

### Quick Tips

- 1) Recognise that your anger and frustration is growing
- 2) Recognise what makes you go there
- 3) STOP
- 4) Get self under control before responding

#### 1. **Make the commitment not to lose it.**

- Remind yourself that you're going to try to stay in control from now on.
- Understand how important it is to not lose it
- Don't give yourself permission to lose it
- Notice what sets you off
- It's never easy, and it's hard for anyone to control their temper 100 percent of the time, but still, making that first promise to yourself is the beginning of calm—for your whole family.

#### 2. **Expect that the ED is going to push your buttons.**

- Try not to take it personally, this is the ED

#### 3. **Prepare ahead of time.**

- Notice when the anxiety is high and try to prepare for it.
- You might observe that every day at five o'clock, your family's nerves are on edge as dinner approaches
- Ask yourself, "How am I going to handle this when I know the ED is going to come screaming at me?"
- Prepare yourself. Say, "This time, I'm not getting into an argument / debate.
- Nobody can make me do that. I'm not giving the ED permission to hit my buttons."
- Your stance should be, "No matter how hard you try to pull me into a power struggle, it's not going to happen."
- Let yourself be guided by the way you want to see yourself as a parent versus your feeling of the moment.

#### 4. **Ask yourself "What's helped me in the past?"**

- Start thinking about what's helped you to manage your anxiety in the past.
- What's helped to soothe you through something that makes you uncomfortable?
- Commit to not saying anything when that feeling comes up inside of you.
- In your head, you can say something like, "I'm not saying anything; I'm going to step back; I'm going to take a deep breath."
- Give yourself that moment to be able to do whatever it is you need to do to get calmer.
- Remember: You don't *have* to react to the ED

**5. Take a breath.**

- Take a deep breath when you feel yourself escalating—and take a moment to think things through.
- There is a big difference between responding and reacting.
- When you respond, you're actually taking some time to think about what you want to say.
- When you react, you're just on autopilot.
- As much as possible, you want to respond thoughtfully to what is happening.
- Make sure that you take that deep breath before you respond because that moment will give you a chance to think about what you want to do.
- Think of it this way: when you are upset and trying to get your child to eat, you are going to press harder and try to talk some sense into them, so you're likely to yell harder.
- You can go from 20 to 40 and it keeps escalating. The anxiety feeds on itself.

**6. Keep some slogans in your head.**

- Say something to yourself every time you feel your emotions rising.
- It can be anything from "Stop" or "Breathe" or "Slow down"
- Whatever words will help you, take that moment and go through a list of priorities.
- Keep a mental picture handy to calm myself down: eg., think of a beautiful place in your mind that always calms and relaxes you.
- Working on that will increase your ability to be able to go there more automatically.

**7. Think about what you want things to be and what will move you closer to recovery**

- If the way things are now is not how you want things to be continuing in 10 years, start thinking about what you *do* want.
- Ask yourself, "Is how I'm responding to my child now going to help?"
- Is that going to help her progress or slow progress?"
- Research shows us that the more expressed emotion around eating, the stronger the ED becomes and the sneakier the ED behaviours.
- Keep that goal in your head. Ask yourself, "Will my response be worth it?"
- Will your reaction get you closer to the goal of recovery?

When your anger is rising in response to objections from the ED, your thinking process at that moment is very important. The whole goal is really to be as objective as you can with what's going on with yourself and with your child. Ask, "What's my child doing right now? Is this my child or is it the ED?"



You need to figure out how you're going to respond to what's going on. Then you can stay on track and not be pulled in a thousand different directions.

**The thinking process itself helps us to calm down.**

- As parents, what we're really working toward is "What's within my power to do to get myself calm?"
- So the less we can react, the better—and the more we think things through, the more positive the outcome will be.
- Thinking helps us to be calm and breathe; calm helps us to get to better thinking.
- Observing ourselves helps activate the thinking part of the brain and reduces the kind of "emotionality" that gets in the way of better thinking.

**Responding thoughtfully rather than simply reacting.**

- "Response comes from the word responsibility." So it's taking responsibility for how we want to act rather than having that knee-jerk reaction when our buttons are pushed. If we can get our thinking out in front of our emotions, we're going to do better as parents. And that's really the goal.

Adapted from:

<http://www.empoweringparents.com/How-to-Get-Control-When-Your-Child-is-Making-You-Angry.php#ixzz2n86Oe4gb>

