

## DESCRIPTION OF VICIOUS CIRCLES

### **VICIOUS CIRCLE: Mad About You**

#### **OBSTACLE: Abandonment**

You are caught in a vicious circle where you are often made anxious about a partner abandoning you. You tend to oscillate between dependency and a dramatized independence, but there is frequently a sense of emptiness or panic when you are alone for any extended period. You tend to be a relationship addict, and like any addict go drunk and dry, but moderation is difficult. You desire another to know you very well, so well they are able to read your mind, to know your needs before you are aware of them yourself. This may cause you to try to control another in an effort to stave off the abandonment you fear. Relationships tend to be intense and stormy, and this is alternately gratifying and frustrating.

### **VICIOUS CIRCLE: Rage for Order**

#### **OBSTACLE: Anxiety**

You are caught in a vicious circle where you become anxious when things are out of order, chaotic, or in disarray. You have a strong sense for the way things should be, and are often anxious or irritated with things as they are. Things in life don't move smoothly, and you often use anger as a weapon to rectify imbalances, to set things right. You are a doer, but it is particularly difficult for you to simply let things ride, to accept things that can't be changed, to go with the rise and fall of events. The ironic result of the addiction to control is that anger contributes to the chaos--things get worse, not better.

### **VICIOUS CIRCLE: Shame-Game**

#### **OBSTACLE: Shame and Guilt**

The trigger for your anger is shame--shame over appearing foolish, over not being strong enough, mature enough, big enough,...enough in general. Your biggest nightmare is the jeering crowd, the patronizing pat on the head. Shame leads to anger, and anger is a drive to overcome the shame, to be big enough, strong enough, man enough. The key goal for you is to be respected, to be right. Anger places you momentarily in the dominant role as The Strong One, but this is not enough for you, because anger violates others either in violent acts or hurtful words. Anger provokes guilt, and guilt causes us to crawl back and beg forgiveness. But the submissive role leads again to shame, and the circle continues to spin.

### **VICIOUS CIRCLE: Avoiding Anger**

#### **OBSTACLE: Conflict**

You attempt to stay cool, stay calm, avoid conflict. Feelings of all kinds are avoided, in fact, because they lead inevitably to upset. Your dominant mood is cool, calm, collected, and controlled. But escape is futile: you try to avoid anger, but it finds you anyway, just as ghosts in folktales can't be left behind forever. The coolness alternates with explosive heat. Avoiding anger is only another way of producing anger, anger of a particularly virulent kind. You have two notes on the scale: cool boredom and rage, and the rage, even if rare, is disturbingly beyond control. Avoiding anger only closets it, stores it for a later decision. It is like avoiding opening up bills because you know you can't pay. Eventually the table is stacked with bills, and they avalanche onto the floor.

### **VICIOUS CIRCLE: Unfair Game**

#### **Obstacle: Unfairness/Envy**

You tend to react when you feel you have been treated unfairly by others. In social situations—work, school, family—you have a very sensitive gauge regarding fair treatment by the authorities—supervisors, justice system, school personnel. Anger is often an attempt to gain justice, to balance the scales. When those in charge don't rectify the injustice, you elect yourself as the Avenger—the one responsible for setting things right. But too often, this enterprise backfires. When you get angry at the injustice, you draw attention to yourself and get targeted as the Troublemaker. Instead of bringing about justice, this causes even more treatment that you regard as unfair persecution.

### **VICIOUS CIRCLE: Breaking Out**

#### **OBSTACLE: Claustrophobia**

You tend to react most strongly when things get in the way, close you in, when rules seem too restrictive. You use anger to break out, to challenge authority, to burst through whatever obstacles stand in the way between you and your freedom. For you, life should be a dance, but too often it is weighed down with unnecessary responsibilities and silly regulations. You want to be the absolute master of your destiny, and when people or things stand in your way, you challenge them. But anger when used as an instrument of freedom often brings a recoil from life. The result of anger is often not more freedom, but greater restriction.

# SIX TYPES OF VICIOUS CIRCLES OF ANGER ADDICTION

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