

**“Use the
Force, Luke!”**



**Irving Plotkin
Veteran Foster Parent
Jedi Knight**

Managing Number One, First!

&

**And Staying Motivated to
Make a Difference**

Charlie Appelstein, MSW
charlieap@comcast.net
www.charliea.com
[Facebook.com/charlietraining](https://www.facebook.com/charlietraining)



Understanding, Normalizing, and Learning from our Feelings

Think: *“What must have occurred in this client’s life to get him or her to make me feel this way? Behavior is a message.”*

Typical Feelings and/or Traps

1. Angry
2. Frustrated
3. Out-of-Control
4. Disgusted
5. Guilty
6. Jealous
7. Sexual
8. Afraid
9. Hopeless
10. Overwhelmed
11. Add your own

Influenced by:

Personal baggage, limited resources, quality and quantity of supervision, training and temperament.

Feelings: Yes

Inappropriate Actions: NO!

All feelings are okay. Learn from them. They’re diagnostic.



“Check Your Baggage at the Door”



This is a reflective questionnaire about who you are and why you’ re here. No one will see this document but you. It is given to increase your self-awareness about past experiences and how they can influence present day decisions, practices, and attitudes.

Were you raised in a happy home?

Did you receive enough attention from both parents?

What kind of limit setting did your folks employ? (e.g. spanking, yelling, logical consequences, punishment, etc.)

Were your parents physically affectionate to you?

What kind of values were taught and modeled?

Were there a lot of rules and structure in your home?

Did your childhood experiences influence your decision to work
In a helping profession?

What baggage should you check at the door?

What should come through?

The Observing Ego

“I’ m REALLY ticked...I could just - it’ s okay. Stay cool...ALL feelings are normal. Learn from this. I’ m suffering a bad self-esteem injury, but in a little while it will heal.

Respond instead of **React**.

Use the Force, Betty!

...I mean, Luke.”

Lack of support leads to punitive actions.

Strategies to use in order to keep your cool

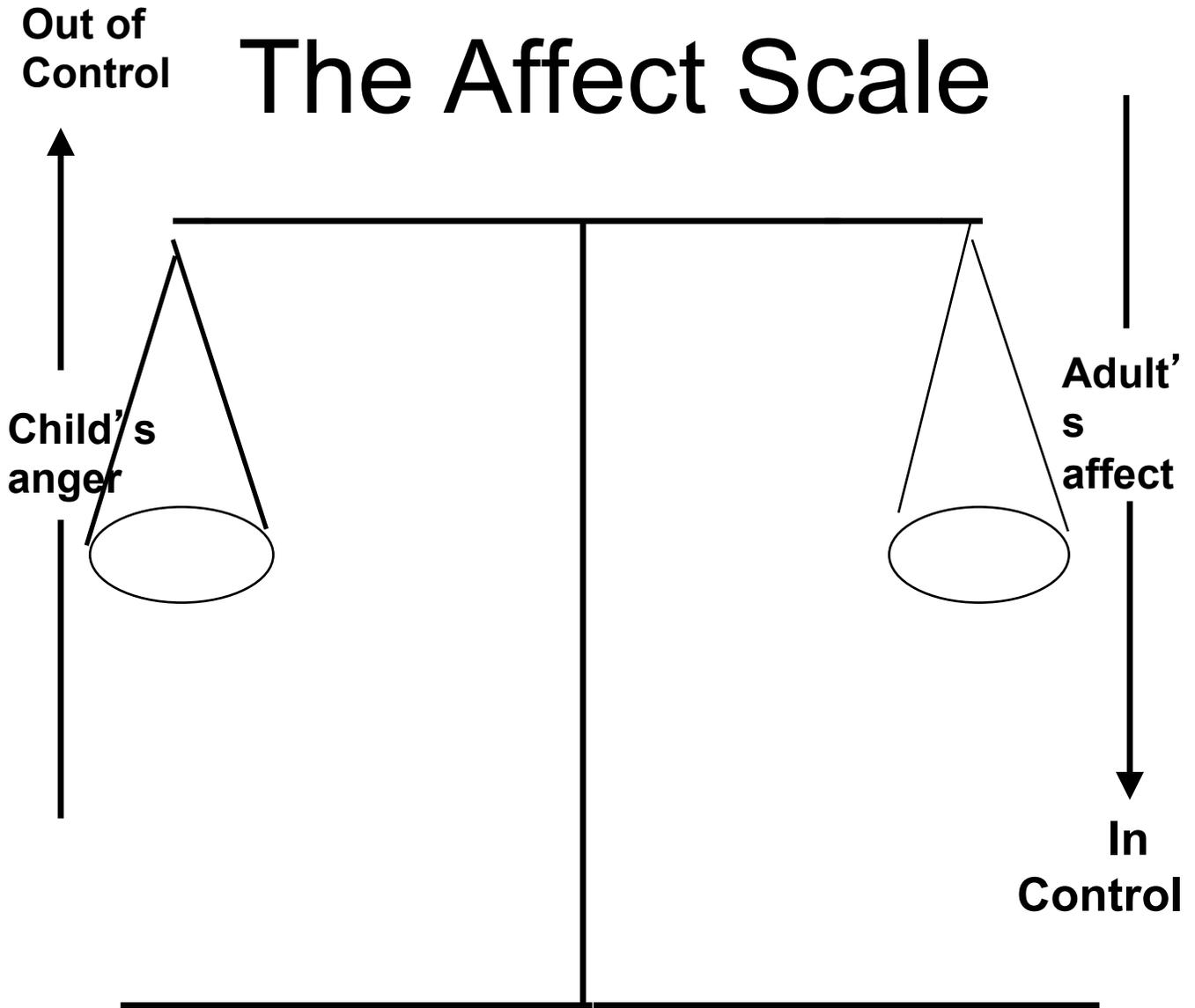
1. Think about the principle of lack of support being related to punitive actions – and don’ t go there. Think: *“I can do anything for 90 more minutes!”*
2. Visualize yourself going to be or walking to your car at the end of a brutal day with a BIG smile on your face *thinking “I kept my cool all day. I didn’ t “react” (much)... I did good!”*
3. Think about tomorrow: *If I respond instead of react to the end of the shift, my relationships will grow stronger...and the job will get easier.*
4. Think about a M.A.S.H. Unit: *When I’ m at my worst, I need to give it my best!*
5. **Use the Force, Luke!** *Don’ t succumb to the Dark Side.*

Respond =
The Golden Rule

Self esteem is fragile even when it’ s good!

Don’ t say or do anything to a child or group that you wouldn’ t want said or done to you.



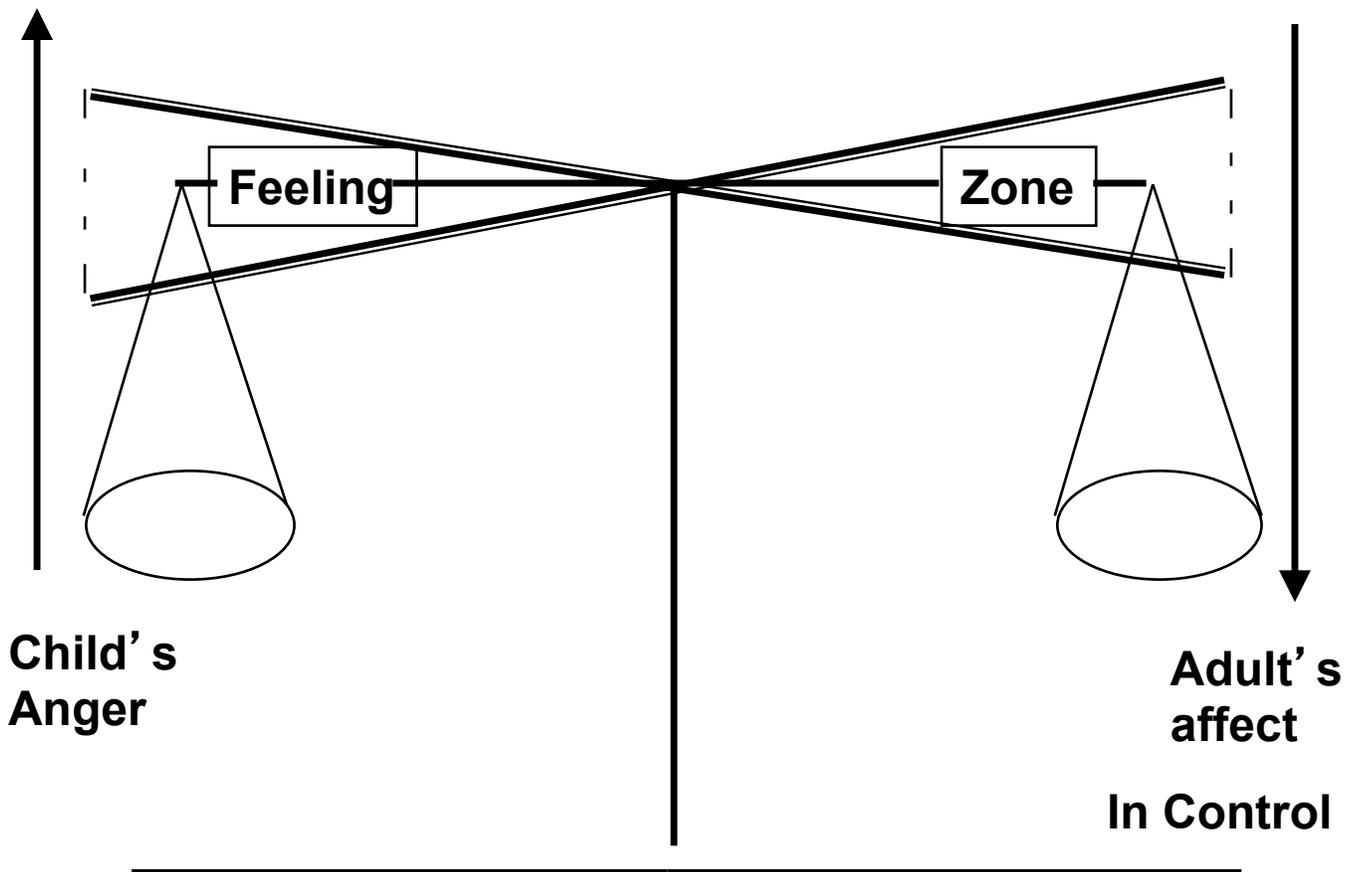


Key: Establish inverse relationship

As they get louder, you become more quiet

Loss of
Control

The Affect Scale



Inside the “feeling zone” there is room to model affect-laden content.

Said in a controlled, but somewhat expressive manner:

“John, I’m really upset about the choice you just made.”

“Mary, I’m angry about that decision...”

Key: If the child escalates through the zone, the adult’s affect should grow more muted.

Content vs. Message



“You won’ t be around next week?”

2 weeks later...



“*You...* won’ t be around next week.”

Use “I” or “We” instead of “You” and start requests with “Please” and finish with “Thank you.” Proper language sends supportive messages.

Body Messages



“C’ mon dude...let’ s get it done, and then we can boogey. NBD brother.”

NBD = No Big Deal!

VS.

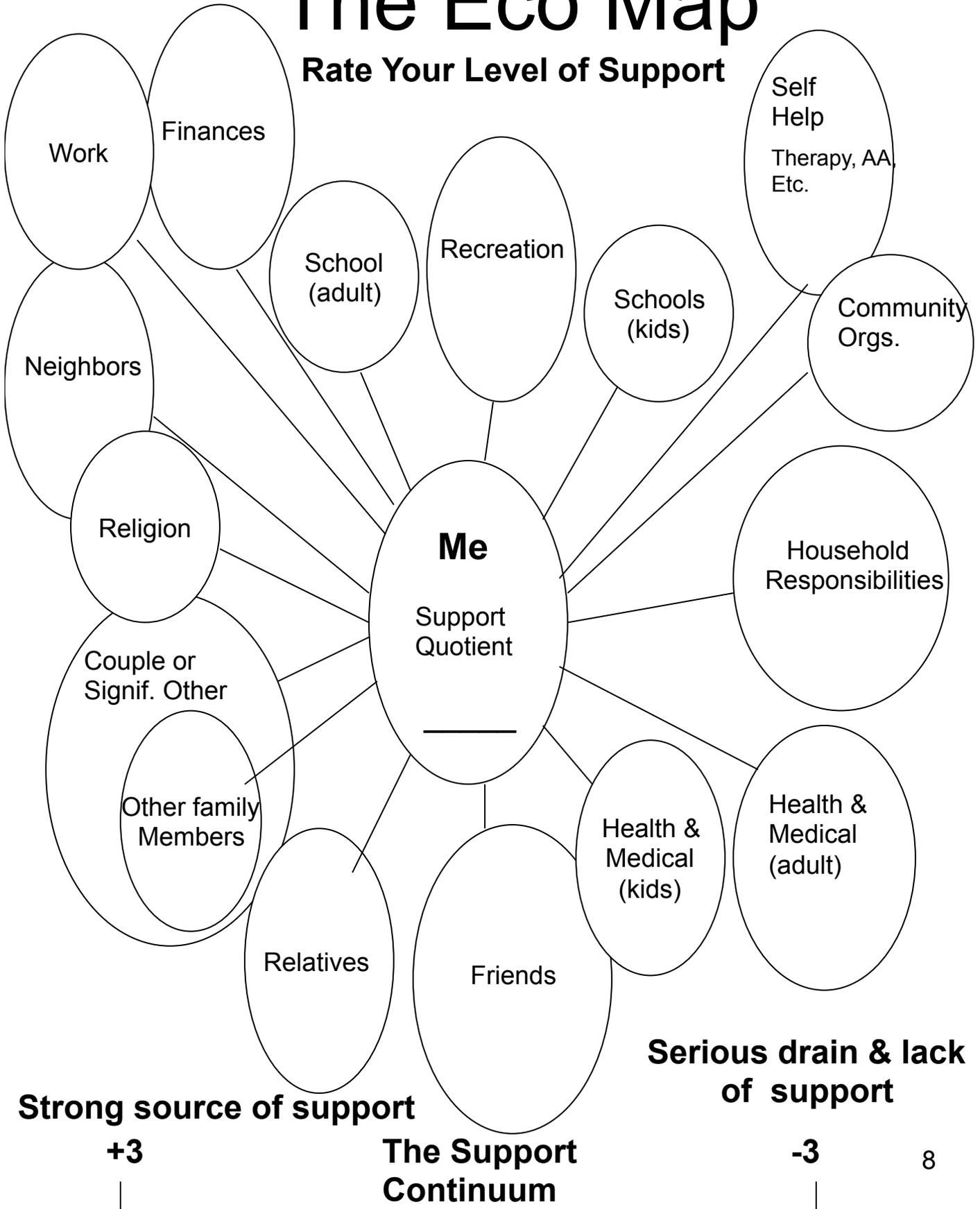
“You need to get it done now!”

Speak to kids at eye level or below. Approach them in a calm manner. Be careful about your pace, posture, tone, facial expression, hand movements and body position.



The Eco Map

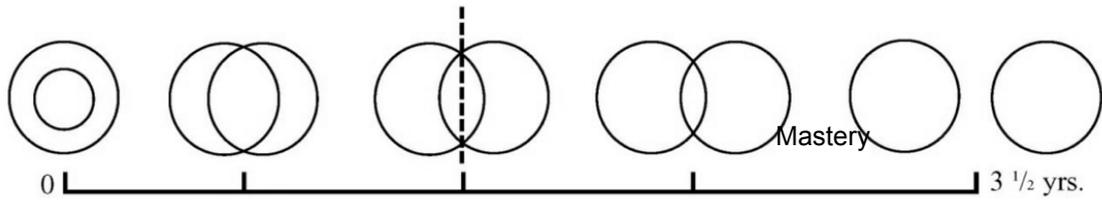
Rate Your Level of Support



THE HOLDING ENVIRONMENT

"A Total Environment Provision"

TASK: "good enough parenting"



Object Permanency
Sociopathic

Borderline
"Terrible Twos"
Separation-Individuation

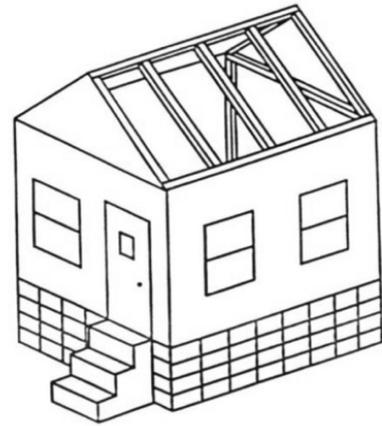
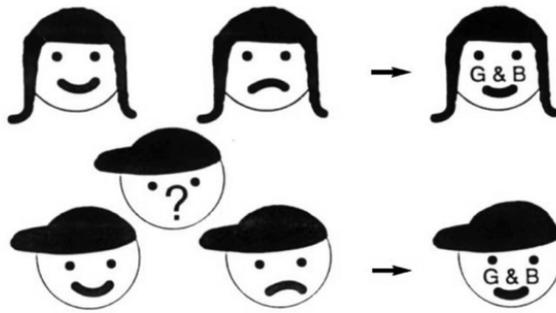
OBJECT
CONSTANCY
cohesive self
sense of self

SPLITTING MECHANISM
Good mother/Bad mother

5 yrs.

Social Accommodation
Social Subordination

TASK:
merge the good
and bad introjects

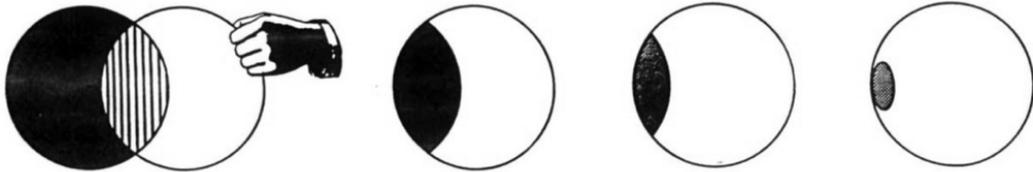


Foundation

FILLERS VS. TALKERS
DEFICITS VS. CONFLICT

GOAL:
Filling in the emptiness

Effect of Separation



13-17 years old = Second Phase of Separation-Individuation
In other words: "I'm moving on. I'm separating from my parents. I'm thinking about:

- Who I am?
- Where I'm going?
- What I'll be?
- Where do I fit in?
- Changes in my body?
- Sexuality?

Splitting

Individuals whose developmental needs get skewed, primarily during the terrible two's period, tend to do a lot of *splitting*. In other words, they try to get the adults in their lives at odds with one another.

Splitting is a normal developmental occurrence that rears its head during the terrible twos, when a child is beginning to separate and individuate and doesn't want to be told what to do. When the emerging two year old hears "No" for the first time, it causes stress, prompting the child to split: "When mom's being good to me, that must be the good mom. When she's saying 'No,' that's the bad mom." If parents remain balanced (i.e. set reasonable limits but stay warm and loving) during the "splitting" (terrible two) period, the child emerges with a good sense of self and understands that mom (and dad) can be both good or bad, but is one cohesive person, and I am too.

Individuals who tend to seriously split the important adults in their lives, often do so because it brings them back to the developmental stage they still need to master. If the professionals refrain from splitting and stay balanced in their approach to such children and family members, treatment progresses.

Splitting is a stress reaction. When one feels stress, in the haste to relieve it, polarization occurs: Whatever is causing the stress is bad, and the individual is good (i.e. a split occurs)

The stress of working in an under-supported social service setting coupled with the developmental need for some at-risk kids and family members to provoke disharmony among the staff members, often results in agencies having a great deal of inter-personal and departmental splitting. Therefore, it is essential for staff members to avoid splitting at all costs:

Splitting stops an individual – and a program or home – from moving forward.

Youth: My mother said you guys are too nosy!

Professional: I like your mother. I'll give her a call to make sure we're on the same page.

Tip: Whenever you feel yourself being drawn into a "split" think:

"I'm not as good as I think and they're not as bad. Stress and a number of other factors is causing me to polarize (i.e. See things in black-and-white terms) Stop it. Find the middle ground. Communicate more. Don't be played like a puppet. Stay professional.

Every home, school and social service setting in America should hang the following symbol throughout its setting:

