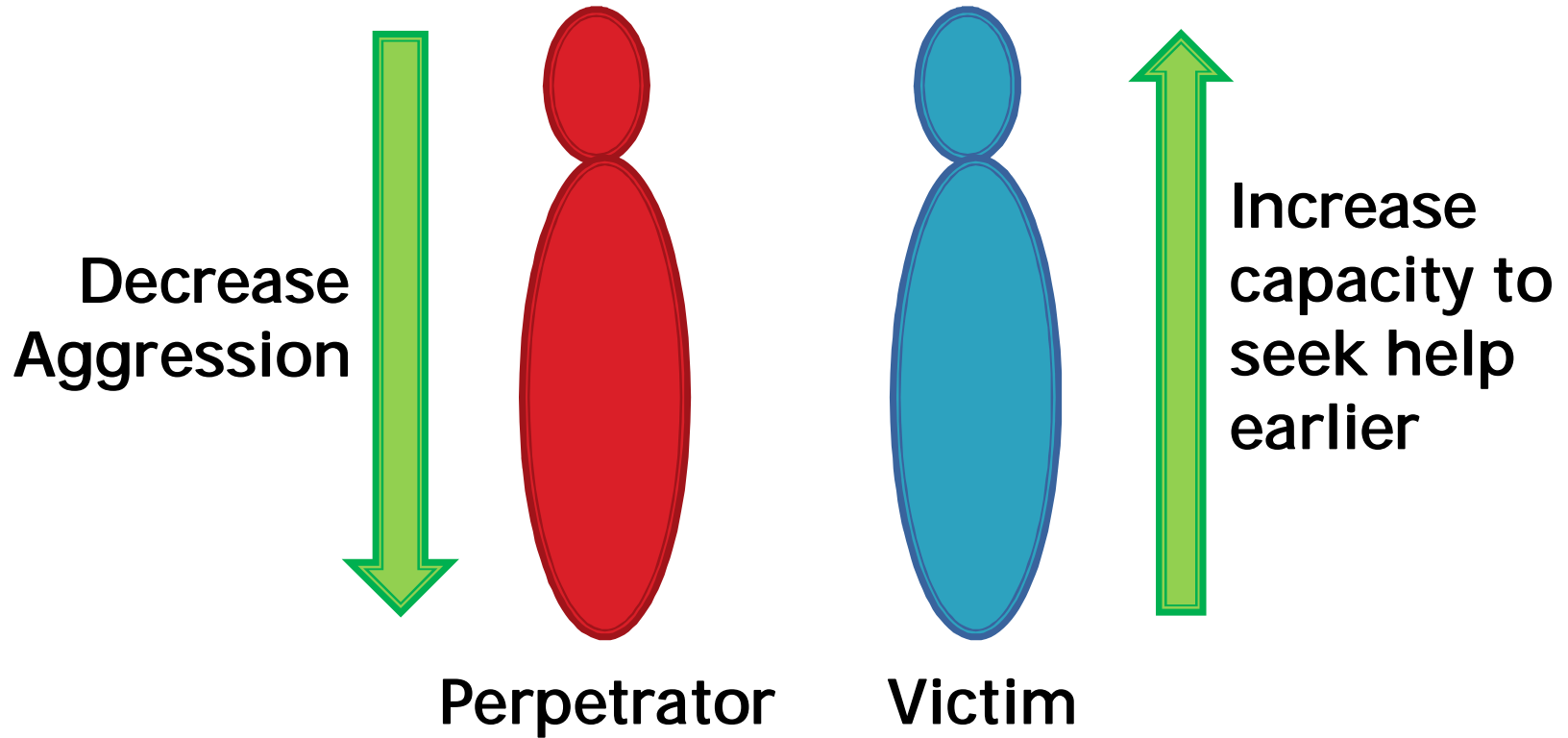


# Emotion Regulation Skills to Manage Violence

A Mindfulness Based Approach

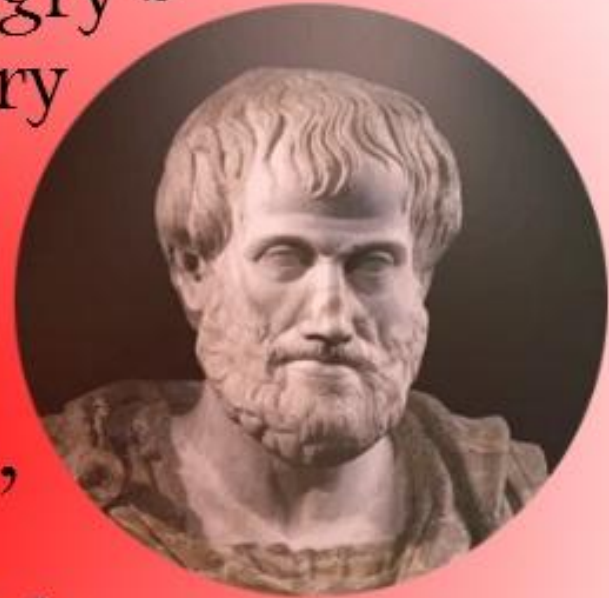
# Violence Reduction



# Violence in nature and man

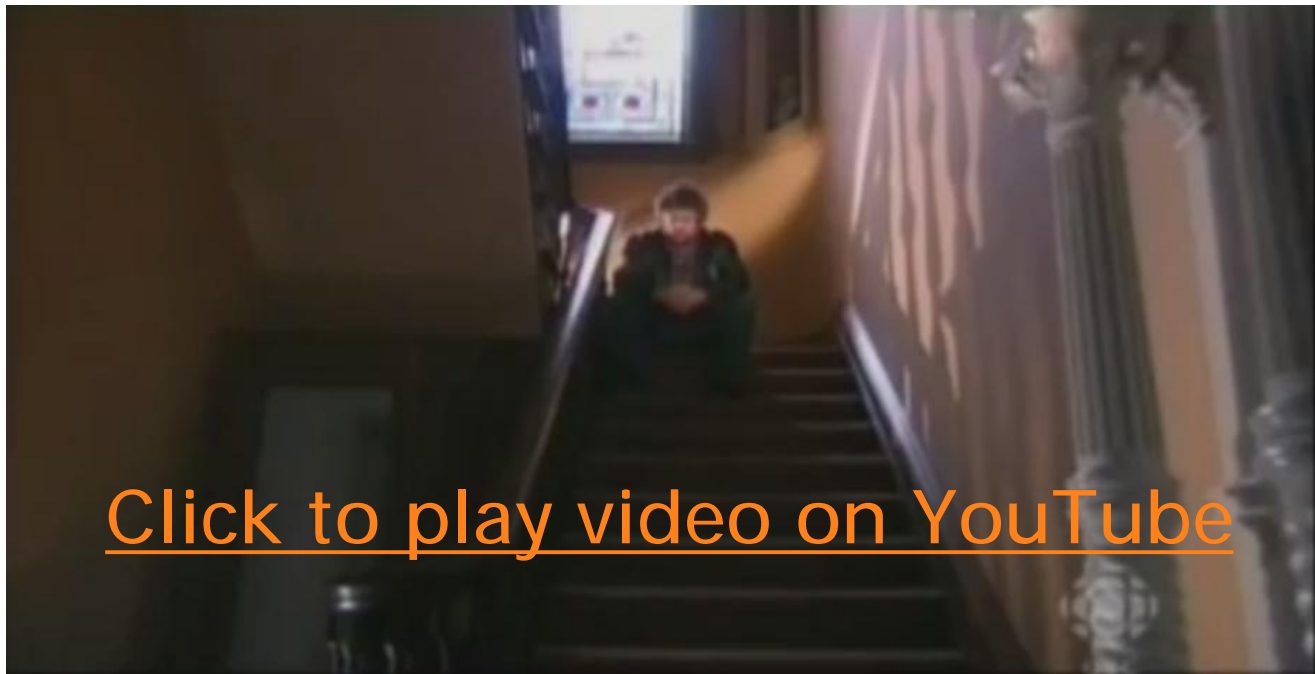
“Anybody can become angry ~  
that is easy, but to be angry  
with the right person  
and to the right degree  
and at the right time  
and for the right purpose,  
and in the right way –  
that is not within everybody's power  
and is not easy.”

~Aristotle



# How Anger Goes out of Control

## Anger, Amygdala & Prefrontal Cortex



# Systematic review of Mindfulness research on brain changes

- ▶ 30 studies on effects of mindfulness training on brain structure and function
- ▶ Brain changes (activity levels & volume & connectivity)
  - Prefrontal Cortex (conscious decision making & emotional regulation)
  - Insula (internal body states)
  - Cingulate cortex (decision making),
  - Hippocampus (memory)
  - Amygdala (emotion).
- ▶ These changes appear to be consistent with the idea that mindfulness helps your brain regulate your emotions.

(Rinske Gotink et al. 2016 - Erasmus MC, Rotterdam)



# 8 Week Mindfulness Training for Anxiety Patients

- ▶ **Mindfulness Group** (vs Control group)
  - Amygdala activation decreases more
  - Reported more decrease in anxiety
  - More activation of the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC)
  - More connection between the PFC & amygdala

(Sara Lazar et al. 2011. Harvard Medical School)

# Mindfulness is ...

- ▶ Paying kind attention to present experience, moment by moment, without judgement.
- ▶ The awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally and compassionately.

- ▶ Mindfulness is the English translation of the word *Sati* in Pali (ancient language of Theravada Buddhism scriptures)
- ▶ *Sati* is one of the inherent faculties of mind and heart. Not just the mind.
- ▶ Rooted in Buddhism but Mindfulness in all true wisdom traditions.
- ▶ Also in Persian Gnosticism (Irfan). Hozoor and shohood.



# Non-judgement

- ▶ Non-judgment does not mean we do not have preferences.
- ▶ We can have preferences but do not judge our experience as 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong'.
- ▶ We simply accept it as another experience.

# Acceptance

- ▶ Acceptance is not approval.
- ▶ Acceptance is not resignation.

# Anger

- ▶ Anger is an inner state
  - We usually attribute to others as the cause of it.
- ▶ Anger can arise as result of
  - Powerlessness, not-understanding, prejudices, false beliefs and assumptions, sense of entitlement, ...
- ▶ Let's own our anger.
- ▶ Work with anger instead of projecting & inflicting on others.
- ▶ **Anger is NOT Aggression**
  - Aggression is destructive
  - Anger can be useful (compassionate anger)

# Compassionate Anger

"Just like our organs, our anger is part of us.

When we are angry, we have to go back to ourselves and take good care of our anger.

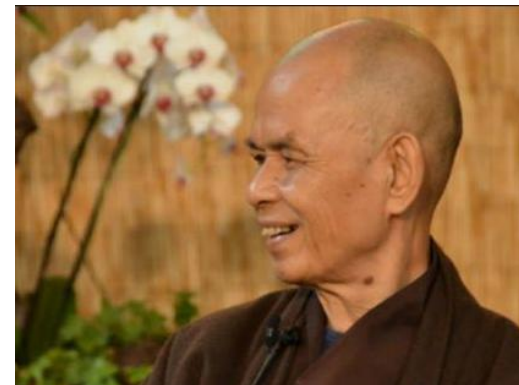
We cannot say, '*Go away, anger, I don't want you.*' When you have a stomach ache, you don't say, '*I don't want you stomach, go away.*' No, you take care of it.

In the same way, we have to embrace and take good care of our anger.

Just because anger or hate is present does not mean that the capacity to love and accept is not there.

Love is always with you."

[Thích Nhất Hạnh.  
Zen Buddhist master, author, and peace activist.]



# Dis-identifying from Anger

You are not your anger.

You feel angry.

Noticing your language can help:

- ▶ Try not to say "I am angry"
  - Identification with anger
- ▶ Instead say: "I feel angry"
  - Simple acceptance of your experience without judgment and identification; but with compassion for self and others.

*let's meditate together*



## Stop Breathe & Think: Meditate

Stop, Breathe & Think Health & Fitness

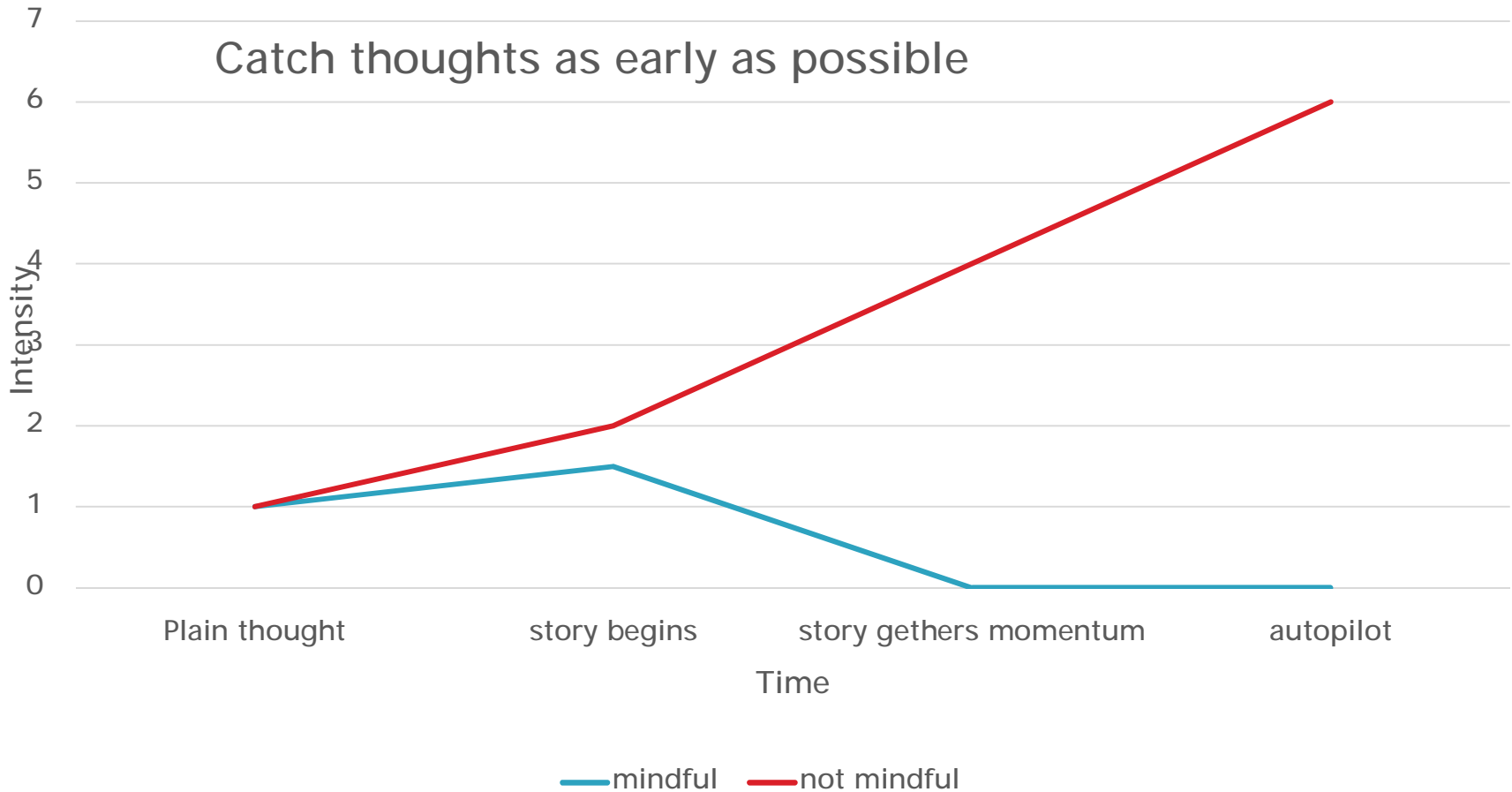
★★★★☆

3+

Offers in-app purchases



# Story of our thoughts



# The NAD Practice

- **Notice**

Notice your thoughts as they arise. Catch them as early as possible before they turn into a story and gather momentum.

- **Assess**

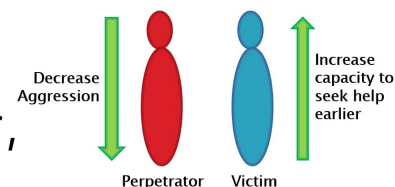
Make a quick assessment whether the thought is of service to you right now in this moment or not.

- **Decide**

Choose whether you wish to go with the thoughts or not.

# Summary

- ▶ Mindfulness helps reduce violence
  - Emotion regulation skills.
  - Perpetrators: Less aggressive, own their anger, compassionate anger.
  - Victims: Less wait before seeking help. Self-compassion, less self-blame and fear.
- ▶ Anger is NOT Aggression
- ▶ Own your anger & work with it.
- ▶ Take up mindfulness practices.
  - Sense your body often.
  - Many types of meditations.
  - Apps are available.
- ▶ Do the NAD.



For information & resources go to  
[www.innerchange.com.au](http://www.innerchange.com.au)