

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



775 Breaking Down Anger — Part 1

Do you know why you get angry? Would you like to be angry less, and less angry? I'm Jerry Roberts, let's talk about anger and how to figure it out, next on The Extra Point.

Ryan Martin is a professor of psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and the author of *Why We Get Mad: How to Use Your Anger for Positive Change*. He says most people get angry more than they think. Martin says it ranges from several times a week to several times a day for the average person.

Anger is an intense emotion and any number of things can bring it on. Martin describes anger as having three stages, and they can happen quickly. The first is the provocation, whatever it is that triggers our emotion and possible outburst.

Somebody we care about is treated badly. We're cut off in traffic. We're in a hurry and the line at the bank isn't moving fast enough. Our boss rips us in front of other workers. We might not want to talk about it, but we know what will cause us to flash in anger.

Before that happens, we'll *interpret* that provocation. This is stage two. We decide what the provocation means to us, and whether or not we can deal with it.

Let's say you're in a meeting and the least experienced person on the team attacks your position on an issue. You might not get too upset, figuring his position doesn't carry much weight. You can handle this, no problem.

On the other hand, what if it's the most experienced and highly regarded team member who stands up against your idea? Would that be different?

Would you be able to be so dismissive as to the impact? Would it worry you that this happened? Could the worry lead to fear, and

could the fear come out as anger — once you're out of the meeting?

Another thing that occurs in this second stage is that we may blow things out of proportion. "I know why he shot down my proposal. He wants to promote one of his people, and if he can make me look bad enough, maybe I'll get fired."

For some folks, the transition from a molehill to a mountain can take place in mere seconds.

This is influenced by the third stage, our mood. An expression of anger is when provocation and interpretation meet up with the wrong mood. We spoke a moment ago about being able to deal with things. If we're in a foul mood already, our ability to cope with the trigger is going to be impaired.

Our interpretation may go off the tracks, and we may indeed visualize the situation as being much worse than it is. If you've ever seen somebody fly off the handle about something that didn't seem worthy of that reaction, this is what is going on.

The mood factor also answers the question as to why something seemingly has no effect on somebody one day, and causes a massive eruption another day.

Martin also discusses "productive anger," and that's what we'll have for you tomorrow, as we deliver part two on this issue.

That's The Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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