

ANGER

PARENTING CHALLENGES ★ PAGE 1 OF 2

I teach three hour trainings on Anger Management, so please realize that this is a smidge of what I believe to be true about working effectively with anger.

ANGER, RESENTMENT AND REVENGE: Anger that is not dealt with (not expressed or in some positive way vented), turns to resentment. Resentment that is not dealt with, turn to revenge. The anger-resentment-revenge cycle starts small, builds and then (like a volcano) erupts. The fact that we have not taught parents (who would then teach their children) how to diffuse anger has caused a multi-generational problem. Too many people are too angry.

The best way to diffuse anger is to r-u-n. RUN! Instead of giving a really angry child a time out (sit on the chair until the timer goes "ding",) take the child outside.

"I am going to count to ten. Before I get to ten, you will run and touch that tree and run back and touch my hand."

Running diffuses the amount of anger inside of the child.

Riding a bicycle really fast, rollerblading, running in place--may take the place of running. I used to run up, walk down, run up my stairs to diffuse my anger.

Teach children to take slow, deep breaths to calm down. The child can walk and breathe--slowly in, slowly out. This process helps the body to calm down.

For years, I have been teaching appropriately hitting something as a means of diffusing anger. We had a black punching bag in our garage and a blue plastic bat. Taking swings at the black bag was one way every member of our family diffused anger. **THIS METHOD OF DIFFUSING ANGER HAS BEEN CHALLENGED BY A PERSON I RESPECT.** Her rationale is that hitting something when angry teaches a child to be violent. Teaching a child to appropriately hit something can be an alternative to throwing something off the wall, breaking things or otherwise being destructive with really volatile anger. In a world where so much anger is stuffed inside, I see appropriately hitting something as a way of teaching children to get rid of their destructive anger. I am still processing her challenge--and I offer this information to the reader as a consideration.

My children would throw bean bags into an "anger" box to diffuse their anger. I was careful to mention that bean bags are only thrown into the box, not off the walls, lights, etc. I would model throwing bean bags into the angry box; the angry box became a place for each of us to download our inappropriate anger.

More harm is done from irrational anger than our anger-filled news programs relate. Mountains of hurt can come from a single moment of anger. Parents emotionally and physically harm their own children in a moment of anger. Every single one of us carries a scar from someone's anger. No message is ever received with anger wrapped around it. It is too frightening to hear the message. What is received is, "Don't do this around me again or something bad will happen to you." A child learns to modify behavior in order to live successfully in the world when love is wrapped around the message.

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Whatever is going on in your life, however huge the challenges, however enormous your stress and fear, one fact remains: You chose to have this child. It is your responsibility to diffuse your anger so you do not harm him or her. An emotionally damaged child will try to function in the world and will create an endless cycle of self-harm. Some children who have been harmed from parental anger will harm other people. Get help if you need it. Please!....for the sake of our children.....for the sake of our world.....for your sake--Get help if your anger is too explosive.