



Upset, What Should You Do? - HALT

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Sometimes our feelings and needs are jeopardized by factors that we can but fail to control. There is a neat little formula that we can use to identify inner signals and reduce our personal vulnerability.

H - stands for hungry. I tell my clients that I am like a baby. If I don't eat or sleep - I cry.

Not eating in a regular and healthy manner can interfere with our blood sugar levels and reduce both physical and mental energy. I once worked with a man who did his doctoral dissertation on the importance of breakfast for intellectual functioning. Imagine trying to start your vehicle in the morning if it doesn't have any gas in the tank. You wouldn't get very far. And it is the same for your brain. It will not get you very far if you don't ensure that there is fuel in the form of food to start the engine. The easy solution to feeling hungry is to eat something. Make sure your choice is a healthy one. Some fruit, for example, will provide you with much more nutrition and blood sugar stability than a dessert.

A - represents angry. Carrying resentment or allowing negative feelings to have a prominent place in our lives, can prevent us from experiencing happiness and peace.

If you are feeling angry, begin by trying to identify what is upsetting you and why. Emotions travel in pairs and often the underlying feeling of anger is fear. Are you afraid that something is happening in your life that will hurt you or your reputation?

Communication is a key to understanding. Rather than retreating into your own world and fostering this negative feeling, try talking with a co-worker, friend, or professional about your anger. Perhaps their perspective will help you to develop a different perspective.

L - stands for the word "lonely". People who do not like being alone often make poor choices when building relationships with others. Their desperation interferes with their judgment.

Dealing with loneliness can be handled through developing hobbies, joining groups or ministering to others out of your own hurts. I frequently suggest that clients develop a list of "100 Things that Bring me Pleasure". This is a wonderful resource for the times when you are feeling lonely. Rather than sitting and feeling sorry for yourself, you can turn to the list and choose something to do. The important thing to remember, however, is that it is best to develop the list when you do not need it. Be prepared by having the ideas on paper before you really need them.

T - represents tiredness. Sometimes, when I am feeling out of sorts, the best thing I can do is have a sleep. Everything is clouded when a person is tired. We move slower in both mind and body. Work takes far longer to complete, and mistakes are more prevalent.

Many of my clients have sleep difficulties and these interfere with all aspects of their lives. When they tell me that they can't get to sleep, I encourage them to reexamine their habits. Do you go to bed at the same time every night? Do you like your bedroom? Are the sheets, pillows and blankets comfortable? Is the room free of distractions such as television, computers, light and noise? Perhaps you need to focus on staying awake for a whole day after a restless night in order to re-establish your sleep pattern.

H.A.L.T. is a simple but effective way of helping us to keep in touch with our feelings and needs. It allows us to identify the thing(s) that are interfering with our moods and abilities while also leading to appropriate action that will get basic needs met.

Perhaps it's just a little food, companionship, rest or reflection will lead to the desired serenity that will make this a better day!