

When rage comes welling up

There's nothing wrong in getting angry; in fact, it may be totally justified. But what we do with our anger makes a huge difference

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Now that anger has been vented, the highlight of season 5 IPL is clearly Shah Rukh Khan's spat with the security at Wankhade Stadium. It also meant that a fun trip with friends went downhill for a 13-year-old (and her father) and a match victory turned sour. "I was not drunk, but I was angry because the guard man-handled children," claims the superstar. Fans of King Khan ask: Which father would not be angry to see his child abused? His anger was genuine.

Genuine or not, anger needs to be managed, say experts. Psychotherapist Meera Ravi says: "Every show of anger is genuine from the person's viewpoint. Getting angry is a right that each of us has. It is normal, but the related behaviour makes all the difference."

Anger in certain situations is justified — when your child is abused; when you are unjustly taken for a ride, so on and so forth. Experts suggest ways and means to manage genuine anger; situations that are guaranteed to make your blood boil and get mercury rising, yet which need to be managed.

PARENTAL RAGE

You see your child getting scolded or hit by someone:

Response: This is sure to get any parent fuming. There is one important aspect here. Consider the relation of the person with the child. It could be a family member, teacher or a lawful authority — the dynamics are different for each. First, acknowledge that you are angry

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and analyse what's making you angry. Is it the cause or is it a trigger for an existing bad mood to explode. Step back for a second before reacting. Remember, you are a role model to your child and your behaviour will be emulated most of the times. Tell yourself that flaring up and/or trying to hit someone will not help the situation. Also, tell yourself that you will not be aggressive in front of your child. Speak to the person in a firm tone and ask him/her the reason for the action. Say firmly that you need to know what is happening and why. Maintain eye contact with the person. If the person in front of you is too angry to talk and is abusive, step back from the situation, especially because of your child. This is a victory and not accepting defeat. Explain to the child that it is not a good idea to have a conversation with a person who is not ready for it.

However, remember that by letting the situation go, you may be role modelling escapism. So, when the person (this applies to family members and teachers) is calm and ready to talk, bring up the situation again. Ask for the reason why they had to scold or hit the child. Understand the two sides of the situation. Tell them firmly and calmly that you don't want your child to be hit or scolded in that manner. Give them alternatives as to how to reprimand your child. Make it clear to your child as well.

OFFICE RAGE

You have caught a colleague badmouthing you or a boss who is unjust towards you....

Response: Again, acknowledge your anger and analyse the situation before taking action. First, figure out if it is a one-off thing or if it is a pattern. If the situation is a one-off thing, then always get the facts right. Most people assume more than checking out facts. Assumptions like "I know they don't like me, or she speaks to the boss all the time and that's why she got the role" are fairly common. Plus, people tend to build up stories based on other colleagues' inputs. "Oh, it happened to me also, I got it because I spoke to so-and-so" — these maybe genuine but they are not from your point of reference. Ask from the horse's mouth and this means the boss. Be courageous and ask in appropriate language the reasons why you were shortchanged. Say that "you would like some clarifications" rather than saying "I need clarifications" or you could say that "I am disappointed that I didn't get the role". Voice your concerns clearly.

If it is a colleague who has been backstabbing you, again confront the colleague and ask his/her side of the story. Don't rely on half-truths from others.

If you see a pattern in being short-changed, then instead of getting angry, understand your own shortcomings. A pattern reflects something about you and how you have not been assertive enough. Take stock of the situation and be firm in pointing it out to the people concerned. Say "I will not have it again" and put your foot down. Examine the consequences (if you really need the job) and be prepared.

RELATIONSHIP RAGE

Your spouse has cheated on you...

Response: The situation invokes extreme betrayal followed by extreme anger. But you need to assess the situation by looking at the evidence and not on suspicions. If your spouse has not been showing interest in you, it does not mean adultery. However, in genuine cases of cheating, anger is all consuming. But step back to do some self-introspection. Examine if the relationship had been 100% complete. Only if there is a gap in the relationship will a third person enter it. Next, examine your choices. Understand that by shouting and fighting, answers are not forthcoming.

Ask yourself what purpose is served by such slanging matches. Can you deal with life after divorce emotionally or financially? Separation or divorce leads to emotional vacuum. Will you be able to handle society and family queries with dignity? If children are involved, there is more reason to keep the situation peaceful. If the option is to separate,

deal with all situations, including court matters, in a dignified manner. However, if you have no choice but to give the marriage another shot, then work to mend the relationship. Talk calmly with the spouse and examine the benefits of being married to each other. If both are agreeable to continuing the marriage, avoid raking up old issues in a new fight.

ROAD RAGE

The guy behind you rams into your car — not your fault at all — and begins to abuse you...

Response: A person who says he/she does not get angry in this situation may not really understand the term anger. Before you get into a fist fight with the person involved, assess how many people will support you in case the going gets rough. Look at the choices in front of you. Do you want the person concerned to pay you for the damaged bumper? Does he have the means to pay it? If yes, then note down the licence number. Speak assertively and tell them that it is their fault. Don't use bad language. If the person can't afford to pay the damages, then is it worth the fight and the time spent? Move on rather than getting into an ugly spat. Avoid getting out of the car or stopping the vehicle when it is late in the night.

By letting the situation go, you may be role modelling escapism