

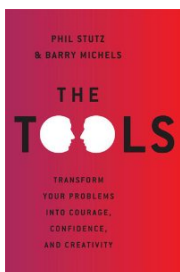
HOW TO CONTROL MY ITALIAN TEMPER

I am not sure how Italian temper differs from other types of tempers. My Italian temper is quick to flare, and then I have Italian Catholic guilt for losing it. When my temper is out of control, I don't listen to reason, including myself trying to reason with my temper self. Just as I am about to send that e-mail to my law firm partner, I am telling myself, "Don't do it, don't do it." But my temper self just marches or barrels forward, just like the proverbial bull in the china closet.



When I shoot the verbal gun, (i.e. my mouth) there is always shrapnel heading back my way. Then wounded from the backlash, I feel bad, guilty for losing control.

So what can I do or you do if you suffer from the same affliction. (I certainly hope you don't!) I have looked for solutions in self-help books (Don't laugh). I found one that is interesting and helpful to me. It is called "The Tools: Transform Your Problems into Courage, Confidence, and Creativity" by Phil Stutz & Barry Michels. (<http://www.amazon.com/Tools-Transform-Problems-Confidence-Creativity/dp/067964444X>) Their answer to anger is "Active Love." The author talks about how he stumbled onto the concept of Active Love when he was a small boy. He got very mad at his dad while on a car trip. He sat in the backseat and had terrible thoughts about his dad. He was in the Maze (caught in an endless circle of negativity). When they arrived at their destination, he saw a small puppy shivering outside of the car in the parking lot. He got out of the car and picked up the puppy. His black cloud mood suddenly lifted. The world tilted and he didn't hate his father anymore. His bad mood was gone.



The author states that the trick is to be able to get to that state of puppy love when you are hurt or angry. He says that you have to make a conscious effort to feel this way when someone has wronged you. His remedy for this is a tool called Active Love. It is active because it takes work. When you use it you create that love inside of you that you experience when you see a puppy. Here is how the Active Love Tool works. The following is taken verbatim from The Tools:

"Imagine that you're surrounded by a warm, liquid light that is infinitely loving. Feel your heart expand far beyond you to become one with this love. As you bring your heart back to normal size, this infinite energy concentrates itself inside your chest. It's an unstoppably loving force that wants to give itself away.



Focus on the person who's triggered your anger. If they're not physically in front of you (usually they're not) then visualize their presence. Send all the love in your chest directly to them; hold nothing back. It's like completely expelling a deep breath.



Follow the love as it leaves your chest. When it enters the other person at their solar plexus, don't just watch. Feel it enter. This will give you the sense you're completely at one with them. Now relax--you'll feel yourself again surrounded by infinite love, which will return to you all the energy you gave away. You'll feel filled up and at peace." The Tools, pages 80-81.

I was very mad when I tried this. In fact when I sent the love out of my chest, it was more like expelling a blow torch towards the person I resented. I pulled all the love I could into my chest. I visualized my heart getting bigger. Then I pictured the person, took a deep breath and blew it out hard aiming for their chest. Ok I admit it was somewhat aggressive. I was so pissed I did it several times putting as much force as I could into my blow torch of love. I even visualized my love blow torch knocking the person to the ground. Ok maybe I didn't do this exactly how the book suggests, but it did help. Or maybe I was so tired from blowing out and aiming for their chest that I just wore myself out. Maybe the effort got rid of my anger and the good news is they never felt a thing.

