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MARRIAGE: ANGRY OUTBURSTS

Angry outburst is the third step of the process of SELFISH DEMANDS, DISRESPECTFUL INTERPRETATIONS and then ANGRY OUTBURSTS.

Anger is deceitful: It lets you forget what really happened and offers you a distortion of the truth.

Whom do you believe? Give the benefit of the doubt to the victim.

Angry outbursts are a form of temporary insanity.

What is said and done often is irrational and psychotic....out of touch with reality.

The details of the angry outburst are often forgotten or remembered falsely.

Irrationality takes a detour around our intelligence.

We act in a primitive and irrational manner.

Anger is deceitful and it is also cunning.

Anger tries to convince you that an angry outburst is an appropriate reaction.

We feel that someone else “made us” angry. If they had been more considerate we would not have lost our temper.

We tell our partner that they deserve our angry reaction because they caused them.

Here are some steps for stripping anger's deceit and cunning from outbursts so that anger can be seen for what it is: an ugly monster.

STEP ONE: Identify instances of angry outbursts and their effects.

1. On a scale from 0 to 6, with 0 indicating no unhappiness and a 6 indicating extreme unhappiness, what number most accurately reflects how much unhappiness you experience when your partner attacks you with an angry outburst?
2. How often does your partner attack you with an angry outburst?
3. When your partner attacks you with an angry outburst, what does your partner typically do? List the ways you are attacked.
4. Which of the ways you are attacked cause you the greatest unhappiness?
5. When did your partner first attack you with an angry outburst?
6. Have partner's angry outbursts increased or decreased in intensity and/or frequency since they first began?
7. How do recent angry outbursts compare to those of the past?

The deceit and cunning of anger will blind us to the truth about our anger. The victim is much better able to record what the partner does when angry. Accept your partner's descriptions (above) at this stage.

Anger is a threat to the safety and security of your partner. You may think your anger is an honest expression of your frustration. You partner sees it as an ambush, a painful attack. It now makes you your partner's worse enemy. I call these "Disrespectful Judgments."

The partner who uses angry outbursts needs to answer why the partner does it.
Why do you lose your temper?

STEP TWO: Understand why angry outbursts take place.

1. What are the most important reasons that you use angry outbursts to punish your partner?
2. When you use angry outbursts to punish your partner, what do you typically do?
3. When you use angry outbursts to punish your partner, what hurts your partner the most?
4. After you use angry outbursts to punish your partner, do you usually feel better about the situation than before you used angry outbursts?
5. Do you feel that punishment evens the score and that without it your partner wins and you lose?
6. Did you even try to control or avoid using angry outbursts to punish your partner? How do you accomplish this control? What can you do to control these angry outbursts?
7. If you were to decide never to use angry outbursts to punish your partner again, how would you stop?
8. Are you willing to stop using angry outbursts to punish your partner? How would you change your approach to your partner to overcome anger?

You will note all these questions assume that angry outbursts are intended to be a punishment.

Anger is always punishment.

One of the ways people deceive themselves about anger is to interpret anger as something other than punishment.

The purpose of anger is to inflict pain and suffering on the target.

Once anger is seen for what it is, the easier it is to answer the questions above.

Here are some more questions to answer as you begin to figure out how to overcome angry outbursts.

STEP THREE: Try to avoid the conditions that tend to trigger angry outbursts.

1. In the instances of angry outbursts that you identified in Step Two, describe the conditions that seemed to trigger them. Include your physical condition (amount of sleep, physical health) setting, people present, and behavior of the people present, your mental state and any other relevant information.
2. What changes in any of these conditions or efforts to avoid those conditions might help you stop angry outbursts in the future?
3. What changes identified in question #2 can be made with your partner's enthusiastic agreement?
4. Create a plan. You and your partner must work to come up with a negotiated plan that both of you will work upon to avoid these conditions that are a part of these angry outbursts. Agree also on a deadline when you will have accomplished these goals.

Two very serious mistakes are the source of all the triggers for angry outbursts. **First**, there is the mistake of assuming that caring people make sacrifices for each other.

If you are doing something for your partner that you regard as a sacrifice, stop doing it.

It is a mistake. Partners who care for each other always consider how the other person feels.

A caring partner never expects or wants their partner to suffer for them.

Only uncaring will set up a desire to make the other person hurt or sacrifice.

Second, there is the mistake of what each person believes they have come to agreement upon.

Both must clearly state what they understand to be their agreement.

Often we believe that there has been an agreement that "if I do this for you, you will do that for me." Make sure that agreements are clearly understood by both persons.

Angry outbursts often come at the end of a series of mistaken beliefs about agreements.

This includes telling your partner what to do with a demand.

Your partner will not comply with a demand.

You then turn to an angry outburst...."do it or else."

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Angry outbursts can be a reaction to your partner's failure to meet your
DEMAND.

Angry outbursts can be a reaction to your partner's DEMAND of you.

It is the DEMAND that is the mistake.

Demands are important triggers to angry outbursts.

The same is true of DISRESPECTFUL JUDGMENTS.

It is the disrespectful judgment that is the mistake that leads to angry outbursts.

Your physical state of mind may also be a mistake that leads to angry outbursts:
(physical surroundings; life style; etc.)

The first line of defense against angry outbursts is to eliminate those conditions that trigger angry outbursts.

STEP FOUR: When you cannot avoid conditions that trigger angry outbursts, work with a counselor or a support group to help you to learn to control your temper in those conditions.

You need to develop a person or group to provide encouragement and accountability in avoiding angry outbursts.

You find you are not able to eliminate the triggers.

Your partner is uncooperative.

Partner refuses to stop doing the things that irritate you.

You must learn to control your anger.

It is possible to overcome angry outbursts even when the partner makes a mistake that would trigger an angry outburst.

Angry outburst should be avoided at all costs because they are a severe form of abuse.

A mistake by your partner is never an excuse for angry outbursts.

Avoid losing your temper regardless of what the partner does.

Walk away. Leave the situation that is causing you to be angry.

If you cannot guarantee your partner's safety because you cannot control your angry outbursts, then you should not be with your partner until you can learn to guarantee their safety.

Stop doing what irritates me and I'll control my temper.

There are many situations where we cannot make our partner do what we tell them.

The goal is to avoid angry outbursts when you are irritated the most, that is, when they seem most insensitive.

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Please list all instances of your partner's angry outbursts and acts that you consider punishment for something you did.

STEP FIVE: Measure your progress.