



Anger – Does it have an upside?

Confession... COVID is wearing on me. Is it on you? I find my *anger trigger* can be a hair trigger far too often, usually “aimed” at those closest to me; namely my wife, Lyn... NOT GOOD!

After nearly a year of living with this pandemic, we’re all a bit beat down. Agreed?

My question to myself is:

Do I have a choice?

I do know the answer: YES! And, YES! When it comes to anger, I do have a choice.

How can I “de-couple” my impulse from my action? Think of a train. If you’ve ever traveled in Europe, you may have noticed that when trains pull in to stations, sometimes they leave with fewer cars than they came in with. The train “de-couples” some cars.

Is it possible to de-couple from my anger? I believe it is. HOW? Here’s a hint: it isn’t by TRYING harder. Instead, it’s by TRAINING. What if, in the 0.3 second window I have between a driver cutting in front of me and me laying on the horn (or using some other “gesture” – you all know what I mean) I pause, breathe and de-couple from my normal response? And then, the next time the person in front of me in the grocery check-out line decides to tell his life story to the cashier, what if I were to pause, breathe and realize that this may be the only social interaction my check-out-line buddy will have today? If I were to get enough “reps” in, might my new response to my trigger change?

A friend recently interviewed Russell Brand on a Zoom call. One of his questions was what were a few life lessons Brand had learned, even during the pandemic. Brand wrote a great book on addiction, *Recovery*, and his response to my friend was:

Change is possible. Hope is real.

Wow! Are those statements true? Might they be true for me?

Another conversation with a friend comes to mind. He’s had some business challenges. The “lockdown” has really hurt his business; threatened its continued existence. If there is any “justification” to being angry, he has it. Despite his current situation, he reminded me of something we’ve discussed numerous times. He said,

Mark, there is no upside to anger.

Again, Wow!!

One last one. In some reading of late, from Dallas Willard, in *The Divine Conspiracy*, I came across this:

Most people carry a supply of anger around with them...

To cut the root of anger is to wither the tree of human evil...

Influential people tell us today that we must be angry, that it is necessary to oppose social evil...

There is nothing that can be done with anger that cannot be done better without it...

So, what do you think? Is it worth TRAINING to DE-COUPLE from anger? Why not go for it? You might just be glad you did!