

General Recovery - Growing Through the Pain

“Things usually get worse before they get better,” I said to the tearful man during his second session as he grieved the impact of his long-term anger management problem on his wife and three children. He was beginning to realize that his family was afraid of his anger, as we reviewed all the ways he had controlled others with his intimidation during his adult life. His guilt and shame over his behavior felt too big for him to handle and he was regretting that he had ever come to my office or “opened this big can of worms.” I reassured him that he could work through the pain, one day at a time, and that I had watched hundreds of folks heal from much worse. Because many such behaviors are kept secret in the home, most of us are consumed by our shame and underestimate our healing capacity and the common nature of our problems. We feel hopeless when we realize that there may be a long road to healing. But, once we accept that our patterns took many years to develop and are often rooted in early childhood experiences, we can give ourselves the time and grace needed to recover. We must learn to accept fear and guilt as a normal part of the change process in any problem area and await the long-term rewards of working through our pain to full recovery.