

## Anger's Terms Of Endearment

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Anger can shorten the life of the angry person and make others around him miserable. Find its hidden consequences. Find the home site of author Bill Allin at [http: billallin.com](http://billallin.com)

Two things a man should never be angry at: what he can help, and what he cannot help.  
- Thomas Fuller

First of all, this quote deals with the management of anger, one of the strongest human emotions. Fuller implies that we can either control it or let it run loose. He suggests that if we want to control it we need to understand the root of the anger and whether the investment of emotional energy that anger requires is worth the investment.

In general, anger expressed is never worth the investment of emotional energy it requires. Furthermore, it tends to do more harm to the angry person than to the object of the outburst. It never does any good over the long term.

Mostly we don't realize how much harm anger can do to us. Anger, especially when held as a grudge over a long period of time, can depress the immune system, opening the possibility for organ failure or disease. That's pretty serious, especially as it's a form of self harm.

Even in a short term bout of anger, the immune system takes a sharp downward spike so that during the period of anger the angry person may have little or no defence against attack by rogue bacteria or viruses. While an angry person is shaking a clenched fist at or giving the finger to someone who has given offence, serious trouble may be brewing inside his own body. And he will know nothing about it, until tragedy strikes and a doctor gives the bad news.

There is no point in getting angry at something you can help because if you can do something about it, you should do it and get on with your life. No problem gets better because someone gets angry about it.

If you can't help the problem, there is no point in getting angry because no one else can help you with it either. Sometimes life sucks, but it's just like hitting a pothole in the road with a wheel of your car, you drive on and forget about it.

Why do we even have the emotion we call anger? If it's so self destructive, how did it even evolve and why don't we evolve it out of ourselves?

Evolution is taking place within our species now. We are in the midst of evolutionary progress whereby the female vagina is moving from access from the rear to access only from the front. Slightly more than half of today's women lack a clitoris. And around 35 percent of us never develop wisdom teeth. These changes simply happen so slowly that we don't notice.

We could evolve anger out of our species, but that would mean giving up one of the most critical responses to danger, the fight or flight response. Anger is nothing more than the fight or flight response extended over a longer period of time.

The fight or flight response allows us to quickly evaluate a potentially dangerous situation, then choose to deal with it (fight, in a loose sense of the word) or get out of the way (flight). If we are crossing a road and suddenly see a bus bearing down on us, it wouldn't be wise for us to have to weight all of the options as to how to respond to the situation, requiring a brain process that takes far too much time for our own safety.

With the fight or flight response, a heavy dose of epinephrine (better known by its trade name Adrenalin) races through our bloodstream, making our nerves and muscles almost instantly ready to respond to whatever the brain decides we should do--tackle the matter in a confrontation or get out of the way. As humans rarely win confrontations with buses, we need almost instant response to save our life.

That same surge of epinephrine goes through someone who is in the process of getting angry. Some people can go from calm to full blown anger in the same time it takes a Porsche to go from zero to 60 mph. Unfortunately, that is when the brain process of evaluating a situation to determine the best possible course of action, the one that takes

much longer than fight or flight, should kick in. For some, it doesn't.

For others, it does. We have experienced, either by being personally involved or by being onlookers to others in situations, the danger of emotionally violent responses that end up with hurt, regret and repentance later. So we have conditioned ourselves to make that longer brain process kick in instead of the fight or flight response that produces anger.

That's a matter of rigid training or of personal discipline of the self.

Road rage is an obvious example of people who take the stupid behaviour of someone too personally (it's rarely intended to be taken as offence) and allow their fight or flight response to take over. The "fight" part dominates and the person exhibits some form of rage, often an illegal behaviour, but he doesn't consider that at the time because he doesn't have time to think about it.

Implicit in Thomas Fuller's advice is that we should think, thoroughly and clearly, when a situation presents itself that could develop an anger response. Not only is it wise to avoid doing harm to our own health, it's not smart to ruin relationships or break the law in a bout of anger.

Anger is within our own control. All it takes is practice and some self discipline.

Bill Allin

***Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems, a guidebook for parents and teachers who want to teach their children important life lessons, such as how to avoid doing harm through anger and how to master their emotions.***

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