

Anger

Prologue

The already programmed human response when someone gets us/makes us angry is to blast the person with anger. This reaction usually happens faster than our thinking. It's so automatic that, many times, we can't stop this reaction from happening.

This automatic reaction to blast the other person with anger (when they trigger us) has a very good and needed foundation; a very good and needed function. This reaction comes from a primitive part of our brain; from the survival part of our brain.

At the survival level if someone 'makes' us angry, then we perceive that we're being threatened by that person. If we're threatened by that person, our well being (our survival) also could be threatened. The automatic reaction is to blast and push away the other person. This is usually done verbally, though we may also physically hit the other person. Domestic violence and violence between strangers brings the reaction-response past the verbal stage.

What Charles Told Me

Charles said yes when I asked him permission to lead group. He had one warning. He repeated this warning about two more times within the next year. He saw my weakness, at that time, in relation to leading group. Charles said my weakness was wanting to be too nice. (That may surprise some of you that have been to the group meetings).

After four years of leading group, I'm still working on this aspect. I notice how I'm reluctant, at times, to verbally push into people in a way that I know will provoke their anger. At times I'm intuitively directed to verbally push into the person. My usual inner reaction is: "Oh shit. This is going to cause a backlash." Then I do verbally push into the person and, from my memory, it's always caused a backlash. The person feels attacked, the primitive part of their brain kicks in, and I get verbally blasted.

At Times Anger Needs To Come Up

Charles has shown me that there are times that a person's anger needs to come up more to the surface to be released. And the group leader, at times, provides the prod. Charles has never apologized for his provoking the person to bring up their anger.

I've seen Charles, many, many times, be verbally blasted by the people in the group. I've also seen him take the verbal blasting in stride. If the verbal blasting keeps going on, he'll put an end to it by telling the person to just sit with what's going on inside them. He then tells them that he'll come back to them later.

Charles, and every person who has led group meetings, have had people leave because they were angry with the group leader. Charles' view is that they weren't meant to stay. Charles has told me that nice, nice, nice doesn't always work.

Recently I provoked a person in group. They became angry with me. What happened to them in the next twenty minutes was an astounding release of emotions and energy that had been smothering them. This release was not directed at me.

I felt bad for provoking the person. I knew the person was going to have anger toward me. I knew there was going to be some cold times ahead. I've had it happen to me a number of times in the last four years. It's not fun. It's a part of the job.

Verbally Blasting Another Person At A Time When We're Physically Safe

As has already been written, verbally blasting the other person is an ultra fast, automatic primitive response to when we feel threatened. When we reactively verbally blast a person that we're in a relationship with (in a non-life threatening circumstance with someone that we're physically safe with) this verbal blasting is always negative. It doesn't help the other person and it doesn't help ourselves.

As long as we're blasting the other person (either silently or verbally), we're escalating the anger in us. We're not helping to heal the other person or to heal ourselves.

Verbally Blasting Me In A Group Meeting

When a person reacts and verbally blasts me, more war is happening. Again, it's a very quick and automatic response. Once the person responds automatically by verbally blasting me, then what? Will the person be willing to go inside and be with the anger energy that was already inside them (and that I had nothing to do with putting there) or will the person continue to focus on me?

Charles has a saying: “It doesn’t matter who did what when.” If we’re feeling anger or sadness or grief or judgement or fear or low self worth, the story of why it’s there doesn’t matter. What matters in that moment is *releasing* the feelings. These feelings are stored up in us. Making another person wrong *does not release* these feelings. Know that the feelings are manifestations of energy. Releasing this energy then releases the feelings. This release cannot be done when we focus on the story of why the feelings are there.

It’s a very, very big step to be able to not go with the story of who did what when and to feel the pain inside and release the pain inside.

My Working With Anger Toward Charles In Group

I’ve been very angry with Charles a number of times in a group setting. Twice I said to myself that I’m never coming back. One time this went on for days.

My anger toward Charles in group has almost always not been acted out. (I don’t remember responding and verbally blasting Charles). I’m angry with him. He knows it. I know it. I wasn’t suppressing the anger or acting it out. This was just my way of being with the anger. This doesn’t have to be another person’s way of being with the anger. Even though I was very angry, I couldn’t see any reason to respond with words. I can’t explain why it was this way. There have been a number of times in relationship that I’ve reacted and verbally blasted the other person.

If I had to guess why I didn’t respond harshly with words, I’d say that I respected Charles too much. I sure as hell didn’t like what he was doing. This not acting out led to (while still being angry at him) really good constructive work.

If You Dish It Out, You Gotta Be Able To Take It Too

I’ve dished out anger to Charles; primarily by glaring. I knew that the anger inside me had nothing to do with him. *He lit the fuse but the dynamite inside me is all mine.*

In leading group, I’m getting closer to being able to take it. I’ve watched Charles for years as people have thrown anger at him through their words. He knows it’s a person’s own dynamite going off.

As I enter this fifth year, I’m more willing to take it. If the person knows that I lit the dynamite, then it’s up to the person as to how much they want to work with getting rid

of the dynamite and how much they stay with the story of me being bad. The answer determines how much they'll release the already present stockpile of dynamite (anger) inside themselves.

Either way, I'll be there.

Concluding Remarks

Most of the people reading this article are old enough to want to stop the war between ourselves and another person. People, in their youth, usually have more rashness. It's harder for them to want to stop the war when someone provokes them with words.

A prime time we can dissolve and release anger is when anger is right there; when someone lights our fuse. How much do we want to direct anger at the fuse-lighter? How much do we want to, in that moment, lessen the amount of dynamite in us? Responding by verbally blasting the other person will very likely increase the amount of dynamite in us. *If we want more peace in our life, a grand time to go for peace is the exact moment we want to go to war.* If we take the fuse-lighters as messengers to lessen our stockpile of dynamite, then we'll go in the direction of peace.

There even comes a time if someone has truly hurt us or beaten us that we'll find more advantage to forgive than to stay in anger. Anger is justified in the moment of abuse. To carry that same anger for many years hurts ourselves.

May we come to greater peace by letting go of the focus of who did what when and disarm ourselves of the anger and hatred inside of us.