



FaithWorks Counseling

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Fight/Flight/Freeze Alarm

Inside your brain, there's an "alarm system." It's called the **fight/flight/freeze** response.

This alarm is supposed to keep you safe if something dangerous happens, like if a mean dog was chasing you.

But sometimes, the alarm **goes off by accident** — like when someone tells you "No," when something feels unfair, when you're confused, or when you feel trapped.

When that happens, your body gets ready to:

- **Fight** — Arguing, yelling, name-calling, defying instructions (appears as "oppositional").
- **Flight** — Running away, hiding, quit, refusing to participate.
- **Freeze** — Staring blankly, refusing to move or answer, emotionally shutting down, feeling stuck

Oppositionality is often *not* intentional disrespect — it's the brain trying to protect itself against a perceived threat.

It happens super-fast — before you even *think* about it!

That's why sometimes you might feel so mad, upset, or stubborn before you even know why.

The good news is: you can **learn to spot the signs** your alarm is going off — and help yourself calm down.

That way, you stay in charge, instead of the alarm running the show.

Let's figure out what YOUR alarm looks like — and what you can do when it happens.

My Alarm Signs (What happens in your body when you're upset?)

- 🖐️ My hands feel: _____
- ❤️ My heart feels: _____
- 🧠 My brain feels: _____
- 😡 My face feels: _____
- 🏃 I want to: _____

The thermometer shows how “hot” your brain and body alarm is getting.

When the temperature is **low**, you’re calm — the alarm is *off* or just *whispering* or talking in a soft voice.

When the temperature **rises**, you’re moving into **fight/flight/freeze** mode — and the higher it goes, the harder it is to think clearly.

And your thermometer helps you see it!

When your brain alarm starts to go off, it's like your temperature is rising.

 Quick Reframe of the Thermometer Zones:

ZONE	ALARM STATUS	FEELINGS/BEAVIORS	ACTION
GREEN	Calm, safe	Relaxed, Thinking Clearly	Enjoy It!
YELLOW	warming up	Frustrated, Annoyed or Upset	Use “Press Pause” Tools
ORANGE	very warm	Tense, Upset, Voice is Getting Loud	Use “Press Pause” Tools
RED	Full alarm mode	Angry, Yelling, Quitting, Shutting Down, Run or Freeze	Emergency Reset Plan

If you catch it when it’s yellow or orange, it's way easier to press pause and calm back down!

MY EMERGENCY RESET PLAN:

"When I notice my alarm going off, I will: _____
