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Parenting Made Easy System

**NAVIGATING THE CHOPPY WATERS OF  
THE TEENAGE YEARS**

**DAY 6: HANDLING ANGER POSITIVELY**

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**In a nutshell** – Today, we are going to look at how to handle anger positively ...

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*Welcome back!*

Everyone gets angry with their kids at some time or another - it's normal - it's healthy. Kids know just what buttons to push and they push them at regular intervals!

I think it helps to accept that anger is an honest emotion, but it's what you choose to do with your anger that's important. If you don't express your anger, and instead you suppress it, it can lead to frustration, resentment, bitterness and a sense of hopelessness and depression. Clearly this is not a good thing for either you or your children long term.

Resentment builds walls between you and your teen. So, how do you handle your anger and release your temper in a healthy way?

One way is to press your internal (and imaginary) "pause button" like the one on your TV and ask yourself "What exactly am I annoyed about?" This helps you step back from the situation that you find yourself in - immediately giving yourself some distance between you and your anger - and helps you to get back in control and to calm yourself down.

You will probably discover that you get wound up by the same things over and over again, so this is a great opportunity to ask yourself another empowering question:

***"What would I like to see happen in a perfect world?"***

Asking yourself this question helps you start focusing on a new solution to your frustration. So, relax, start to breathe slowly and deeply, and get very, very specific about what it is you want to see happen. This will give you clarity and direction, which in turn you will be able to pass on to your children who often don't understand what exactly it is you want them to do.

Also ask yourself:

***“Is my attitude moving me closer to or further away from the relationship I want with my children in the long term?”***

This question takes you into the bigger picture of your parenting. It immediately changes your perspective, which can be extremely powerful and helpful.

Another positive step to take is to talk openly and honestly to your child about how you are feeling. You can say something like:

***“I’m tired telling you this over and over again because I feel.....”***

***“I’m angry with you because ....”***

***“I’m hurt because you did.....”***

This teaches your child about empathy and immediately takes the emotional charge out of your own energy and frustration.

## The mirror technique

If you feel like screaming and shouting at your kids then your own anger has probably been building up for too long! One helpful strategy to try is to talk to a mirror. Stand in front of a mirror and imagine talking to your teenager as if they were looking straight at you. Imagine them sitting calmly, attentively and in a relaxed state listening to everything you say.

Tell them exactly how you feel - pour out your heart - speak truthfully - explain all the frustration, anger, hurt or disappointment. The idea is to get all your feelings out in a safe and healthy way.

Some people hit pillows, bounce on the bed, hit golf balls in the garden or go for a long hard walk around the block - I have even been known to go into a cupboard and have a good swear to myself! Do something physical to release your charged-up emotions. Don't be reckless or dangerous to yourself or your teen. Just step back, breathe deeply and slowly, and do what suits you.

Your anger can be a really positive opportunity to find out what's really bothering you deep down. Just stop and ask yourself "What am I so angry about?" You will get clarity from asking that question, and it will help you identify what you'd like to change. It's usually something small or quite trivial, but changing it can make a big difference in your life and help you move forward, rather than stay stuck where you are.

Once you've expressed your anger about the behaviour that you don't like in your child, do your best to forgive them and to forgive yourself. Have a hug, say sorry and move on to learn the lesson from the experience. Teach your teenager this technique too, and encourage them to use it, as a healthy way to release their pent up emotions and frustrations.

## Habitual anger

Maybe you're a person who's been angry for a long time or a major part of your life? I call this "habitual anger" because you've got used to behaving in this way for so long that it has become a habit.

Habitual anger is trying to tell you something. The solution is to ask yourself some better questions - questions that empower you and give you an insight into yourself:

- Why am I choosing to be angry all the time?
- What am I doing to create these situations time and time again?
- What is it that's making me angry?
- Who am I really angry at?
- What do I believe about my life that causes all these frustrations?
- Is this the only way I can react to life?
- What could I do differently?
- How could I feel more in control of my life?

Habitual anger is not good for your body as it creates stress, tension and illness. So it's really important that you start to understand what's causing it and to make changes that will help you feel more in control of your life.

Many women (and particularly mums) have been taught that to be angry was something bad and unacceptable, and that to lose your temper meant you were a "Bad Person" or a "Bad Parent." So, many mums have learned to feel guilty and to swallow their anger rather than express it healthily.

This is an unhealthy way to handle anger as it can turn inwards and make you feel unhappy, helpless, stuck, depressed and generally out of control of your life. So acknowledge that it's perfectly normal to lose your temper sometimes and find a strategy or technique that suits you to release it safely.

You are still a role model for your teenager regardless of their age and in everything that you do so teach them how to handle anger and frustration healthily and talk about it with them.

What better gift can you give your emerging young adult?

## Now it's your turn!

If you can honestly say that you never get angry or frustrated, and that you are the epitome of calm and reason, then you've earned yourself a day off from homework. Assuming that you are like the rest of us, however, here is your mission for today:

Get your pen and paper, and record your answers (honestly) to the following questions:

1. What behaviour in my teenager makes me get angry?
2. How do I normally deal with this anger?
3. What could I do instead when I feel my anger start to appear?

## A Quick Recap

- We have learned that regular family chats or "family meetings" are a great way sort out the usual ups and downs of family life.
- Everyone gets angry with their kids at some time or another.
- It's important to find an outlet for your anger, rather than suppress it.
- If you lose your temper with your children frequently, your relationship with them is only going to go further downhill.
- Habitual anger happens when you've been angry for so long that it has become a habit.
- Learn to release your anger and you will see your relationships improve almost immediately.

**Next time ...**

We are going to look at tools and techniques that will help you become a brilliant listener, and turn you into a parent that your teenager will enjoy confiding in! ...

*See you then!*



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