

EVERYONE

POSITIVELY

AGGRESSIVE

Touché 22

At the end of 2021, we promised to share those stories that move us and convince us of the impact of our work every day. We are therefore pleased to present the Touché year 2022 in the form of a collection of stories, told by the people who have crossed our path throughout that year. For those who now feel their heartbeat raising because they think they won't find what you think you need here: to avoid cold turkeys, we do give some factual info and a figures here and there in the margins of those stories.

Whereas last year was all about the Anger heroes in our midst, this year we like to put the spotlight on the 'soldiers of love'. Warriors of love. Or warriors for love. We saw a real army of them passing by in 2022. Thanks to Lieven Nollet, Wendy Vandeputte, Surgu Decuypere and Katrien Geleleens, who got these warriors in front of their lens, the stories here also get wonderfully beautiful faces.

As an organisation, we are proud of our radicalisation in 2022. It was necessary in order to live up to what we want to stand for: truly everyone positively aggressive. And to get rid of some demons from the patriarchal past. And so the year ended with renewed vows :

- ⦿ We do not help anyone get rid of their anger, quite the contrary. We support 'colère' in all its possible colours and smells, and we like to pour some oil on the fire already, especially with those who do not yet know their own 'colère' well.
- ⦿ We certainly don't help you get rid of another person's anger already. And we explain as little as possible what we are doing with someone. After all, that person himself will always know better than anyone else.
- ⦿ What people need varies and changes. The more, the better. Because healthy angry people can always, even in the heat of the moment, choose for themselves what they want to do with that anger. Right now, we see people mostly speaking, boxing, stilling and creating. And so that might look completely different next year.
- ⦿ We rather believe in blind trust and in people. And in as little fuss, paperwork and scrutiny as possible. Signing up, convincing us of a need or proving that you fit into our box is not needed.
- ⦿ Everyone contributes to the Touché pot according to their wishes and abilities, thus contributing to solutions for themselves and others. We need money from others to keep this place running and to ensure that even those who don't pay can keep coming. We want to say T H A N K Y O U very loudly for this, and tell in all colours what we conjure up with that money. But we are not willing to sell our soul, independence, agility or solidarity. Or to show some people the door or prioritise others.
- ⦿ We want to take people, their anger and their thermostatic solutions seriously. That's why we always work with people who work wholeheartedly, using their own positive anger and with a lot of expertise. All those who work for Touché are paid equally. Years in prison or therapy count as heavily or lightly as diplomas, years in school or accumulated professional knowledge.

TALK



ABOUT IT

Speaking positively aggressive

618 people engaged in 1,556 moments of talking with a Touché companion, sometimes alone, sometimes with someone they brought along and sometimes in groups with other Touché visitors.

Those conversations were taken good care of by 17 Touché conversation facilitators, all of whom practice the art of solution-focused speaking.

We conducted these conversations at Touché, in prisons (because this is the only place where it is possible to talk to people who are detained), online and occasionally at another location.



Learning to operate your angry thermostat

“Since recently, we regularly welcome new people together in group. And then I like to do so with an 'ancien' by my side. Because although I can steer a conversation in the right direction with an arsenal of good, wise and beautiful questions, and I now have an extensive vocabulary to explain why anger isn't such a bad thing, speaking from the experience in the other chair is something I need to practise a bit more. I do have that experience, however, but I often lack the courage, or simple belief that my experience is meaningful, to simply dare to speak from there. But I am lucky to have known a few people for a long time now, who are able, willing and able to explain it well. They have also known me for a long time and are often better at asking the right solution-focused questions at exactly the right time than I am. As a result, we can also exchange chairs, and they can take over the role of conversation conductor, allowing me to sit in the chair of the recipient of the questions. And also sometimes telling something about my own journey with my anger.

The most important lesson I learned about that? When I feel anger, it has a good reason. Then there is something important enough to fight for. But not every way of fighting is equally likely to succeed. Or at least not with clean strokes. That's why my motto for quite some time now has been : carry on in a friendly way. And I also recognise a lot in Touché colleague Bruno's 'Stand your ground' idea. Don't go backwards, because then you get depressed. But don't fly forward either, because then you'll burn up everything and everyone. Gaining mastery over your own choices, daring to stand your ground, even when things collide, and at the same time remaining friendly and inviting, that's the trick.

Recently, we had another one of those group discussions with a couple of people who did not know each other. It soon became clear that they couldn't have been more different. Extremes even. And magically, they appeared to find each other just in that. One had just left a relationship with years of partner violence, the other had just been convicted of attempted manslaughter of his partner. One exactly a Duracell rabbit, couldn't sit still and was a waterfall of stories. The other a small, quiet mouse who had to do her best to get anything said. And yet another one right in between, thoughtful and hyper alert to what was going on with the others. We didn't really have to do much, except to give a little nudge here and there, offer coffee and tea, put the 'little mouse' a proverbial micro under her nose and help the 'rabbit' find its energy and volume button. That was all it took to then witness a touchingly beautiful, almost magical exchange. At the end, they thanked each other for helping them understand their respective ex-partners better, stepped outside with a different resolution each to give their own anger a chance to blossom positively in the time to come, and all signed up for something different as a follow-up activity at Touché : one wanted to come on a talk, another wanted to box and yet another wanted to quiet down. And then they also very much wanted to meet again, to see how the others would have fared in the meantime.”

Figuring out what desire is hidden in your anger

Wondering what that sounds like, such a solution-focused conversation about anger? On Angerheroes.com, you can experience it for yourself in the form of a chat with our chatbot, which is at your service day and night.

Your anger is your superpower
Transform it into a positive force.

Let's do it!

Meet Anger Heroes

Anger Heroes Chat

RAWbot

Did you bring some anger with you?

Toekomstige woede held 10:13

Yes! 🙌

RAWbot 10:19

The fact that you are angry means there is something going on that is really important to you

Do you feel like dealing with your emotions?

Or maybe you need to calm down first or just dive deeper into your anger first to feel it properly?

Get started! 🙌 Calm down first 😞

Dive deeper 🌊

Toekomstige woede held 10:14

Let's get started! 🙌

Gelezen

RAWbot 10:14

Tell me, what is so important to you that you want to spend your energy on it?

RAWbot 10:17

Why is this so important to you?

RAWbot 10:15

Suppose nothing at all got in the way, and everything was possible, what would YOU do about this issue yourself?

RAWbot 10:16

What difference would that make to you?

RAWbot 10:16

How would that make you feel better?

RAWbot 10:18

Super! Your anger is your superpower. The key to harnessing your anger as fuel is understanding the wish in disguise that lives inside of it.

That sounds like you know what triggered your anger and what it is trying to tell you. Are you ready to take the first step?

Yes No

Thinking differently by speaking differently

We very consciously and as radically as possible choose solution-focused language in all our speaking: in counselling sessions, mutual consultations, communication with referrers, phone calls to each other, chats about what makes us angry, ... This choice is dictated by the fact that our thinking is put in a certain fold by how we speak. And we found that solution-oriented thinking creates more choice, hope, (self)confidence, future perspective, creativity, contentment, pride and even kindness.

*“I sometimes think of myself as having no problem at all,
but then I get into trouble every time.*

*By coming here to talk about myself, I have learned to assess
how full or empty my bucket is and what I can do with it to pour it out in time.”*

“I want to thank you for not letting me down.

*I am the oldest son at home and grew up in a neighbourhood
where I constantly had to stand up for myself.*

I only knew fighting and shouting when I came in here.

At Touché, I learned other ways to make myself angry. I react much less harshly.”

*“Aggression has never actually gotten me anywhere,
but I used to not know how else to react.”*

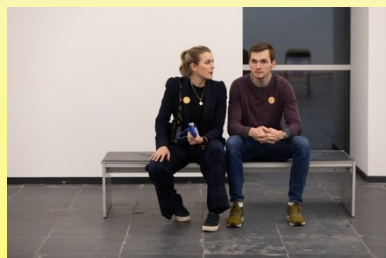
*“I used to have relationships, but they only lasted a few weeks each time.
Whenever something happened that bothered me, I got so angry every time,
because I had no other way to react at the time,
and made sure she didn't want me anymore.*

*A few hours later, I regretted that,
and then you could try to make up or talk it out,
but I really didn't know how to do that then.*

Now I am in a relationship that has lasted for a few months because I am trying my best.

*If something awkward happens, I hold back first
and when I feel calm enough, I just talk about it.”*

*“It is the very first time in my life that I have been really, genuinely welcomed into the positive.
I have experienced this before in crime, fighting, drugs, ...,
but never before in anything serious and positive.”*



OUT

OF

THE

BOX

Learning to fight just to fight less

869 people boxed out at 492 training sessions.

These were provided by 6 Touché boxing trainers.

We trained weekly or fortnightly at 5 fixed locations (gym 9duust, Boxing Woest, Oudenaarde prison, the Touché boxing basement and the online boxing gym), we went on tour with 19 open training sessions in Ghent's parks and squares and we went boxing on demand 16 times at other organisations.

Trainings happened live and online, individually, in pairs and in groups.

We mix, match and combine as much as possible all ages, genders, experienced boxers with nitwits and even cowards, expressive and potty-mouthed bullies, ...

"The Out of the box training helps me find the motivation and perseverance I need to get up every day and go to school to finally get my degree.

When the going gets tough, I no longer just drop out, on the contrary, now I see that as an extra challenge to prove to myself that I have really changed.

And I am now even in a steady relationship with a very nice girl!"



Unleash your aggressive energy in a controlled way

“Since joining Touché, boxing has taken on a completely different meaning for me. I used to think it was mainly something for hyper-stressed musclemen who got a kick out of punching each other on the nose with blood, encouraged by a bloodthirsty and riled-up crowd, just as schoolboys used to circle two fighting cocks in the playground while scanning "blood, blood!.

I thought of myself as a calm, peace-loving man, who could even always calm others who were in danger of going airborne due to conflict by mediating. Until at one point, after a trivial mistake at work, I exploded and then completely blocked. That was the domino that caused me to revisit just about everything in my life. I turned out to hold a lot more anger inside than I thought and wanted. My wife turned out to find me passive aggressive instead of peaceful. My children turned out to be afraid to tell me things.

Just then, I heard someone on the radio saying something about Touché. It sounded like the straw I needed to be able to look at myself and the future with hope again. I took a chance, called them and went for an interview. When they told me about boxing there, I thought "what the hell, why not?" and I joined. And what a lifechanger that has been for me!

I ended up there among all the people who were simultaneously the same and yet also completely different from me. Only those hyper-stressed musclemen from my former boxing fantasy were not walking around. On the contrary, everyone there turned out to be super sweet and friendly. Boxing itself is sweating, persevering and very disciplined training while having a lot of fun. And at the end I always feel discharged. And proud, of myself and all of us. We never really talk about our problems or anger there, so I don't know why the other people are there, and yet those same problems and inner anger dissolve like snow in the sun just there. Every single time.

In the meantime, therefore, boxing for me has become synonymous with very different things : coming to yourself, discovering yourself, making space in your head to discover new things, being in your power, discharge.”

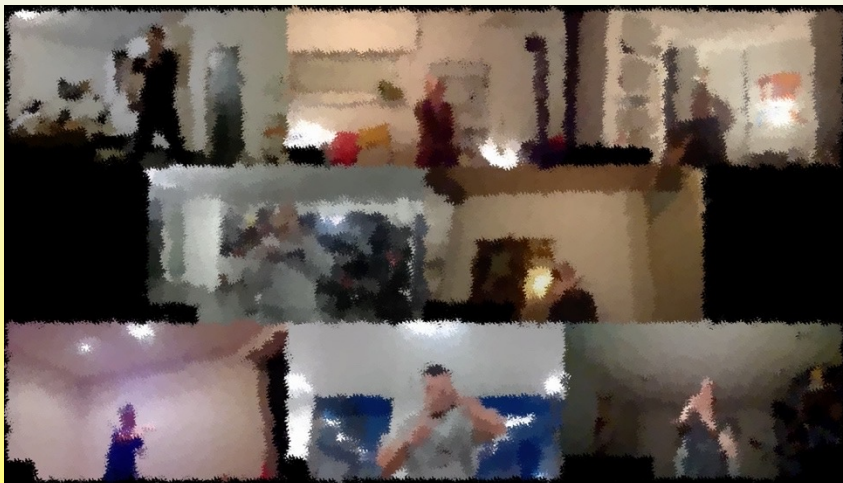


Mental reset

"I've been taking part in the online boxing trainings weekly for a while now, and it's been incredibly rewarding. Working out together with all the people who live in completely different places, but all look the same through screens, is super motivating, just plain cool and at times funny. I don't know what it would be like if we were to train together in real life, because we are a really colourful bunch: enthusiastic 'duracel kids', people who are rehabilitating after cancer treatment, super-muscular sportsmen and women, happy couples, teachers who come to vent their frustrations, ... And I would forget that we are trained by a boxing champion, because Ismail gives us all exactly what we need to exit at the end of the workout proud and content with ourselves.

In recent years, work and children meant that sport was hardly ever an option, and especially in periods when difficult things happened, I noticed this not only physically, but also mentally: I could tolerate much less. Since I have been boxing online, I feel much better. It is as if my head is reset in the course of that hour of training, allowing me to think lighter, more positive and solution-oriented afterwards. However, sometimes it is hard work. But I get through it every time, thanks to the other people who I also see sweating and cheerfully carry on, Ismail's kindly motivating words that always seem to come just at the right moment (could he be a mind reader?), the paradox of not having to do anything (because everyone can do the exercises in their own way and at their own pace), the boxing exercises themselves, which always require a combination of concentration, control and at the same time not thinking, letting go, going for it in full, And now I know I can do it, I feel I am getting better and better, and I know I will feel super good afterwards.

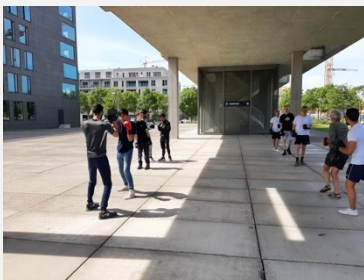
Because I can just do it at home, I don't feel I have to give up other things or arrange everything from babysitting to transport. And after the training I can just step straight into my own shower, which is another advantage. And last but not least, it gives me the opportunity to train together with people I would otherwise never be able to train with. As a result, every Tuesday evening always brings wonderful and sometimes really moving encounters, in between the sweating."



We're all in this together

Boxing has a positive impact on mental, emotional, physical and social well-being. It provides physical release, (self-)respect, fun, self-control and a good feeling about yourself. Participants say that at the end of a boxing training session they experience less tension, frustration, anger, malcontent, and more joy, hope, self-confidence, calmness, energy. They are also often surprised by these effects, because of the apparent paradoxes (e.g. 'becoming calmer by fighting', 'feeling respected by fighting in a group of strangers', ...).

The groups that train together always consist of a colourful mix of participants (all ages, experience or nothing at all with boxing, eager to box or afraid of it, boys and girls, random passers-by and people who come especially for the training, ...). This was often described by participants throughout the year as "surprisingly different" and beneficial. Participants and trainers talk about "being all together, not just to see off together and drag each other through, but also to be content together afterwards", "we are all the same", "everyone gets angry, but everyone does it differently", ... People talk about each other in very encouraging, motivating, complimentary and sometimes even touchingly beautiful terms. Members interact with each other in a very friendly, respectful, conscious, positive and motivating way, and also help each other very thoughtfully and thoughtfully so that everyone would feel comfortable with each other. The trainers have a model role in this, but we find that the participants very quickly absorb and monitor this.



IN

THE

EYE

OF

THE

STORM



Stand your ground

During 7 'stilling tasting sessions', 35 people with 2 facilitators tried out a range of ways to still, in order to get to know the most useful applications of silence for them.

'Stand your ground' means choosing with full attention to step all the way into or just out of your anger, choosing what to focus on and what to shield yourself from, being able to control the buttons of your own mixer.

"I have recently noticed that I have managed to not respond aggressively in a discussion immediately. When I thought about it afterwards, I noticed that I was doing the breathing exercises I learned here."



The warrior

There once lived a great and famous warrior.

Young people regularly came to him to be trained.

One day, a young warrior arrived at the man's house.

He was determined to be the first one to defeat the old warrior.

Apart from being resilient, the young warrior was also cunning and knew how to exploit every weakness of his opponent.

He had a habit of waiting for the first one to go on the attack to see where those weaknesses lay, and then struck with merciless strength and speed. No one had lasted long against him in a fight.

Against the advice of his anxious students, the old warrior accepted his young opponent's challenge. When the two faced each other, ready for battle, the young challenger started scolding the old warrior and hurling crude insults at his head.

He also started literally throwing mud and spitting in his face several times.

For hours he continued to rant like this. But the old warrior did not react.

Calm and motionless, he let the storm pass over him.

When the young warrior had totally exhausted himself, he gave up.

Ashamed, he turned around and stepped away from the battle site.

Dismayed and disappointed that he had allowed himself to be so terribly insulted and humiliated in public, the students gathered around their master and asked him,

"How could you let that happen to you? Such a humiliating thing!

Why did you let all that be said about you?"

The man was silent for a while at first, meanwhile looking deep into each of his students' eyes.

Then he replied : "If someone wants to give you something, but you don't take it, whose is it?"

From: The happiness of TAO

Reconciling with your rage in stillness

“Proud is a big word, but I am very happy that a while ago I signed up for the Touché stilling series without thinking too much. It turned out to be a true voyage of discovery, where one illusion after another fell by the wayside, but as a result of which, in retrospect, I now feel much freer and more content.

I was actually convinced that I had nothing to do with aggression. Hearing how they look at anger at Touché, as something we all have and need, made me think I would definitely be lacking in it. After all, I never used violence, and I just avoided confrontations, didn't I?

Until one day I arrived for that day's stillness session, all worked up, like a headless chicken. I could not quiet my head with the best will in the world, it just raced on and on. I tried to find a good posture and listen to the instructions. Putting my stream of thoughts into a coma didn't work, but I did become somewhat calmer. This exactly also made me more aware of my surroundings and the people sitting around me. My eye fell on one of the other participants, from whom I had heard last time what he was all struggling with, and boy, that story had stuck. If anyone was entitled to anger, it was him. He looked so serene and calm now. And suddenly my franc fell over myself : I really was in the right place at the right time. Because what was all that clamour in my head and body today other than frustration, annoyance, moodiness, restlessness, ... Aren't those synonyms for anger, colère, and yes, even aggression? Shit man, I was actually even one big barrel of aggression, only I had never looked at it that way before!

That was not an immediately fine observation, but what a lucky man I was to have that franc fall in the middle of the colourful and warm Touché nest. Where they are fans of anger and aggression. And very elegantly take all those who pass by in an almost imperceptible dance of translation that leads to you automatically starting to see your own anger as a companion to the route, and in the long run even to love it.

So it's thanks to Touché that I've recognised my own aggression and that I can now just stand up for myself (because that usually turns out to be the function of my anger for me, to protect myself) in a way that I'm really happy with, without wanting to crawl under a rock afterwards because I feel guilty or ashamed, because I now usually do it in a way that other people can also do something with it, or at least understand me. I have actually become kinder to those around me, just by being able and allowed to get angry. That's a gift Touché has really given me: I can simply get angry now and then instead of fussing all the time inside. And I've also learned to relax, and noticed that I not only benefit from this, but that I also really need it from time to time.”

ARTISTIC



RAGE

Creating beauty out of anger or indulging in the artistic creations of others

In spring, we did an 'Act it Out' workshop with Nabil Malat.

Nabil Mallat manages to make emotions splash off the screen like no other.

Having done so with verve, full of glory and boxing in Cool Abdoul,
he was happy to roll up his sleeves to explore with us
what beauty, interest and utility a marriage between acting and aggression could bring.

16 participants allowed themselves to be taken through acting exercises to make
get to know their own anger (even) better
while practising self-control and catharsis.



“Niet mogen lachen is echt een oefening in zelfbeheersing!”

“Het was leuk om geconfronteerd te worden met je eigen emoties en dit onder controle te houden.”

Creating beauty out of anger or indulging in the artistic creations of others

On 6 October, 14 clean colère creators presented their work, thoughts, uppercuts and other splashy creations at the SMAK at the 'Salon de Colère Artistique'.

instigator on duty was Dirk Domen, creator of 'Colera, a short but angry documentary'.

Painter Mike Claeys, choreographer Alain Platel, dancer Bérengère Bodin and spoken word artist Leah Nyirenda presented their work and their own story about anger as a creative force.

Visual artists Wendy Vandeputte, Kwartsman, Mie Vandebussche & Sebastiaan Cielen, Bruno Herzeele & Elke Thuy and Cassette for Timescapes showed their creations.

Touché companions Ismail, Wesley and Lieven and justice elves Laura Otte and Lisa-Marie Parmentier made everyone think, talk, box and still.

And last but not least : the audience shared in the clean chunks and threw in some more, by sharing how that works in their lives, creating beauty with colère.

Colère does create beauty, that much became clear!



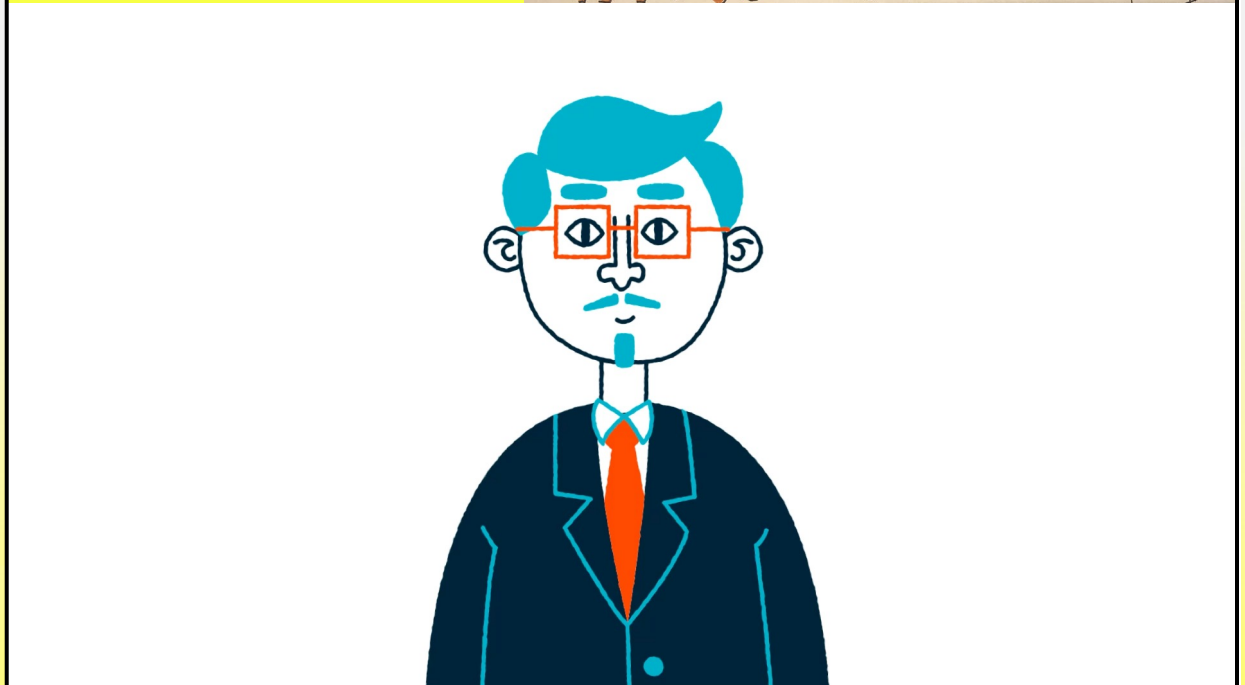
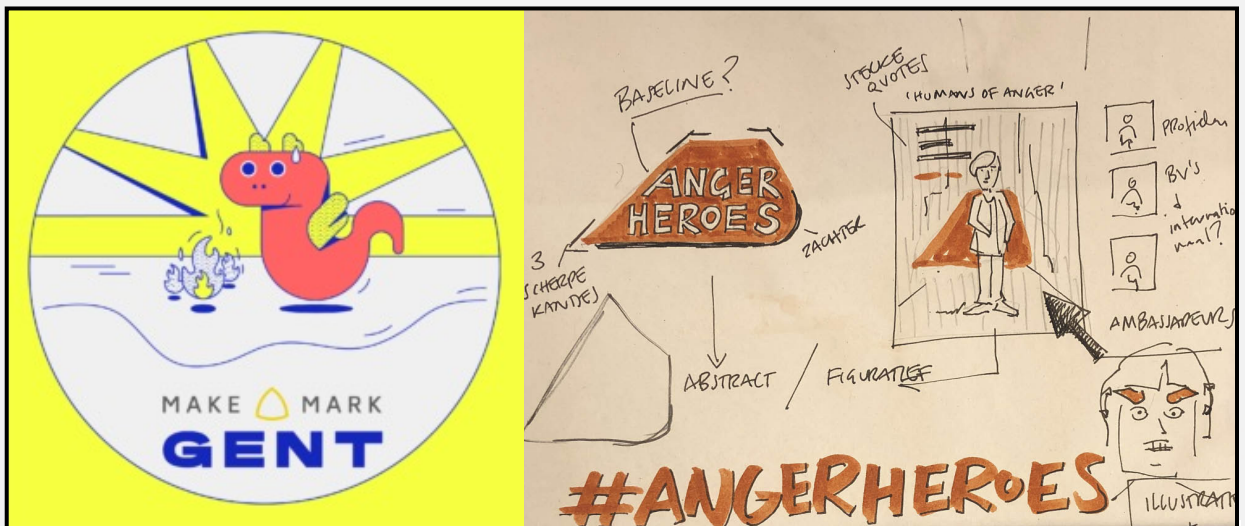
Creating beauty out of anger or indulging in the artistic creations of others

Cool Abdoul and Why We Fight were screened several times in 2022
with a Touché pre- or post-talk.



Creating beauty out of anger or indulging in the artistic creations of others

At Make a Mark Ghent, a group of creatives got to work on our Angerheroes ideas, plans and dreams. And they actually transformed them into some delicious sketches and a video.



TRAININGS



&

WORKSHOPS

In 2022 verzorgden we 31 vormingen en workshops in andere organisaties, voor in totaal 876 deelnemers.

*“The way you look at aggression is so enlightening!
Brought in a very enthusiastic and inspiring way.”*

*“A training in a pleasant relaxed atmosphere.
Safe, surprising exercises.
Back to basics, good questions.”*

*“This training was very useful to me.
The solution-focused translation of aggression was a real eye-opener for me,
although I thought I was already quite solution-oriented.
Because we received and did concrete exercises, I can really get started with this,
both with my clients and with my colleagues!”*

*“I have been working in the youth care sector for 2 years now.
That is wonderful work because you can mean so much to the children and young people who stay with us.
But it is not always easy. Especially when difficult things happen in the community. Or when you think
about the terrible things the youngsters we work with have experienced. The malchance they already had.
Sometimes I really doubt myself. Whether I'm doing it right. If I am doing enough. If I don't do too much.
And at such moments I always think back to the guest lecture we had when I was still a student.
We were then allowed to go to the prison with a group of students, where a group of inmates had prepared
a lesson for us. About how you as a counselor can make a positive difference in the life of a young person.
They told their own stories, what had been important to them and what had not.
And there was so much wisdom in that. It sounded so logical and obvious, and at the same time so difficult
in practice: really listen to what children and young people say, show interest in who they are, first build
trust and then start working together, have an eye for the sadness under their anger, ... And also strange
that we did not learn these kind of things before. I was lucky that I was allowed to take that one class. Even
then I thought this was the highlight of our training, and now that I'm at work, I notice again and again how
valuable their message from back then remains.. I feel incredibly grateful for the lifeline this lesson has been
for me a few times. And I actually hope and believe that through me the children and young people with
whom I now work with will also benefit.”*

*“My view on anger and aggression, but also on assistance and justice, on norms and punishments
has completely changed thanks to Touché. How can we think that responding to aggression with
aggression, or worse, with indifference, will make a positive difference?
We have to embrace people and find out together how we are going to solve it!”*

*“Touché accelerates reintegration after detention, an admission, a time-out, ...
Touché is the only organization that does not erect a bureaucratic wall around its activities
and that is also open to the so-called 'most difficult' people (they even seem to prefer the 'hardest').
Touché's insights can be useful not only in working with people or for the methods they use,
but also for an organization's personnel and other policies.
They succeed in applying what they preach very consistently and transparently themselves,
with each other and with their collaborations with partners.
And that's why they make a difference, I think.”*

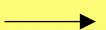
An ex-top gangster by your side

“Fighting aggression with aggression only gives more aggression”, Ahmed serves up very clearly, without using a word too much in response during a guest lecture at Ghent University. We look up. We hear the silence. His answer hits the audience like a billiard ball hits the edge of the gaming table. A small tap, full of dynamite and energy that comes unstoppable and free of any will in your direction. Should brains be able to crack audibly, it was bound to do so now. Presuppositions crumble like dominoes. Touché. Our hearts are racing.

17 years ago, encumbered by serious offences and a long prison sentence, just a young twenty-something then, he went behind bars as a top gangster. Everything came to a standstill. He and his heart locked up. With overheated aggression as a companion in a more-than-aggressive system, he faced a hustle. Years later and after some wandering, he decided to look his aggression in the eye. He read its face and content as a wish in disguise. Although his brain (and body) was bathed in a highly toxic bath for many years, he managed to make this turnaround sustained. In a snap of his fingers and from then on, without even looking in the rear-view mirror, he fought his demons and decided to use all the energy at his disposal to become the man he wanted to be. He positioned himself with unprecedented focus and determination on the highway of his life and never left it.

Along the way, we saw him mastering his aggression, finding words and trust in others that gave wings to his words, increasingly articulating his gentle, mild and talented being, and discovering and creating freedom in his thinking so that possibilities appeared as hopeful beacons on the horizon. This freedom of choice, despite the rabid dictates of detention, gave him back his autonomy. Aggression was no longer his foe to be feared. It had become meaningful fuel that drove his engine. More than once we hear him say that he feels not only surprise but also humility in the face of his wishes that have since become reality.

However, it was not offered to him on a golden platter. Those years also equate to painful disappointments and scratches on his soul. For instance, he was shown the door by a befriended training institute just days before the start of a course he was supposed to participate in. The top gangster was playing tricks on them (and thus on him). But he did not take an exit. Not even when - once free with conditions - he had to go through the procedural maelstrom of Justice when, with us as ardent supporters, he asked if he could also work for Touché, in addition to his current job. Suddenly, there was "concern that his taxes would go up too much". Many streams of words and letters later, this turned out to be a habitual convulsion of Justice that proleatises dreams 'at the end' because it is charged with a very negative and suspicious pattern of thinking that translates people's functioning into destructive profiles chiselled in stone. He saw himself as a hurdler running the sprint of his life. Again, he showed himself unflappable. At the hearing, he asked the prosecutor if he could speak first. Although this disrupted the usual order, he was allowed to take the stage without a lawyer to express his wish. The phone call we received from him afterwards marked the start of a fine sequel.



For some time now, we have been allowed to call ourselves his colleague. Not only are we honoured and incredibly grateful, we notice day by day how valuable his presence is. He co-writes the script of our organisation, drawing different lines and shapes than we do, and that is just as well. For instance, he is often not interested in much context information resulting in a faster, more real, more direct and therefore different kind of interaction. If we say too much, he interrupts us with the most gentle yet convinced determination. He quickly gets in touch with what matters, resulting in a very authentic, ordinary and honest contact. He gets entry where social workers can only press the bell. He sees young people as young people finding their way. Not as the complex cases with many stars. And he helps them understand their aggression better, without too many words or complex theories, but man-to-man and with the firm belief that no one should be given up. He reminds us of what made a difference to him as something we should not lose sight of in all our enthusiasm for new projects: being there, staying there, listening and continuing to listen, even when he could not or would not talk.

And so we dance the tango together, all switching roles with incredible ease, without much thought or discussion. That creates sparks. The bleakness of the context in which we met him is in stark contrast to the movingly beautiful things we see him do. For instance, he is already tipping us about his possible successors, based on 1 criterion: does this or that one have a Touché heart? And for all those in whom he suspects such a heart, he quietly, modestly and generously creates a stage for their voices to be heard. Periodically, we pinch ourselves in the cheek to make sure this is not a dream.

We wish you all a beautiful ex-top gangster in your lives. The world would benefit! Or maybe one is already by your side, without you suspecting it?

Text published in '[An everyday miracle. 50 stories of connection and commitment](#)'

*“Your mission and approach touches something in me,
it exudes a genuine, powerful humanity.
Thank you for that!
It has and gives hope.”*

