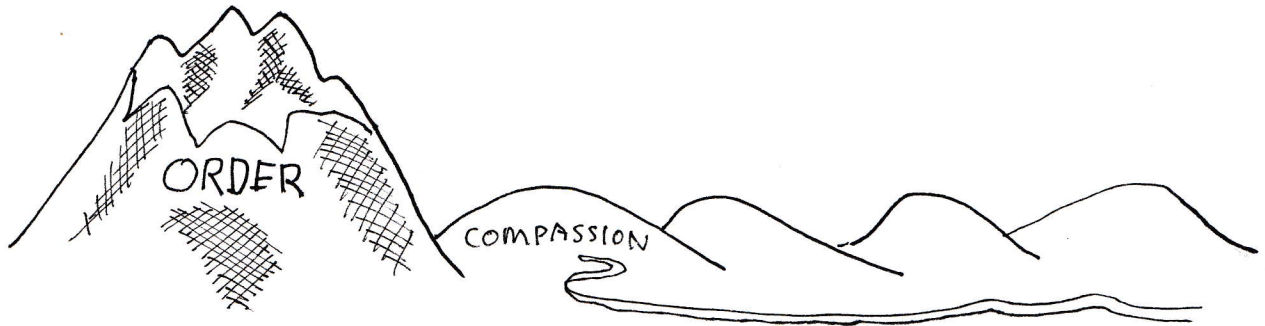


## Getting Unstuck on a Challenging Middah Hilary Rowen

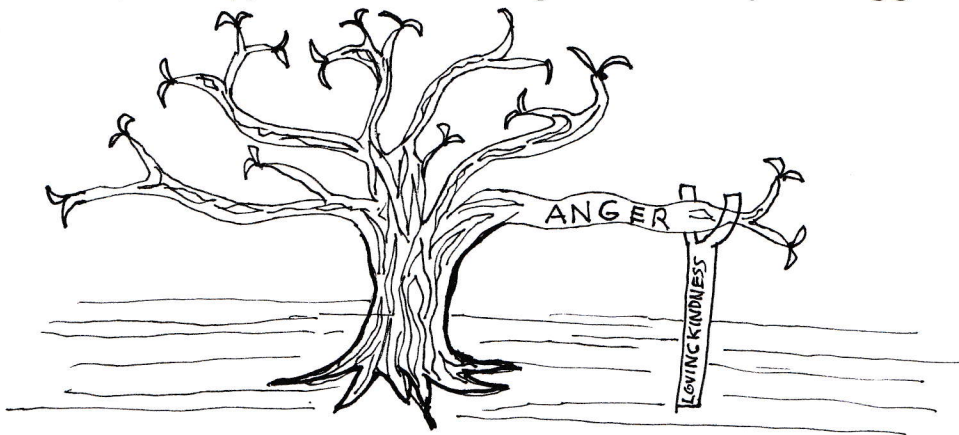
Everyone finds some middot easier to practice than others. One person might find Order to be a challenging middah, while Compassion comes more easily. Another person might find Order easy, but Compassion a challenge.



Our havruta (Michelle Sherry, Sandy Greenspoon and Hilary Rowen) has been exploring using middot that we find easier or more accessible to bolster our practice of those middot which we find more difficult or challenging.

### An Example: Anger and Lovingkindness

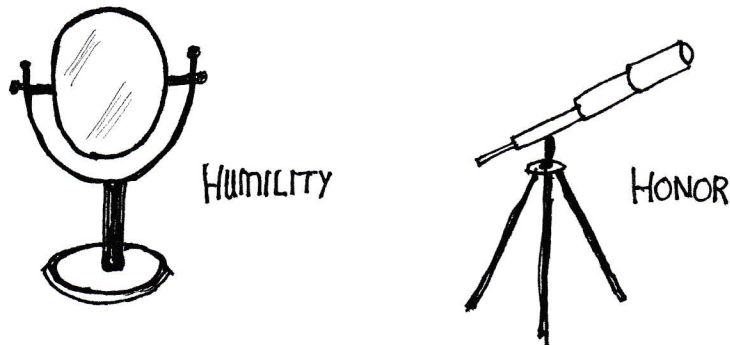
If you are working on the middah of Anger, but not making much progress, then you might consider the relationship between Lovingkindness and Anger. Trying viewing the person that you are angry at through the lens of Lovingkindness, whether that person is yourself or another. Perhaps that approach can lead to forgiveness as a way of letting go of unproductive anger.



### Another Example: Humility and Honor

If you are having trouble with Humility – whether you have too high or too low an opinion of yourself – think about the middah of Honor. Where Humility requires you to consider whether you are taking the right amount of space in the world, Honor shifts your focus to other people.

Practicing Honor requires us to focus on how we view and treat others. Do you have respect and appreciation for other individuals, not for their achievements, but as fellow human beings in the world? Try looking at yourself though the lens of Honor.



If you tend to see other people as more worthy of respect or love or kindness than yourself, try Honoring yourself. Can you respect and appreciate yourself as you respect and appreciate other people?

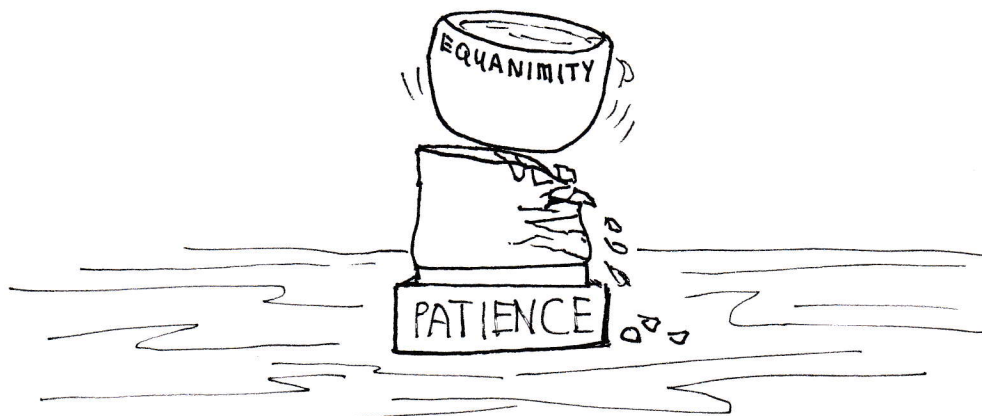
If you tend to see yourself and your interests as more important or more interesting than those of other people, trying Honoring others. Can you see other people as just as worthy of respect and appreciation as yourself?

#### Finding a Good Supporting Middah – An Example: Equanimity, Patience, Gratitude and Humor

Pick a middah that you find challenging to practice. Try to drill down on why that middah is difficult for you.

For example, if you are struggling with Equanimity, you might determine that a lack of patience -with yourself or others – often triggers a loss of equanimity. Try using Patience to support your practice of Equanimity.

This approach would work well if you feel reasonably comfortable and capable in practicing Patience. But if you struggle even more with Patience than with Equanimity, then Patience will not be a good supporting middah for your practice of Equanimity.



When this happens, look at other middot.

You might find that practicing Gratitude helps maintain or restore Equanimity. Practicing Gratitude can change one's mindset from seeing the glass as half empty to seeing the glass as half full. This change in viewpoint could allow you to address life's inevitable challenges with fewer feelings of frustration, anger or unhappiness.

Or perhaps you recognize that you tend to lose Equanimity when you are taking yourself or your situation too seriously. If you are good at laughing at yourself and your foibles, try practicing the middah of Humor to help gain a better sense of Equanimity.

