

ANGER, AND HOW TO HANDLE IT RESPONSIBLY

There are as many reasons that people get angry as there are people in the world. What may be a specific trigger or hot button for one person will have no affect at all on another. Yet, there are some provocations that we can agree have some affect on most, if not all, of us.

Why do people have such strong anger reactions? Any of the following might be going on:

1. A personal trigger or hot button. These are almost always tied in to childhood experiences that could well have been forgotten on a conscious level.
2. They learned this behavior as they were growing up. The most influential adults in the child's life may have modeled this behavior as a way to express anger.
3. To cover up and not have to admit even to themselves fear, hurt, weakness, tenderness—any feelings that might make them feel vulnerable or threatened.
4. Frustrated desires--a perception of someone or something in the way of getting what you want.
5. Not feeling heard
6. Feeling disempowered or backed into a corner
7. Feeling disrespected
8. Misinterpreting what they're hearing or seeing so that it sounds or appears threatening or disrespectful
9. Feeling something is unfair or unjust

Why do people react in inappropriate ways to these things?

1. They don't have the words or communication skills to express their anger and frustration in more appropriate ways.
2. They take things personally that are not about them.
3. It provides a much-needed physical energy release
4. There's a short-term payoff, i.e. protection, attention, to be in control
5. They give their power away and feel like a victim

What are some better alternatives to dealing with and expressing anger?

In the moment and immediately after:

1. Take a few deep breaths to try to calm your body and mind
2. Leave the situation for a while. Take a break. Come back when you (or them) are not so "hot."
3. Release the physical tension in a way that's safe for everyone, and in a location where it doesn't scare others—beat a bag, stomp, yell, beat pillows, whatever works for you.
4. Acknowledge that the need to control is really about YOU. It isn't about the other person or people you're trying to control—it's about your need that you're trying to fill or squashing a fear you may have. Identify the need; identify the fear—be aware and take responsibility for your feelings.

5. QTIP—Quit Taking It Personally. What other people say and do is about THEM, not you, even when it has a direct effect on you. It's their issue.
6. Find a safe place for your Inner Child where you can get in touch with him or her. Ask it if it wants or needs to get even, or to be comforted or reassured. Do so in your mind. Give the Child as much time as it needs.
7. When you're alone, write down the hurts, frustrations, and fears. Ask for help or guidance from the Universe to help you deal with them.
8. Notice the meaning you're assigning to what people say and do. What's being threatened? Ask yourself the following questions:
 - a. Is this factually accurate?
 - b. Is it in my best interest?
 - c. Does it protect and prolong my life?
 - d. Does it get me what I want instead of what I don't want?

Commit to:

1. Identify your personal triggers and hot buttons. Become aware of the things that piss you off time and again. Be aware. Get healing around them.
2. Acknowledge and identify the self-talk that has given you permission to be hurtful or abusive, or to punish or shut people out, or to batter. What is that self-talk dialogue? Change your internal dialogue. Challenge your beliefs. Get clear whether or not they're logical. Remember: There is no reality—only perception.
3. Learn communication skills—Take a class. Get books. Join or start a communications support group.
4. Sit down with those people with whom you've been inappropriate with your anger and say, "I promise you I am not going to be this way with you anymore." Apologize. Ask the other what you need to do to begin to clean up what you've done, to help heal the wounds you've inflicted. Healing takes time—be patient and be consistent with your new behaviors. The other person is going to need time to learn to trust and feel safe again.