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Helping organizations and individuals maximize their human assets.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH:

“It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit.”

-Harry S Truman

IN THIS ISSUE:

Dealing with Anger in a Marriage

Anger is a feeling, a natural emotion, a human response to your safety, well-being, and happiness. Everyone experiences anger - some people more intensely and frequently than others. Though anger is one of the most common emotions known to the human race, few people are skilled at reacting to this feeling with complete effectiveness. [MORE...](#)

When Tragedy Strikes At Work

Imagine that you, as a manager, are busy with your many daily responsibilities, when tragedy strikes. As you would expect, there are no easy answers, and each situation presents its own set of challenges. However, there are some general guidelines to help you in most situations. [MORE...](#)

Key Steps to Success in Counseling

There are four key steps to being successful in the counseling process: Willingness, Motivation, Commitment, and Faith. [MORE...](#)

Courtesy of USA Today

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Dealing with anger...

Many of us rely on a few specific responses that we learned as children and continue to use as adults. These responses can turn into constructive or destructive behavior. Recognizing what makes us angry can help us find better ways to cope with this emotion. It's not whether we get angry, but what we do with our anger that matters.

Those who have studied anger indicate that more anger is developed in marriage relationships than in any other relationship. Unresolved anger is the principal cause of violence toward another person. Successful anger management can mean the difference between marital joy or absolute misery. The success or failure of a marriage may depend on the way a couple copes with their anger.

Misconceptions of Anger

Many of us hold misconceptions of anger and these misconceptions can lead people to cover up their anger in different ways. According to D. L. Carlson, five misconceptions are:

- * If you don't look angry on the outside, you don't have a problem with anger.
- * If you ignore hurt and anger, they will go away.
- * Venting feelings and anger will make them go away.
- * Playing the martyr (being nice all the time) and not expressing anger will not damage you.
- * Your relationships will suffer if you express any anger or hurt.

How People Cover Up Anger

If marriage partners have any of these misconceptions, they may cover up their anger in one or more of the following ways:

- * denial (ignoring the evidence)
- * peace at any price (i.e., giving in rather than engaging conflict, withdrawal)
- * grievance collecting (keeping track of everything that has happened)
- * passive/aggressive behavior (pouting, sarcasm, stubbornness, procrastination, generating guilt)
- * bigotry (hating another group of people)
- * all is well attitude (overly sweet and nice about what is happening)

Anger Can Be Healthy in a Relationship

David and Vera Mace, pioneers in the Marriage Enrichment movement, indicate that anger is healthy and normal and is present at different times in all marital relationships. Couples should give each



other the right to be angry. The Maces have outlined a way of coping with feelings of anger that surface in almost every marriage.

When a spouse notices angry feelings coming on, those angry feelings should be expressed in words, but said calmly and with love. These feelings should be expressed in much the same tone as they would say, "I'm tired," or "I'm very tired." Couples who effectively manage their anger agree that it is necessary to express and acknowledge it. They agree never to attack in anger even though they share angry feelings. They should agree with each other that they won't yell at one another unless there is extreme danger. If a firm, non-yelling policy is developed, it will remove the need for a spouse to feel defensive or to develop any type of retaliatory anger. If both partners can express their anger calmly, they will be better able to find out how and why the anger is present in the marriage.

Resolving Anger

The Maces developed an acronym (AREA) to help couples remember a better way of resolving anger:

A is for admitting your anger to your spouse

R is the desire to restrain your anger and not let it get out of hand by blaming or belittling

E stands for explaining in a very calm manner why you are angry

A stands for action planning or doing something about the cause of the anger

If anger is handled in this way, using a calm approach to identify the cause of the anger and what can be done about it, couples usually find that the anger was based on a misunderstanding or misinterpreted words or deeds. Couples may also find out that one partner was pushed beyond a level of tolerance. All these things can be resolved if approached calmly.



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References

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- Jenson, Glen O. Anger in a Marriage. Utah State University, December, 1996.
- Source: Recker, N. (1997). Dealing with Anger in a Marriage. Retrieved February 7, 2005, from the Ohio State University Extension web site:



Tragedy at Work...

- **You hear a commotion down the hall, respond, and discover that an employee has swallowed a lethal dose of drugs in the presence of his coworkers.**
- **An irate individual storms into your section's work area and shoots an employee while you and other employees look on, shocked and helpless to intervene.**
- **A dazed-looking employee walks into the work area, bruised and disheveled, collapses at her desk, and reports that she was attacked while conducting a routine business call.**

Initially, your responses will probably be almost automatic. You will notify the proper authorities and take whatever steps are necessary to preserve life and safety. After the paramedics and the investigators leave, the hard questions begin for you as a manager:

- **How do you help your employees recover from this event, so their personal well being and professional effectiveness will not suffer long-term effects as a result of trauma?**
- **How do you get your staff moving again after employees have suffered from injury, bereavement, or emotional trauma?**

Stay firmly in charge. Let all employees know that you are concerned and doing all you can to help them. You represent the organization to your employees, and your caring presence can mean a great deal in helping them feel supported. You don't have to say anything profound; just be there, do your best to manage, and let your employees know you are concerned about them. Be visible to your subordinates, and take time to ask them how they are doing. Try to keep investigations and other official business from pulling you out of your work area for long periods of time.

Ask for support from higher management. Relief from deadlines, and practical help such as a temporary employee to lighten your burden of administrative work can make it easier for you to focus on helping your employees and your organization return to normal functioning. Let people know, in whatever way is natural for you, that you are feeling fear, grief, shock, anger, or whatever your natural reaction to the situation may be. This shows your employees you care about them. Since you also can function rationally in spite of your strong feelings, they know that they can too.

Share information with your employees as soon as you have it available. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Particularly in the first few hours after a tragedy, information will be scarce and much in demand. If you can be an advocate in obtaining it, you will show your employees you care and help lessen anxiety.

Ask for support from your Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is available to offer professional counseling to those who wish it, and to provide debriefings to groups affected by trauma. Encourage your employees to take advantage of the EAP as a way of preserving health, not as a sign of sickness.

