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Partial Lecture notes for Free Download

ANGER; Emotional Energy Summoned For Self-Preservation

“Whenever we’re bumped, we’ll spill whatever we’re full of.”

Introduction

Question 1 - Which is worse too much anger, or too little?

Question 2 – Which is the more effective way to stop a pot from boiling over – to lift off the lid or screw it on tighter, or take the pot off the stove?

Although this emotion is so commonly experienced by most of us, after thousands of years, humanity in general is still incredibly, horribly, ‘anger-ignorant’. Consider the woman’s refuges, road-rage, racial hatred, assaults on children by their parents, divorce rate, full jails, alcoholism etc. Probably no other basic human emotion has caused so much suffering and pain, and yet after so long, few people have even the most basic understanding of it, such as revealed below. Sadly, few churches, anger management groups, and nonviolent support groups, etc. show real and consistent success, possibly for one of the 3 following reasons:

1. It is treated as if cathartic expression is all that’s needed; cry, shout, scream, orgasm, beat the pillow, work it out, in order to ‘let it all out’. The futility of repeated pot ‘lid – lifting’. The real issue is usually the unbearable feeling, which *must* be identified and a strategy adopted to ‘make friends with it’.
2. It is suppressed by self-control (behaviorism), E.g. try harder, behave yourself, sit on it, get a grip, “I can do all things through Christ”. This leaves the sufferer to ‘white-knuckle’ it, or cope in other ways, such as quit and run, drunkenness or bingeing, bullying the children, nicotine blanket or cold politeness.
3. It doesn’t sufficiently consider difficult contextual and biological factors causing emotional exhaustion. If life is simply too demanding, or two people are continually winding each other up, or one is in ‘survival mode’ or anemic. Every person has their breaking point, whereby any continued demand becomes deeply threatening to one’s sense of survival.

DISAPPOINTMENT ENERGY sometimes called anger, *disappointment energy*, because it often involves some form of disappointment. Thus, the one who can quickly ‘let go’ what was hoped for does not take the psychological insult, which the one who refuses to let go the desire must struggle with. In other words, the more psychologically flexible and secure one is, the less anger will be demonstrated. This degree of psychological flexibility (humility).....

FIFTEEN LIKELY CAUSES

1. **Fear of the ‘unbearable feeling’.** Anger is usually the first resort to protect one from the emergence of the particular ‘terrible echo’ that constantly dogs most people e.g. being humiliated, disillusioned, deceived, or losing control / feeling powerless. Therefore, the treatment must begin with the identification of which emotion that is.
2. **Inability to Negotiate.** ‘Blowing up’ instead of developing negotiation / assertiveness skills to regain a balance of power, so that you may get your power back and/or live in peace with a crazy-maker. (See notes.)
.....
3. **Depressive anger** (frozen rage) Another form of ‘old’ anger. The sulk has gone inwards, becoming cynicism, which in turn cripple’s enthusiasm, initiative, extroversion and energy. Look for signs of the ‘passive-aggressive’ or self-hatred born of early rejections.

4. **Unrealistic expectations.** Check them for reality. If they are constantly too high for your own spouse, employee, Pastor or children, why? Why do you need your idealism? Why do you need to be 'in control' – 'have things according to your expectations? Time to make friends with life and people *as they are*, and review agreements to walk together as necessary.
5. **Fear, mis-expressed as Anger.** Some people, when frightened, mis-portray themselves as angry, usually because it was not safe to show fear in their childhood family. If you are frightened for the future of your child or your marriage, don't just 'rip into them', (reactive retaliation) but rather, tell them you are frightened for them, or 'us'.....
6. **Self-hatred spillover** Of deep anger and frustration with / at yourself. A deep belief that you are stupid and inadequate, spills onto spouse and children, as it surfaces. This is often just a replay of one's parents' spillover onto you when you were a child. (Cracked mirror syndrome.)
7. **To protect Pride and unwillingness to take correction / rebuke.** See also #1. It is often forgotten by well-meaning Counsellors that "God resists the proud". Sometimes anger is a clear sign that God Himself is against this person, who will not humble themselves and take correction from their associates, spouse etc. "If I get angry enough I can make you back off, and then I can do what I please" is the psychodynamic behind this one.....
11. **Co-dependent relationship**, where each continually wind each other up to snapping point. Neither have the ability to become proactive and set their own agenda. Both lose their dignity in an instant. Play the ball, not the player. Treat this one as *double trouble* – its not just 'his' or 'her' problem. They are both 'emotional children' who know only the squabble they are engaged in – who can't distinguish the deed from the dude.
12. **Emotional exhaustion.** When the river runs low, the rocks show through. Are you monitoring your emotional energy levels? The lower you get, the quicker you'll 'snap'. Too many undisciplined children, or a lack of a supportive spouse, or lack of sleep. Too much stress from working far too hard. Lost the reins? Anemic? What's the *real issue* here?
13. **Energy flashes / spill over.**
Saturdays, Sundays, first days of the holidays, Mum and Dad can be very irritable, if the usual burst of emotional / physical energy needed for work, has suddenly got nowhere to go, especially if the job is a high-stress / demanding physical one. It's not essentially anger, just too much energy. A young boy may also be taught how to calm himself down during a burst, by breaking in the 'bronco'. ADHD??
14. **Grief process.** There is a stage of grief which manifests itself as anger, and is simply an early stage of the process of coming to terms with the disappointment of loss / bereavement. Let's hope the other partner doesn't take it personally.
15. **Organic damage.**

EMPOWERING QUESTIONS FOR THE ANGRY

- Is my anger and rage my friend or my enemy? Why do I *need* to be angry? What purpose is it serving? · Is there another and better way to get control, stay safe, or 'fix' the problem? What is the alternative you have lost sight of?
- What is the truth-coach that must kick in before I let my guard-dog loose?
- Punisher's like their anger – it's what helps them punish those they 'love', but is it helping?

CONCLUSION; If a person won't take correction, and won't grow past their anger, then what other option is there, apart from becoming increasingly offended – increasingly angry? In this, can they create their own hell?