

# **DIVIDE AND CONQUER**

**RECLAIMING LOST GROUND  
WHEN THE ENEMY TURNS ALLIES  
INTO ADVERSARIES**

**josiah**venture

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INTO ADVERSARIES**

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**Spring Conference 2026  
Notebook**



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Teaching notes by Dave Patty.

# UNMASKING THE ENEMY'S PLANS

Gen 3:1 – 4:16

## **God's Garden Is Profoundly Good – Gen 1-2**

Good food – 1:11-12

Good environment – 1:24-25

Good people – 1:26-27

Good leadership – 1:26-31

Good care – 2:15

Good relationships – 2:18-25

But ...

There was a snake in the garden – 3:1

## Who Is The Serpent?

“And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.” Rev 20:2

“Devil” – False accuser, Slanderer (Greek)

“Satan” – Adversary (Hebrew)

**Diábolos** (from **diabállō**, “to slander, accuse, defame”) – properly, a slanderer; a false accuser; unjustly criticizing to hurt (malign) and condemn to sever a relationship.

**Diabolos** in secular Greek means “backbiter,” i.e. an accuser, slanderer. Diábolos is literally someone who “casts through,” i.e. making charges that bring down and destroy.

**Śātān** translates to “accuser,” “adversary,” or “opponent”. It originates from a verb meaning to oppose, obstruct, or act as an adversary.

## **What Was The Result Of His Work?**

### **1.Mistrust framing – 3:1-5**

God is their greatest ally, but he is reframed as an adversary – Mistrust.

### **2.Camp recruiting – 3:6**

Others are recruited into an opposing “camp”.

### **3.Shame distancing – 3:7-10**

God becomes a different kind of adversary because of their guilt and shame.

### **4.Blame shifting – 3:12-13**

Close partners are repositioned as adversaries because they are the cause of my problems.

When safety is gone allies become turned against each other because of the need to control the threat and find safety.

#### **5.Win/lose rivalry – 4:1-12**

Brothers become adversaries because of comparison and competition.

#### **6.Division cancer – 4:14-16**

Adversarial relationships grow and expand like cancer

Adam and Eve sinned and were held accountable for their disobedience. But we dare not miss the “battle behind the battle” that incited their response.

## **There Is A Serpent In Your Garden**

He is the adversary and the accuser. Through lies and manipulation, blackmail, and deceit, he works to turn believers into adversaries and accusers of God and each other.

God made us in his own image – Satan seeks to do the same.

This results in separation (divide and conquer)

- Separation by mistrust
- Separation by sharing
- Separation by sin and guilt
- Separation by accusation and judgment
- Separation by comparison and competition
- Separation by association

The Serpent, and my response to him can destroy God's good garden.

## **Captain America: Civil War**

“When an incident involving the Avengers results in collateral damage, political pressure mounts to hold the team accountable. The resulting battle drives a wedge between Captain America and Iron Man and pits the Avengers against each other.”

**Steve Rogers:** “Tony, we used to be a family.”

**Tony Stark:** “I don’t care.”

**Black Widow:** “We’re still friends, right?”

**Hawkeye:** “That depends on how hard you hit me.”

**T’Challa:** “Is this all you wanted? To see them rip each other apart?”

**Zemo:** “I knew I couldn’t kill them. More powerful men than me have tried. But if I could get them to kill each other...”

**T’Challa:** “Vengeance has consumed you. It’s consuming them. I’m done letting it consume me.”

**Zemo:** “An empire toppled by its enemies can rise again. But one which crumbles from within? That’s dead... forever.”

**Vision:** “Our very strength incites challenge. Challenge incites conflict. And conflict... breeds catastrophe.”

**“The Bait of Satan,”** by author John Bevere, posits that offense is a strategic trap used to ensnare believers, causing division, bitterness, and disconnection from God’s will. Offense acts as “bait” on a hook, leading to a trap where individuals often remain oblivious to their captivity while becoming stuck in resentment.

Satan is the accuser. He is the whisperer.

When I feel attacked, I get defensive. When I get defensive, I get self-protective. When I get self-protective, I fight, flee or freeze. This causes me to wound, escalate and add additional problems to the first.

“Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes.” Eph 6:11

# NOTES

# ANATOMY OF DIVIDE AND CONQUER

## How Do Allies Become Adversaries?

Sometimes I **cause** it, sometimes I am **caught** in it (I have become the adversary to someone else), and sometimes I **watch** it and don't know what to do.

## Places where civil wars (divide and conquer) occur:

1. Husband and wife
2. Parent and child
3. Siblings
4. Teammates
5. Church members
6. Church staff
7. Leaders and followers
8. Leaders and other leaders

Become aware of your battles. Where do you see divide and conquer happening now or in the last 1-2 years?

# Battle Map

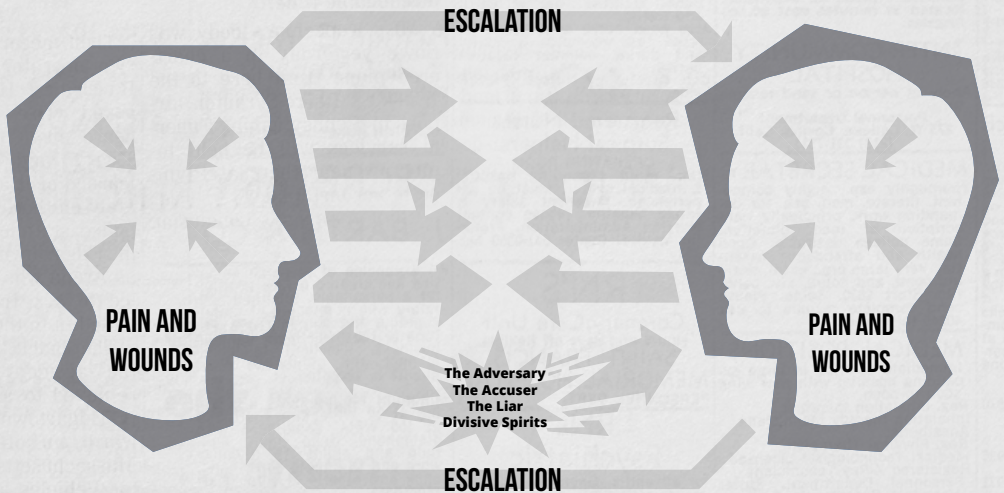
<b>CAUSE IT</b> Others have become adversaries to me.	<b>CAUGHT IN IT</b> I have become an adversary to someone else.	<b>WATCH IT</b> It is close to me and I don't know what to do.

What is the impact of these battles on the good garden?

What would be the result if lost ground were reclaimed?

# Understanding The Adversary Trap

## The Adversary Trap



## Key elements of the Adversary Trap

### A. A Snake in the Garden

- The Adversary – I Pet 5:8
- The Accuser – Rev 12:10
- The Liar – John 8:44
- Divisive Spirits – Prov 16:28, I Sam 16:23, 18:10, 19:9, I Kings 22:23

His first bait – Mistrust Framing – Gen 3:1-5

B. Pain and Wounds (Zech 13:6)

“Hurt people hurt people”

C. Our Instinctive Offensive Weapons – Josh 22:10-34

1. Self-protection
2. Judgement
3. Accusation
4. Gossip and Slander

D. Our Instinctive Defensive Weapons – I Kings 19:1-10

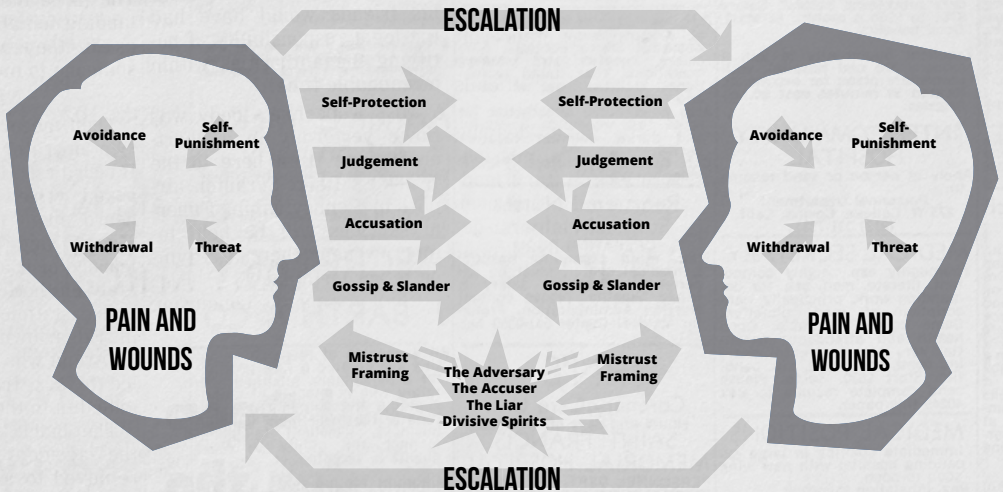
1. Threat Triggers – The Amygdala Hijack
2. Withdrawal
3. Avoidance
4. Self-punishment

E. Escalation

Our instinctive response increases pain and threat for the other person, resulting in an increased instinctive response from them. The adversary trap either escalates or hardens. Our enemy is pleased. He conquers us by inciting us to conquer each other.

“The thief comes only to kill, steal and destroy.” John 10:10

# The Adversary Trap



## Application

It is helpful to unmask the Adversary Trap in a specific way so that you can become aware of the trap and be able to choose a different response.

"...in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes." 2 Cor 2:11

**Pick one of the battles you listed above, and describe what is happening in greater depth.**

1. What is the “Mistrust Frame”?

2. Describe the hurt and pain.

3. Where do you see instinctive offensive weapons at work?

- Self-protection
- Judgment
- Accusation
- Gossip and Slander

4. Where do you see instinctive defensive weapons at work?

- Threat Triggers – The Amygdala Hijack
- Withdrawal
- Avoidance
- Self-punishment

5. How is this escalating or hardening?

6. What is the design of the enemy? What will happen if this is not resolved?

Proverbs 6:16–19: Lists “one who sows discord among brethren” as one of seven things God hates and considers an abomination.

**Tony Stark:** “You seem a little defensive.”

**Captain America:** “It’s been a long day.”

**Tony Stark:** [to Bucky] “At ease, Soldier. I’m not currently after you.”

**Captain America:** “Then why are you here?”

**Tony Stark:** “Could be your story’s not so crazy. Maybe.”

**Sam Wilson:** [to Steve] “I just wanna make sure we consider all our options. The people that shoot at you usually wind up shooting at me.”

# NOTES

# TAKING BACK LOST GROUND

The Battle Inside You

## **Ephesians 4:3-6 (NIV)**

**3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.** 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

## **Romans 12:14-21 (NIV)**

**14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.** 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18 **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.** 19 Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;  
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

To take back lost ground you must...

1. **Choose a different path** than your instinctual response. This will require obedience, sacrifice, and self-discipline.
2. Don't wait for others, do **everything** that you can. "Make **every effort** to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."
3. Keep your eyes on the goal. **Live at peace with everyone**, if it is possible, as far as it depends on you.
4. "Do not be overcome by evil, but **overcome evil with good.**"

Don't pre-decide the outcome and respond out of that conclusion. Do what is right, no matter what the outcome. You won't always change the other person, but you can always change yourself.

## Winning the battle within you.

There are four key battles you need to win within you: **Pain, Threat, Debt and Judgement**

### 1. **Pain** - Deal with your pain and wounds

Isaiah 53:1-5

"...by his wounds we are healed." (NIV)

**If you do not deal with your pain, it will control you.**

### 2. **Threat** - Defuse your threat triggers so that you experience safety

- Become aware of your amygdala response.  
If your response does not match the situation, it doesn't just come from that situation.
- Uncover your fears  
Gen 3:10  
Matt 8:23-27
- Renounce the lies that energize them  
Heb 6:17-18

- Run to your strong tower for safety

Proverbs 18:10

"The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe."

Psalm 91:1-8

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty."

**If you do not deal with fears, your threat triggers will hijack you.**

### 3. **Debt** - Forgive as God forgave you

...so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. 9 For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. 10 Anyone whom you forgive, **I also forgive**. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, 11 so that **we would not be outwitted by Satan**; for we are not ignorant of his designs. 2 Cor 2:7-11

...bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, **so you also must forgive**. Col 3:13

**If you do not forgive their debt, it will imprison you. (See Matt 18:34-35)**

#### 4. **Judgement** - Refrain from unauthorized judgment

**Unauthorized Judgement** – I Cor 4:3-5, Matt 7:1-6,  
James 4:11-12, Jeremiah 17:9-10

1. Things hidden in darkness
2. The motives of the heart
3. Final conclusions about the nature or character of a person
4. Issues outside my “camp”

**Authorized Judgement** – Matt 18:15, I Cor 5 – 6.

1. Actions
2. Impact

**If you do not deal with judgement, it will be a log in your eye and you will be unable to see clearly. (See Matt 7:3-5)**

### **Review**

There are four key battles within you that you need to win: Pain, Threat, Debt and Judgement

1. **Pain** - Deal with your pain and wounds
2. **Threat** - Defuse your threat triggers so that you experience safety
3. **Debt** - Forgive as God forgave you
4. **Judgement** - Refrain from unauthorized judgment

## Reflection

Look back on a specific “divide and conquer” situation you are now facing. It can be the one you unpacked in the last lesson, or a different one from your list.

In that specific “Adversary Trap” how are you doing at the battle within? Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Pain**

Deal with your pain and wounds.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Threat**

Defuse your threat triggers so that you experience safety.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Debt**

Forgive as God forgave you.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Judgement**

Refrain from unauthorized judgment.

- If you do not deal with **pain**, it will control you.
- If you do not deal with fears, your **threat** triggers will hijack you.
- If you do not deal with **debt**, it will imprison you.
- If you do not deal with **judgment**, you will be unable to see clearly.

Based on what we discovered from God's Word, what are specific steps you could take to recover lost ground in these four areas:

1. Pain

2. Threat

3. Debt

4. Judgement

# NOTES

# TAKING BACK LOST GROUND

The Battle Around You

## **I Corinthians 11:18**

In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it.

## **2 Corinthians 12:20**

For I am afraid that when I come, I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

## **Galations 5:15**

If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

There are four key battles around you that you must win. The battle for **initiative**, for **compassion and love**, for **truth** and for **healing and restoration**.

**1. Initiative** – the next step is always yours

**Matt 18:15-17 – when they sin against you**

- When someone has sinned against you, go to your brother
- If in person, just the two of you
- If that doesn't work, take someone else
- If that is not successful, bring in leadership from the church

**Matthew 5:23-25 – when you sin against them, or they think you have**

- When you realize that someone has something against you, leave your gift at the altar
- First, go and be reconciled with your brother
- Come to terms quickly with your accuser

**Philippians 4:1-3 – when two people you know can't get along**

- "I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord."
- Timothy "help these women..."

**I Cor 6:1-5 – when a conflict in your church is escalating**

- "When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?"
- "I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers..."

Always take the initiative

Always move toward the problem

Snails – "The longer it takes to address a problem, the more expensive the solution." Jerry Domes

**2. Compassion and love** – feel with them, feel for them, and express it.

Matt 9:36

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

I Peter 4:8

“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”

I Cor 13:1

“If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.”

Prov 17:9

“Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.”

Matt 18:27

“The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.”

“I’m sorry.”

“That must really hurt.”

“That is really difficult.”

“I love you.”

“I care about what you are going through.”

You can feel with someone even if you don’t agree with them. (Like in John 11:21-37 where “Jesus wept.”)

Compassion and love are the oil that allows tension and pressure to be productive rather than damaging (think of a car engine).

### 3. **Truth** – speak the truth in love

Eph 4:15

Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth**.

2 Cor 4:2

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, **by setting forth the truth plainly** we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

You don't help anyone by hiding the truth

Clarity is kindness

The truth will set you free (John 8:32)

#### 4. **Healing and restoration** – make level paths for your feet

Eph 4:29

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for **building others** up according to their needs, that it may **benefit those** who listen.”

James 4:11

“11 Brothers and sisters, **do not slander** one another.”

Hebrews 12:13

“Make level paths for your feet,” so that the lame may **not be disabled, but rather healed.**

I Peter 5:8-10

“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 **Resist him, firm in your faith,** knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. 10 And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself **restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.**”

Ask for and extend forgiveness

I don't want to hurt you, and it is clear that I did. I'm sorry. Would you please forgive me?”

Pray for and expect healing

Fight for and believe in restoration

## Review

There are four key battles around you that you must win. The battle for **initiative**, for **compassion and love**, for **truth** and for **healing and restoration**.

1. **Initiative** – the next step is always yours
2. **Compassion and love** – feel with them, feel for them, and express it
3. **Truth** – speak the truth in love
4. **Healing and restoration** – “make level paths for your feet so that the lame are not disabled but rather healed.”

## Reflection

Look back on a specific “divide and conquer” situation you are now facing. It can be the one you unpacked in the last lesson, or a different one from your list.

In that specific “Adversary Trap”, how are you doing in the battle around you. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-10

\_\_\_\_\_ **Initiative** – the next step is always yours

\_\_\_\_\_ **Compassion and love** – feel with them and feel for them, and express it.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Truth** – speak the truth in love

\_\_\_\_\_ **Healing and restoration** – make level paths for your feet so that the lame are not disabled but rather healed

Based on what we discovered from God's Word, what are specific steps you could take to recover lost ground in these four areas:

**1. Initiative**

**2. Compassion and love**

**3. Truth**

**4. Healing and restoration**

# NOTES

# GUARDING UNITY AND PEACE

You will not always be successful at bringing peace, restoring relationships, and shepherding restoration and healing.

## **2 Tim 4:14**

“Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.”

## **2 Tim 4:16**

“At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.”

## **Acts 20:28-31**

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard!”

## **Luke 12:51**

“Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division.”

## **How does the battle affect you?**

When you become aware of the battle or enter the battle, you can easily become....

Anxious

Worn

Wounded

Discouraged

Frustrated

Angry

Frantic

Hopeless

Helpless

Burned out

Emotionally depleted

How does God keep you and your spiritual family healthy and safe?

**“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord  
Jesus Christ.”  
(1 Cor 1:3, 2 Cor 1:2)**

“Grace and peace to you” frames the content for 17 of the 22 Epistles, and the phrase is repeated by Paul, Peter and John.

(Rom 1:7, I Cor 1:3, 2 Cor 1:2, Gal 1:3, Eph 1:2 Phil 1:2, Col 1:2, Titus 1:4, I Pet 1:2, 2 Pet 1:2, I Thess 1:1, 2 Thess 1:2, Phm 1:3, 2 John 1:3, Rev 1:4)

“Grace” and “Peace” appear individually in the other five Epistles and in Acts, used by Luke, James, Jude, and the writer of Hebrews.

**“Grace and Peace”** consistently frame God’s instructions to us. These are resources we always need to stay healthy.

**“From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”** shows us the source of these resources. The Fatherhood of God and the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

**Grace –**

Gal 5:4-6

Eph 2:7-9

Phil 1:6-8

2 Thess 2:16-17

2 Tim 2:1

**Peace –**

John 14:27

Romans 8:6

Romans 16:20

2 Cor 13:11

Gal 5:22

Phil 4:7

Grace and peace are appropriated through **faith**.

Remember that God is guarding his people and protecting his work

And the God of **all grace**, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, **will himself restore you** and make you strong, firm and steadfast. I Peter 5:10

"May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord." 2 Pet 1:2

## **Final Takeaways**

Spend a few minutes thinking back through what we covered in “Divide and Conquer” and allow the Holy Spirit to draw attention to the most important action steps for you in the weeks ahead.

What are three things you need to remember?

1.

2.

3.

What are three things you need to do? By when?

1.

2.

3.

Final words from the Holy Spirit to you:

# NOTES

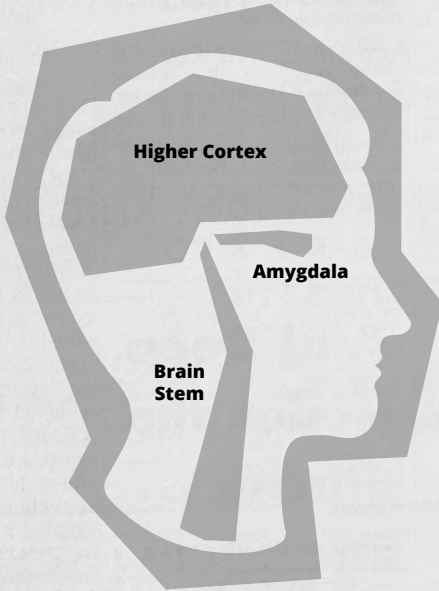
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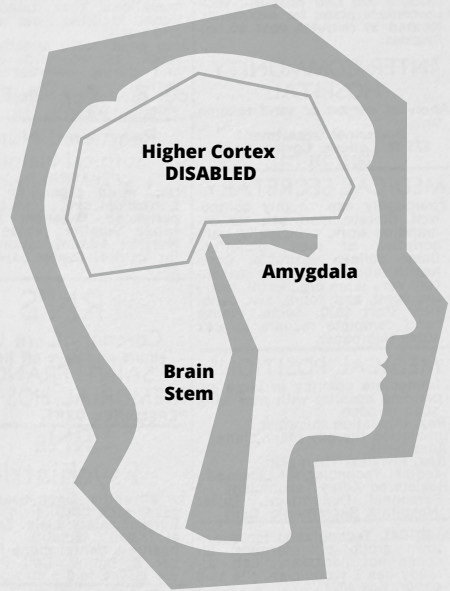
# APPENDIX 1

## The Amygdala hijack



### LOW EMOTION

(Calm, Relaxed)



### HIGH EMOTION

(Anger, Fear, Excitement, Love,  
Hate, Disgust, Frustration)

“Amygdala hijack is an emotional overreaction response to stress. This activates the fight-or-flight response and disables one’s rational, reasoned response.

Amygdala hijack can happen to anyone and is usually triggered by something, causing the amygdala to ‘disable’ the frontal lobes and take control of your emotional responses.

Sometimes we have suppressed emotions that suddenly become prominent when triggered by past memories, which then results in activation of the fight or flight response.

This triggering can result in inappropriate or irrational behavior, such as shouting at someone you care about.

After the amygdala hijack, we may feel emotions of shame, embarrassment, or guilt.

Daniel Goleman first coined the term amygdala hijack in his 1995 book titled "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ."

### **Symptoms**

- An amygdala hijack occurs as part of the fight or flight response being triggered, meaning that similar physical symptoms of this response will occur during a hijack:
- Rapid heart rate
- Clammy skin
- Dilated pupils to improve vision for faster responses
- Sweating
- Goosebumps on the skin
- Increased blood sugar – for immediate energy
- Contracted blood vessels allow the body to redirect blood to major muscle groups
- Airways expand to allow in and use more oxygen
- The result of amygdala hijack can be an emotional overreaction response to a perceived threat. It can then take several seconds for this reaction to dissipate before one can have better control over their amygdala.
- The individual may also find they cannot think clearly during a hijack. After the hijack, it is common for individuals to feel embarrassed or regretful."

[simplypsychology.org/amygdala-hijack.html](http://simplypsychology.org/amygdala-hijack.html)

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