

NOTES ON ANGER

Anger is often the most problematic of feelings. Children often experience anger from parents as abandonment, disapproval, shunning, shaming, and generally that the child is Not OK.

Parents usually do not take the time when they are angry to tell the child the difference between the parents anger over the child's behavior and the child's "personhood." The child often takes this "personally" (what else can a child do!) and then will often make a decision that they, themselves, are Not OK.

After that childhood decision is made – by the child – it is often forgotten. All that remains are years of behaviors generated from low self-esteem that was based upon that decision.

Behaviors such as:

staying out of the way,
being "nice",
not making "trouble",
keeping their feelings to themselves,
talking other people out of their anger
soothing other peoples "upset" feelings,
being "helpful"
not getting angry
not showing anger
getting good grades,
being "sweet"

As a grown up these behaviors have been practiced thousands of times. If you practice anything thousands of times you get pretty good at it. It does not matter that the skill is dysfunctional, what matters is that it has been mastered and now is has a life of its own and the avoidance of anger cripples that persons emotional life.

Now comes the problem, when the grown up child meets a partner, or goes to work for a boss and applies those same "skills" for angry conflict resolution. It won't work the same as with their mom, dad, or family.

Now that child must learn new skills. The new skills are about acquiring the skill of:

NORMALIZING THE EXPRESSION OF ORDINARY HEALTHY EVERYDAY ANGER.

This means learning to say the words about everyday irritations, and angers, and mads, that will not result in abandonment, shaming, blaming, naming, humiliation, and ridicule. THIS PRACTICE IS NOT PERSONAL.

Normalizing the expression of everyday anger can be an EXERCISE about trivial and non important small behaviors. The irritation needs to be delivered with a straight face, or slightly angry face, in **SMALL DOSES** !

Practice on purpose—when you are NOT angry—then you get the value of normalizing the expression of anger – rather than having anger drive you – now you have control of learning how to express mad without disaster.

A few examples to PRACTICE (not personal) saying with your partner (not your boss, not parents) are:
Kelly, sit up straight at the table.

Terry, turn off the TV and talk to me.

Pat, shut off the computer and come talk to me.

Taylor, don't interrupt me when I am in the middle of talking.

Leslie, the trash is piling up, take it out now.

Jerry, pick up after yourself, I'm tired of picking up after you.

This is practice (not personal) in order to get a feel of saying the words at a low level of mad, anger, irritation, instead of always stuffing it inside and blowing up – one way or another – later.



R&M SEMINARS

OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.