

Two Mean Dogs

A Native American tribal leader was describing his own inner struggles. He said, "There are two dogs inside me. One of the dogs is mean and evil. The other dog is good. The mean dog fights the good dog all the time.

Someone asked him which dog usually wins and after a moment's reflection, he answered, "The one I feed the most."

Native American tale as told by
author Harold Kushner in *Living a Life That Matters*

Application: Story Telling, poems, quotes, help emotional tools stick—easier to understand and remember. Use this story to help with empowerment, mindfulness and choice.

Stimulus→Choice→Response

You can't control the stimulus---In this example, the stimulus is the mean dog (negative thought)—it shows up when it wants to--- but you can choose your response to the mean dog. Don't feed it.

Nail in the Fence

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence.

The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to control his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to control his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all of the nails had been pulled from the fence.

The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said. "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. No matter how many times you say you are sorry, the hole is still there."

Author Unknown

Application: Change is often motivated by the desire to help others. When we believe that our anger only impacts us—why change? The realization that anger impacts those around us may inspire us to learn new coping strategies, to be better.