From Anger to Intimacy: Equipping Couples to Make the Move
Harnessing The Most Powerful God-Given Emotion

Gary J. Oliver, Th.M., Ph.D.
Carrie E. Oliver, M.A.
The Center for Marriage and Family Studies
John Brown University

One of the main reason that many couples come for marriage counseling is that they have hit the wall of conflict that has led to one or both saying or doing things out of anger that has only increased their hurt and hopelessness and made the situation worse. In this professional workshop you will learn how to cultivate a healthy anger that can make conflict productive and actually increase the trust and intimacy in a marriage relationship.

1. Understand the God-given emotion of anger.
2. Learn the three primary emotions that can lead to the secondary emotion of anger.
3. Learn specific ways that the healthy communication of anger can lead to increased intimacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

II. DEFINING ANGER

A. A strong feeling of ________________ or displeasure.
B. A state of ________________. Anger is __________.
C. Anger is a piece of information that can serve as a __________ that tells us we don't like what is going on.
D. A ________________ emotion that is experienced in response to a ___________ emotion such as fear, hurt or frustration.

III. WHY CAN ANGER BE SUCH A PROBLEM?

A. It is such a ________________________ emotion.
B. It is one of the most _________ and ____________ of all the emotions.
C. When not properly understood and dealt with, it is one of the most ____________.
D. Anger has definite _______________ effects.
IV. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CAUSES OF ANGER?

A. ______ (Past)  
B. ____________ (Present)  
C. ______/Anxiety (Future)

V. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CAUSES OF MY ANGER?

A. What triggers your anger?
B. When are you most likely to experience anger?
C. How does you / your spouse know when you are getting angry?

VI. HOW DO YOU “DO” ANGER?

A. Unhealthy / Destructive Anger

1. The Cream-Puff
   - anger suppressed  
   - overcontrolled  
   - blames self  
   - anger turned inward  
   - dependent  
   - repress / suppress  
   - conflict avoider  
   - denial  
   - overresponsible

2. The Locomotive
   - hostile  
   - critical  
   - driven  
   - combative  
   - rage  
   - punitive  
   - suspicious  
   - cruel teasing  
   - blatant sarcasm  
   - has all the answers  
   - quick to blame  
   - few intimate friends

3. The Steel Magnolia
   - procrastination  
   - forgetfulness  
   - chronic lateness  
   - subtle sarcasm  
   - makes excuses  
   - silent treatment  
   - fosters confusion  
   - mixed messages  
   - inconsistency

B. Healthy / Constructive Anger

-responds  
-anger communicated  
-motivated by love  
-indignation  
-responsible  
-unselfish  
-trusting  
-proactive  
-firm  
-listens  
-I win/You win

VII. HOW TO BECOME A MATURE RESPONDER

A. Biblical Principles:

1. Ephesians 4:31; Col. 3:8:  
3. Prov. 15:18; 16:32; 19:11; 29:11:  
5. Mark 3:5; Eph. 4:26:
2. Col. 3:21; Prov. 15:1; Prov. 20:2; Prov. 22:24-25; 29:22:

B. Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recognition</th>
<th>Self-Awareness</th>
<th>Social Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional self-awareness</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accurate self-assessment</td>
<td>Service Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Organizational awareness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regulation</th>
<th>Self-Management</th>
<th>Relationship Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional self-control</td>
<td>Developing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>Conflict management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achievement drive</td>
<td>Visionary leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>Catalyzing change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. Solution Steps: Have a ___________ ___________ to deal with your anger!

1. Be ___________ of it.

2. ___________ ___________ responsibility for it . . . to God, others and yourself.

3. Determine at the outset who/what is going to have the ___________.

4. Remind yourself of the positive things that healthy anger can provide.
   a. It serves as an a_________ c. It is a powerful source of energy
   b. It is a source of motivation d. It can actually ___________ trust and intimacy in a relationship

5. ___________ it . . . identify the cause/source of it.

(Cherniss & Goleman, eds, The emotionally intelligent workplace, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001)
a. Keep an anger log:

b. Construct your anger curve:

c. Identify the primary emotion:

6. Choose your ______________. How are you going to choose to __________ the energy?

**SPEND**

**INVEST**

D. Additional Practical Suggestions (David Augsburger)

1. Be angry, but ______:

2. Be angry, but ____ ______________:

3. Be angry, but be __________:

VIII. CONCLUSION

A. ________ it, then ________ it.

B. In expressing anger your attitude should not be "who's right and who's wrong?," but rather "**what can each of us learn from this discussion that will make our relationship more positive, satisfying and bring glory to our Lord Jesus Christ?**"

C. When someone else is angry seize the ______________ to understand and be a ____________.

D. Small Beginnings:

1. Remember that ______ means to find what doesn't work and keep on doing it . . . and expecting different results!

2. What’s **1** thing you have learned today that with God’s help you will begin to apply today?

IX. RESOURCES

Oliver & Oliver, **Raising Sons . . . and Loving It!**, Zondervan, 2001

Oliver & Wright, **Good Women Get Angry**, Servant, 1995

Wright & Oliver, **Fears, Doubts, Blues and Pouts**, Victor Books, 1999
, Raising Kids to Love Jesus, Regal Books, 1999