

PREVENTING ANGER IN CONFLICT - Stephen Oh

Introduction

Anger, a human emotion is not a problem in itself. Everybody gets angry, while mild anger can sometimes be good to express strong feelings and deal with situations. However, if anger is expressed in harmful ways over a long period of time, then it can lead to problems in relationships at home and at work and thus affect the overall quality of life. Anger is an emotion that starts from mild annoyance to intense rage which is accompanied by biological changes in your body. When one gets angry, heart rate and blood pressure rises and stress hormones are released causing one to shake, become hot, sweaty and feel out of control.

When people are angry, they behave in angry ways too. Angry behaviors include yelling, throwing things, criticizing, ignoring, storming out, withdrawing and doing nothing.

Anger can lead to violence if not properly controlled and some people use anger as an excuse for being abusive towards others. Violence and abusive behavior gives someone power and control over another person usually through creating fear. Anger involves verbal, emotional, physical or psychological abuse

Intense Anger may be related to other problems such as an injury to the brain, or drug or alcohol use. It is important to get professional help for these problems.

Anger triggers can come in many and varied forms like rude drivers to spammers to co-workers that make your job hard. It seems that everyone is getting on your nerves and you're about to explode. A familiar strategy for managing anger is to distract your mind from the situation that is making you angry. Try counting to ten, playing soothing music, talking to an empathetic friend, or focusing on a simple task like going for a car wash or folding laundry.

Understanding what righteous anger and natural anger is.

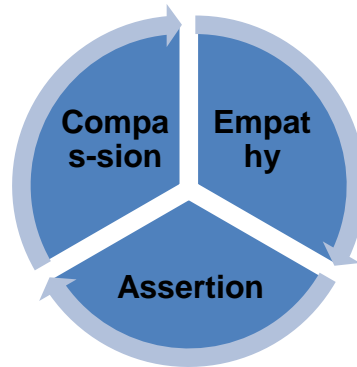
An example of righteous anger is having a holy indignation concerning our own sins. An example such indignation would be the outrage we feel when learning that an old defenseless old man being kicked at the street corner. However, we need to note in Eph. 4:26, "In your anger, do not sin" and hence even in righteous anger we must not hold on to it but to surrender it to God as He has said "Vengeance is mine and I will repay" - Rm 12:19.

Jesus said "Good trees produce good fruits" Mt 7:17. The fruit of the Holy Spirit mentioned in Gal 5:23 is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control and as such we need not allow anger to come our way no matter what the triggers are.

Natural or unrighteous anger occurs when we allow it to lead us to say something or do something contrary to God's will and it hurts or harms others. Holding a grudge when we are wronged comes quite naturally, but that doesn't qualify us for it. A grudge is actually one of the most toxic sins we can experience and destructive to our faith. The fruit of the flesh among other things sins are hatred, fits of rage, dissensions, factions..... Gal 5:19-20. Unrighteous anger leads to impulsive behaviour that only aggravates an already tense situation which inevitable lead us to sinful actions.

The simple technique of counting to 10 only provides the time needed for delay and offers a distraction from the anger-arousing event. However, more importantly it allows us time to pray for divine wisdom. Once in a more relaxed state and with God's given wisdom, we can consider the best course of action to take.

The three anger-regulating principles of empathy, compassion and assertion is of great help anger management.



- Empathy is the ability to see a situation from another point of view and to give due consideration to it.
- Being compassionate in an anger-arousing situation allows for deliberate choice of being tolerant and demonstrating the love of Christ.
- Respond assertively is to be standing up for our rights, but in a manner that does not violate scriptures nor the rights of others. The appropriate expression of feelings and beliefs would help to understand the matter better to enable conflict resolution.

The last but not the least is to pray and let God take over. Once you've engaged in the above steps, you can be more objective and at peace in resolving the conflict. Consequently, we can let go of the anger, the hurts, or wrongs done to us and be a testimony that God is glorified in our lives as we exercise the fruit of the Holy Spirit , primarily self –control.