

MANAGING ANGER: Three Steps Across the Bridge ***by Naomi Drew M.A.***

The bridge between any conflict and its peaceful resolution is the space we allow before reacting. Creating this space takes three essentials:

awareness, choice, and willingness

1. Awareness - Notice your own reactions in the moment of anger (pounding heart, racing pulse, negative thoughts, etc.) Instead of moving forward with words or physical reactions, take a step back, breathe deep, and feel what you feel. If you have to say anything, try, "I'm really angry now. I need to take a moment to cool off."

2. Choice - Anger makes us think we have no choice but to react automatically. Not true. *We each have the power to choose our responses in the face of anger*, but first we need to detach from the adrenaline surge that pushes us to act in ways we may later regret. Make a conscious decision to exercise your power of choice next time anger strikes.. Instead of doing what you've always done in the past, use the following steps:

* **STOP** - Take a step back and simply notice your physical reactions.

* **BREATHE** - Inhale deeply right down to the pit of your stomach 3 times.

* **CHILL** - Walk away for a moment, get a drink of water, wash your face, or do something else to release the energy of anger. When you've retrieved your grounding, go back and talk about the problem.

3. Willingness - Ask yourself this: Am I willing to give up the way I've reacted to anger in the past? This isn't about relinquishing your right to be angry; it *is* about letting go of reactions that can escalate conflict, diminish the dignity of the other person, harm relationships, and sometimes even lead to violence. If you're willing to start responding to anger in more constructive ways, use the STOP, BREATHE, CHILL technique next time anger strikes. We all have the power to get a handle on anger.. Doing so is up to you. Now, model this strategy and teach it to your children.

Excerpted from the Peaceful Parents e-newsletter by Naomi Drew. To subscribe go to LearningPeace.com.

Naomi Drew is the author of six books, available on Amazon.com:

Learning the Skills of Peacemaking (ProEd Publishers)

The Peaceful Classroom in Action (Personhood Press)

Peaceful Parents, Peaceful Kids (Kensington Publishers)

Hope and Healing: Peaceful Parenting in an Uncertain World (Citadel)

The Kids' Guide to Working Out Conflicts (Free Spirit Pub.)

A Leaders' Guide to The Kids' Guide to Working Out Conflicts (Free Spirit Pub.)

To schedule a workshop or keynote, please call 609-397-8432, or e-mail Naomi@LearningPeace.com