

Anger: Friend or Foe?

By Dr. Peter Robbins, Co-Founder of Turning Point Counseling

“Anger is the anesthetic of the mind.” - C.S. Lewis

“Hot heads and cold hearts never solved anything.” - Billy Graham

“Anger dwells in the bosoms of fools.” - Albert Einstein

“The fire you kindle for your enemy often burns yourself more than him.” - Chinese Proverb

“Speak when you’re angry and you make the best speech you will ever regret.” - Ambrose Bierce

I. The Masks Of Anger

- a. Depression
- b. Headaches
- c. Insomnia
- d. Sarcasm
- e. Speeding
- f. Habitual Lateness
- g. Jealousy
- h. Forgetfulness
- i. Eating disorders
- j. Over-politeness

II. Anger: A Secondary Emotion

- a. Anger almost always hides more vulnerable emotions such as Hurt and Fear
- b. Anger also arises due to false and/or unrealistic expectations
- c. Anger’s legitimate purpose is to energize us to say “Ouch!” when we’ve been hurt

III. The Two Components Of Anger:

- a. An emotional/verbal experience
- b. A physical experience

IV. Why Anger Attacks!

- a. The emotion of anger, like a shark, moves in on you. It’s not instant, it builds
- b. An anger attack, like a shark attack, can be avoided if we have our heads and hearts below the surface of our anger (looking for the hurt and fear) and fend off the growing emotion of anger by dealing with it early on (“In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.” – Eph. 4:26).

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V. Dealing With Anger

- a. Let yourself experience the feeling of anger (“Be ye angry, and sin not” – Eph. 4:26), while exploring its roots – Hurt? Fear? Unrealistic Expectations?
- b. Don’t be distracted by the drama of anger. Go for the vulnerable emotions being shielded by the anger.
- c. Remember: The feeling of anger is not a sin, the expression of it may be.
- d. Deal with the need to verbally express your feeling as well as the need to physically express the adrenaline of anger in acceptable and appropriate ways (“and sin not”).
- e. Anger becomes sin when we hold in our anger and don’t express it (not “speaking the truth in love” – Eph 4:15) or by exploding and verbally or physically injuring others and yourself.
- f. Work through past hurts and/or nagging fears. When this is accomplished you will no longer need the shield of anger for protection.
- g. If anger persists, seek professional Christian Counseling.

“He that angers you, conquers you. Keep cool and you command everybody.”

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

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