

ANGER - 7 KINDS PAGE 2

Rebellious Anger (healthy)

Rebellious anger can be part of the natural developmental process as children define themselves by getting others to respond to them when they are oppositional: Parent says "do," child says, "no"; parent says, "don't," child does it anyway. This healthy rebellion occurs developmentally at approximately ages two, nine, and fifteen years. Appropriate parenting responses involve giving reasons for rules, listening, honoring the child's objections, changing rules if appropriate, and staying firm with the limits as set: "I hear that you don't agree. You are entitled to your opinion, but for now you must follow this rule." When a child's healthy rebellious anger is not responded to appropriately, the need to separate and individuate remains incomplete. Such individuals grow up with a great need to argue and initiate verbal fights; they often take polarized positions and insist on win-lose outcomes. In grown-ups, this type of anger becomes racket anger.

Racket Anger (un-healthy)

Racket anger is chronic and serves as a coverup for vulnerability. Beneath this type of anger are disowned fear, incomplete developmental needs, grief, and potency. Confronting racket anger with anger will not work because the other will escalate his or her "I'm OK, You're not-OK" position and the discounted "I'm not-OK, You're OK" fear. Reassuring statements will usually deescalate the situation. After rapport has been reestablished, uncovering the pain, fear, and developmental need can bring about healing and contact. Expressing fear while receiving support can also facilitate the expression of appropriate biological, natural anger when boundaries are invaded or there is a threat of abandonment.

Treating racket rebellious anger requires a reply to hidden messages using mirroring responses or empathetic therapeutic responses: "You seem to have a completely different point of view on this than I do," or "I hear how strongly you feel about this." In groups, allowing the hassling and pointing out the underlying feelings and needs sometimes helps. Redecision therapy involves confronting the parent, who never listens, and deciding that "my beliefs count even if you don't agree with me."

Pig Parent Anger (un-healthy)

Pig Parent anger is punitive and destructive at the least, and homicidal and suicidal at worst. It is developed in the Child by the child to protect himself or herself from adverse external abuse from outside Pig parents. It operates from a "get-rid-of" mentality, an "I'm OK, You're not-OK" position, and it hides an "I'm not-OK, You're not-OK" despair. Verbally, it says things like, "You'll never amount to anything," "You are a whore," "You're just like your father," and "I hope you suffer for this." It lashes out at others, especially at the attributes and behaviors that children have had to repress, such as joy, movement, sexual curiosity, rhythm, and other healthy sensual pleasures. Individuals who use Pig Parent anger are symbiotic in that they have not separated from others psychologically and have not integrated their vulnerable selves because of an absent nurturing self. Treatment for persons operating from severe Pig Parent, who are hurting themselves or others, sometimes requires hospitalization and/or possible medication. The treatment goal from a rededication point of view is to help them confront Don't Exist, Don't Feel, and Don't Be a Child injunctions and to receive empathetic support while they internalize and learn to use a Nurturing Parent and a healthy Controlling Parent that set appropriate limits and offer protection. Socially, confronting first- or second-degree Pig Parent statements requires a combination of clear boundaries ("What you are saying to me is hurtful, and I won't listen to it) and empathetic responses ("I do want to know what is going on with you and what you need from me. It sounds to me like I have hurt you in some way.").

Parent Anger (healthy Limit Setting or OK Critical Parent----- un-healthy Righteous or NOT OK Critical Parent)

There are two types of Parent anger: healthy limit setting ("You are not to play with matches," or "You are not to talk to me that way") and Righteous Parent anger (which plays "Ain't It Awful" and "NIGYSOB"). In the latter, such preachy, righteous, and condemning Parent anger is ineffective because, in confronting scary situations, this type of racket anger discounts the vulnerable Child within and the potent Adult. Inviting persons who are preaching and condemning to think and/or report their feelings is useful and may help them to identify their feelings and needs and to consider options for solving their problems.

Righteous Parent anger differs from Pig Parent anger only in the quality of the condemnation. The Righteous Parent believes that he or she is doing it for the "good" of others or the relationship. Pig Parent just wants to lash out.

Summary

Anger is either healthy and potent—as in Natural Child anger, Adult responsive anger, and healthy (controlling Parent anger—or counterproductive and destructive as in overadapted, discounted anger, Pig Parent anger, racket anger, and Righteous Parent anger. Eric Berne believed that 90 percent of all anger is racket anger. It is important to remember, however, that underneath racket anger lie fear and unresolved developmental tasks. Through treatment, individuals expressing unhealthy and ineffective defensive anger can be invited into their pain and fear for the purpose of healing, and they can be taught to confront others and protect themselves effectively, thus allowing intimacy.



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.

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