

Clearing the rubbish

A very silly story!



Once upon a time there was a man who lived in a lovely house. He was very busy and didn't take the time to clear up after himself. As he spent most of his time downstairs, over time the rooms became so clogged with rubbish that he thought there was only one thing for it – he would have to move upstairs.

So he bought a ladder and went in and out of his house through the bedroom window. Any rubbish was simply thrown down the stairs so he didn't have to think about it anymore! That is, until he met someone he wanted to share his life with. They got married – but, not surprisingly,

she didn't want to live in just part of her husband's house. And she refused to climb in through the window! Many arguments followed. He was determined to keep that part of his life closed off – she wanted the whole of him. Eventually his love for her won the day and he agreed to start clearing up.

We are like that two-storey house. Rubbish has accumulated on the ground floor. We know it is there but we don't know what to do with it. We try and ignore it but it seems to have an enormous influence on the way we think, feel and act. We have to make a fundamental choice: are we going to spend the rest of our lives 'upstairs' – just living in our extrovert – or are we going to start looking at and processing the issues deep within. We have learnt, over the years, where we are the most comfortable and our general inclination is to stay in that position. To embark on a clearing out programme may seem daunting – but if we don't we will never reach our potential nor be fully at ease with ourselves. It is a choice that will affect the rest of our lives.

decide
where
you are
going
to live

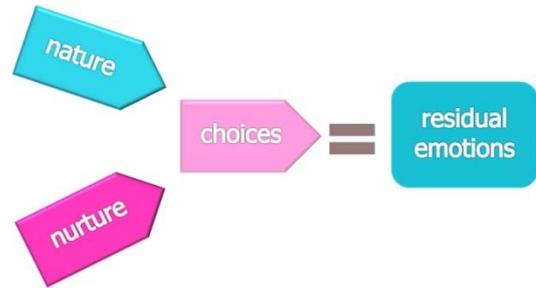


How do we get rid of the rubbish?

To answer that we need to understand how our emotions work.



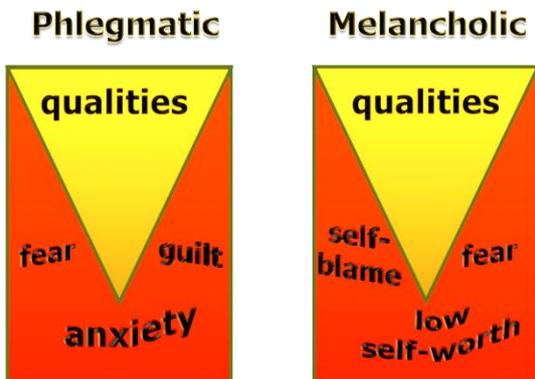
What are 'residual emotions' and where do they come from? They are a combination of nature, nurture and the choices we make.



Nature

God intended for us to operate fully in all the qualities of our temperaments. When Adam and Eve broke trust with God, fear entered and the image of God within us was marred. Now, instead of our extrovert and introvert temperaments working in harmony the extrovert puts pressure on the introvert and reinforces and exacerbates the weaknesses within the introvert. The result is that our introvert is diminished and in the 'gaps' that are created, the negatives of the introvert echo and reverberate within. We are left feeling that there is something fundamentally wrong with us and that we are not really a loveable or acceptable person.

negatives reverberate



This negative area of our lives can cause us to feel the need to punish or hurt ourselves in order to bring about some form of 'justice' or emotional equilibrium within. If we are Choleric we will probably punish ourselves with our thoughts – if Sanguine we could harm ourselves physically. This negative area also fuels false guilt in the Phlegmatic - it acts as a kind of generator of guilt. This guilt then attaches itself to specifics and the

danger is that the focus then goes to those specifics rather than dealing with the underlying cause. The same is true of Phlegmatic anxiety. The low self-worth of the Melancholic leads to constant apologising – regardless of whether or not they have done anything wrong! For both introverts those negative areas result in a corresponding defensiveness against anyone who threatens to expose what they really feel about themselves. Usually the extrovert temperament is called upon to reinforce the defences!



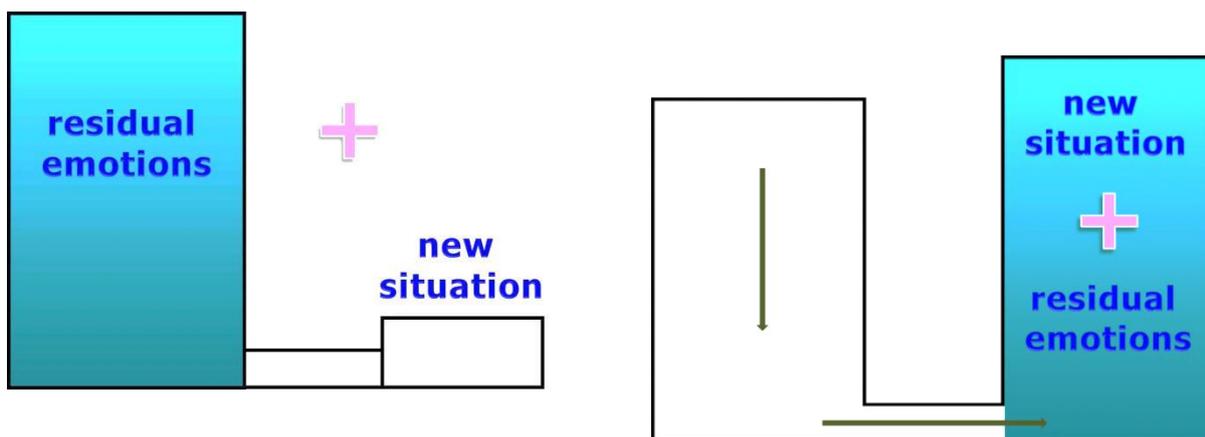
Nurture

The impressions that surrounded us from childhood – good and bad – fall to the 'ocean floor' within and form part of what we feel about ourselves at the deepest level. They, in turn, affect the way we view life and tend to reinforce what we already feel about ourselves. That is what we mean by Nurture. If the impressions are predominantly good then they do battle with Nature – i.e. the flaws in our temperaments. If the impressions are very good then they go a long way towards counteracting the

negative effects of our temperament weaknesses. If the impressions are not good then they form a natural alliance with Nature to convince us that we have no value.

Residual emotions

Nature plus Nurture produces ‘residual emotions’. Why is it important to know about these residual emotions? Because they are always present in the background, waiting to influence us in every new situation that we face. If we understand them and the role they play in our lives we will save ourselves, and others, from unnecessary pain and struggle.



When we face a new situation we can find that, into the emotions of that situation flow all the ‘residual emotions’ from the ‘storage tank’ that we carry around with us. The new situation quickly becomes enlarged out of all proportion – and the people at the receiving end of our emotional response can be left wondering what has hit them. We might be rather confused ourselves!

What can we do to deal with these ‘residual emotions’? Where do ‘choices’ come in? Go to [Step Two: Session 4: Processing emotions](#) to explore this further.