

Angie's Marriage Column ~ September 14, 2011

[What can you do to help your angry spouse?](#)
[What can an angry person do to help themselves?](#)

Ask Angie: my husband gets angry quite easily and shouts at myself and my daughter anywhere and anytime. This makes us very cautious and careful with him as we don't know when the situation will become embarrassing. He always blames us for causing him to behave this way as we can prevent the situation from escalating. It's been over 25 years and I am tired of living like this and I fear for my daughter who has been scarred from this unstable and abusive relationship.

Marriage Guidance: You both need to learn how to detach from the abuse. You need to send your husband this marriage column to his email or print it out and leave it for him to read. When people write into the ministry with problems it is always the "other spouse" that has the problem. We can tell you what you can do about the "other spouse" but the wrong/error/sin of the other spouse needs to be brought up, otherwise how will they ever come out of denial and receive healing? How can the marriage ever be restored with God if one spouse is still living in the error of their ways?

Pray for your husband! I know it doesn't seem right praying for someone who is mean and abusive. 25 years is a long time to endure living with an angry person. But we must learn to pray for others who need Christ in their life. God is faithful to us in wisdom and guidance when we have faith to go to Him!

You never mentioned that your husband has gotten physically violent so I am assuming that he has not. We would give totally different advice if that was happening.

Coming out of Denial and Realizing the Anger Problem

Alcoholics never come to us saying they have a problem, no; in fact it is always the spouse of an alcoholic who comes to us with their spouses alcohol problems. That's because most alcoholics are in denial of having a problem with drinking—and they justify reasons why they can drink. Angry people are usually in denial of being abusive with their spouse because they justify reasons why they can behave angry and abusive with their spouse.

Living as an angry, bitter and resent-filled person is an addiction—it is an addiction of living within our negative emotions. **Your husband probably does not even realize he has this anger problem because he thinks that his behavior is normal.**

A Constant Angry/Bitter Person is Addicted to their Feelings

Anger is a deep-seated emotion that can remain bottled up within a person for years, and maybe forever. After being angry for so many years and never understanding why you are angry is a form of addiction because it is habitual. Angry people *think* they feel better when they control others with their emotional fits and bouts of abuse, but what it does is alienate them from loved ones instead and it causes animosity between families. **Angry people desperately NEED to get to the root problem of "why" they are angry before they lose what is most important to them, their family.**

Loving someone who has anger problems is often difficult to do. **Living with an angry person is like being on an emotional roller coaster ride because you never know when they might explode.** It's much like living with an alcoholic. Does it seem like you're always walking on eggshells? Are you afraid to speak up because you might get yelled at and verbally abused, or worse, hit?

The truth is we all feel anger from time to time and most of us take the needed steps to relieve ourselves of that anger. Some of us express ourselves through writing, while some of us go jogging, or go on an eating rampage. Some of us actually know how to express anger in a good way to the person we are angry with and our anger subsides. After a time, the anger is gone and we resume our lives normally. And then some of us angrily explode at those we live with and love, all the time, and every day. This is wrong—it is not fair to the one who is angry and it is not fair to the person(s) who is on the receiving end of the anger.

When a person who is considered to have anger problems becomes angry it is because they have harbored pain from a past event or situation. Often times the angry person will habitually lock in their emotions and then explode during stressful situations and circumstances that are going on in their life. This way of living becomes a habit for them, and until they learn how to express their emotions productively they will express themselves in the wrong ways, which alienates them from others. It is really sad when a daughter is afraid to be around her dad because of the anger he is locking up within his soul. But it doesn't have to be like this.

Angry people feel more vulnerable and so they use anger as a way to express themselves and get temporary relief. **They use their anger as a weapon of sorts.** But angry people always remain hostile inside of themselves because they never truly get to the root of the anger problem. *They don't even know why they are angry.* Anger is a symptom of a deep-rooted issue within the psyche of a person. **God is our Healer but if we are not going to God with our problems we will remain a slave to our angry emotions and those we love will also remain a slave to our angry outbursts.** Unless YOU learn to detach emotionally from the angry person.

Angry people often feel out of control and have this intense need to control people and circumstances around them. This is very unrealistic. What they don't understand is they can't control what other people say and do, but they can control themselves and circumstances that they create.

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
the courage to change the things I can;
and the wisdom to know the difference.*

What Can You Do To Help Your Angry Spouse?

Anger never resolves issues. If you live with an angry spouse you should learn to detach so the anger won't gobble you up with it. **Anytime you retaliate with angry and abusive words back to an angry person you're fueling the fire.** Simply walk away. You want to put the fire out, not rekindle it. Anyone who lives with an angry person needs to learn how to emotionally detach

from the anger. Don't let the abuse control how you feel or control what you do, or control your behaviors.

By learning to detach emotionally from the angry person you do not allow the abuse to control you. There is no reason you should take the brunt of anyone's abuse, ever. Leave the room. Go to a friend's house. Take the kids out for ice cream. Take a walk. But try not to fight back with an angry person—that's not going to get anything resolved. **Let your angry spouse know that you would love to talk with them when they are calm and ready to talk.** But as long as they remain filled with aggressive emotions you are unable to be around them.

Don't facilitate your spouse's angry outbursts; walk away, leave the room and or leave the home if you have to. Be an example—show the proper way for releasing emotions and stress through your own actions. When you detach in a loving way you send signals to the angry person that their behavior is not tolerable with you any longer. Eventually they will learn that if they want to get a point across, behaving verbally abusive is not the way to express it. When we detach from the angry person that is when they realize they have an anger problem.

Encourage your spouse to let go of hurt and pain they may be feeling inside. Let them know it is ok to talk about their feelings with you because you care about them and want to help. But understand it's like dealing with an alcoholic. They have to see the problem or wound within themselves and heal that wound through the only way that actually works, and that is through the acceptance and forgiveness of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **Pray for your spouse. Read the bible together.**

Anger is a sin because having an angry heart leads to violence, hatred and sometimes murder. What is within our heart and mind comes out in our actions. Angry people need God just like any other person who is controlled by an addiction needs God. God is our Healer!! Without Jesus Christ living within us we are nothing!!

How Can an Angry Person Help Themselves?

Understand how to let go of emotions in productive ways. Remember there is always an underlying *reason* for deep-seated anger. Once you realize *why* you become angry, take the needed steps to heal yourself from within so you can be a better communicator and express yourself in productive ways rather than in violent ways. **Pray about your anger.** Sincerely ask God to help you understand better ways to express yourself and to not allow your emotions to control you.

When you feel yourself getting angry, don't abuse your spouse with that anger. Go outside and run around the house ten times instead. Beat on a punching bag, or do fifty to a hundred pushups, but **never hurt your spouse or loved ones with your emotions.** Don't bully your spouse around and make them walk on eggshells. Is that really what you want? There are far more productive ways to communicate your emotions.

After you have calmed down, think about what you would like to say to your spouse. Take several long, slow deep breaths and exhale slowly. What are you thinking about when you

become filled with anger? How can you relate your anger into words? Even if you think it doesn't make sense you need to express your thoughts. Learn to get your feelings out in the open so issues can be resolved. Don't keep your feelings bottled up. Express yourself by writing a letter or by talking to yourself about your feelings. **Talk to God about how you feel. He will listen to you but don't expect an answer the way you want.** God will guide your heart to do what is right, even if at the time you don't think it seems right. When you expect a certain outcome that is when you will be disappointed, so then don't expect. Follow the leading of the Holy Spirit rather than your own spirit. **The flesh is weak but you can fight this battle and win!**

Bottom line is it's perfectly ok to feel anger. But it is not ok to abuse others with impulsive, violent emotions. **Exercise:** Write down on paper how you can assertively and productively express yourself in words rather than explode in a rage. Write down what you will say. Keep the paper handy, where you can see it and read it every day.

How can we stop being abusive with our spouse and be assertive instead? It's easy once we learn a few simple communication techniques. When we are frustrated, disappointed, stressed, or angry what happens? We use our emotions in negative ways with our spouse. This causes a chain reaction and they become abusive back. But this kind of interaction between married couples does not resolve anything, but only makes things worse!

The truth is we can control our emotions and the way we express ourselves—we really can! We can grow away from the habit of using our emotions destructively and start using them constructively. I always say that emotions are ok to have as long as couples don't verbally abuse one another with angry words and fist.

We have to get our feelings out somehow and so learning to be productive with our feelings is where to start.

10 Ways to Be More Productive During an Argument or When Trying to Express Yourself

- 1) **Listen to what your spouse has to say, even if you disagree!** Hold back from interrupting because quite frankly, it is very rude to interrupt people when they are trying to express themselves, even if they are expressing themselves in a negative way.
- 2) If there is anything ambiguous that your spouse said to you then have them clear it up so you do understand. **What's the use in listening if you aren't really hearing?**
- 2) Once they're done talking its now you're turn. **Don't fingerprint, blame, or accuse** your spouse of any wrong doing, even if you think they are wrong! There is a special way you communicate your feelings without them becoming defensive and denying what you said about them.
- 3) **Keep an even tone as your speak.** Don't sound whiny, squeaky, naggy, or yell and scream at your spouse. That's abusive!

4) Use sentences that start with “I feel”, “I wish” and “I think”. **Don’t tell your spouse how they feel** and don’t tell them what they should do or what they are. How do you know any of those things if you aren’t them? Let **them tell you how they feel**.

5) **If you are too angry to talk with an even tone then you need to leave the room.** Too much anger will not resolve the issue and will only make it worse.

6) **Be sure you know your own feelings before telling your spouse your feelings.** What are your needs? What do you need rectified from this argument? What do you want from your spouse? What are you going to do to help rectify the issue at hand?

7) **Don’t keep your feelings and needs inside.** Bottled up feelings cause resentment and anger. Resentment is a marriage destroyer. Resentment will also hurt your spiritual lives tremendously because it keeps you bitter inside and distant from God.

8) **Be assertive with how you feel and what you want.** Don’t be afraid to express your feelings about issues in marriage. This is the number one problem why couples grow apart—it is because they DO grow apart—they don’t know one another anymore. **If you don’t talk with your spouse about how you feel and what you need then how on earth can they even begin to oblige themselves to you?**

9) Realize you may or may not get every need or want met through your spouse. **Some needs and wants are not the responsibility of your spouse.** Your spouse can’t make you 100 percent happy all of the time. That is just asking for too much. Find ways that you can make yourself happy through God, community, hobbies, and serving others—there is always happiness found there.

If you happen to know that you are an angry person or if you know you are resentful, come out of yourself and begin doing things for others and this will help you to look at your old self and see how wrong it was to treat others so badly. That’s not who you are, that’s who you are making yourself become. But you do not have to be an angry person because God has given us all with the ability to be loving people. It happens through our relationship with Jesus.

10) Be sure to do the things you can to encourage, support, and show appreciation of the person you married. **Don’t hold back your love.** Learn to compromise, communicate, and to come up with solutions to the issues that are affecting your marriage.

All of the suggestions above is actually being assertive and will improve your marriage immensely. Being assertive with your feelings and needs lets your spouse *know* the person they married. It allows them to either give in to those needs or at least talk to you about them so you can both come up with an amicable solution. **Assertiveness frees you from holding in bottled up emotions and later getting resentful, or worse, being abusive with your loved ones.**

Being assertive makes you happy, which makes your spouse happy. Assertiveness is the way to productive communication. This is why **I highly recommend that the reader of this article print it out and read it together with their spouse.** Ask God to help you with your angry

emotions. Remember marriage is a partnership and it takes two to tango just like it takes two to stay married.

In Christ,
Frank and Angie
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Marriage Preparation ~ Godly Courtship
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Watch our family videos of Cuenca
<http://www.youtube.com/user/HMFamilyLife>

Note*** If an angry person becomes physically violent or behaves as if they are going to become physically violent then you and anyone else in the home must separate yourselves from that person.

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