



Syracuse Integrative Psychiatry

Comprehensive care. Transformative outcomes.

DEPRESSION DEEP DIVE SERIES: PART 7 OF 12

The Fire of Aggression

Part 7: Reclaiming Healthy Fight & Boundaries

Welcome to Part 7: The Fire of Aggression.

Depression is often a "freeze" state. To thaw the ice, we need heat. In psychodynamic theory, healthy aggression is the life force—it is the energy that allows us to move, to want, to protect ourselves, and to take up space. Reclaiming your "fight" is essential to breaking the depression.

"A depression is a frozen rage." — Freud

1. The Taboo of Anger

Many of us were taught that anger is dangerous or unlovable. So we learned to turn that energy against ourselves (self-criticism) or numb it out (depression). But anger is just energy. It is the fuel for change.

Reflection:

What were you taught about anger growing up? Who was allowed to be angry? Who wasn't? How do you physically feel when you start to feel angry? (e.g., "I get shaky," "I cry").

2. Setting Boundaries as Life Force

The most basic form of healthy aggression is the "No." A boundary is an act of self-definition: "This is me, and that is not me." Depression often comes from having porous boundaries—letting too much in and giving too much away.

Reflection:

Where in your life are you saying "Yes" when your body is screaming "No"? How is this draining your battery? What is one small "No" you are willing to say this week to protect your energy?

3. Physicalizing the Fight

You cannot think your way into healthy aggression; you must feel it in your muscles. Depression lives in a collapsed posture. Aggression lives in a spine that is straight and eyes that are focused.

Reflection:

Experiment: Push against a wall with all your might for 30 seconds. Growl if you can. Afterward, notice your body. Do you feel more awake? More present? Describe the shift.

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