

Moving Through Your Anger

Read about anger during and after your divorce. Remember that anger isn't only normal, but it is necessary to begin the healing process. This article helps you to let go and move on, so you can begin the road to a happy life.

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Categories: Coping with Divorce, Divorce and Annulment, Divorce Recovery, Health and Well-Being, Marriage and Divorce, Relationships and Dating, Spirituality and Divorce

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Holding onto anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.

~ The Buddha

Anger, one of the five stages of the entire grief process (along with denial, bargaining, depression, and acceptance), is normal and healthy. Anger is not only healthy, it is even considered to be an essential part of grieving. As uncomfortable as it can be to feel heightened levels of anger for an extended period, it is crucial to allow yourself to go through this phase.

Anger can be a very scary experience, regardless of whether it's your own anger or anger that is directed at you. For this reason, many people try hard to avoid it. Yet feeling angry is not wrong. It's what you do with your anger that determines whether it is constructive or destructive.

Using anger to stand up for yourself and to take care of yourself and your children can actually serve you well. That is constructive. Screaming and raging can damage relationships and self-esteem and is, therefore, destructive.

Another expression of anger not discussed as often as screaming and raging is the kind of anger in which someone seethes for years. This is the person who cannot get over the wrongs that have been done to her or him, and self-identifies as a victim. Although it may feel powerful to wield your anger over someone, it is actually quite disempowering, because you are spending your valuable time and energy thinking about the person with whom you are angry. The act of focusing on that other person is sometimes called "giving your power away."

Because divorce is such an intense experience, fraught with feelings of rejection, failure, and mistrust, it is a situation in which people have the potential to stay angry for years. They may resent the fact that they have had to return to work, or that they now have the burden of child care responsibilities, or that they have no hope of having children anymore and feel that they "wasted" valuable years with their ex-spouse. Perhaps they trusted someone who was untrustworthy and now their anger is directed at themselves as well as at their spouse.

There are endless scenarios and reasons why people can become—and stay—angry, but if you do stay angry, you should know that the toxic emotion is in you and the other person may have no clue that you are feeling the way you do. It is always in your best interest to move beyond feeling high levels of anger.

AFFIRMATION

I am moving through my anger today.

stronger day-by-day

This article has been edited and excerpted from *Stronger Day By Day* with permission by New Harbinger Publications, Inc, copyright © 2010, Susan Pease Gadoua is the author of *Contemplating Divorce, A Step-by-Step Guide to Deciding Whether to Stay or Go* (August 2008), and *Stronger Day by Day: Reflections for Healing and Rebuilding After Divorce* (July 2010). Susan is a licensed therapist based in the San Francisco Bay Area with an expertise in marriage and divorce.