



HERS

OPINION

HIS



Learning to Control Anger

BY C.M. BROOKS

Controlling anger is a timely and relevant topic considering all the violence that has taken place in Portland over the last two weeks. There has been a string of gang violence, drive-by shootings, kidnapping, intimidation, and murder. And as if things couldn't get any worse last week for HER, some people that I care about were almost seriously injured because of another's failure to deal with their own anger, which consequently, turned violent.

And here in lies the problem with the emotion, anger. The outcome always leads to violence. Someone directly or indirectly will be hurt because anger breeds aggression and situations that can be handled diplomatically and problems that do have solutions are lost because of anger's insidious nature. And this element makes it easy for an individual to lash out with their fists and to a certain degree, rationalize their behavior, instead of using the minds to alleviate a situation. This makes it easy for a person to tell themselves, "I shot him because he was wearing the wrong color," and not feel the least bit of remorse. Where's the logic?

Anger is a deep-rooted emotion and

if you observe closely, you'll find that it is expressed outwardly, signaling that larger problems exist within that person. An adult, whom we assume has all their capacities, doesn't strike or attack another over 'spilled milk'. They are usually bombarded with problems that they perceive to be overwhelming. Instead of getting to the root of the problem and making changes in their lives, they lose control and they often lose control over minor situations like 'spilled milk'.

Strangely enough, there are those who lack control in their lives and at the same time, use their anger and violence as a way to gain control. It's a power trip to some extent. You see, it's very easy to manipulate an individual by using violence. Think how easy it is to tell a child if they don't shape-up, you'll pull out the belt or one gang member saying to a rival, "if you ever step foot in my territory again, I'll kill you." Well, if you've used a belt on this child on previous occasions and if this particular gang member has committed murder before, then the person on the receiving end of the message will tread lightly, to say the least. I call this achieving the end by violent means and it is wrong!

The saddest thing about anger, in

HER opinion, is that it not only begets violence, but it separates and divides. Once you've unleashed your anger on a person, you will never have the same relationship with that person, their friends, and certainly not with their family ever again. It is too difficult to forgive and no one ever forgets.

If you are prone to violent behavior, you need to search for answers internally. It may be that past experiences have never been resolved or that there are numerous concerns in your life that aren't being dealt with properly.

If you are a parent, curbing anger and aggression in a child is a solution to a potential problem. This means letting them know fighting is wrong and making clear the consequences of their actions. While you are at it, you may ask yourself if you are contributing to your child's hostile behavior by yelling at him/her, or hitting for no apparent reason.

You must understand, that if you allow a child to strike out against friends and family members, then they will strike out against anyone, over anything, at any time, when they are adults. And nowadays all anger gets you is a free ride to prison or a trip to the morgue. Take your choice.

BY ULLYSSES TUCKER, JR.

Anger is one element that human beings need to learn how to re-direct or control. If directed positively, anger can be utilized as a motivational tool and become a foundation for growth. Granted, there are many situations, problems, attitudes, values, morals, and life conditions that can easily provoke anger or even violence in some individuals. Throughout the course of each day, I confront racist people, nasty attitudes, and social/economic conditions affecting the community that should not exist in such an affluent country. Actually, it's not wrong to get angry at circumstances that affect the world or you as an individual, but how you react to or handle it can cause some problems. How do you cope with anger? Are you violent? Do you work towards logical solutions? Do you suppress your anger until it turns into a problem elsewhere? Anger needs to be addressed openly, honestly, and immediately. If it bothers you, tell your mate, family member, co-worker or neighbor that it does.

It is important to note, as we did in last week's column ("Building Self-Esteem"), how a person reacts to anger

might depend on their self-perception or level of esteem. Over the years, I've learned the hard way to control my trouble with the law, my family, the school system, or with rival thugs/gangs. Eventually, people will learn that they are accountable and responsible for their own actions, not other people. Sure, people can upset you, but learn to handle yourself. As an adult, I'm at peace with myself because I have strong sense of self and great esteem. I'm a happy person. I've learned to worry about things that I can control, like my emotions, attitude, and behavior. I can control other people or their anger. As long as people feel that others are responsible for the anger inside of them, they will continue to justify it or act in a negative way. If people are ever going to have love in their hearts, it is imperative that they learn to let go of anger and develop some inner-peace. Some people deal with anger by walking away from certain situations, talking to themselves, or exercising are a few ways to express anger without hurting another individual. An angry mind is consistently paranoid, defensive, and restless. Does anger bring you what you really want? What affect does your anger have on other people? Do you hurt other people when you express anger?

There are some people, who for some reason or another, get great pleasure out of making someone upset or mad. Self-control is very important in dealing with anger because a "short-fuse" can lead to great problems. When people attack or provoke others, they are unconsciously hiding their fear, guilt, hurt, or past pain, which causes them to feel vulnerable in the first place. When I reflect on my past behaviour, I can only laugh at some of the situations or things that use to upset me. For example, I use to hate white people be-

cause they stood for all that was wrong in the world. Elements like poverty, unemployment, racism, and hatred was all their fault. I carried this anger around until I was a junior in college, where I learned that there are some good black people and some bad black people. There are good and bad elements in all people. It was difficult purging myself of this anger, but having some positive experiences with white people made the adjustment and revelation much easier to accept. I was placed in a predicament that promoted growth and change. It takes great inner-strength to change one's behavior and attitude. In many cases, people are surrounded by people who reinforce their negative behavior or help them to justify their anger. Yes, I get upset and angry like millions of people in the world. Unlike some, I just handle it in a positive way. I've learned to give out intellectual whippings instead of physical ones because I do not enjoy dealing with the law. There is no substitute for maturity.

To gain greater control over anger, people need to look inward for some of the answers, which could be locked up in old relationships, family abuse, career frustration, economic conditions that you might be faced with, or in the people you surround yourself with. No one can control your rage or anger but you. Getting fired from a job, caught up in the criminal justice system, hurting another person, or losing someone you love is a terrible time to learn the values of self-control. If there needs to be changes in your life to change your attitude or decrease the amount of anger inside, then by all means do so. You do have a choice as to whether you desire to be angry or not. As my grandmother Bolton used to say, people fly into a rage always make a bad landing.

School Boycott...continued from front page

with a catch-22 situation, asking, how can the boycott be effective, when it's denying students further education...why target the kids? To this, the salty BUF leader responded by paralleling the boycott to the Birmingham boycott of the last generation, and quoting Martin Luther King, Jr.: "They [the kids] are the ones who are suffering the most." He also added that he felt the missed school days would be more than made up for, should the reform plan be adopted.

Another argument arising is that the fault may lie as much with families as with the school system (Herndon rejects this). As African American caller from Northeast Portland, identifying himself as "Fred", said on KGW radio Monday: "In Portland, we do not stress education within ourselves...I feel a lot of the reason we do not excel...is culture." Herndon refuted that by stressing that "the so-called worst [test score-wise] school in Portland is predominantly white", adding that he does not think faults in education lie in color; but, rather, he faults the way the education system is set up, and those confining the system to the status quo.

This is a summary of Herndon's twelve-point educational reform proposal:

Portland Public Schools need to:

1. Establish a committee (composed of parents, representatives from the school board, businesses, and general community members) that will monitor schools with low test scores, monitor overall progress, and develop an incentive system for exemplary persons in all facets of the system

2. Establish building management teams, including a consultant with a proven success rate in the socioeconomic strata of students served. This team's purpose would be to assess strengths and needs, and to advise and revise accordingly

3. Require school achievement plans for students having difficulty
4. Establish a clear statement of upper-rung accountability for student performance
5. Evaluate upper-rung members based on student performance

6. Establish expectations, including projections of the number of years it will take 90% of the students in each school to achieve at or above grade level, as well as to compete by international standards
7. Establish a system of determination for the superintendent to access updated data regarding academic status/progress of every school

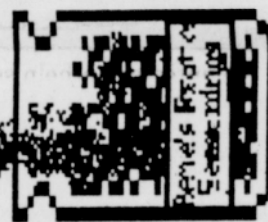
8. Provide leadership training and monitoring of such
9. Establish a system of staff development for school personnel, based on assessments of students
10. Examine and enhance cultural identification for minority students

11. Offer greater freedom and reward for innovation in meeting district goals
12. Survey parents twice a year regarding their satisfaction with progress, and receive input via parental suggestions for improvement.

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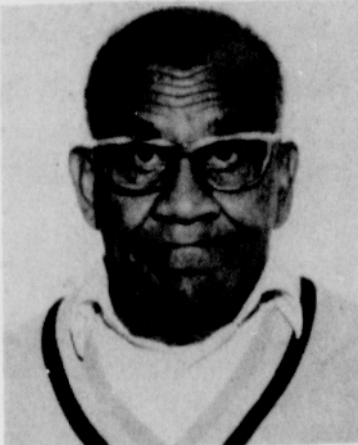
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