

Stop Light for Self-Awareness

Dan Goleman (1995) describes how school children have been taught successfully to use a “stop light” model to help manage their impulses and emotions.

Try out the following exercise yourself or with children to learn a simple technique that will help you avoid outbursts that you may regret later.

Red light

1. Stop what you are doing, and if it helps, take some slow deep breaths to encourage you to think before you act.

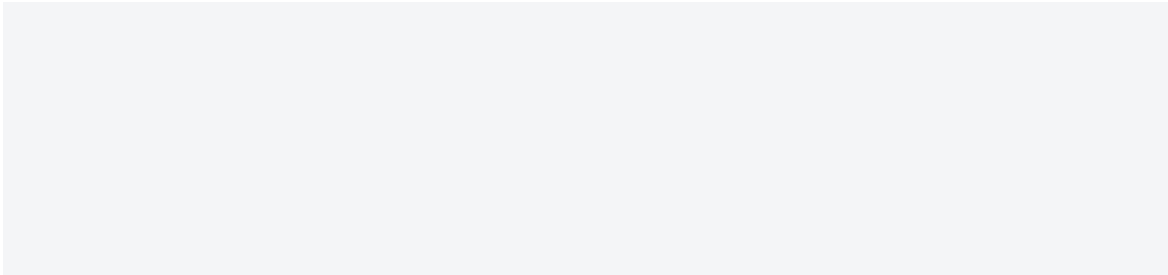
Yellow light

2. Next, write down the problem you are facing and how you feel about it:

3. Reflect and write down a positive goal:

4. List several realistic solutions to the problem:

5. What are the likely consequences of each potential solution?



Green light

6. Go ahead with the best plan.

With practice, the above steps can help you visualize regaining control. They are especially beneficial with children, where the process can be re-imagined as a car driving down the road and responding to different lights that flash up.

References

- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. New York: Bantam Books.

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