has gone too far.
- Things would go more smoothly if my spouse (and kids) listened to me and did the things I asked.
- My spouse purposely makes me jealous and does things behind my back.
- I have few feelings about my childhood except I’m glad it’s over.

The AVOIDER

- I would describe myself as independent and self-reliant.
- I’m a task-oriented, high achiever.
- I am usually “fine” and when something bad happens, I try to get over it and move on.
- In my family growing up, we rarely (or never) discussed personal concerns.
- I try to avoid emotional confrontations or arguments.
- I feel uncomfortable when someone is very emotional, especially if I think I am supposed to help that person.
- I don’t feel comfortable around highly emotional and needy people.
- I’m usually happiest when others are happy and don’t want a lot from me.
- I show my love by doing tasks or giving gifts rather than being sentimental.
- I’ve felt resentment toward my spouse for always wanting more from me.
- I’m tired of my spouse telling me I am distant and/or don’t show enough affection.
- I don’t really think about my own feelings and needs very often and have learned to take care of myself.
- I don’t really miss my spouse or family if I’m away from them.

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Initial Attraction:

The Controller is often attracted to the even mood and low level of reactivity in the Avoider. Since the Controller's childhood home was chaotic and unpredictable, the Avoider's stability and predictableness can be a welcome relief. Initially, the Avoider may enjoy someone who takes charge and makes decisions. This can feel caring and protective to the Avoider since they often came from a childhood home that valued independence and self-reliance. When the Controller's anger emerges the Avoider will initially dismiss and minimize it as "no big deal".

Overview of the Core Pattern:

Over time Avoiders will view the Controllers' "take charge" manner as intrusive and irritating rather than protective and caring. Avoiders are self-reliant and accustom to making their own decisions and don't need much from others. The Controllers demand for compliance will chaff against the Avoiders autonomous life-style. The Avoider's distancing and evasive maneuvers will make the Controller feel like they cannot monitor the situation. The Controller survived childhood by keeping alert, watchful and monitoring the mood and behavior of others. The Avoider's distancing and independence makes the Controller feel apprehensive and threatened and they increase their efforts to control. The more the Controller displays anger and tries to control the more the Avoider will distance. Sometimes the Avoider may get pushed over a line and fight back and an intense battle ensues.

When stuck in this Core Pattern, each person feels:

The Avoider:

- I feel as though I am "walking on egg shells" in my marriage and waiting for a blow up.
- No matter how hard I try, it is never enough to keep my spouse happy.
- Relationships are too hard, so why try?
- I find excuses to be away from my spouse.
- I never know what to expect. It can be really good and suddenly it's very bad.
- My spouse is very reactive and it annoys me.
- My spouse makes a big issue over the dumbest things.
- My spouse does not appreciate me or the hard work I do.

The Controller:

- My spouse tries to manipulate me by avoiding me.
- Everything would be fine if my spouse would do what I say but they have to do it their way.
- My spouse hides things from me and keeps me in the dark.

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- If my spouse would just listen to what I say, I wouldn't get mad.
- I would rather my spouse fight with me than just avoid me.
- My spouse punishes me by ignoring me.

Following, we list the general individual growth goals for the Controller and the Avoider. Ask your spouse to pick a growth goal from **your** list that would be most meaningful to them and begin there. Start with one goal and focus on making observable progress in that area. For more ideas, see the How We Love Workbook.

Individual Growth Steps for the Avoider: (See How We Love Workbook)

Controllers have varying degrees of anger. If you are experiencing physical abuse seeking safety is very important. No one can grow in an unsafe, threatening environment. Some of the growth goals below will depend on the willingness of your spouse. You can practice these skills with a mentor or friend if your spouse refuses to grow.

1. **Discover feelings:** Use the Soul Words List to learn to identify feelings. Your lack of awareness of emotions and your general inability to express needs is an injury that needs addressing.
2. **Notice:** Pay attention to your body. Your body holds in feelings and keeps them from surfacing. Notice tightness in your chest, jaw or throat. What happens in your body when the Controller is angry?
3. **Ask:** Learn to ask for help instead of isolating when you are facing something difficult. You cannot know the value of comfort until you have experienced it. Initially this may mean asking for help from a mentor, sponsor or friend if your controlling spouse is unsafe.
4. **Eye contact:** Ask your spouse (mentor/ friend) to gently tell you when you are not making eye contact or smiling when speaking about something painful. Lack of eye contact is another way of avoiding feelings, needs and awareness of others. Smiling is a way of moving away from feelings. These are largely unconscious reactions, so having feedback is important. Try again to share while making eye contact or being mindful not to smile.
5. **Pursue and initiate:** When someone is emotional, get the Soul Word List and questions for the listener (freebies on the website) and find out more rather than avoiding the emotion. Since the Controller usually expresses anger, ask them to help you understand the feelings that underlie the anger if they are willing to grow along with you.

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6. **Don't fix:** Your tendency is to fix emotions (problem solve) rather than just listening. Learn to listen to the emotions of others and validate the reality of their emotions. If the Controller is willing, it's best to start with the Controller's childhood emotions about different memories or events. Often the current reactivity or the Controller is driven by childhood wounds.
7. **Describe your feelings:** Tell your spouse about your day using three feelings words rather than just facts.
8. **Listen:** One learns to listen by being listened to. Admit that you are not a good listener when things get emotional. Learn to ask questions and stay present.
9. **Link feelings to needs:** Try and link your feelings to needs. "I feel overwhelmed and weary. I need a hug." Use this format: I feel _____. I need _____ to facilitate growth.
10. **Explore childhood:** Avoiders often see no problem with their childhood, yet they have no memories of comfort or emotional connection. Use the workbook in the back of How We Love to explore the origins of your Avoider imprint.
11. **Don't isolate:** The older we get, the more loss we experience. Use times of stress and loss to explore your feelings and ask for help.
12. **Make relationships a priority:** You may be a workaholic and consider your job or things as more important than people. Consider how your emphasis on production and possessions hurts the people in your family.

Individual Growth Steps for the Controller: (see How We Love Workbook)

1. **Feeling under the anger:** Learn to identify feelings underneath the anger. The only emotions the Controller is aware of are frustration and anger. Anger covers more vulnerable feelings that felt unbearable in childhood. Fear, shame, humiliation, loneliness, despair, may be just a few of the feelings you had little to no help managing during a difficult childhood. Control keeps you safe from having to feel vulnerable feelings. Use the feelings word list (freebie on the website) to begin to communicate the feelings under the anger.
2. **Grief:** I will allow the grief I couldn't allow as a child and learn to grieve with people who can comfort me and give me what my parents could not provide. There is often a lot of trauma in a chaotic home but no place to grieve or receive comfort. Grief is the antidote to anger. Anger is a defense that keeps that pain out of awareness. Feeling the pain as you recall childhood events in a comforting and supporting place may help you receive the comfort you missed as a child. The wounds begin to heal and the defense becomes unnecessary.

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3. **Denial:** I will acknowledge the reality of the pain in my childhood and the impact of the trauma I suffered. People from chaotic homes tell horrendous childhood stories with a smile. They often minimize trauma believing it was normal. "I survived; it wasn't that bad," is a phrase we hear over and over.
4. **Compassion for the child you once were:** I will learn to have compassion for the child I once was. You cannot have compassion for the hardships you endured if you deny and minimize the impact. You must remember what it was like to be a child or you will traumatize your own children in the same way and not be aware of the damage you are doing.
5. **Respect vs threats:** I will watch my voice tone and learn to communicate without intimidation. You can demand respect, make threats and intimidate, but if you do, the respect of others will be based on fear. It's hypocritical to yell and raise your voice and be furious with others when they do the same thing. Respect breeds respect. Listen to your voice tones and learn to speak in a gentle, kind way. Apologize when you go back to old habits. **Apologize:** I will take responsibility for my anger and see the damage it causes to my relationships. I will apologize for how I have hurt others in the past and let them explain how my anger makes them feel. Ask family members how they feel before, during and after an outburst. Listen to their answer without defending yourself.
6. **Time-outs:** I will take time-outs when I feel the anger building and use the feelings word list to communicate the vulnerable feelings under the anger.
7. **Listen:** I will learn to listen calmly even if I disagree. Controllers don't listen, they tell. Your perspective isn't the only view. Learn to stay in the listener role and not be scared off by tears or vulnerable emotions.
8. **Comfort:** As I learn to recognize more vulnerable emotions under the anger, I will admit my need for comfort and allow my spouse to comfort me. For most Controllers, there are no memories of comfort from childhood. Learn to recognize when you are stressed and anger is building. Ask for comfort rather than getting angry.
9. **Address addictions:** I will admit my addiction(s) and seek relational comfort verses gaining relief through my addictions. Addictions relieve pain and stress. You cannot let go of them until you can go to people for help rather than things. Consider a 12-step group or find a Celebrate Recovery group in your local church.
10. **Find a mentor:** I will accept my need for re-parenting and seek a mentor. You cannot heal alone. You need a mentor or sponsor who can be a support as you attempt to grow. Asking for help is essential to healing.

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Identifying and Exiting the Core Pattern

In Part 3 of our book, How We Love (2006), we discuss Duets that Damage How We Love. When harmful love styles combine in close relationships (especially marriage), a destructive, repetitive Core Pattern is created that blocks emotional intimacy and makes resolution of conflict difficult. These reactive patterns are at the root of many complaints and struggles so learning to identify and exit the Core Pattern is critical to moving toward a secure connection as a couple. Each person must own and work on their harmful love style and use the Comfort Circle as a new and healthy format for connecting as a couple. (For more on the Comfort Circle, go to howwelove.com.)

See Controller/Avoider Core Pattern Diagram

The diagram on page 1 explains the circular Core Pattern. Each step of the Core Pattern is represented by Steps 1 through 7. What is happening in each step is explained under the next section “**What’s going on?**” Then, **individual action steps and couple action steps** are listed that either the Avoider or Controller would have to do to pull out, or exit, the Core Pattern. The Comfort Circle is useful in that it requires each person to listen to the other without interrupting, defending or fixing. The goal is to recognize the pressure building in Step 1 and address the Core Pattern at the beginning which could alleviate the completion of the destructive dance. At any point in the circle, steps can be taken to exit the Core Pattern by either spouse.

Before we begin, it’s important to realize control and avoidance are both reactions to painful events in childhood. The pain in the Controller’s childhood home may be more obvious, blatant and easy to identify. For the Avoider, it’s more about what was lacking or absent so the wounds may not be as obvious. For both these styles, there was no development of emotions, self-awareness or comfort for painful events during the growing up years.

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Step 1

1. Controller: Build-up of tension

- *Caused by non-compliance*
- *Rigid/easily angered and deregulated*
- *Compliance/control create predictability and unpredictability is a reminder of childhood trauma*
- *Anger is a defense against painful/vulnerable feelings*
- *Anger is about control not connection*
- *No empathy for self or others*

Step #1: What's going on?

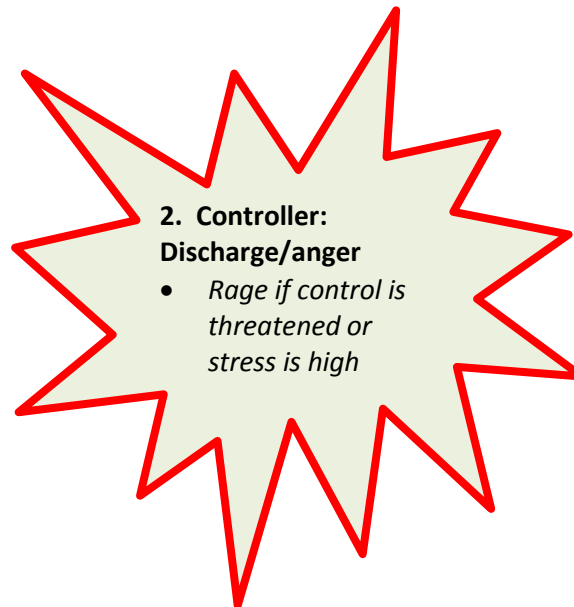
1. People from homes where there is “fright without solutions” (Mary Main) often become chaotic and disorganized as adults or become highly rigid. Because security was never experienced, they have no innate cognitive or emotional understanding of healthy emotions and relationships. Rigid Controllers tend to latch on to highly systematized and regulated guidelines for living life, spending money and parenting. When people move outside their prescribed and predictable behaviors or compliance is compromised, the Controller is easily overwhelmed and becomes angry.
2. The distancing of the Avoider makes the Controller feel like they cannot monitor the situation and monitoring was an essential survival tool of the Controller during childhood. Thus, they are quick to force compliance and control to ease their internal distress.
3. Anger and rage function as a relief valve to their own build-up of tension as well as a show of force intimidating those under them. Anger also keeps the terrifying and vulnerable emotions lying underneath the anger from coming to the surface. As children, Controllers experienced many painful feelings (terror, humiliation, panic, confusion, betrayal) and vow to never experience these feelings as adults. The non-compliance of others threatens to put them in a one down position where childhood feelings might be re-experienced. Anger and control function as a defense against re-experiencing childhood pain.
4. Controllers never received comfort or empathy as kids. As adults they have little to no empathy for themselves or others and life is about control and not connection.

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Step #2



Step #2: What's going on?

Tension builds inside the Controller until it can no longer be contained. Most often, Controllers don't understand why they need so much compliance. They don't realize control is about staying away from painful childhood feelings. In a Controller's childhood home, feelings are mostly intensely painful. There is little predictable joy or satisfying, loving connection. Therefore, feelings are seen as a painful nuisance and a reminder of not having control. In a secure home, parents are teaching kids how to feel and deal with painful emotions. In a chaotic or rigid home, no one is helping a kid learn to regulate and recover from painful feelings. Parents are often the cause of frightful events.

Step #3

3. Avoider:

- *Surprised by Controller's anger*
- *Minimizes...It's no big deal! What's the problem?*
- *Lacks insight or empathy for Controller's childhood wounds as well as their own wounds*

What's going on?

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Avoiders come from homes where emotions were ignored and dismissed. Kids should be seen and not heard. They view the Controller's outbursts as unnecessary overreactions and become annoyed. As the Avoider looks for ways to distance and disengage, they will find their logical approach to the Controller's anger only flames the fire. Try to recognize neither of you received empathy as kids and it's something you both need to learn to give and receive as adults. The antidote to anger is grief. Both of you need to learn to grieve. It's never helpful to tolerate physical or emotional abuse. If this is happening you must get help and learn how to protect yourself.

Step #4

4. Controller feels dismissed and escalates

- *Demands acknowledgement and compliance*
- *May be physically and/or emotionally abusive*
- *Detached from own childhood trauma so lacks empathy for self or others*

What's going on?

Remember, Controllers had no control when they were little kids. When they were little they complied out of fear. The Avoider's "dismissal" causes the Controller to feel they are losing control and will often display more anger to get the upper hand thereby reducing their anxiety. Remember, initially the Controller is unaware how their childhood wounds drive the anger. Control equals safety. Lack of control reminds them of childhood when they had no control and life was unbearable.

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Step #5

5. Avoider:

- *Feels unjustly accused: May become angry or is evasive and looks for ways to detach and leave the presence of the Controller*
- *May comply enough to get the Controller to leave them alone*

What's going on?

The Avoider gets further triggered and overwhelmed and may lash out in anger but inwardly the Avoider's desire is to detach and move away from the Controller if they are physically able or they may skip the anger, detach and go away.

Step # 6

6. Controller:

- *Dislikes distance as they can't monitor*
- *May apologize while excusing, blaming and minimizing the severity of their reactivity*
- *Promises it won't happen again*
- *May temporarily become underdog and may beg for another chance*
- *Or may never admit wrong doing*

What's going on?

When the Avoider becomes detached and elusive, the Controller cannot monitor the Avoider and this makes the Controller uneasy. At this point, the Controller may close the gap by apologizing and making promises to control their anger. In some cases, the Controller will never

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apologize and will punish the Avoider until they are compliant and doing what the Controller desires.

Step #7

7. Avoider:

- Distances more and more as the relationship progresses
- Avoider may want to leave by fears the Controllers retaliation

What's going on?

As the pattern becomes entrenched, the Avoider will feel more and more detached and resentful of the Controller's anger. The Controller will resent the Avoider's distancing and feel their spouse is purposefully trying to punish them by detaching. In reality, the Avoiders have been coping with emotions by detaching long before they married. The Controller most likely came from a home where they experienced unreasonable and unfair punishment so the behaviors of others can be mistaken for punishment. The Controller's anxiety and insecurity will be expressed through anger.

EXITING THE CORE PATTERN:

Step# 1 and 2. The Controller and the buildup and release of anger

For Controllers, these steps are very important in learning to manage your anger. It's important to note your anger is legitimate but it's way more about the past than the present. Much of the anger you feel toward your spouse is about unexpressed anger and grief from your childhood. The goal is to learn to "Be angry but don't sin." This means don't backbite, name call, scream and rant, touch anyone or say hurtful things.

Here are some ways to grow. It's a long list so you have the big picture. Take them one at a time. If you spouse sees you making an effort to grow they will have more patience.

1. Increase self-awareness by noticing the build-up of tension that ultimately results in an outburst. Set your phone alarm and look at the Soul Words List several times a day and pick three feelings under any category except anger. Rate the intensity of your feelings from 1-10 (one low, ten high) and jot down any thoughts that go with these feelings. This will help you to better understand how your stress builds towards an eruption of anger.
2. Do the first chapters of the workbook in How We Love and contemplate when and where your anger really started during childhood or adolescence, and what events growing up are at the root of your anger.

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3. Notice the absence of sadness and grief. Reflect on childhood memories with your spouse or friend and use the Soul Words List to describe the feelings a child would feel in each situation.
4. Ask your spouse to go around the Comfort Circle with you and share your childhood experiences that are at the root of your anger. In doing so, you can learn to experience with your spouse what you did not experience as a child (listening, validation and comfort).
5. Take responsibility for your anger and own that it is destructive. Quit blaming, excusing and minimizing the impact your anger has on others. If you had an angry parent, think about how you would feel if they owned the impact of their anger on you and make consistent efforts to change?
6. When you come home, ask everyone in the family to share three feelings about their day. Use the Soul Words List and simplify it for younger children. You don't know what stresses your family members have faced during the day until you ask. Listen to the feelings and try to validate the feelings but don't try to fix the feelings. Let them be.
7. Make a list of the mean phrases you tend to use when you are angry. (If you don't know, ask your family.) Circle each phrase that was said to you as a child. How do you think you felt as a child when you heard those words? Put a name by each phrase that you did say or would like to say to your parents, siblings, extended family or other specific people from your childhood years. (Don't say it, just be aware of who you are really angry at.)
8. Ask your spouse to help you notice the verbal and non-verbal signs that indicate stress is building inside you and be open to their input (tight jaw, teeth clenching, flushing, increasing irritation). When your spouse tells you they see these signs, STOP, go to a quiet place and write down all stressful events in your life and three feelings for each event. Share with your spouse.
9. Resist your desire to turn to an addiction and numb the pain. Get in a 12-Step group and call your sponsor and ask for help when you feel the need to numb pain. In this way, you can learn to turn to your spouse for relief rather than using addictive behaviors to get relief.

Exiting the Core Pattern: Step #3 The Avoider's lack of empathy

Step 3: Avoider: Action steps to exit the Core Pattern:

Most anyone wants to retreat when someone is angry and venting. If you are enduring physical or emotional abuse, please get help. This is never OK. In a calm moment tell your spouse, "When you get angry, I want to hear you but I can't listen when you are so angry. I need 20 minutes to let things calm down. So next time you are angry, I will ask to slow down the

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process and wait until you are calm so that I can hear you out. I will get the Soul Words List so you can help me understand the feelings underneath the anger.” Then, next time the Controller is angry, go back to this plan.

After the Controller is calmer:

- Try not to debate the details or defend erroneous or fallacious accusations. Get off the thinking mode and out of the “courtroom” into the empathy mode. Lean in to the Controller with empathy and learn to say things like:
 - “Wow! Something hurts! Can you pick three feelings off the Soul Words List?”
 - “You must have gotten triggered by something... sit down and tell me about it.”
 - “You’ve been quiet, so tell me what’s been going on in your thoughts and emotions?”
1. Try to tolerate a wide range of emotions rather than running away. This does not mean to accept verbal abuse or engage if the Controller is in a rage.
 2. Choose to remember there is a hurt little child inside. Ask, “When did you have these same three feelings as a kid?” Gently remind them that their past hurts are bleeding into the present.
 3. Seek to understand and comfort the childhood wounds that make your mate so sensitive to abandonment. Make it safe for them to grieve these childhood hurts instead of being mad. As grief increases, anger decreases. Grief heals, anger festers.
 4. In calm moments, tie the present feelings to the childhood experience where the feelings began. “You are very angry at me right now; did someone in the past hurt you in a similar manner? Perhaps I am getting some of the anger you never expressed to them.”

Exiting the Core Pattern: Step # 4 The Controller escalates

If you are a Controller and your spouse is lighting your fuse, stop!! Take a time-out. Nothing good happens from this point onward. Repeat the time-out phrase: “I am too angry. I will ask for a do-over when I calm down.” OR “I want to listen but I need to have a calm conversation. Let’s take a time-out and then use the feeling words list to get beneath the anger.”

1. If you need to, call a sponsor and ask them to talk you down. Review your childhood triggers that fuel your reactivity.

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2. Remember you are not as little and helpless as you were as a child. You have resources and choices now that you did not have when you were growing up.
3. Don't use addictions to numb out. Use the Soul Words List and begin journaling to describe the hurt, vulnerable feelings underneath the rage.
4. Did you have an angry parent? Try and remember how scary an adult's anger is to a small child. Have you forgotten what that felt like?

Exiting the Core Pattern: Step #5: The Avoider detaches (or sometimes fights)

Avoiders: If you want to fight:

Anger breeds anger. Engaging in anger and fighting back only prolongs the predictable bad ending to this pattern. Disengage in a mature way:

- "I'm not going to fight. I am taking a time-out and when we are both calm we can try a do-over."
- If you engage with anger and react to your spouse, you should apologize when things calm down.

If you want to flee:

1. Admit when you are overwhelmed and ask for a time-out, assuring your spouse you will reengage when things are calmer.
2. Reflect on how dismissing and minimizing your contribution is to the continuation of the Core Pattern. Tell your spouse, "This is when I want to detach. After we calm down, I want to try and listen. I feel inadequate but I want to try."
3. When you are **not** in the Core Pattern, look for ways to show empathy and offer to hold your spouse and listen to their childhood pain. You can engage while admitting your discomfort with strong emotions.
4. When your spouse is calm, initiate the Comfort Circle. Ask the Controller to share their feelings from Step 1. Look your spouse in the eye, move physically closer to them and with empathy ask, "What hurts inside?" If they complain and blame, ask your Controller spouse to make a statement using the format... "I feel _____ I need_____."
5. If the Controller cannot share in a calmer way call another time-out.

Exiting the Core Pattern Step #6: Avoider's distance makes the Controller uneasy.

This is the point where you decide your spouse is crazy and you are exiting. You will want to remember that your spouse's anger started before you ever met and their crazy home caused the Controller to shut off vulnerable feelings and control with anger.

Try to:

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- Resist “fleeing and avoiding” but rather, establish appropriate boundaries with the opportunity to re-connect if boundaries are respected.
- Remember, underneath all that anger, your spouse is sensitive and feels things deeply. Ask to hear the hurt under the anger. Try to keep in mind the hurt child inside your spouse.
- Initiate a do-over when you spouse calms down. Don’t always make them do the pursuing.
- Apologize for your part of the Core Pattern and the impact of avoiding your spouse’s emotions.

If your spouse is verbally abusive, walk away and tell them that you will return when they have calmed down. If they are physically abusive, leave the house and call 911.

Take the children instead of leaving them at home and abandoning them. If you want to get out of the house don’t you think your kids do as well? Don’t bad mouth your spouse to the kids but do listen to their feelings about what just happened. Even little kids can tell you more than you might imagine.

Exiting the Core Pattern Step #7: The Avoider distances more and more

The Avoider acts like nothing ever happened and waits for the Controller to “Get over it.” Eventually the Controller reengages and acts like “nothing ever happened.” There is no resolution.

1. Apologize for your contribution to the dance. Avoiding emotions has not helped your spouse. Ask for an apology if your spouse’s anger has been hurtful.
2. Make every attempt to reengage and ask your spouse about the original hurts and anxieties (Step 1) that activated the pattern. Share your own feelings about being the brunt of their anger.
3. In calmer moments, firmly, yet gently, explain to the Controller how their anger makes you feel. Mirror back to them how the intensity of their rage does not match the current offense. Look for childhood wounds in the Controller that may be fueling their over reactivity. (Does your behavior trigger your spouse because it reminds them of a similar experience in the childhood?)

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A note from Milan and Kay

Due to our Christian beliefs, we often speak in churches and our faith is deeply intertwined with our work. We believe one of the most important interventions to bring healing to relationships is prayer. The Christian gospel is the story of rupture, repair and restoration. God sent his Son, Jesus, to provide payment for our sin so we can enter into a relationship with a holy God, clean, forgiven and restored. The offering of this gift involved *initiation*. Jesus entered our messy, broken world with a willingness to experience our sorrow and pain. The gift of His loving presence involved *sacrifice and pain*. Jesus's death on the cross expresses the magnitude of His sacrificial love. As we accept this gift of love, we enter into a secure connection with God, becoming a member of his family, with a promise we will never be abandoned.

This serves as a model for healing our relationships. Overcoming these core patterns means we must *initiate* and move towards pain, not away from it, with a focus on restoration and redemption. We must be willing to *sacrifice* and embrace the *pain* of taking on our own wounds as well as the injuries of our mate learning to repair ruptures. This kind of love and commitment builds a deep trust and bond. Over time, our marriage can become our most secure connection and provide a charted path to lead others into healing, freedom and joy.

Praying as an individual and as a couple is a powerful intervention at any point around the core pattern as we seek to escape the pull of the destructive dance and find the freedom of secure connection. Our prayers are with you and for you on this journey.

Blessings, Milan and Kay