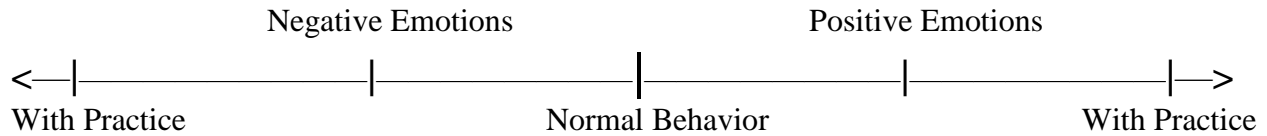


Tug-Of-War



Your emotions are yours to choose. It is up to you since you are the only one you can control, and, if you think about it, the only one you would *want* to control. Friendship, love, and kindness must all be freely given and learned.

We can improve.

How?

Practice. But we can practice the wrong things.

We want love. We want respect. (So, too, do others.) And when we do not get what we want, even what we need, we can choose to become more aggressive or more responsible.

One time, when asking for something doesn't work, you see that raising your voice does. Next time, raising your voice doesn't work, but a derogatory comment does. Violence can soon enter as a means to get love. Strange, but true.

Or:

One time, when giving a card isn't well-received, you see that giving flowers is enjoyed. So you raise this by finding out what flowers or colors they like best. Then, you try giving them flowers they've never seen before, like strawflowers. When you do this, you move your normal behavior a little closer toward positive emotions for yourself and others.

Looking at the tug-of-war graphic above, we see the right practice can make what was once positive emotion our new normal behavior. It also makes negative behavior as bad as what was once our normal behavior. But, with poor practice, what was once our negative side becomes our centerline normal behavior. **What wins this tug-of-war is always up to you.**

I tell my martial arts students that we become as we rehearse. If you practice hitting a bag in anger, you won't get good at punching, but you will get good at anger. Ask yourself, "Without blaming anyone, what is pulling me the wrong way? What will I do to move closer to the emotional health I want?" For example: Yelling about dinner could be replaced by a new tradition of everyone saying three things they're grateful for. Or it could turn into physical abuse.

My worst actions are _____

My best actions are _____

Worst actions could become: Positive _____ Negative _____

Best actions could become: Positive _____ Negative _____

If applying this helps improve your life, then look for more resources at:

www.EmotionalManagement.org