

Anger is often describe as being one of the stages of grief. It is a strong emotion and can be difficult to handle.

“What Triggers Anger”

Anger is one of the most difficult emotions we have to deal with and when it comes to our children we hope to give them good behavioural habits which will last into adulthood. The first thing we need to do is to understand how anger triggers our brain. This in turn will help us to react more effectively, with ourselves and our children. Anger is rooted in our reaction to fight when we are initially alerted to danger. This includes psychological dangers such as fear, frustration, powerlessness, hurt and jealousy.

Possibly the most significant thing that happens when we get angry is the fact that the amygdala in our brain reacts first, before the rest has a chance to click into gear. The adrenalin that the amygdala triggers floods our brain switches off the thinking part of our brain literally before it starts to think.

The phrase ‘the lights are on but there is nobody at home’ can be a very apt description of what happens to us.

The reason this happens is because all our sense go through the amygdala before they get to the rest of the brain. It quite literally has a head start. It can take up to a couple of minutes before we can start to think.

This is why calming down is so important: This is what allows our thinking brain kick into gear and start to work.



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Anger

“Types of Anger”

We all react differently when we get angry. In the story we have explosive anger and stubborn taciturn anger. Both need different approaches. A big part of the rows that break out between us comes from the misunderstanding over what the other is feeling. They seem to be handling the situation differently from us therefore we can't understand them.

It is important to recognise that in our families there are a number of vying personality types and we need to take this into account. People who explode need time to calm down and people who are quiet find it hard to open up when they are angry. Each needs a different response.

Think about your family. Who is the one that explodes and which is the one that sulks? Which family member tries to mend fences first and which one needs time to lick their wounds? Are there two or three that always go head to head over anything? Is there one who will do anything to avoid a fight?

All have strengths and weaknesses of their own. How can you learn to use the strengths better?

Talking about how each of the family reacts when they get angry can be helpful for you all to learn what to do the next time it happens.

Please see **Resolving Anger** for more information on this emotion.

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