

# **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

<i>-anger suppressed</i>	<i>-anger turned inward</i>	<i>-conflict avoider</i>
<i>-overcontrolled</i>	<i>-dependent</i>	<i>-denial</i>
<i>-blames self</i>	<i>-repress / suppress</i>	<i>-overresponsible</i>

###### 2. The Locomotive

<i>-hostile</i>	<i>-rage</i>	<i>-blatant sarcasm</i>
<i>-critical</i>	<i>-punitive</i>	<i>-has all the answers</i>
<i>-driven</i>	<i>-suspicious</i>	<i>-quick to blame</i>
<i>-combative</i>	<i>-cruel teasing</i>	<i>-few intimate friends</i>

###### 3. The Steel Magnolia

<i>-procrastination</i>	<i>-subtle sarcasm</i>	<i>-fosters confusion</i>
<i>-forgetfulness</i>	<i>-makes excuses</i>	<i>-mixed messages</i>
<i>-chronic lateness</i>	<i>-silent treatment</i>	<i>-inconsistency</i>

##### B. Healthy / Constructive Anger

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

#### 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: 4. Prov. 22:24-25; 29:22:

B. Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

	<b>Self (Personal Competence)</b>	<b>Other (Social Competence)</b>
<b>Recognition</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional self-awareness</li> <li>• Accurate self-assessment</li> <li>• Self-confidence</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Social Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Service Orientation</li> <li>• Organizational awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Regulation</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Self-Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional self-control</li> <li>• Trustworthiness</li> <li>• Conscientiousness</li> <li>• Adaptability</li> <li>• Achievement drive</li> <li>• Initiative</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Relationship Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing others</li> <li>• Influence</li> <li>• Communication</li> <li>• Conflict management</li> <li>• Visionary leadership</li> <li>• Catalyzing change</li> <li>• Building bonds</li> <li>• Teamwork and collaboration</li> </ul>

(Cherniss & Goleman, eds, *The emotionally intelligent workplace*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001)

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 \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. It is a source of motivation
  - c. It is a powerful source of energy
  - d. It can actually \_\_\_\_\_ trust and intimacy in a relationship
5. \_\_\_\_\_ it . . . identify the cause/source of it.

- 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