

Unhealthy anger: The Maria case.

Maria is very time pressured. It's 07.30 in the morning and she must take her 8 years old son to school before catching the commuter train that leaves at 07.50. She urges her son to hurry up but he takes all the time in the world to arrange his hair, collect his things and philosophise about his plans for the day. Finally, they manage to leave home and head for school. Suddenly, the boy stops. He must absolutely return home because he has forgotten "an incredibly important thing". In a very sharp voice, Maria orders him to move on but her son keeps insisting. That is the last straw! Maria becomes extremely angry, grabs the boy by the arm and drags him, kicking and yelling, to school. He is still crying when she leaves him there. The clock is well past 07.50 and Maria has missed the train. She gets late to work. On the way there, she is still inflamed with righteous anger. After a while, her anger subsides and she becomes increasingly ashamed and regretful. She realises that she could have avoided the whole situation by getting up 15 minutes earlier. That would have made her feel more relaxed and less irritated by her son's behaviour. "I'm a completely worthless mother" she says to herself. Thus Maria begins her daily Odyssey on an ocean of stress.