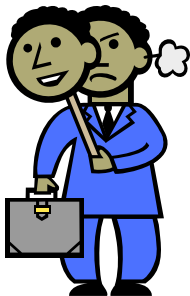




Chapter One

Anger is a Form of Communications



The experience of 'intense emotions' in the form of anger is a common event that each of us experiences on a regular basis. During these occurrences we are overcome with emotional energy that radiates outwardly in our facial expressions, body language and even in the tone of our voice. The way you express your emotions is your own personal way of communicating to others. Over time they become familiar with your patterns of talking or not talking. Your friends become acquainted with your ways of showing that you are feeling unhappy, dissatisfied or violated.

The more successful you are in communicating emotions in a constructive manner, the more likely you are to continue using them as a tool in communicating. I once asked a group of contactors if they ever considered what it would look like if they attempted to manage their construction crews without

using the loud voice and intense body typically language that comes with expressing anger. They broke out into laughter at the role-play I put on as I politely asked my disobedient workers to please pick up their tools and quit talking back. The role-play was insightful as it accurately surfaced their frustration that workers just don't listen unless they think their bosses are angry and demand their attention...

Anger Is Neither Bad Nor Good; It Just Is

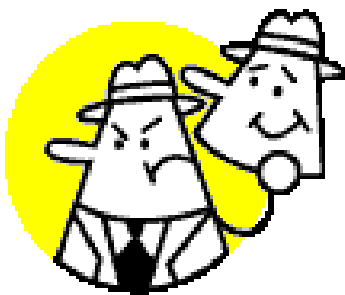
The state of being angry is neither bad nor good; but rather it is what you do with it that makes the difference. I once heard someone say, "50 years of good living can be ruined by 10 seconds of stupidity." I assume they were saying that their 'stupidity' was out of control anger and their actions resulted in dysfunctional problem solving that unnecessarily hurt others. Unfortunately, too many times I have heard horror stories that affirmed that saying.



The truth is that anger does not have to always end badly. In fact, if a person skillfully uses it as a tool to increase their self-awareness then it can be a valuable asset that, if used wisely, can increase a persons chances for success.

What is Your Anger Range?

Each of us has a range of emotions by which we express to others that we are dissatisfied or unhappy. On the lower end of the range your friends may not



even be aware that you are angry. On the upper end you are visibly agitated, or even angered, and display flurry of curse words and derogatory slanders that could tear down the most challenging foe.

Fortunately, most of your friends learn early what the warning signs of your anger looks like and don't push you once they identify that things are going the wrong direction. But this is not always the case is it?

There are people in your life that intentionally stress your coping style so as to push your buttons and manipulate you emotionally into a bad place. They

do this to punish you in repayment for something you did to them, or at a minimum to get a rise out of you. Their goal is to get you worked up for the pleasure of seeing you miserable and unhappy.

Over time the people that interact with us learn to identify when we are angry and when we are not. In functional relationships it is this familiarity that enables relationships to grow and prosper. Healthy relationships are always working to reduce conflict. By understanding each other and exercising healthy communication we learn to respect each other and utilized signs of anger as a means to problem solve and overcome shortfalls. It is only by strengthening our weaknesses that we eventually get stronger. In other words it is the arguments we overcome and the utilization of using anger as a tool to communicate hurt that we learn to understand each other and promote problem solving.

*It is not what happened that is important but rather
how others 'feel' about what happened*

When we put ourselves in the other persons shoes, we increase our chances of understanding their point of view and in opening the door for healing, bonding, and for positive outcomes. Remember, it is not what happened that is important but rather how they feel about what happened.

The Business of Facts Not Feelings

Many of the businessmen that I've worked with over the years have reported that anger is an important tool in managing their employees. They complain that no one tends to listen unless they raise their voices. They also indicated that many of their employees complain they look angry because their facial expressions radiate negativity and frustration.



The business world is about keeping costs down and maximizing profits. It is not unusual for employees to report they consider their bosses insensitive

and harsh. When I talk to the very bosses they are complaining about they respond, “*Look Doc this is about staying in business; paying the bills and keeping food on the table; I don’t have time for group hugs and sweet talking children into doing their damn jobs.*”

Work Relationships are 90% Facts & 10% Feelings

Love Relationships are 90% Feelings & 10% Facts

It is these same people that will tell you that they use anger to keep people moving and to keep profits in line. They embrace a work ethic that minimizes feelings and emotions if they get in the way of getting the job done. I have found many business owners report they use their anger to motivate and energize their work force in keeping performance and productivity at high levels. It is no surprise that many in the working world are skilled in using facial expressions and body language to communicate they are pissed, and in many cases using the fear of losing their jobs as a threat to get the job done. In these cases anger is being used in dysfunctional ways to motivate and energize workers to meet some desired goal!

Anger Can Be an Unnecessary Habit

Although the expression of anger can be associated with a higher success rate of getting things done, it can also become habitual. Parents often complain children don't listen to them unless they raise their voices. They find themselves frustrated when no one listens to their direction; resorting to hostility when their directions aren't followed and nothing gets done. Over time the parents forget the importance of assessing each situation as they occur and resort to yelling and screaming as a global reaction to getting things done!



Too often the interactions between family members become locked in the habitual exchanges of anger and defiance. Children respond to their siblings with antagonism and/or sarcasm and communications break down to a battle of angry

exchanges that spiral into full-blown arguments. These dysfunctional expressions of anger are focused on placing blame and getting payback. They result in more agitation causing a continual spiraling up of emotions.

When a family atmosphere becomes locked into this type of reaction it becomes habitual. Instead of looking for other ways to respond to conflict, family member's "score-card" each other and compete against each other in ever increasing levels of conflict. This is unhealthy and can only have a bad outcome on all involved. There is a solution that can benefit all those involved. It requires the family to attack anger from a different angle. Instead of viewing the situations as a reason to retaliate they can use it as a tool to assess hurt feelings and attempt to understand the underlying individual needs are not being met.

Anger Is an Asset If Used Properly

Anger is your cue you have a 'need' that is not being met. If you use this warning sign in a positive way you will benefit immensely. It can provide an opportunity to break a negative pattern and try something different. Remember, "The best thing to do is not always the thing you do the best." This means that old patterns are in place and it may be difficult to try something different – especially if you have no experience and have never done this before.



Once you have caught yourself and identified the warning signs of anger, it is time to become 'self-aware'. Through the act of self-awareness you can identify the cause of your anger and begin working to take action. I believe we can better understand anger if we view it as "the distance between what I want and what I have." This means there is a gap that represents an unmet need. Now if you can get in touch with that gap, you can work to resolve your internalized anger.

When you redirect the energy generated by your anger into 'constructive' actions you are in fact stimulating worthwhile activities that will ultimately have a

positive impact on your relationships. Remember, by becoming self-aware you are using the arousal of anger as an internal indicator to regain a sense of personal control in such ways that result in positive action to resolve conflict (or at least find a constructive way to cope with your angry feelings). Additionally, once you learn to identify through self-awareness that anger is present you can use this as an emotional trigger to respond in a way that allows you to regain control of your actions and stop yourself before you use anger in destructive ways.

Sometimes The Best Thing To Do

Is Not The Thing You Do The Best