

Chapter 3.11 Anger and Rage

This chapter deals with the problems of anger and rage, which persisted even after most of Billy's symptoms had been alleviated. The goal of treatment was to create in Billy a way of achieving relaxation and calm, to install the relaxation procedure, and to time it to kick in just before he previously had gotten angry.

There were a few incidences in which Billy felt anger and rage. He was not violent, but his expression was so intense that the other people involved became afraid. What happened was that Billy wanted to tell his story, and he can be quite talkative. I think he felt, because of all his suffering, that other people owed it to him to listen. This caused problems. I had phone contact with one person who had experienced Billy in a rage. This person said that Billy's expression was so frightening that the person started carrying a gun.

The two situations that created anger in Billy occurred when people treated him as many in the Army had treated him, specifically if someone did not listen to him, or if someone made fun of him. As far as I know, since I started seeing him, he has not actually been violent, although he did have rage reactions.

When I worked with Billy, I had already done several interventions, which lessened the rage reaction: 1). In the creation of an alternate past the color blue had significance; 2). Fast phobia cures had been done in situations in which he previously felt he had no control. He utilized the feeling of control he has when he does a wheelie on a bike; 3). He had gained control over his internal images. When a person aroused negative feelings in him, he was able to shrink the internal image of that person which diminished the emotional impact. He said, "I can shrink him and put him on the head of a pin."

Daniel Amen,(1997) in his book *Change Your Brain, Change Your Life*, (pages 204-205), writes that temporal lobe problems may be associated with frequent attacks of rage. He gives several prescriptions for optimizing and healing the temporal lobes. He says that all forms of vocalization including singing, chanting, yodeling, humming, reciting poetry and simply talking can be therapeutic. However, nothing beats toning. Toning means making sounds with elongated vowels for extended periods of time. Since the temporal lobes are involved in rage reactions and toning is therapeutic for the temporal lobes, I decided to create a program for Billy tailored to his specific situation. An alternate past had previously been created, and he gave it the color of the blue of the ocean off an island. The blue color was associated with calmness, with relaxation, and an optimistic view of life. I ask him to use a long drawn out "blue" as a toning. I asked him to feel relaxed, comfortable, and in control as he said the word "blue". Then I had him repeat it over and over again. I told him that each time he said, "blue" the relaxation, comfort, and feeling of control would double.

I had him go back to a situation previously in which he had not been able to tone *bluuuuuee* and have this feeling of relaxation. I asked him to feel the difference the toning would have made and to see the freedom that it would have given him in that situation. I had him repeat this for two or three more situations. Then I had him imagine a situation in the future that might arise in which it would be useful to hear this internal sound of *bluuuuuee* and to feel that relaxation. I asked him to feel the difference that this is making in his future and to see the freedom that it is giving him in his future. I asked him to repeat this for several possible instances in the future. Anger and rage occur at a subconscious level; therefore the reprogramming needs to be at a subconscious as well as conscious level. I changed my voice tone and cadence of speech to be like the voice I use in inducing trance. Billy has become quite skillful at going into a trance state in which he is able to create the internal scenarios that I ask him to do. In spite of strong provocation on a couple of occasions, he has not had a rage reaction since then.

I had heard from several people second hand reports of incidences that involved Billy. The reports were that he had gotten disturbed and was persistent in demanding someone's attention. These incidents seemed to involve his wanting to tell his story at some length and the other person not having the time or desire to listen. I was finally able to talk to someone who had talked directly to Billy. She referred to him as the "Dahmer person." She said he had come into the office of a documentary film festival and asked about a film about Dahmer. She said he wanted to talk and tell her about himself, and she was quite busy at that time, and did not have time to listen. He was persistent, and they even thought about calling the police.

After debating whether to tell him what she had said, I decided to do so. He was quite defensive at first but later said he wanted to apologize for embarrassing me. About three weeks later he said that he no longer gets irritated with people. He said the turning point was when I told him what the woman at the film festival had said. He said that he thought about how he was coming across to people and decided that the image he projected was not "him." He felt he was different from how he was coming across to others. One of the principles of neurolinguistic programming (NLP) is that communication is not the message you mean to send, but rather it is the message that the other person receives. He began thinking about how he was appearing to others, and that enabled him to react calmly.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Violence occurs when you feel you have no other choice. Remember when you felt angry. Did you feel as though you were powerful and had lots of choices, or did you feel like you were at the end of your rope and didn't know what to do? Having choices minimizes the risk of violence. So if you have times when you go into a rage or even get angry, how can you use something similar to what was effective for Billy? First, check if there is any part of you that has any objection to being able to control the anger, and if you are willing to make a firm commitment

to change. Next would be to have a way of obtaining a relaxation response. Some examples of effective means are meditation, progressive relaxation, prayer, chanting, yoga, and listening to music that creates a relaxed state. Popular magazines are full of these techniques, and most of them are effective. The trick is to be able to have that relaxed state when you need it. If you are similar to most people you have what I call triggers or buttons, which automatically shift you into an angry state. The moment just after that trigger is fired is when you need the relaxed state. You might assume that what the person said fires the trigger, but it is almost always how the person said it. The reaction is too quick for the person to have thought about it. I ask clients. "Can your trigger be pulled if you see the person but don't hear him or her?" Then can your trigger be pulled if you hear the person but don't see him or her. That way you can determine whether the trigger is visual or auditory. Auditory triggers involve tone of voice, pitch, rhythm, accent, volume, and timbre. Visual triggers involve posture, finger- pointing, expressions, looking down one's nose, in your face, blank stare, look of disgust or disdain. Do some research on yourself; find out specifically what the trigger is. Usually the trigger originated with a parent or sibling.

The sound "bluuuuuee" accessed the relaxed state in Billy. Then you need to find a sound that reminds you of the relaxed state. Then hear that sound and notice how that creates the desired state. Then do with yourself what I did with Billy. Go back to a situation in which, had you been able to hear that sound and feel the relaxation, it would have made a difference. Feel the difference it would have made and see the freedom it would have given you. Do this for a few instances. Then imagine a situation in the future when your button is pushed, and you start to get angry. Hear that sound and feel the relaxation; then feel the difference it is making in your future, and see the freedom it is giving you. This procedure is called future pacing. You need to rehearse this new behavior several times, so it will kick in when you need it. One of the principles of NLP is that anything worth doing is worth doing poorly at first. So if this doesn't work the first time and you get angry, then learn what you can from the experience. My hunch would be that there was already some change. Then repeat the exercise.