

Reflecting on the Emotion of Anger

Contributed by Sr. Linda Szocik

This week we invite you to reflect on the emotion of anger. Bring to mind a situation of anger... perhaps you were separated from someone abruptly in death; you were denied the position in your parish or work that you felt ready for; you felt pressured to make a move you were not ready for; you were hurt by a comment from a friend; you reflected on Jesus confronting the money changers...

Now sit with that one situation and be compassionate toward yourself. Use this meditation or simply sit in quiet for 5 minutes.

Self-Compassion Meditation: <https://youtu.be/4MxVprypBPA> (Ctrl+Enter to follow link))

O God, quiet my heart and fill me with your compassion. Cleanse my mind of angry thoughts; cleanse my lips of angry words; and fill my heart with peace.



It is common to experience anger at a time of loss and grieving. Although anger may be denied and suppressed, it is an emotion we can bring to awareness. Reluctance to face conflict may prevent us from recognizing and working through anger. Sometimes we might not even be aware that we are angry.

Take time to reflect and learn a bit more about anger and how it can teach us... strengthen us... heal us...

Recognizing and Validating Anger

When we do not acknowledge and express anger, it can take indirect forms and appear as depression, fatigue or apathy.

Raise to your awareness a situation that has caused you to be angry, and ask:

- What might God be revealing to me in this situation?
- What valid needs of mine are not being met?
- Is there a gift which this anger is teaching me?

Some creative ways to release anger are dancing, jogging, relaxation exercises, cleaning the house; freeing the mind of rehearsing the situation that caused the anger which can recycle the pain.

Exploring the Origins of Our Anger

Understanding the reasons for your anger can lead to greater clarity about yourself and your relationships. Two key questions which help unlock these insights are:

- What am I really feeling?
- Why am I feeling this way?

Using Anger for Spiritual Growth

We can learn to look at our anger and accept it without guilt, but also to use it creatively for our own spiritual growth. In situations we face we strive to know when to become angry, and when to make peace; when to take action, and when to keep silent.

Consider questions that may help in sorting the approaches to anger:

- What am I really angry about?
- What is the problem and whose problem is it?
- How can I express my anger in a way that will not leave me feeling helpless and powerless?
- When I am angry, how can I clearly communicate my position without becoming defensive or attacking?

If you feel anger toward a person who is no longer living and you cannot express the anger directly, there is something unfinished in the relationship. Here are some suggestions:

- Write a letter that is later destroyed
- Speak to the individual in an empty chair
- Create your own ritual of closure



Praying About Your Anger

Choose an experience of anger. In communion with God, reflect on this experience: What were you angry about? What feelings lay beneath the anger? What is God revealing to you in this anger? Acknowledge the feelings and let them be your own.

Decide on one thing you can change about your action or responses that gave rise to the anger. How can you change and heal your heart? Ask for strength to carry it out.