

# ANGER MANAGEMENT IN THE HOME

by Sally Burgess, Forefront Families LLC

Anger is a legitimate emotion. Everyone in the world gets angry and has also felt the effects of being around angry people. Anger is caused by many things: injustice, dissatisfaction with circumstances or self, and frustration at not being able to do or get what one wants or needs. Toddlers show their frustration frequently as they try to master developmental stages. They cannot express their needs in words effectively, but they sure do know how to wail.

Tweens and teens often feel inadequate as their hormones and subsequent feelings change, and as they adjust from being dependent children to becoming responsible young adults. They may demonstrate their dissatisfaction, confusion or frustration by verbal and physical violence, or through withdrawal. Adults have experience and authority on their side. They can use their anger as a weapon to hurt themselves and others and with long lasting effects. Lance Armstrong stated in his books that when he was a young rider he used anger to gaud himself into winning races.

Anger is an emotion that can be used for good or for destruction e.g. people have turned fear into anger to protect themselves when being attacked. Anger is an emotion that rises within. As we become conscious of its presence, we have a choice. We can quell it or fuel it. If we don't deal effectively with the anger then we are making a choice to allow it to fester or accelerate.

Kids become frustrated and angry when parents are inconsistent with discipline, break promises and treat them unfairly. Kids become fearful and angry when parents do not control their own anger, and it becomes a destructive influence within the family. Uncontrolled anger often results in verbal and physical abuse, actions which have long lasting and often irrevocable effects on others. Adults are well aware if they have an anger problem. They have usually been told throughout their lives that they need to deal with it. Prisons are full of angry people.

So, how do we deal with anger effectively? We need to recognize the emotion of anger, then immediately identify the source. It is impossible to deal with the source objectively unless we are in an emotionally stable state of mind. So we need to calm down. Take some deep breaths. Count to 20. Walk away from the situation long enough to clear our head. If we can't deal with the situation objectively then we might need to get help. Sometimes we get angry because we have red buttons that, when pushed, make us fly off the handle. Sometimes particular people or situations make us see red. We need to recognize our own issues. If you know you have an anger management problem, then get help – seriously.

The most important aspect of anger management in the home in the long term is for parents to be *effective role models*. If they are aware of their own emotions they will not allow anger to control their outcomes. They understand that with clear, objective thinking, they will see the situation as it really is and respond appropriately.

Kids will learn by your example and explanation to do the same thing. The best way to create objectivity (and not act out of anger) in the home is to create a set of *core family values*, expectations, and appropriate consequences. When a child contravenes the values, the consequence is already set and the parent just issues the corrective action as agreed and understood by the child.

There are community resources to assist you with anger management. If you, or your children feel unsafe in your home, seek help immediately.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.