

The Basic Wall of Virtue Practice – Required for any further Wisdom Work
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First Daily Practice – Wall of Virtue (Divided into Two Parts)

The “Wall of Virtue” is created from wisdom. It is called a “wall” for moments when we can’t access wisdom – we have to go to trained responses. Virtue – it does not matter how we feel or what they do – we restrain our speech and behavior according a pre-set code, until we can calm down and process within and ideally with another person.

The Wall of Wisdom is not therapy, nor meant to save a relationship that should end. The Wall of Virtue restrains anger, because anger is hurtful to others and inhibits communication, reasoning and problem solving.

Instead of angering, we learn to ask for what we want, in a simple, not hurtful way.

The Wall of Virtue restrains defensiveness, because defensiveness often triggers an angry person to become more angry. In addition, defensiveness is often rooted fear and imploring an angry person to stop. Defensiveness does help in communication, reasoning or problem solving.

Instead of being defensiveness, we learn to set kind, clear and firm boundaries.

The Wall of Virtue restrains negative communication so that reasoning and processing can occur, even if the reasoning and processing results in downgrading or ending the relationship. Usually, establishing Wall of Virtue helps repair or save a relationship that can and ought to be repaired or saved.

Wall of Virtue Practice – Adapted by each person.

- 1. Soon after waking up**, will yourself not to be angry or defensive. You place this brief wall of virtue especially if you live with others – spouse, children, etc. Anything can happen first thing in the morning.
- 2. Later on in the morning**, take about 5-10 minutes for the fuller Wall of Virtue Practice.

Review the vision for your life. What kind of person do you intend to be, especially in your interpersonal relationships? Don’t yet focus on your plans for the day. Focus on what kind of person you want to be. Also meditate on self-care.

If you are prone to anger or frustration: “I can have anger, but it is my anger. I will minimize venting my anger on other people.” Anger is often rooted frustration and the need to control. Anger happens before you can think.

If you are prone to defensiveness: “I can feel defensive, but the best thing to do when feeling defensive is just not to talk the defensiveness, and instead de-escalate for now.”

If someone does vent anger or criticize you, say things such as “What exactly what would you like me to do right now?”

Or, “Hmm, let me think about that”

or “Maybe that’s true; let me think about it”

or “Ouch, that was hurtful, but maybe it’s true; let me think about it.”

Or, “Ouch, that didn’t feel so good. I have to exit this conversation.”

If what they want is benign, just do it in order to de-escalate – get into the details another time

The Oath – No Four C’s – No Bad JEDDDI

The Four C’s:

1. I will not **criticize** others (finding fault in an unkind way - including unsolicited advice, dominating others, controlling others or telling them what to do or think),
2. **complain** about them to themselves (“why-ning”),
3. **condemn** others (accuse, assume, blame, label, unkindly compare, cut down or put down, insult or show contempt with words, gestures of facial expression), or
4. engage in escalating **conflict** (arguing). Once you realize things are not going well, disengage.
5. If you do any of this – apologize. And always know - there are usually ways to get what you want or to correct another person’s behavior. Anger and criticism don’t work well.

If you are being angered at or criticized, remember: No bad JEDDDI

“If someone is criticizing or venting anger at me, I will minimize trying to

- a. justify,
- b. explain,
- c. defend,
- d. demand (that they do or not do something),
- e. deny (what they have claimed) or
- f. give more information (JEDDDI)
- g. until they calm down and are ready to process.
- h. Don't tell an upset person what to do. You will understand bad JEDDDI better after reflection and training in the wisdom practice, discussed later. Once you have mastered the basic idea, put “no Bad JEDDI” in your first daily practice.

Bad JEDDI does not work. After a couple tries, don't tell an angering or resistant person to calm down, what to be, what to do. De-escalate, process later. Learn to draw kind, clear, firm and if needed, ruthless boundaries (without rue).

After three go-arounds; kindly end the conversation.

If another person is escalating on their own, disengage, and if necessary, get out of the room (in extreme cases, out of the house/apartment). Do not leave with a “parting (Parthian) shot.” Just say something like, “this is not working for me right now; I will be back later so we can talk about this.” Avoid passive-aggressive remarks, having to have the last word. Avoid telling other people what they should or should not do without their permission.

In general (memorize and train).

If someone says something with which you disagree, be affirmative and curious before expressing your opinion.

Do not let the behaviors of others determine your behaviors:

“It does not matter what other people do; what matters is the kind of person I want to become.”

“Do not try to persuade a resistant person (a person in an irrational state) to do, not do, understand, realize or be aware of anything. Take no for an answer, or some version of no. Just decide what you are going to do next, and make sure it is wise and does not make things worse. If

nothing, then nothing.” Taking no for an answer reduces conflict and does not give meaning to the other person being resistant.

You can (must) draw boundaries, just don’t match their anger and criticism.

Remember, a person’s not saying yes is a way of saying no. People often avoid saying “No,” so you have to detect a “constructive” no – anything but yes.

Ask for what you need with great specificity – something that can video-recorded. In a tough moment, every word counts. Be precise. No big prefaces. One sentence of background, and then ask, “I would like you to . . .”

People can respond with “Yes,” “No,” or “Maybe” (in their own words).

If you are asked to do something or not do something simple that is not immoral, or does not endanger life, limb or fortune and has no long_term consequences, typically let people have what they need for now. Buy time and process later.

Don’t control or boss people around.

No arguing – three rounds, step away. Process later.