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Grumpy Old Men
and Cranky Old Women
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Webster defines anger as a strong feeling of displeasure and belligerence.

New born babies get angry,
wonderful, kind people get angry
and so do the elderly.

Anger is a complicated emotional response which is a result of personal history, childhood and life time experiences, unmet needs and many other factors.

- Anger can be caused by a perceived loss of control over factors affecting important values.
- How do you see this in the elderly?

- 1. One of the emotional manifestations of old age is a sense of rage at the seemingly uncontrollable forces that confront older people as well as the indignities and neglect of the society that once valued their productive capacities.**

2. Some older people rage against the inevitable nature of aging and death.

3. Some older people use anger to control others.

They may see it as strategy for maintaining some sense of power over their own lives because as long as they remain angry or resistant people will notice them.

4. Some older people express resistance to any suggestions or new ideas.

This resistance is a way of maintaining a sense of personal identity, which may be threatened by change.

Med Rounds, Hampton Toy, M.D. & Charles Russell, Ph.D.

Things we know about anger:

- * It is a powerful emotion
- * It is a powerful survival tool
- * It is a source of energy
- * It is a secondary emotion

What we know about anger

- * When we are angry, the brain downshifts to a lower evolutionary level.
- * Prolonged anger is unhealthy.
- * Repressed anger is also unhealthy and turns into depression and or anxiety.

The Nature of Anger

- * Like other emotions, it is accompanied by physiological and biological changes.

The Nature of Anger

- * When you get angry, the levels of your energy hormones, adrenaline and noradrenalin go up which increase your heart rate and blood pressure.

The Nature of Anger

- * This is particularly significant in an older person who may already be suffering from high blood pressure and cardiac problems.

Why are Some People More Angry than Others?

According to Jerry Deffenbacher, Ph.D. a psychologist who specializes in anger management, some people really are more "hotheaded" than others.

Why are Some People More Angry than Others?

- They get angry more easily and more intensely than the average person.
- * There are also those who don't show their anger in loud spectacular ways but are chronically irritable and grumpy.

Why are Some People More Angry than Others?

- * Easily angered people don't always curse and throw things; sometimes they withdraw socially, sulk or get physically ill.
- * People who are easily angered have a low frustration tolerance.

What Makes Some People This Way?

- It can be genetic or physiological. There is evidence that some children are born irritable, touchy and easily angered.
- * Another may be sociocultural. Anger is often regarded as negative. We are taught that it is alright to express anxiety, depression or stress but not to express anger. As a result, we don't learn how to handle it or channel it constructively.

What Makes Some People This Way?

- Research has also found that family background plays a role.
- Typically, people who anger easily come from families that are disruptive, chaotic and not skilled at emotional communication.

What happens in a family where physical and or psychological abuse is the norm but now the abuser is old and frail?

Primary vs. Secondary Feeling

1. **Anger as a response to fear**
2. **Anger in response to loss of control**
3. **Anger in response to decreased level of energy**
4. **Anger due to a stroke or other health problem**

Expressing Anger

1. Expressing
2. Suppressing
3. Calming

Treatment Approaches

Cognitive Restructuring
Problem Solving
Better Communication
Using Humor

Changing the environment

Some other tips for Easing UP on Yourself

- * Timing
- * Avoidance
- * Finding an alternative

Suggestions for Responding to Anger

- * What you are afraid of?
- * What feeling preceded the anger?
- * What other feelings are you feeling?
- * What are you trying to control?

Suggestions for Responding to Anger:

- * What can you control?
- * Consider your options.
- * Choose the one which brings you the most long term happiness.

Who needs counseling?

**Between stimulus and response,
there is a space. In that space lies
our freedom and power to choose
our response. In our response lies
our growth and freedom.**

Victor Frankel,
Man's Search for Meaning