



## WHICH WOLF ARE YOU FEEDING?

by Pilar Tamburrino, M.S., LMHC, CEAP

ONE EVENING AN OLD CHEROKEE TOLD HIS GRANDSON ABOUT A BATTLE THAT GOES ON INSIDE PEOPLE. HE SAID, “MY SON, THE BATTLE IS BETWEEN TWO WOLVES INSIDE US ALL. ONE IS EVIL – IT IS ANGER, ENVY, JEALOUSY, SORROW, REGRET, GREED, ARROGANCE, SELF-PITY, GUILT, RESENTMENT, INFERIORITY, LIES, FALSE PRIDE, SUPERIORITY, AND EGO. THE OTHER IS GOOD – IT IS JOY, PEACE, LOVE, HOPE, SERENITY, HUMILITY, KINDNESS, BENEVOLENCE, EMPATHY, GENEROSITY, TRUTH, COMPASSION AND FAITH.” THE GRANDSON THOUGHT ABOUT IT FOR A MINUTE AND THEN ASKED HIS GRANDFATHER: “WHICH WOLF WINS?” “THE OLD CHEROKEE SIMPLY REPLIED, “THE ONE YOU FEED.”\*

It is human nature to react or respond to a negative situation. Sometimes we respond appropriately, but sometimes we react with our emotions and then wonder what went wrong. Self-regulation involves the ability to choose how we think, how we feel, and the actions we take in response to life circumstances or the behaviors and/or comments of others. It is being able to keep disruptive emotions and impulses in check, so we may think before we act. Self-regulation, one of the five elements of emotional intelligence, (a concept developed by psychologist Daniel Goleman), helps us keep calm under pressure and stop unhelpful behaviors. Self-regulation involves heightened awareness of our emotions and the capacity to keep negative reactions under control. It is the key to our ability to manage challenging and stressful situations while allowing us to function at our best.

Here are a few strategies to improve your self-regulation skills:

- ▶ Become more aware of your emotions and how you react to them.
- ▶ Identify your triggers to stress so you’ll be aware of when you are most vulnerable to reacting negatively.
- ▶ Reframe your negative thoughts.
- ▶ Keep calm under pressure by using relaxation techniques.
- ▶ Take a time out: breathe deeply, drink water, or walk away for a moment.
- ▶ Consider the consequences of your actions.

We can’t control the weather, the traffic in Miami or someone else’s negative comments or actions, but we can control our reactions to those events. It may take some practice and a conscious effort on our part to stop, identify the emotion being triggered, and choose a constructive response. Self-regulation allows us to manage how we think, how we feel and ultimately, how we respond. And, those are things we can control. So, the next time you feel frustrated, angry or feel you have reached your limit, take a minute to think carefully about which wolf you want to feed.

If you find you are struggling with managing your emotions, we can help. Schedule an appointment to meet with an FSAP consultant by calling 305-284-6604.

# TOP 5 WAYS YOU CAN CREATE A COMPASSIONATE WORKPLACE

**1 Start small.**  
Five minute favors can go a long way.

Notice when someone can use some support; just listen, offering suggestions or sympathy for a challenge she or he is facing.

**2 Learn to focus.**  
Avoid distractions.

Put the smart phone away and concentrate on the task at hand; establishing a solid connection with whatever task you perform, or the people you engage in conversation.

**3 Be kind to yourself.**  
Don't be your own worst enemy.

The more self-compassion we have, the more likely we are to be happy, optimistic, and satisfied with life. Self-compassion makes us more conscientious, resilient and motivated, and more willing to take responsibility for mistakes.

**4 Make compassionate decisions.**  
Before you act, ask yourself:

What is my motivation?  
What are the implications for others?  
How would I feel if I were on the receiving end of this decision?

**5 Lead by example.**  
Our emotions and behaviors are contagious.

A leader is anyone with a sphere of influence.

**"THE HEART IS LIKE A GARDEN. IT CAN GROW COMPASSION OR FEAR, RESENTMENT OR LOVE. WHAT SEEDS WILL YOU PLANT THERE?"**

- JACK KORNFELD

## Subscribe

*Mind and Matter* is a quarterly publication from the UM Faculty and Staff Assistance Program that provides helpful tips and articles regarding work-life balance, health and well-being.

If you would like to receive this newsletter directly in your inbox each quarter, as well as announcements about upcoming FSAP seminars, please send an email to [cbootle@miami.edu](mailto:cbootle@miami.edu).

## Did you know?

The FSAP is a resource for work-groups experiencing a critical incident, an adverse event or the unexpected loss of a colleague. While FSAP consultants are not first responders, department heads should not allow too much time to pass before engaging the FSAP. Those affected by adverse circumstances are offered assistance and made aware of available resources. Please contact the FSAP at 305-284-6604 if you have any questions.

## FSAP Team

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## Contact FSAP

305-284-6604 [miami.edu/fsap](http://miami.edu/fsap)

## FEATURED SEMINAR: MINDFUL PARENTING

This seminar will be facilitated by Professor Scott Rogers, director of the University of Miami's Mindfulness in Law Program and co-founder of the UMindfulness Research and Practice Initiative. Scott has been sharing mindfulness across the U for more than a decade and for more than 20 years has been teaching mindfulness and developing mindfulness trainings. He is a nationally recognized leader in mindfulness and collaborates on research exploring the enduring brain and behavior changes that may accompany mindfulness trainings.

July 26, 27, 28

## ADDITIONAL UPCOMING SEMINARS

Summer Relaxation | Workplace Fitness: Fact or Fiction | Mindful Living