



# Can't we all just Get Along?

Michelle Dennis,  
Head of Access Services  
Hedberg Public Library (Janesville, WI)

# Michelle Dennis

- 2011 Hedberg Public Library - Janesville, WI (pop 64,000)
  - Head of Access Services & Security
  - Staff of 14 PSAs + 8 Shelves
  - Coordinate 9 PIC's
- 1994-2011 Director of Clinton Library (pop 2,192)
  - Staff of 4 (3.75 FTE)
- Conferences – Trainings – UW iSchool
- Ropes Challenge Course Facilitator 2002-2010
- First management job at 16 – team leader Hardees' in Jefferson, WI

My 40th year in WI public libraries!



Also.

- Group home for runaway teens (Portland, OR)
- Aide in a psychiatric hospital (Oconomowoc, WI)
- Group home for adults with multiple mental illnesses (Whitewater, WI)
- Favorite hobby is community theatre, acting and stage managing

# Work relationships

What do you want  
from your work  
relationships?

What do you bring?

Who is responsible for what you  
think and feel?

Can each of us take control of  
how we react and try to react  
better?

Can we change other people?

Can our behavior influence how  
a team interacts?

What role does an effective  
manager play?

One study estimated that American workers spend close to **3 hours a week** dealing with workplace interpersonal stress and conflict.

This is estimated to cost American businesses alone about **385 million working days annually**, and **\$349 billion**.

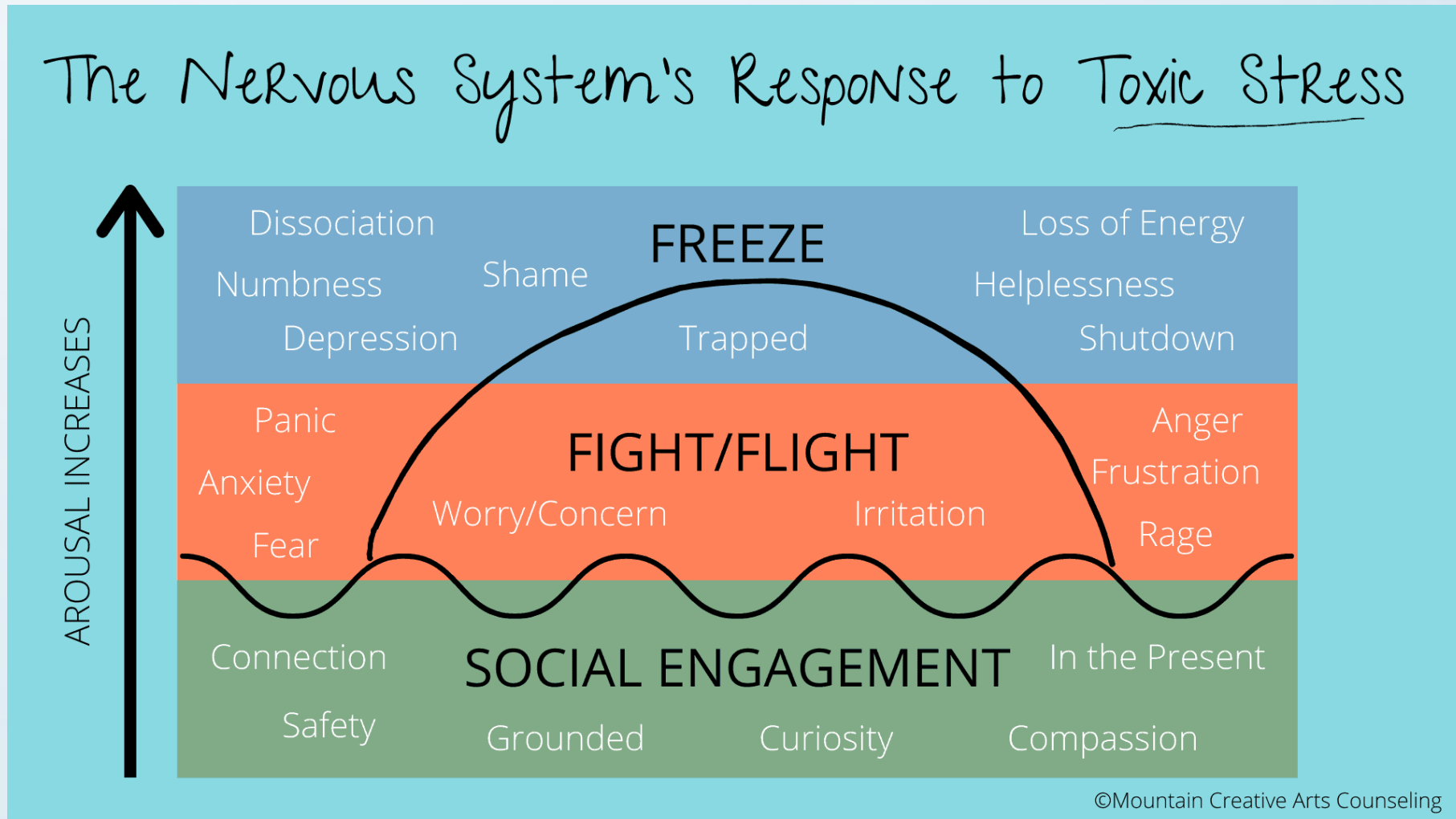
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335171305\\_Is\\_Forgiveness\\_One\\_of\\_the\\_Secrets\\_to\\_Success\\_Considering\\_the\\_Costs\\_of\\_Workplace\\_Disharmony\\_and\\_the\\_Benefits\\_of\\_Teaching\\_Employees\\_to\\_Forgive](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335171305_Is_Forgiveness_One_of_the_Secrets_to_Success_Considering_the_Costs_of_Workplace_Disharmony_and_the_Benefits_of_Teaching_Employees_to_Forgive)



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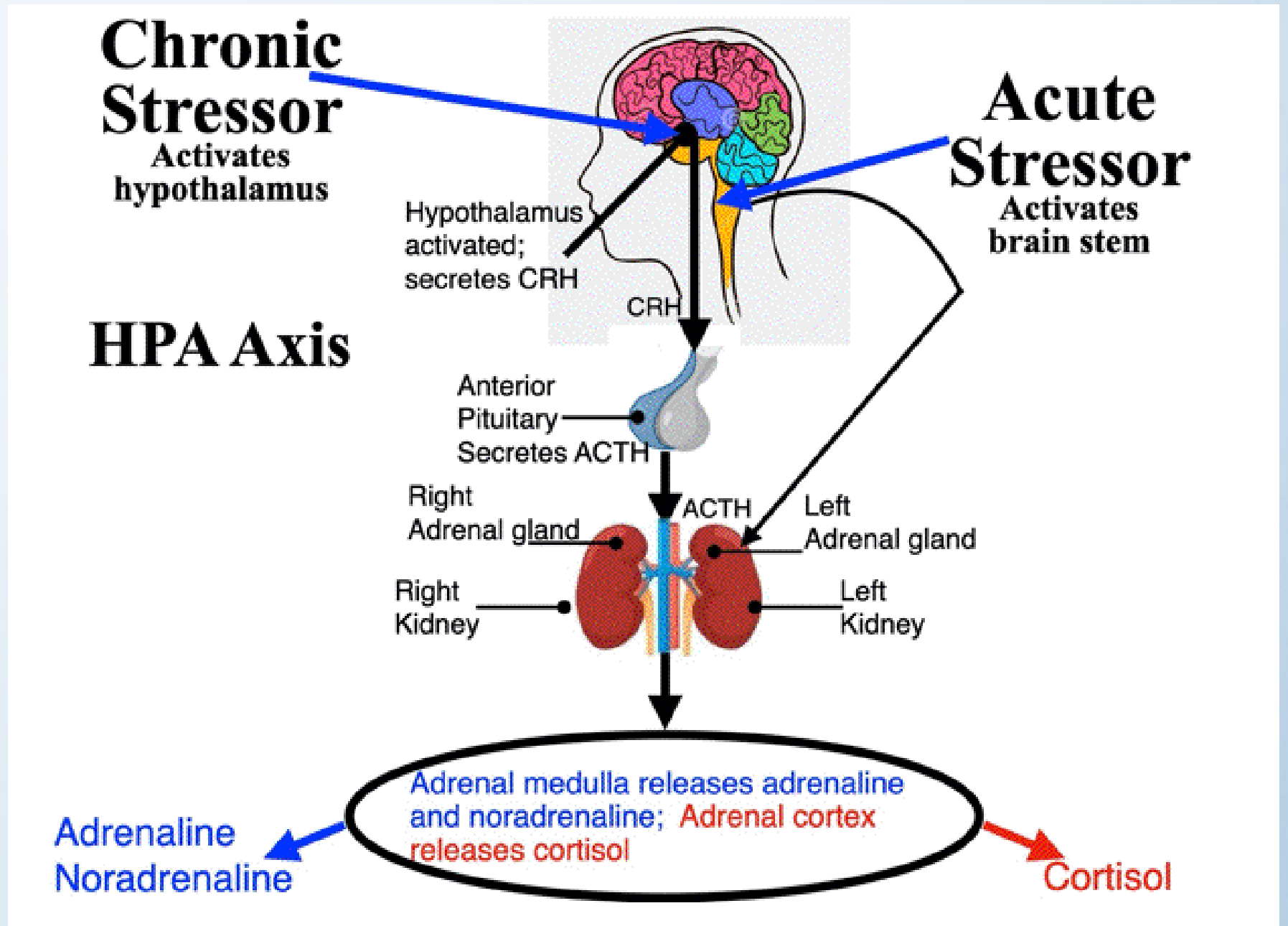


# Physiology of Stress (fight, flight or freeze)

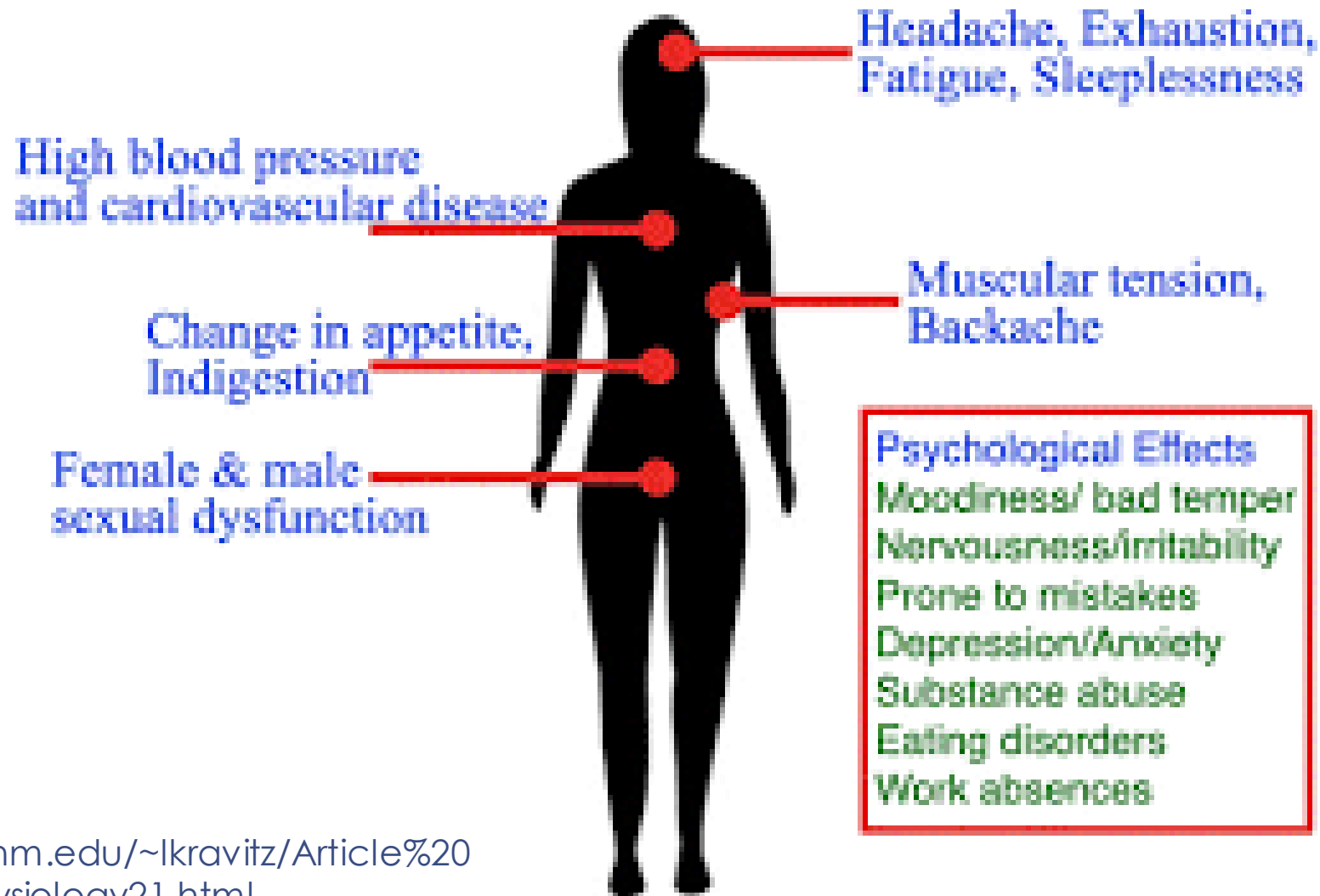


# Anatomy of Stress

[https://www.unm.edu/~lkravitz/Article%20folder/stress physiology21.html](https://www.unm.edu/~lkravitz/Article%20folder/stress%20physiology21.html)



# Long term damage



# Attention, Memory and Emotion Processing



Lupiana, S.J., Justera, R-P, Raymonda, C. et al. (2018). The effects of chronic stress on the human brain: From neurotoxicity, to vulnerability, to opportunity. *Frontiers in Neuroendocrinology*, 49, 91-105.



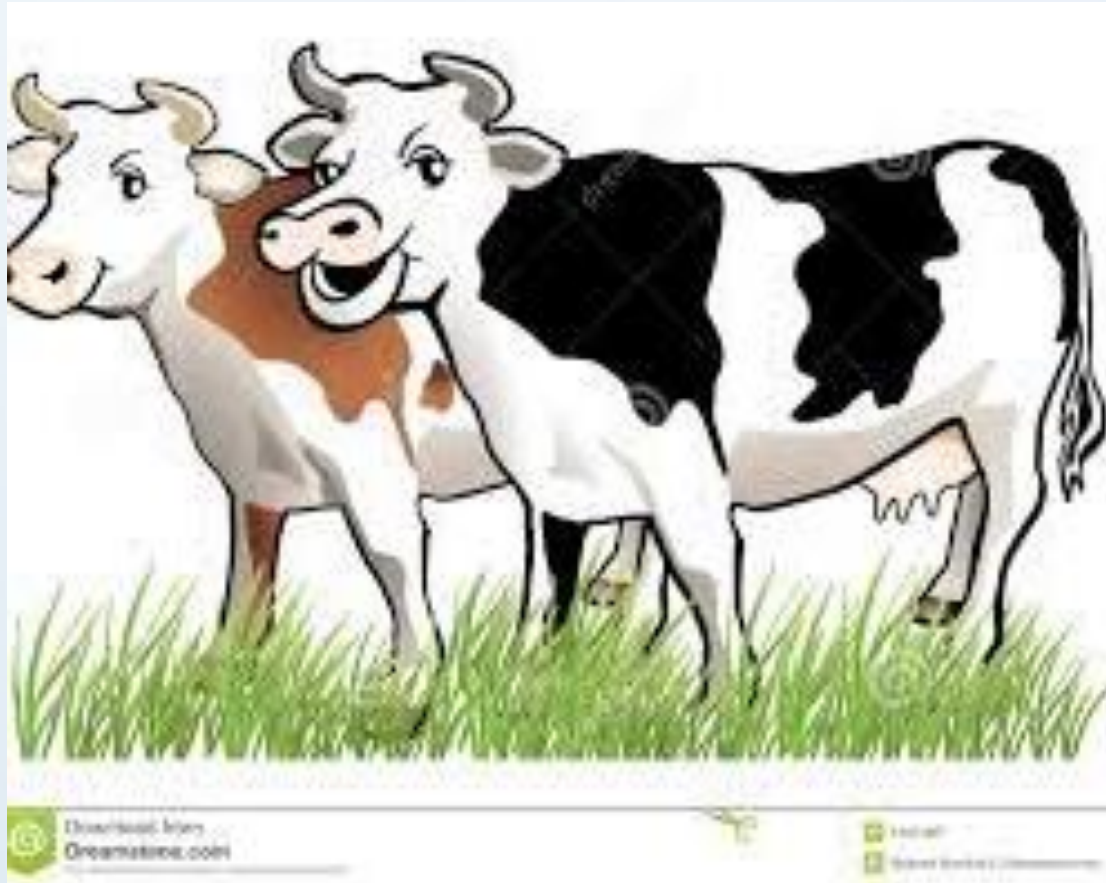
# Signs of Negative Workplace Attitude



- Being critical of everything that others say or do
- Gossiping about others
- Feeling defensive about every action
- Feeling jealous of coworkers' achievements
- Believing everyone is out to get you and target you
- Holding grudges against others
- Having too many expectations from those around you

From Betterly.com

# Important Information or Gossip?



- **Rumination**

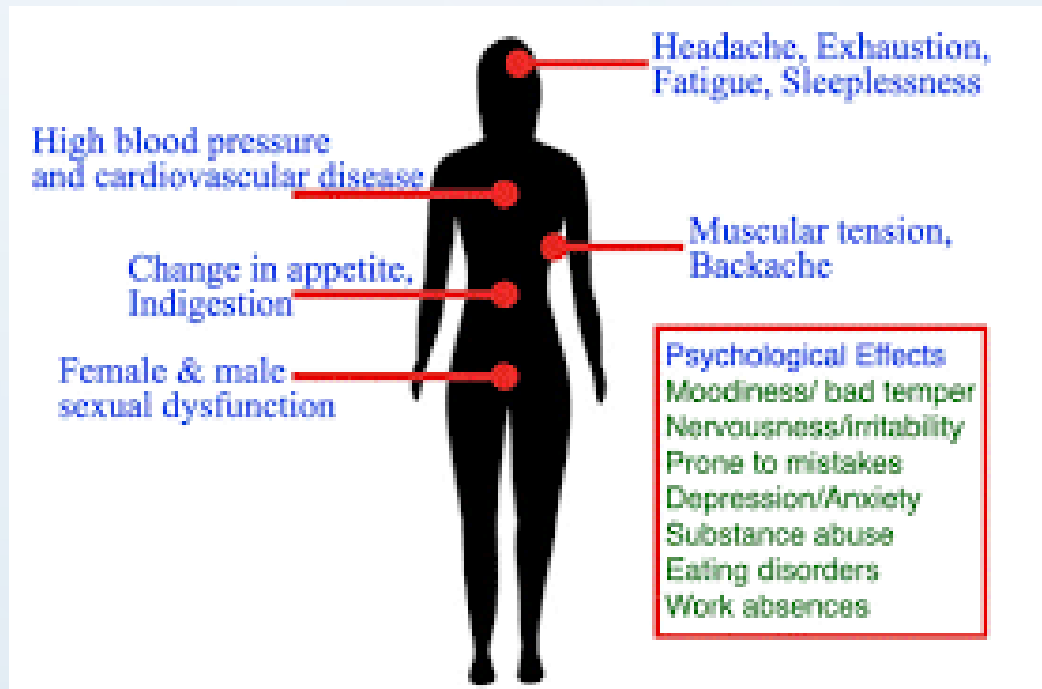
- so deeply focusing one's attention on negative thoughts or distressing feelings that you end up depressed
- Talking endlessly about issues
- Blaming
- Complaining
- Chewing a cud (ruminants like cows, deer, sheep, giraffe)

# Emotional Labor

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6779598/>



# Negativity affects our bodies



- Emotional labor can lead to health complications such as high blood pressure, exhaustion, diseases of the heart and emotional trauma [\[6\]](#).
- These appear to be the same effects as those caused by Chronic Stress



# Tools for Getting Along





# Myths of Positive Workplace Attitude

**Everything must be perfect  
for you to be happy about it**

**Professionals can't afford to  
enjoy their work and have fun**

**Having a positive attitude means  
being happy all the time**

<https://www.betterlyf.com/we-help-with/managing-workplace/developing-a-positive-workplace-attitude>

## **How will fostering a positive workplace attitude help me?**

When you approach your work with a good attitude and optimistic outlook, it will show in your work and increase your productivity.

This can affect how well you complete your work and how other people view you.

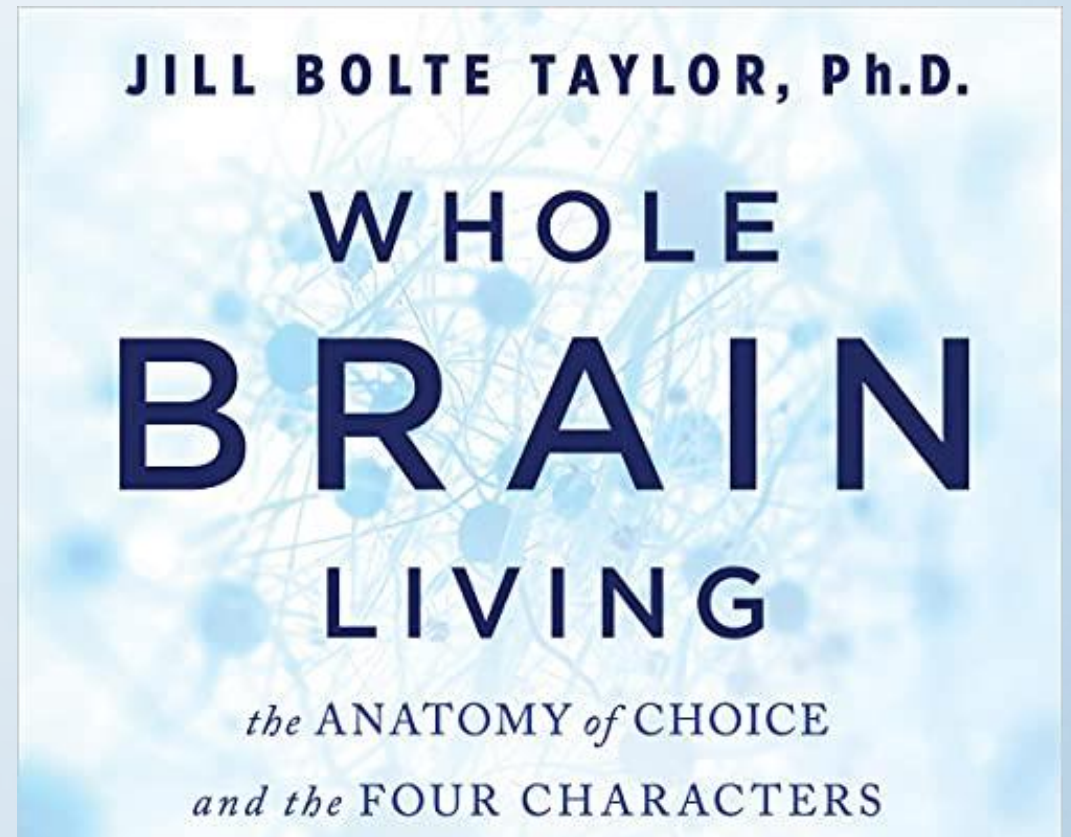
<https://www.betterlyf.com/we-help-with/managing-workplace/developing-a-positive-workplace-attitude>

# The 90 Second Rule

## Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vxARXvIjKBA>

2 minutes 37 seconds



We can OBSERVE The emotion rather than getting ENGAGED in it.

Bottom Line: YOU get to CHOOSE  
how you act out that feeling of  
emotion.

# Living the 90-second Rule

**"What keeps emotions lingering are the stories we tell ourselves about them**

... we often tend to interpret our body's signals as emotions, when in fact, they're just ... processes, happening. They will pass – unless we attach a story to them and keep them alive." Sarah Chauncey

Two popular refrains, which, though playful, may help us make sense of our emotional lives:

1. Brains are Teflon for positive experiences, Velcro for negative.
2. Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional.

Adds Meg Coyle, Founder of One Body Inc. (she offers a free online course called "Practical Pathways to Inner Peace"):

"When we allow ourselves to pause and breathe, we create space for that same 90-second emotional download

Dr. Taylor discusses. ...

<http://thedanielislandnews.com/opinions/how-90-second-rule-can-change-your-life>



# Living the 90-second Rule

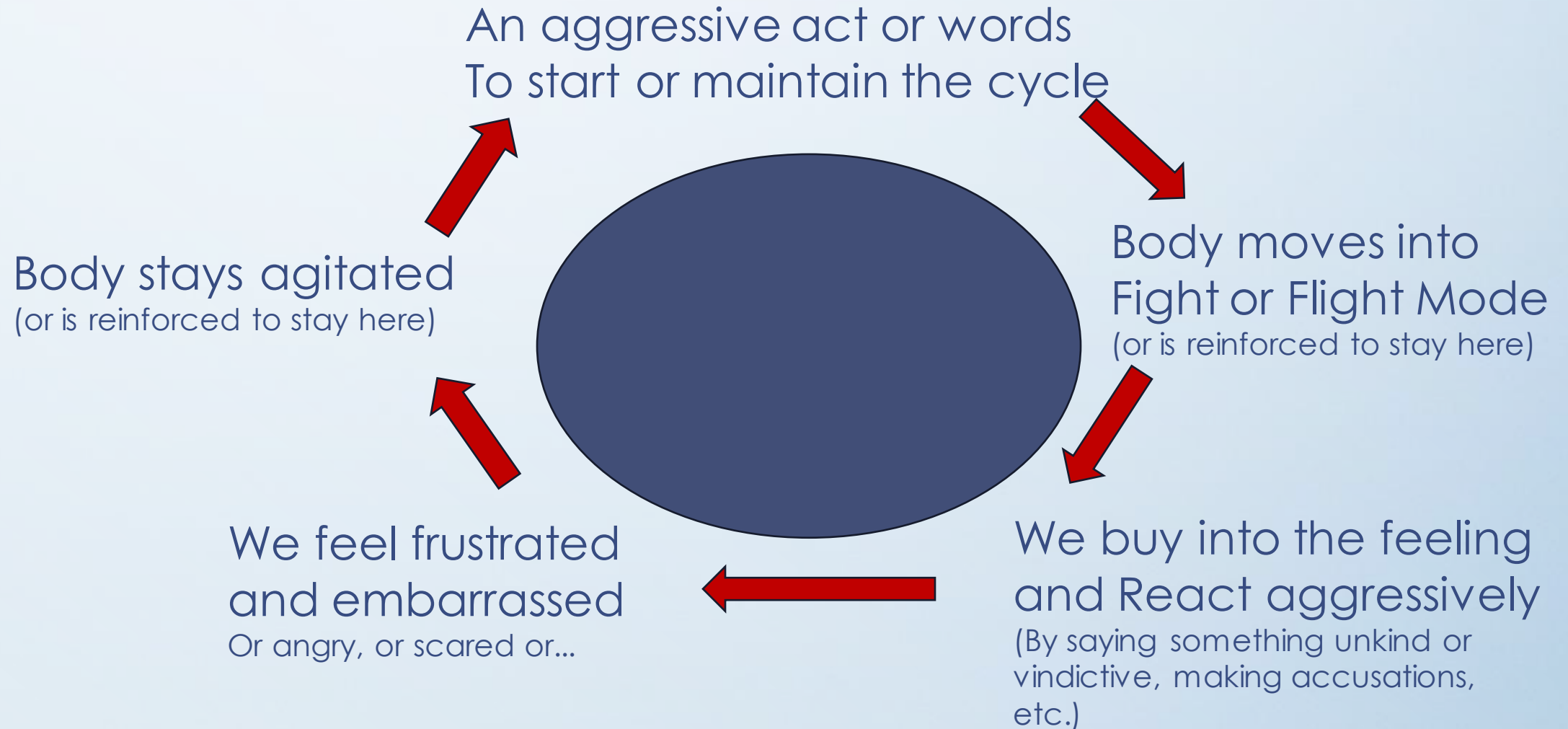
If you want to thrive in this world,” says Dr. Bryan Robinson, author and Professor Emeritus at UNC-Charlotte, “the 90-second rule offers a mindful way to override your hardwired survival reflex of reaction and cope with life’s unexpected events – no matter how dire the circumstances – in a calmer, healthier, more mature way.”

Consider practicing the 90-second rule this week. When stress hits and you can feel yourself launching into full-on fight or flight mode, go back to the principle of the pause.

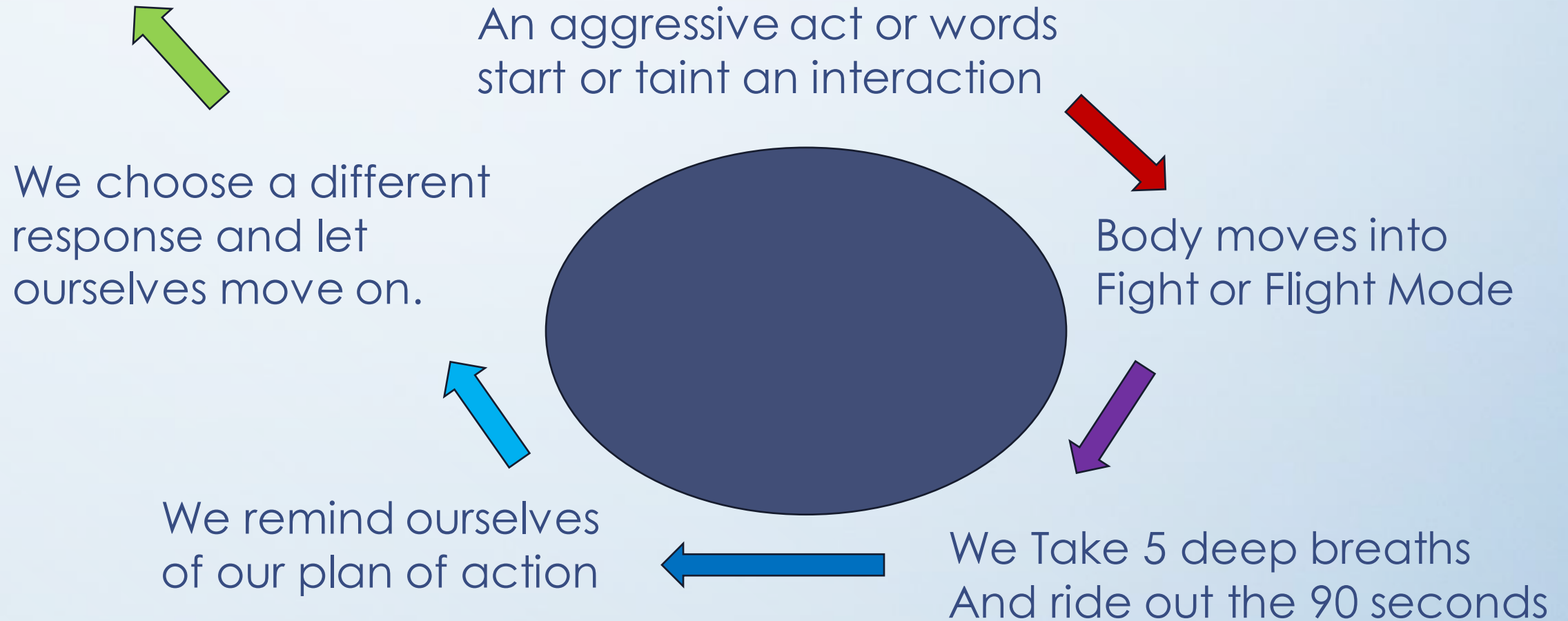
**Inhale. Exhale.**

Allow yourself to feel the tension in your body ease, without expecting yourself to respond immediately to the situation confronting you.”

# Self-Perpetuating Cycle



# Healthier Cycle



# What Stories do You tell Yourself?

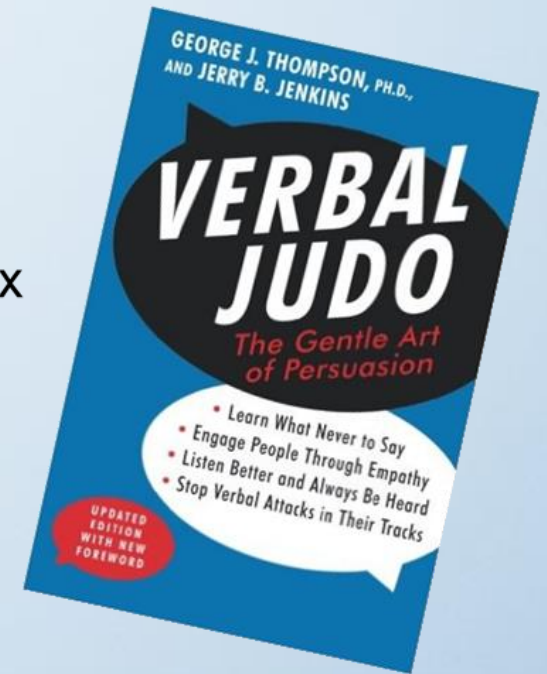


# Verbal Judo: the gentle art of persuasion

by George J Thompson, Ph.D. and Jerry B. Jenkins, HarperCollins, 2013. p.ix

## Five Universal Truths of Human Interaction:

1. People want to be treated with dignity and respect.
2. People want to be asked rather than told to do something.
3. People want to be informed as to why they are being asked to order to do something.
4. People want to be given options rather than threats.
5. People want a second chance when they make a mistake.





“Forgive for Good”

The Stanford Forgiveness Project

One approach that has been especially useful in helping people let go of those negative stories that reinforce our stress reactions is the “Forgive for Good” method developed and tested in the Stanford Forgiveness Project by Dr Frederic Luskin.

# Stanford Forgiveness Project by Dr Frederic Luskin

## The “Forgive for Good” 9 steps

- 1 Know exactly how you feel about what happened and **be able to articulate what about the situation is not ok**. Then, tell a trusted couple of people about your experience.
- 2 Make a commitment to yourself to do what you have to do to feel better. **Forgiveness is for you and not for anyone else**.
- 3 Forgiveness does not necessarily mean reconciliation with the person that hurt you or condoning of their action. What you are after is to find peace. Forgiveness can be defined as the “**peace and understanding that come from blaming that which has hurt you less**, taking the life experience less personally, and changing your grievance story.”
- 4 **Get the right perspective on what is happening**. Recognize that your primary distress is coming from the hurt feelings, thoughts, and physical upset you are suffering now, not what offended you or hurt you 2 minutes—or 10 years—ago. Forgiveness helps to heal those hurt feelings.

**5 At the moment you feel upset, practice a simple stress management technique to soothe your body's flight or fight response.**

6 Give up expecting things from other people, or your life, that they do not choose to give you. Recognize the “unenforceable rules” you have for your health or how you or other people must behave. **Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, peace, and prosperity and work hard to get them.**

**7 Put your energy into looking for another way to get your positive goals met** than through the experience that has hurt you. **Instead of mentally replaying your hurt,** seek out new ways to get what you want.

8 Remember that a life well lived is your best revenge. Instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who caused you pain power over you, **learn to look for the love, beauty, and kindness around you. Forgiveness is about personal power.**

**9 Amend your grievance story to remind you of the heroic choice to forgive**

Luskin F. Forgive for Good: A Proven Prescription for Health and Happiness. New York, NY: HarperCollins; 2002

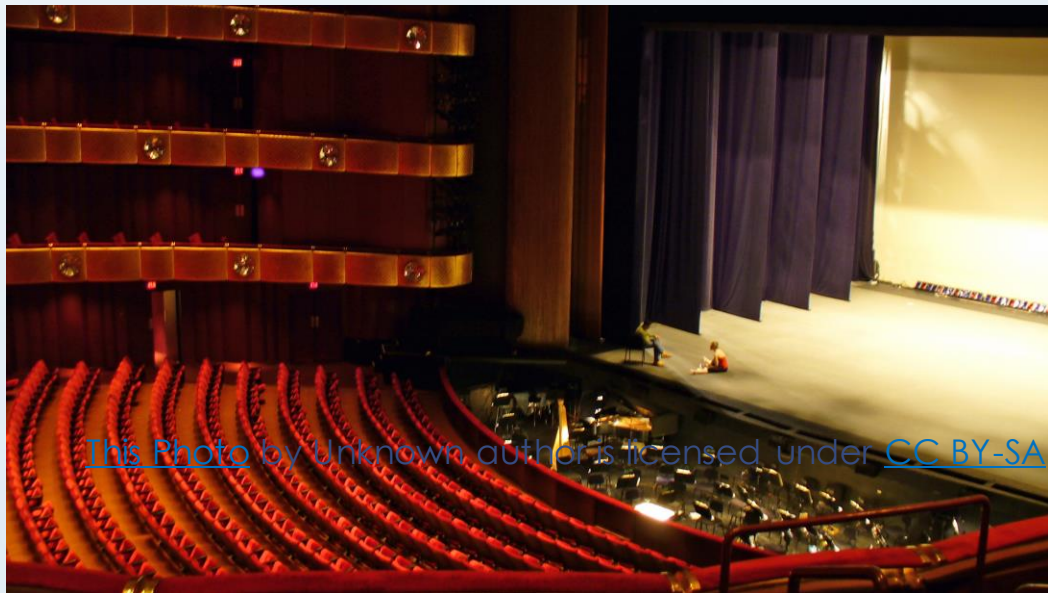


This may take some  
time to master

What do I do in the meantime?



# Act as if...



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# Three Deep Breaths

Counteracting the Cortisol  
Clarifying our thinking /Memory  
Taking time to Refocus



# Planning ahead

- Mental Rehearsal
  - before phone calls
  - Before stepping up to the desk
- Scripting
  - Ref Interview
  - Phrases you always say
  - Incident flow
- Find ways to be yourself
- Balance Emotional labor with truth
- Plan rather than let it happen
- Find common ground with some coworkers

# Reference (Customer Service) Interview

- How may I help you?
- What can I help you find?
- Did I hear you say \_\_\_\_\_?
- Clarify what they just told you
  - Let me make sure I got the right. You said \_\_\_\_\_
- What LIBRARY question can I answer for you today?

- What can I do for you?
- Are you finding what you need?
- What are you looking for today?
  - What have you read that you have loved?
  - Readers Advisory questions
- Thanks for coming to the library
- Have a great \_\_\_\_\_
- Let us know what else we can do for you

## Things you routinely say

# Incident Flow

Based on the Five  
Universal Truths of  
Human Interaction

## Incidents Flow

While we strive to make every library visit a positive and productive experience, incidents will occur. Staff should be as consistent as possible in order to facilitate inter-staff cooperation before, during and after an incident, as well as ensuring transparency for library patrons.

An example escalation of an incident is detailed below for reference. Skip any steps if the behavior and situation warrant it.

- Encounter 1:
  - Acknowledge every person **before** you see a negative behavior.
  - Greeting, eye contact, smile.
- Encounter 2 (if mis-behavior is observed):
  - Offer information regarding the behavior in a nonjudgmental manner
  - Ask them to behave correctly.
  - Walk away to give the patron space to make a choice.
- Encounter 3 (if mis-behavior continues):
  - Check back in a short while.
  - Remind the patron that you already discussed the behavior.
  - Offer the choice to change behavior or leave.
  - Walk a short distance away and give them the space to comply or go.
- Encounter 4 (if mis-behavior continues):
  - Check back sooner.
  - Remind the patron that you already discussed the behavior;
  - Let them know it is time to leave the library;
  - Choose a phrase and stick with it (Broken Record);
  - If the patron does not leave nor comply with the request for the behavior to stop, then choose an option based on their general behavior:
    - Call for backup from supervisor or PIC;
    - Call 911 or the nonemergency Police Contact (757-2244);
    - Inform the patron that he or she should not return until notified by the library;





**3 points for tough conversations**

# What do You want from work relationships?

- Unrealistic
  - We will all be buddies
  - Everyone will agree
  - Workdays will always be fun
- Realistic
  - We can be cordial
  - We can discuss and come to common points of view and consistency
  - We can cooperate towards a common goal
  - Some days will be frustrating
  - We can work it out
  - We support each other

# At some point we have to talk!

- What is our common ground?
  - How can we learn about each other?
- Internal Customer Service
- When do we talk to the supervisor?

# Managers Supervisors Directors

## **How can I foster a positive workplace attitude in my employees?**

As an employer, it is important to understand the needs and expectations of your employees.

Giving an open and effective communications space can help foster a positive spirit among your employees, making them feel heard and respected.

(It needs to be modeled by leadership to be possible)

<https://www.betterlyf.com/we-help-with/managing-workplace/developing-a-positive-workplace-attitude>

# The Characteristics of Positive Workplace Culture



Respect and Trust



Clear and Shared Vision



Employee Empowerment



Work and Life Balance



Recognition and  
Appreciation



Opportunities for Growth



Teamwork and  
Collaboration



Transparency



Inclusivity and Diversity



Low Conflict and  
High Feedback



Positive Leadership



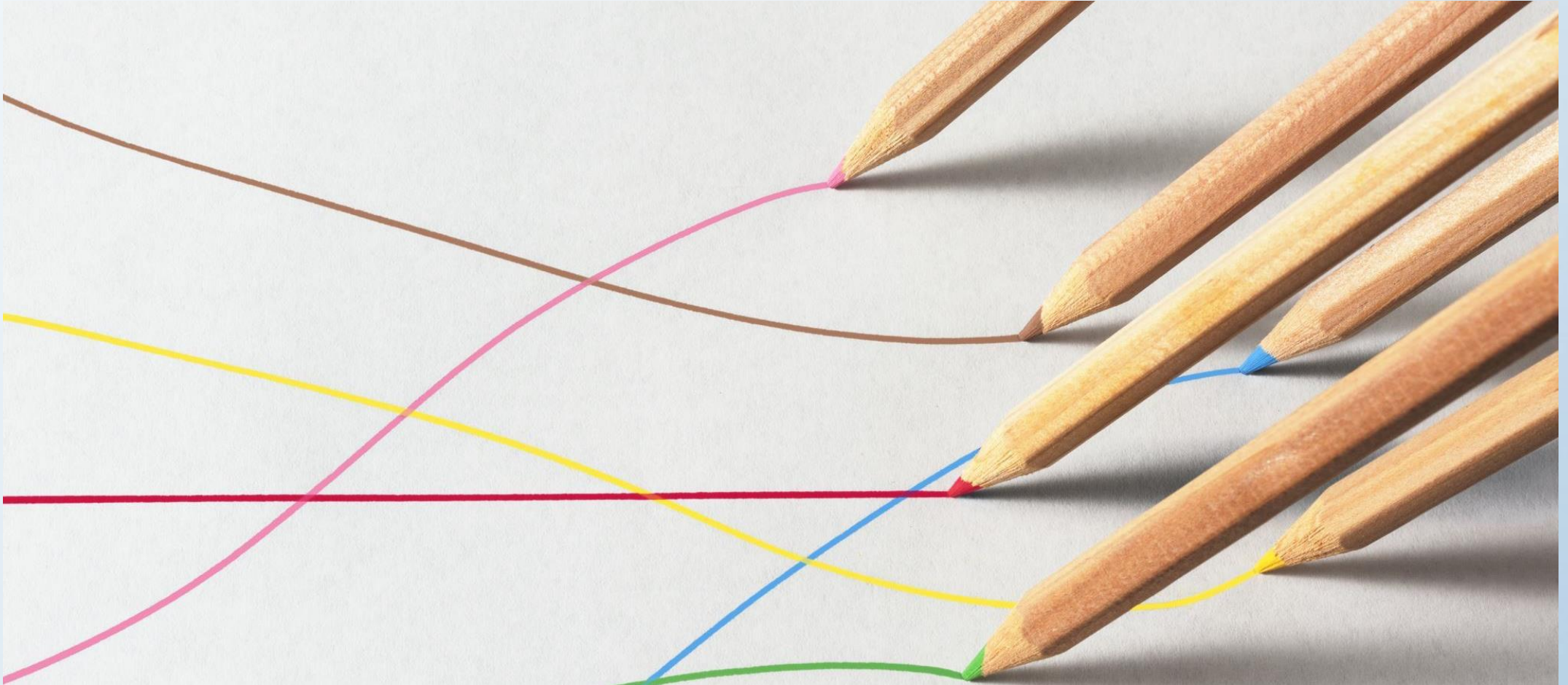
Social Connection





<https://qvalon.com/upload/medialibrary/9c3/9c3b70008971b1f906644d7747a1245b.png>

Bottom Line:  
Its up to you to choose



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