



ANGER MANAGEMENT VS. ANGER RESOLUTION:

“Anger Management” classes have helped thousands of people learn better skills in sharing their anger when it occurs, rather than over-reacting to it. But at the MEIER CLINICS, we like to take it a step further—ANGER RESOLUTION. We specialize in digging out buried root problems, especially buried anger, toxic shame, rage, bitterness, as well as the usual buried fears of rejection, loneliness and other issues.

ANGER ITSELF IS NOT A PROBLEM. IT IS A GOD-GIVEN EMOTION THAT GOD HIMSELF EXPERIENCES. Jesus got angry at the money changers in the temple and chased them out with a whip. In Leviticus 19, the Jewish biblical laws taught that if someone offends you, go ahead and share your anger with that person, but do not get personal vengeance. In the New Testament, in Ephesians 4:26 and 27, the original Greek teaches us to “go ahead and get angry” when we are offended by someone, but to get rid of the anger by bedtime. If we hang on to the anger, we give Satan a foothold in our lives. And sure enough, buried anger and bitterness is the leading cause of not only headaches but biochemical depressions and even other chemical reactions that lower our antibodies and make us more likely to develop diseases. We learned in medical school that buried anger is the leading cause of death.

Many passages in the Old and New Testaments encourage us to speak the truth to one another, rebuke one another, and share our anger with each other tactfully. As iron sharpens iron, a friend who shares true emotions sharpens the countenance of his friend. Some of the anger we experience is righteous indignation because someone has hurt us in a sinful way. Some of our anger is inappropriate, and the result of paranoia, perfectionism, or selfishness. As mature believers, we need to pray about our anger, analyze it, and discuss it with mature believers involved in the situation to bring about resolution, whether the anger is righteous indignation or caused by a problem we have ourselves. But we are always instructed to turn vengeance over to God and trust Him to take care of it. The main reason we hang on to buried anger, whether aware of it or not, is an unconscious or conscious desire to get personal vengeance, but vengeance is God’s business.

Proverbs 9 teaches us that if we confront a wise man, he will love us for it. So, anger shared with a mature friend or mate will end up bringing us closer together. But Proverbs 9 also teaches us that if we rebuke a fool (a narcissist), he will hate us for it, so don’t waste your time with him. Share that anger with God, a counselor or your prayer partner and turn vengeance over to God and protect yourself from future interactions with an unteachable and self-absorbed person. If a person has a pattern of over-reacting to situations with uncalled-for anger, disproportionate anger, or unacceptable expressions of appropriate anger, that person has an anger problem that needs resolution. So let’s take a look at common causes and actual cures of anger problems—some of which may surprise you.

1. SIN (also known as NARCISSISM, SOCIOPATHY, or ENTITLEMENT): The Bible teaches us that the sin of pride causes contention. Getting angry (righteous

indignation) is normal and even godly, but sin is the number one cause of anger PROBLEMS. Anyone you feel you have to walk on eggshells around to avoid upsetting him or her is probably a narcissist. Narcissism is a fancy way of saying a person is selfish, thinks the world should revolve around him (or her), and thinks that other people are merely objects to be used or to make him look good (including his own mate and children). A narcissist thinks he should be in control, and that every problem is somebody else's fault. Anyone who thinks this way will be angry many times a day if he doesn't get his own way in every situation. Cult leaders, some political leaders, and sometimes even people in Christian ministries can be this way. Most criminals think this way. There are two main ways this is caused: being spoiled or being abused.

All of us are born with a sinful, narcissistic nature and as babies, we react with rage when we are not immediately fed or when our mothers even leave the room we are in. Through love and discipline, with good boundaries, we outgrow most of that, although none of us is perfect. We become loving and responsible human beings who value the opinions of others and seek out mutually beneficial relationships with neither party dominating the other. But the Bible teaches us that if we spare the rod, we spoil the child, and also that a child left to himself (to do whatever he wants, without discipline) will eventually bring his mother to shame (by becoming a selfish adult).

Some children, on the other hand, grow up in an abusive home, with various forms of abuse, including verbal abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, frequent shaming, or even religious abuse (using the Bible in ways it was not intended, to manipulate and humiliate children rather than teaching God's grace and forgiveness for the mistakes we all make). Abused children often have to become more selfish and rebel in order to survive. They learn to fend for themselves, hide their feelings and manipulate the environment in order to avoid the abuse. So as adults, the abused child can either become super nice to avoid being like his or her abusive parents, or can become narcissistic and abusive himself as an adult because that is what he got used to.

A spoiled child learns to be entitled and learns erroneously that the world revolves around him—at least whenever he is with his doting mother or father. As an adult, he expects the same and, in most cases, the rest of the world refuses to revolve around him, so he tends to have huge anger issues—even though statistically, he is likely to marry a masochist who was abused and therefore puts up with his abuse and even gets manipulated into thinking that SHE is crazy or the cause of their conflicts. THE CURE: Narcissists are all pretty unhappy, even if they hide it. They get depressed and even suicidal, because the only people who really enjoy life to its fullest are people who love and are loved by God, by themselves (in a Biblical perspective as God's precious child), and by others who know all their secrets and love them anyway. When a narcissist comes to a Meier Clinic Day Program for three weeks of intensive therapy to recover from suicidal depression, we do psychological testing with them so we can show them scientifically (as well as from our own observations) that they are miserable because they learned a very faulty way of looking at life from a narcissistic perspective. If they become convinced that the only way to be happy is to dedicate their lives to God and become loving and giving human beings who become more humble and less controlling, even narcissists are often willing to change in order to get the enormous benefits of living the Christian life. Narcissists who were spoiled learn mature ways of looking at life, themselves, and the people around them. Narcissists who were abused are asked to dig, probe, weep and grieve over their abuse, forgive their abusers, create boundaries from

future abuse from others, and realize there are SOME good people out there, so we all need to let our walls down enough to let a few good people in, to become emotionally intimate with as friends or as a mate. To learn more about narcissism, go to www.meierclinics.org and order the E-book, YOU MIGHT BE A NARCISSIST IF..., which I wrote with two other therapists. Long-term Christian therapy for a year or more is usually needed to reinforce biblical ways of thinking, responding and learning to love and be loved rather than to control and abuse.

2. **EXPLOSIVE PERSONALITIES:** This one may surprise you. Most explosive personalities are actually exceptionally nice people deep down inside. Explosive personalities are people who are normally very kind, loving human beings. But every once in awhile, some small thing, like road rage or a simple offense of a mate, child or coworker, will set off an unexpected fit of verbal rage, and sometimes even physical shoving or threat. But, being a nice person underneath, he will feel tremendous guilt for hurting someone, repent, and be really nice again for several months until the next explosion. This is not at all like the sociopathic, selfish narcissist, who feels little or no guilt at all for raging, and who even blames the other person for his rage. The explosive person repents and tries to make up for his outburst.

The main cause for explosiveness in an adult male is, surprisingly, being sexually molested or abused by another male during childhood. The rage and confusion that develop in a young boy who is sexually molested gets buried, along with the fear of being out of control and being controlled by someone else. Most boys who were sexually abused still turn out heterosexual, but may have multiple sexual partners in their teens or twenties to prove their masculinity. The more masculine a male feels growing up, the easier it is for that male to wait until marriage to have sex, although it is difficult for almost everyone and takes lots of godly self-discipline. Because of all the repressed rage from the abuse, the boy grows up to be a nice human being, like he was prior to the abuse, but will stuff his anger as an adult until it builds up to a point that a small offense sets off a volcanic eruption. **THE CURE:** When explosive personalities come for treatment to a Meier Clinic Day Program, we dig and probe for seven hours a day, five days a week, for three weeks to dig out every incident of childhood abuse, get them to put an empty chair in front of them, pretend the abuser is sitting in the chair, and then tell off the abuser for the abuse. Then we teach them there are seven billion people out there, most of whom are selfish, and that it is ridiculous to let one selfish abuser ruin the rest of their lives—possibly even ruin their marriages to women they love, care about and need. They have to forgive the abuser, with God's help, turning vengeance over to God, who promises in Psalm 68 to smash the heads of any abuser who abuses one of His children (unless, of course, the abuser legitimately repents—and only God knows the heart). After digging out this or other related root problems, the explosive personality can become a more wonderful and loving human being most of the time (although none of us is perfect). **ANGER MANAGEMENT** classes for someone like this will only help a little. Resolving the childhood abuse is critical to truly healing the problem. There are other causes of explosive personality in men and women, but nearly all involve some sort of abuse in childhood. Again, long term counseling by a Christian therapist will help, to practice being aware of anger as it creeps up, so it won't accumulate, and to learn to share anger appropriately.

3. **MEDICAL CAUSES:** Low thyroid causes depression and anger problems, along with dry skin, hair loss, feeling chilly when others are comfortable, constipation, weight gain and sluggishness. Sleep apnea (holding your breath

multiple times while sleeping at night) causes depression, anger problems, sluggishness, narcolepsy, obesity, brain damage, heart wall thickening, and eventually death. Any kind of brain damage, like a severe concussion, a stroke, a brain tumor, or brain damage from drug reactions or toxins, can cause a nice person to become a person who becomes rageful. THE CURE: Treating the medical cause as much as possible often helps but not always. Various medications to quiet down the brain, like GABA medications or atypical antipsychotic medications, often help. But some people with brain damage do not respond to any treatments and have to be under protective custody for their own protection and the protection of others. I would encourage you to protect yourself, your children and other loved ones from a dangerously explosive person.

4. ALCOHOLISM OR DRUG ABUSE. Alcohol, pot, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens and especially illegal amphetamines all cause brain damage. Just go to the Amen Clinic website and see the actual spec scans of brains of young people who have abused alcohol to excess or any illegal drugs and see the holes in their brains after even one year of excessive abuse. All regions of the brain are damaged, but particularly the AMYGDALA, the seat of our conscience. That is why alcoholics and drug abusers become more and more sociopathic the longer they damage their brains, eventually becoming explosive. THE CURE: There really isn't any way to heal the holes in the brain. They are permanent. But stopping the substance abuse will stop further damage from occurring. Often a psychiatrist can try various non-addicting medications, like antidepressants, GABA meds or atypical antipsychotics, or some combination of all three, to make the remaining brain cells work better. Long term Christian therapy can also help. Mental exercise and meditation on scripture can actually cause the formation of some new brain cells that will help improve the condition.

5. HORMONES: Males taking testosterone or other steroids to enhance muscle development can become physically violent and have multiple anger outbursts caused by these hormone shifts. This is extremely dangerous and parents or other family members must do all they can to be sure this ceases—even cutting off all ties with a loved one or family member who refuses to quit until he has gotten help. Women having PMS, menopause or postpartum depression can all have anger problems that are not their fault. Either their family doctor, ob-gyn doctor or a psychiatrist can try various medications to minimize these needless and embarrassing outbursts of anger. In the case of postpartum depression, the hormone changes and brain chemistry changes can become so severe that a sweet and wonderful woman can even kill her mate, her children and herself, delusionally thinking she is God and they are the devil or other psychotic thoughts that are not her fault. Postpartum depression should be treated by an MD psychiatrist, and if psychotic, hospitalization is required until the person and her family are safe again. Several weeks of atypical antipsychotic meds nearly always brings them back to normal, and then extensive therapy is needed until there is recovery. I suggest reading THE POSTPARTUM SURVIVAL GUIDE, which I wrote in 2009 with other authors (Tyndale Publisher).

6. DEPRESSION: People who, for whatever reasons, become severely depressed, become more irritable, more anxious, and even more angry at themselves. Many have panic attacks, severe insomnia and a host of other problems that result from depression. Depression is commonly known as "anger turned inward". We see thousands of depressed people at the national chain of MEIER CLINICS each month. 80% get over it with just good Christian counseling and about

20% get good Christian counseling along with antidepressant medications to get them well quicker so they can return to work, college or taking care of their families. THE CURE: Outpatient counseling is needed, with more frequent visits needed the more severe the depression. Medications help restore the chemicals that get depleted if we have significant repressed anger toward ourselves, God or others, but should always be with the intent to get counseling to resolve the root problems. For those who have tried outpatient Christian counseling and the depression has not improved, we recommend the Meier Clinics Day Program. Attending a Meier Clinics Day Program for two to three weeks can be the equivalent of six months to a year of weekly outpatient counseling.

7. GENETIC DISORDERS: Some people inherit depression, and their "happy brain chemicals" that God created in our brains, like serotonin, norepinephrine, GABA and dopamine stay depleted even if they do everything right spiritually. The brain is just one more organ in the body, like the liver, thyroid, pancreas or any other organ. If you inherit a low thyroid, you may very well die unless you take thyroid medication. If you inherit a bad pancreas, you will develop diabetes and require meds or insulin to keep you alive. You will die without insulin if you need it. The fall of Adam and Eve resulted in fallen bodies as well. Everyone Jesus healed during his personal ministry on earth died of some other cause later. God can heal anything and sometimes he does, sometimes he allows us to suffer and sometimes he allows us to die and come home to Heaven. The Apostle Paul said that he lived for Christ, but death would be a bonus for him. When we see how wonderful Heaven is, we will probably all wish we had gotten there sooner instead of worrying about dying and going there.

The Bible says that laughter does you good (and it does, releasing endorphins), LIKE A MEDICINE DOES. So the Bible is saying laughter does good, but so do certain medicines. Your brain runs on serotonin like your car runs on gasoline. If you run out of gas, do you pull over to the side of the road and pray for God to make your car run without gas? He could easily do that if he wanted to, but he would be spoiling you so He won't. You have to call AAA or go get some gas. If your brain runs out of gas, you are being arrogant to expect God to make it run without gas. Sometimes there are spiritual things you can do to help replenish the gas, but many people inherit low serotonin levels or other low brain chemicals. If someone inherits severe depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, ADHD, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, medications to correct these inherited chemical disorders can restore these people to mental health and usefulness to God, themselves, and to others, just like thyroid meds or insulin can restore genetic chemical imbalances in other organs of the body.

All of the above disorders can cause anger problems that are purely biochemical and genetic, that go away with the right medications. People with bipolar disorder are usually very nice most of the time, but during a three or four day manic phase once every few months, they become grandiose, irritable, impulsive, don't sleep much, talk fast, dominate the conversation and can't sit still for very long. Then they crash, get very depressed for a week or longer and withdraw but get sad and irritable. The anger is not their fault. It is genetic. On bipolar meds, they live a normal life and the anger outbursts are gone. It is as simple as that. If someone is arrogant and lacks understanding about brain chemistry, and then tells people with genetic mental disorders it is a sin to take medicine, they risk the lives and well-being of those people out of that ignorance. It reminds me of the little girl who loved her cat, saw it shivering in the snow outside and lovingly cooked it in the family microwave. She loved her cat to death because of her ignorance and others may be doing the same thing if they advise people not to take meds for their

biochemical, inherited imbalances. Please read my book, BLUE GENES (Tyndale, Publisher), to understand these things in greater depth.

In summary, even though righteous indignation is normal and even godly, anger for inappropriate reasons, like pride, or even hanging onto righteous sin and turning it into bitterness, are the leading causes of anger problems. But there are a host of other medical and biological reasons for people to have anger problems. Nearly all anger problems can be resolved by the various means listed above, depending on the cause of the anger problems. If you have an anger problem, get it evaluated and work to have it resolved. If a loved one has an anger problem, do what you can to help him or her become aware of it, if that person is teachable at all, and protect yourself from suffering from anybody else's anger problems. You are God's child and He never wants you to subject yourself to continued abuse.

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