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The enigma of anger management...

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"Anybody can become angry - that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy."

- Aristotle

I recently witnessed a young mother raising her voice at her young child for throwing a pillow which landed on the kitchen cabinet. She was instructing her son that he's not supposed to throw anything on the kitchen counter. She then turned to me to explain that they were working out some anger management issues. But I wasn't sure which anger management issue to which she was referring: her sons or hers.

I've also seen frustrated parent hit their child to get the child to stop crying. This also seems a riddle to me. Everything about "managing the unmanageable" is intriguing.

There are many published tips from counting to 10, deep breathing, finding a safe spot to vent, step away, leave the room, etc. The catch is that one needs to be somewhat calm and in a control state to remember to execute those tips. When many of us are in the state of anger, we are neither calm or in control.

One suggestion is to manage your anger before you are angry.

"How's that?" you ask.

This sounds like another riddle, doesn't it?

Give yourself a break:

Everyone gets angry at one time or another. And it's unlikely that "this time will be the last time". Everyone gets angry.

Identify some triggers:

Anger is usually "triggered" by an occurrence, like stubbing your toe on an inanimate object or by something that someone says. There may be a certain individual that has a talent for pushing your buttons. Or perhaps the trigger comes after an extended shift at work and coming home to a noisy household.

Identify some of these triggers. And, while you are calm, cool and collected, re-enact exactly how you would want the scenario to play out. Write your own better feeling version of the story, one that has you at ease and unattached to things outside of your control.

A simple example:

Current story:

I get so angry with my kids. They have no respect for me or what I do around here. I'm tired of yelling at them to put away their things. The house is always upside down. No matter how hard I work to keep it neat and clean; the moment they get home from school it's like a hurricane has hit. They constantly leave a trail of their clothes, books, bags, etc. I hate the way the house looks when they get home. They have no respect for how hard I work around here.

Better feeling version of the story.

I know the kids will be home soon. They will be excited to shed their burden of the day. Each time they drop off something, they will feel freer. This is their home, too; their sanctuary. I want them to feel free and safe here. I want them to feel free not only to shed their burden of books and bags, but also any emotional burdens that they have collected along the way.

I also want them to feel safe in sharing their day's events: the fun and well as the challenging. I see now that raising my voice about their discarded artifacts is not only wasted energy but detrimental to what I really want to achieve.

I can create a space of my own, a nice, neat, special place for me, serene sanctuary. So, no matter how chaotic the rest of the house becomes, I'll always have this special haven. I can also create a huge, attractive box for the corner of the family room. I can just gather the things up and place them in the large box. The kids are still responsible for putting those things away, in their own time. But in the meantime, the room still stays relatively clutter free.

Conclusion:

Anger is a natural emotion and stems from our perception of a situation or event. The good news is that our perception, our thoughts can easily be controlled. Since it is easier to think when we're calm than when we're agitated, let's manage our anger before the event.

About the author

Laura is a certified personal life coach. She has been in the software and testing industry for over 20 years. She's worked with such companies as IBM, Eriksson, Staples, Fidelity Investments and Sogeti in various client advocacy and project management roles. The techniques she uses in her business coaching and client advocacy work saved these companies both time and money, which resulted in on-time, quality product delivery with higher client satisfaction.

Laura now uses her client focus, project, quality and people management skills in her personal life coaching career. As a personal life coach, she helps people integrate their goals and dreams into their everyday lives. Laura uses creative and practical tools to help her clients realize what really matters to them. They then follow-through with project and time management techniques to create the reality they really want.

Laura authors many articles and workshops on time management and strategic scheduling. She is also the founder of the electronic magazine *the Rose Garden: the Art of Becoming*. Also, check out <http://thelaurarose.blogspot.com/>

Laura offers **one-on-one career and life coaching, small group coaching, seminars and workshops.** You can learn more about her at www.RoseCoaching.info and contact her at LauraRose@RoseCoaching.info