



Connecting
Couples

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Thought of the Month News and Notes

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Dear Friends,

Anger. It's in the news, in politics, in the workplace, in families. If you coast along, with a few ups and downs and maybe with only a blip or two, anger may not register much with you. However, if you or a loved one seems to be subject to anger a lot or even more than usual, then this Thought is for you! Admit it, we all have urges to just lash out when we have just the "right" stimulus, since it is not our "fault" but (insert reason here) fault!

Learn more about "damage control" in this Thought! I am interested in your feedback!

As always, if you need us, just call.

Donna and David

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MARCH 2016: "The Anatomy of Anger"

It's time to understand exactly what is going on when there is a lot of anger surfacing in your relationship. Anger can be a devastating rupture to the joyful connection that we want in our intimate relationship.

I tell men that their anger is a major turn off for their partner. It is a good strategy to

learn to express our anger in ways that are connecting and even comforting, rather than the usual reactive blast that is scary. Yes, you heard me. I submit that for a man to express his negative feelings in a conscious way can actually feel like a gift to his partner who has been longing to know "what's wrong".

I tell women that their anger is most likely going to be heard as criticism and is going to send their partners into the disconnected land of shame. Sorry. That's just the way it is! Again, negative feelings carefully expressed with ownership can be a path to greater empathy.

But why is anger so triggering?

Many of us grew up in an environment where anger was scary and devastating to relationships. If the parents were angry with each other it spelled anxiety for the little ones. If the parent(s) were angry with us then it meant we were bad and possibly helpless to defend ourselves. Even in my non-emotional home, when my parents did get angry it felt like the end of the world to us children.

What is anger all about?

I think of anger as protest. When a child has a temper tantrum, it is most likely because they are being prevented from doing or having something they want. So they are protesting this situation, as silly or as useless as this might be. It's the same with adults. When we get angry at our partner we are really protesting against something they are doing or not doing that has a deleterious effect on us. It is simply that we don't like what's happening. An important note is that the anger is not really "caused" by our partner. It is our own creation to protect ourselves. When I can't get the lawn mower started and I wind up kicking it and cursing it, no reasonable person would say that the lawn mower did anything to me. It

failed to start for very explainable and emotionally neutral reasons. (Probably it's that I didn't clean the air filter.)

When Tom Hanks' character kicks Wilson out of the cave in a fit of rage, it is because of his dilemma and not due to anything Wilson did. He is protesting his situation and the resulting fears he is dealing with.

Which brings us to the last point about anger. Beneath all anger, I believe, is some lurking fear. Our kid runs into the street and we get angry at them. Are we really just angry or does fear lie at the root of our response?

The same is true with our partner. I see anger as a protest or a hedge against the possibility that our partner does not fully see our point of view. Or that they may hurt us somehow. Or that they may not even love us or care.

And, of course, beneath all this is a childhood hurt or fear that still lives in us. When we had car trouble and Donna innocently asked "Did you change the oil like it says?" I flew into a holy rage. Does she see me as totally incompetent? Why is she criticizing me? And, Oh yes, my father had a way of pointing out all the things I didn't do right. I developed a permanent sunburn around such criticism, and it felt like Donna was slapping my sunburn all over again.

So the next time anger rears up in your relationship, take a few moments to consider these thoughts. It may help in damage control.

As always, we welcome your feedback and responses.

We still have several spots left for our unique second level workshop on April 23-24.

David (and Donna)

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES
COMING UP!**

***Be sure to watch this space or check our web
site for future opportunities.***

Getting the Love You Want Workshops

May 20-22, 2016, Frederick, MD

June 17-19, 2016, Frederick, MD

July 15-17, 2016, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshops

**April 23-24, 2016 (there are a few slots left!
Call today!)**

September 24-25, 2016

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

**People ask me what I do in winter when
there's no baseball. I'll tell you what I do. I
stare out the window and wait for spring.
Rogers Hornsby**

**Behold, my friends, the spring is come; the
earth has gladly received the embraces of the
sun, and we shall soon see the results of their
love! Sitting Bull**

**In the Spring, I have counted 136 different
kinds of weather inside of 24 hours. Mark
Twain**

**"I love being married. It's so great to find one
special person you want to annoy for the rest
of your life." Rita Rudner**

**Italy, and the spring and first love all together
should suffice to make the gloomiest person
happy. Bertrand Russell**

**Spring being a tough act to follow, God
created June. Al Bernstein**

**"If you text 'I love you' to a person and the
person writes back an emoji - no matter what
that emoji is, they don't love you back."
Chelsea Peretti**

**"A little Madness in the Spring Is wholesome
even for the King." Emily Dickinson**

**"Despite the forecast, live like it's Spring."
Lilly Pulitzer**

**"Love is telling someone their hair extensions
are showing." Natasha Leggero**

**"In the spring, at the end of the day, you
should smell like dirt." Margaret Atwood**

**"Spring is nature's way of saying, Let's
party!" Robin Williams**

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in
touch!**

Sincerely,

**David and Donna Bowman
Bowman & Associates, PA**

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