

The Cow *in the* Parking Lot

*"One of the best books
I've ever read on anger. It's
lucid, comprehensive, and filled
with valuable insights. . . ."*

—DR. HOWARD C. CUTLER



A Zen Approach to Overcoming Anger

By Leonard Scheff and Susan Edmiston



The Cow in the Parking Lot

A Zen Approach to Overcoming to Overcoming Anger

Leonard Scheff and Susan Edmiston

Workman Publishing • New York

Copyright © 2010 by Leonard Scheff and Susan Edmiston

The parables on pages 70, 88, 113, 116, and 130 are reprinted from *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, by Paul Rebs and Ngoyen Sensak, copyright © 1985 by permission of the publisher, Weatherhill.

Excerpts in [chapter 10](#) from “Those Aren’t Fighting Words, Dear,” © August 2, 2009, *The New York Times*. All rights reserved. Used by permission and protected by the copyright laws of the United States.

Excerpts on pages 179–183 and 184 from *Anger* by Thich Nhat Hanh, copyright © 2001 by Thich Nhat Hanh. Used by permission of Riverhead Books, an imprint of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced—mechanically, electronically, or by any other means, including photocopying—without written permission of the publisher. Published simultaneously in Canada by Thomas Allen & Son Limited.

Workman books are available at special discounts when purchased in bulk for premiums and sales promotions as well as for fund-raising or educational use. Special editions or book excerpts also can be created to specification. For details, contact the Special Sales Director at the address below or send an e-mail to specialmarkets@workman.com.

In memory of John Clayton Bilby, friend and teacher

Contents

Introduction	8
CHAPTER 1	13
A New Approach to Dealing with Anger	13
How Revenge Backfires	14
The Question of Intention	16
The Process	19
Western Approaches to Anger.....	20
CHAPTER 2.....	22
CHAPTER 3.....	27
The Cause of Anger	27
The Four Types of Demands.....	30
Unspoken Demands.....	31
Unstated Demands.....	32
CHAPTER 4.....	35
The Price We Pay Directly.....	36
The Price to Our Relationships	36
Anger Makes Us Act Stupidly	39
The Physics of Anger.....	41
How Anger Spills Over to Others	42
CHAPTER 5.....	44
Knowing When You're Angry	47
Varieties of Anger	48
Becoming Aware	49
CHAPTER 6.....	54
Pride, Honor, and Other Buttons.....	54
Anger and Hatred	59
Pushing Other People's Buttons	61
CHAPTER 7.....	62

Giving and Receiving	62
Generosity and Keeping Score	65
The Giver Should Be Thankful.....	68
CHAPTER 8.....	70
The Mythology of Happiness	70
De-Mythification.....	75
CHAPTER 9.....	77
Unshakeable Calm.....	77
Using Humor and Empathy	82
Family Feud	83
The Case of the Impossible Person	84
CHAPTER 10.....	88
To Be or Not to Be Angry.....	88
Anger Causes Bad Karma.....	90
The Choice is Yours.....	91
Taking on the Universe.....	93
CHAPTER 11	95
Transforming Anger into Compassion.....	95
Forgiveness	97
“Forgiving Patience”	100
Compassion for Loved Ones	104
CHAPTER 12.....	108
Coming to a Conclusion	108
Further Reading.....	113
Acknowledgments.....	115



You are at the grand opening of a new shopping mall on the edge of town. You've been driving around looking for a parking space for ten minutes. At last, right in front of you, a car pulls out of a spot. You hit your turn signal and wait as the car backs out. Suddenly, from the other direction, comes a Jeep that pulls into the space. Not only that, but when you honk, the driver gets out, smirks, and gives you the finger. Are you angry?

Now change the scene ever so slightly. Instead of a brash Jeep driver, a cow walks into the space from the other direction and settles down in the middle of it. When you honk, she looks up and moos but doesn't budge. Are you angry?

—The Cow in the Parking Lot,



Introduction

Most people, if asked, would agree that we would be better off without anger. Yet anger seems to be a growth industry, which, unfortunately of late, has entered a new phase of destructiveness. Today, we live in a society marked by road rage, spousal abuse, professionally angry TV and radio commentators, teenagers who go on deadly rampages, and an “us versus them” mentality. We live in daily fear of super vandals who are willing to kill thousands to vent their anger.

The question is, why does anger not only persist but increase?

First, anger is a normal human emotion. Everyone gets angry. Someone once asked the Dalai Lama what he thought of people who study the teachings of Buddhism and then use that knowledge to make money. His response was temperate at first. But as he went on, he grew red in the face. Even though he is the human embodiment of patience and compassion, the Dalai Lama himself has admitted that he gets angry. The object of this book is not to eliminate anger but to place it and our expression of it in a different context.

The second reason for the persistence of anger is that there is no obvious alternative. This book will offer one based on Buddhist teachings, but it does not require any specific religious belief. Nor is it psychotherapy except as Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls once said, “Awareness is therapy *per se*.” A fair summary of this book is: You are hitting your hand with a hammer. If you stop, you will feel better.

We have been conditioned in many ways to use anger as a tool for obtaining our ends. Most people do not question this practice and are almost completely oblivious to its costs. My experience in teaching my workshop is that once people realize there is an alternative, their anger begins to dissipate.

The third reason for the persistence of anger is that it is addictive. There is a physical and emotional high that comes with feeling anger. The physical sensation is set off by the release of adrenaline with its resulting increase in blood pressure. This anger “high” becomes addictive much as smoking or drinking does. Like other addictions, anger has its price, which can include heart attack, stroke, and other health problems. I have heard people say, “I only feel really alive when I am angry.” That is like saying, “I only feel really healthy when I am smoking.” Both are examples of how wrong we can be when living in what Buddhism calls *maya*, the world of illusion created by our thoughts.

The conventional addictions, smoking and drinking, are difficult to give up in part because, if you are successful, you may feel like hell for weeks, months, or even years. Recovering alcoholics often say, “There isn’t a waking hour that goes by, that I don’t want to have a drink.”

The good news about reducing or giving up anger is that from the very first time you choose not to be angry or not to act out your anger, you feel better. Once you’ve experienced the difference, you will not want to return to that habit.

Some people may argue that anger is necessary and serves useful purposes. True, when we become angry, it may be an indication that something is wrong with the way we are relating to others or to our environment. Anger can also galvanize us to act on something we believe is morally wrong. When you see someone abusing a child, a form of anger that may be called moral indignation arises. But if your remedy is pursued in hotheadedness, it may well worsen the situation. If you see a mother repeatedly slapping a child, you may want to interfere physically, perhaps even by hitting the mother. That may interrupt the abuse for the moment, but the mother may well add that provocation to her reasons for continuing to abuse the child at a later time.

On the other hand, if you look at the available options with a cooler head, you may find a way to intervene that does not heighten the conflict between mother and child. Sitting next to them in such a way that the mother is embarrassed to continue the abuse may provide a temporary solution, and may lead to a beneficial conversation without promoting further anger against the child.

To act out of moral indignation demands that we pause to consider the best options for putting the situation right. When we act solely out of anger, with little regard for consequences, we are not pursuing the greater good but are only assuaging our own emotional distress. And the result could make the

situation worse rather than better. Certain disciplines, in particular the martial arts, teach that when you act out of anger you are more likely to lose.

Many people believe that they can't help acting on their angry feelings. They see no space between becoming angry and expressing that anger. They believe that they have no control over and no choice about the anger they feel. One of the lessons of this book is that we can consciously create a space between the rise of anger and the actions we take as a result.

When you apply the techniques offered here with ongoing success, you are more than likely to feel an increase in self-esteem. No longer does your anger control you—you control your anger. Unlike the self-esteem that comes from without (“You look good today”; “You did a good job”), this feeling is not dependent on others’ perceptions.

It is quite possible—and even reasonable—that you may greet the foregoing ideas with skepticism. The notion that you can do without anger may seem contrary to your conditioning, as it did to mine when I attended the teachings of the Dalai Lama, in Tuscon, Arizona, in 1993.

There for the first time, I heard someone tell me that anger was destructive and that I could live without it. As a member of the notoriously contentious legal profession, I believed that anger was not only necessary and useful but also essential to my personality and sense of self. For various reasons, I was seated in the middle of the front row for all four days of the teachings. If I missed a session or fell asleep, I was sure His Holiness would notice. Even though I knew he wouldn't care, I didn't want to offend the people who had arranged for me to have the best seat in the house.

As it became clear that he was suggesting that my life would be better without anger, I became increasingly uncomfortable. I believed that anger was what protected me from a world that wanted a piece of me, that it gave me control over the people around me. So there I was, forced to pay attention to something that I did not agree with. I thought to myself: This is a really nice man, but if he thinks I'm going to give up anger, he's crazy. I still felt that way when I left the four-day seminar.

The very next night I was driving home when someone cut so closely in front of my car that I was forced to hit the brake pedal. I honked the horn. The driver turned his head just long enough to scream an obscenity at me. I felt like ramming his car or at least shouting back in return. But I stopped myself—it occurred to me that having spent four miserable days at the teachings, perhaps I should try to apply them. I asked myself what it was that made me angry, and understood that it was that this total stranger had disrespected me. I also

recognized that his insult in itself was harmless; I was the one who was giving it meaning. When I realized that, I started laughing— at myself. Then I felt how much better it was to be laughing instead of fulminating.

That was my first inkling of what the Dalai Lama had been teaching, and from then on I began a process of conscientiously studying and experimenting with his teachings. As I did so, I found my life improving. The price of anger and the lack of benefits became clearer. My wife and I, who had been going through a rough patch in our marriage, reversed direction and have had an improved relationship ever since. My practice as a litigation and transaction lawyer became less stressful and, surprisingly, more successful.

When I was a chronically angry attorney, I would start a conversation with the opposing lawyer with a polite form of “What the hell does your client think she’s doing?” I would never concede that my client could conceivably be at fault. Needless to say, I didn’t settle many cases. Now I start the conversation with something like, “I am not sure I understand what is going on here. Would you explain your client’s position?” Or I might offer or concede that my client failed to do something, like leaving out an important element in a sales contract. The result is that there is less posturing on both sides and cases get settled.

I found myself happier than I had ever been or thought I could be. Wanting to share my experience with others, I developed a three-hour workshop called “Transforming Anger,” in which I tried to make some of the Dalai Lama’s teachings accessible to those who had no acquaintance with Buddhism. I added some exercises and ideas from other disciplines that I thought would be helpful. When someone suggested that I write a book based on the workshop, I realized that I could reach a wider audience and perhaps in some small way even improve the world we live in.

I took the book *The Zen of Running* by Fred Rohe as my model because of its simplicity. Its two basic ideas were that if you want to run, start out slowly and do it in a way that makes it enjoyable. Don’t try to run five miles on the first day. You may run the five miles but you probably won’t become a runner because unconsciously or consciously you don’t want to do anything that painful. Also, find a place and time to run that makes it easy for you. Because, if you don’t enjoy it, you’re not going to do it for very long.

I have tried to observe these principles in approaching the subject of anger, that is, to keep each step in the process as simple as possible and build on the positive results that make the process rewarding. In the second chapter the reader is advised to start by looking at small irritations that cause his or her

anger and to put off dealing with more profound sources of pain. To do otherwise would be like running five miles the first day.

Readers will not be asked to examine difficult parts of their lives. No psychological analysis is required. There's no need to open the dark recesses of the unconscious to learn what this book has to teach. As anger is overcome and you understand better what irritates you about small things, you become more capable of delving into larger issues.

The book invites you to experiment with your life. It is interactive, with writing exercises that ask you to examine incidents in your life and perhaps the motives behind them. There are no right or wrong answers. It is the willingness to observe and examine oneself that drives the process.

Finally, this book is meant to challenge your beliefs about anger and cast doubt on the value of using it as a way of getting what you want. As those beliefs slowly erode, your perspective will change and you will never be able to think of anger, or be angry, in the same way again. The very first time you make a choice not to be angry, you will find yourself on a more pleasurable path.

The transformation that began for me after hearing the Dalai Lama is available to everyone. I hope that by reading this book and practicing its teachings in your life, you will find the contentment that comes from the absence of anger, and that its companion emotions of jealousy, resentment, and insecurity will also be reduced. If you are comfortable with and use the concepts offered here, I believe that profound changes in your life and your relationships will follow.

—Leonard Scheff

CHAPTER 1



A New Approach to Dealing with Anger

You are at the opening of a new shopping center on the edge of town. Since all the stores are having Grand Opening sales and giveaways, half the town is there. You have been looking for a parking space for ten minutes. At last, right in front of you, back-up lights come on. You hit your turn signal and wait as the car backs out in front of you. From the other direction comes a Jeep that pulls into the space. Not only that, but when you honk, the driver gets out, smirks, and gives you the finger. Are you angry? You bet you are! What would you like to do at this point?

- Ram his car
- Let the air out of his tires
- Key his car
- Take out a lipstick and write “jerk” on his windshield

Doubtless, we’ve all fantasized—at least—about one or all of these options. Entire movies have been built around the unexpected and untoward results, including murder, of such petty fits of revenge. You may imagine that expressing your anger—ramming the offending car, and so on—may help it to go away. But let’s look at the specific costs of these various options.

- Ramming his car will likely damage yours, and if a security guard sees you there may be a criminal charge. At the very least, the security guard will take

your license number and put it under the Jeep's windshield wipers for the owner to find. He will not care one bit that you think you had good cause.

- Letting the air out of the culprit's tires takes a lot of nerve. Can you imagine the tension you would be under wondering, as the air slowly seeped out, what would happen if the driver came back to the car for something he forgot? As in the first scenario, the guard who happened by would not see this as a prank.
- The lipstick option is more benign, but even a fast scrawl takes time, and you'd certainly ruin the lipstick. Again, it is vandalism and if a security guard sees you, well as they say in Spanish, "*No vale la pena.*" ("It's not worth it.")

But the main cost may be that you continue to carry that anger around with you for days, or longer, to be reactivated each time you search for a parking place.

How Revenge Backfires

As an exercise, close your eyes for a moment and imagine that the parking offense has just happened to you. Feel the anger rise. Then imagine that you take revenge with any of the above remedies or one of your own choosing.

Now ask yourself if you are any less angry. If your answer is that your anger has gone away, then add to the fantasy the fact that you have been compelled by this lout to commit a violent and possibly criminal act.

Is your anger really gone? Now you are fearful that you may run into the driver or that you will be apprehended for committing a crime.

◆ *Exercise* WRITE A NOTE

Pretend that you have been the victim of this outrage. Instead of committing a criminal act, write a note to the Jeep driver. Keep it short but tell him what you would say to him if you could do so without fear of reprisal.

Now imagine a different scenario. Same scene, back-up lights, car pulls out in front of you. However, instead of our smirking young man, a cow walks into the space from the other direction and settles down right in the middle of it. Remember this is on the outskirts of town. It so happens that the cow has spent

every afternoon in that spot for years. When you honk, she looks up and moos but doesn't budge. Are you angry?

The answer for almost everyone is, "No, I'm not angry; I'm amused." So the question is, "What is the difference?"

This book hopes to convince you that there is no difference.

Whether it was the guy in the Jeep or the cow, the outcome is exactly the same: You need to find another parking spot. The only thing that changes is your *reaction* to the outcome. In other words, no one *causes* us to be angry. Anger is not inevitable. Anger begins and ends with ourselves.

But, some people argue, there is a difference because the guy intended his actions and the cow didn't. We'll look at that more closely later, but for now, let's accept that as true. Does this justify your anger and your desire to express it?

What Are the Benefits of Anger?

Many of us believe that there are benefits to acting out anger. One notion is that to express it—no matter how inappropriately—is preferable to holding it in, that suppressing your anger may even lead to disease. But in the exercise above, where you imagined that this happened to you, you probably became aware that acting out your anger, if anything, augments it. The act of revenge is more likely to increase your anger than reduce it. So cross that possible benefit off your list.

Some of us justify expressing anger as a "moral duty to reform the offender" or at least let him know our opinion of his actions. Let's say that we have written "jerk" on his windshield. What will his reaction be when he arrives back at his car after several hours of shopping. There are two possibilities:

He will look at his windshield and say: "My gosh! I have sinned. I have committed an offense against another human. I am grateful someone has taken the time to bring my unacceptable conduct to my attention. I will never steal someone's parking space again."

Or, he will look at his windshield and say: "You SOB! Look what that *&#%& has done to my windshield! Why do these things happen to me? If only I could find out who did it, I'd show him a thing or two."

Although theoretically there may be two possibilities, we know that only the second one is likely. The offender has already identified himself as an angry person by his response to your honk. No doubt, he has rationalized his conduct

to his satisfaction. “I saw the place first,” “I was in a hurry and needed it more,” and so on. His high level of anger may indicate that he already views himself, probably accurately, as unloved and unappreciated. This latest incident is just one more example of how the world treats him unfairly. You may believe there’s such a thing as a social contract that requires that we treat one another with decency. Unfortunately, many people act on this only when it serves their self-interest. When they are dishing it out, their motto becomes, “It’s a tough world out there, and survival is to the swift.”

So now our Jeep owner drives off, peering around the word “jerk” on his windshield and growing angrier and angrier with perhaps a dollop of shame added to the poisonous brew. His shopping high has worn off, and by the time he gets home, he has a full head of steam. Does it end there? Of course, it doesn’t. That anger will be taken out on the next convenient victim.

So rather than reforming him, you have given him additional impetus to express his already uncontrollable anger. Someone downstream will suffer. It may be his wife, his children, or another stranger who happens to be in his way. Once you think it through, it is reasonably clear that acting out your anger has not only harmed him but also those who must deal with him. So before deciding to reform someone without his cooperation, ask yourself if you want to be responsible for his entirely predictable response to your efforts.

There is a third reason some people use to rationalize expressing their anger: If I don’t, I will feel powerless, i.e., victimized. However, I hope to show that true power comes when we control our anger and not when we allow it to control us.

The Question of Intention

Now let’s look at the assumption that the brash young man, unlike the cow, intended the effects his action had on you. Most likely, he is oblivious to the feelings of people around him. How many times have you said or done something that offended someone else and been surprised at the response?

Most of the time, when people act offensively, their behavior is not aimed at us. Even if there is no doubt the offender is talking to you, or interacting with you, what he says most likely has nothing to do with who you are or what you have done. It’s not personal; he doesn’t know you. You just happen to be a stage prop in an internal drama taking place in his mind.

The mental scenarios most of us create are a mixture of our view of the world, our view of ourselves, our early conditioning, and habitual ways of

responding. They often have little to do with the reality of the present situation. So when our conditioning calls for us to react with outrage to something offensive, we do so, even if our reaction is totally counterproductive. We follow our own script. When it doesn't produce the expected results and even makes us miserable, we still continue to follow our script, but now with an increased sense of outrage and martyrdom.

So if we reconsider the Jeep driver's behavior, we see that the line between intentional and unintentional is not as clear as we would like to think. We may believe that we know what another person is thinking, but most often our efforts at "mind reading" are projections of our own inner, self-centered concerns.



I began with the parable of "The Cow in the Parking Lot" to illustrate some aspects of this book's approach to anger. Anger is often an immediate but irrational reaction based on a notion we have in our heads. What we feel is based to a great degree on what we think. Our fantasized imagining of the Jeep driver's intentions affects how we view "reality" and therefore our reaction to it. In this case, we believe that the Jeep driver has intended to offend, while we know that the cow bears us no grudges; she's just behaving like a cow. It's a simple example of how we create our reality—and therefore our anger—with our minds. As the Buddha says,

We are what we think.

All that we are arises with our thoughts.

With our thoughts we make the world.

Much of what's in our heads is the result of our early conditioning. These beliefs are often referred to in Western psychology as "baggage." For example, we are conditioned to believe that certain things will make us happy, and when we do not get them we are angry. We are conditioned to believe that our honor is at stake if someone "disses" us. We are conditioned to think that achieving a certain goal in the future, rather than living in the present, will make us happy. And we are conditioned to believe that anger is a useful tool in getting what we want.

Buddhism is not a religion in the sense of worshipping a god or embracing a system of beliefs, but its techniques offer a method for overcoming our conditioning. The essential tool of this method is the practice of awareness. The word *buddha*, itself, comes from the Sanskrit root meaning "awake," or

“aware.” Buddhism’s central vow is, “I take refuge in buddha,” which refers not to taking refuge in a god or iconic being but in the quality of “awareness” that such beings have in common.

This may seem simple—and in a sense it is. But it involves a radical change in how we view our minds, our intellects. What Buddhism means by being awake or aware is being present in each moment and experiencing it directly without being limited by all the beliefs, concepts, and assumptions that many of us confuse with knowledge. The Buddha illustrates this with a simple example: “A man shudders with horror when he steps upon a serpent, but laughs when he looks down and sees that it is only a rope.” The idea or concept of a snake, or serpent, is a construction created by the mind and is a useful one for navigating a jungle or a forest. But to one who is awake or aware, there is only a brown curving thing lying on the ground. To see, or be aware of, what is actually before one’s eyes requires a kind of attention that in Buddhism is called “mindfulness.”

If we can be fully present in the moment and observe what we are experiencing directly without allowing the intervention of previous interpretations or beliefs, this is awareness. Seeing the world in this way makes our lives more vivid and immediate, enables a flexibility of response in each moment, and creates the possibility of change.

One specific technique that Buddhism teaches for facilitating awareness is called “bare attention” or sometimes, “bare noting.” We don’t say “snake,” we say “brown, round thing, curving on the ground.” We observe without judging or interpreting. Of course, if the thing then begins to hiss or writhe, we say “snake” and act accordingly. But if we can acquire the habit of observing first with an open mind—“with naked awareness of what *is* before conceptual thought arises,” as Buddhist writer Steve Hagen puts it—we can escape our habitual reactions. By this method, we can also observe ourselves, our moods, our prejudices, and our habits. Change comes, not by struggling to change or by fighting or disciplining oneself, but by becoming aware of what we are feeling and how we habitually act.

This book uses the ideas and techniques of Buddhism, but it does not ask you to accept a particular spiritual view. It requires only that you suspend for a moment any belief that anger is a useful, necessary tool or an essential part of your personality.

The Process

The process offered by the book is based on five working hypotheses. They are:

- **Anger is a destructive emotion.**
- **The first person damaged by your anger is you.**
- **When you act out of anger, you will act irrationally.**
- **You can, if you choose, reduce the amount of anger in your life.**
- **As you reduce anger in your life, you will be happier and more effective.**

You do not need to accept any of these as true; you need only to be open and willing to experiment with them. If you believe even one of them is useful and act on it in your daily life, this book will accomplish its purpose. Now let's take a look at some of these hypotheses.

First, the destructiveness of anger in our world is almost too obvious to require discussion. The notion that revenge is the proper remedy for anger fuels destruction for generations. Every day the classic clan feud between the Hatfields and the McCoys gets played out in large and small arenas. Among the global examples are the conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East, and Hindus and Muslims in India.

At the other extreme, we constantly encounter expressions of anger that are as astounding in their silliness as they are potentially lethal in their effects. People have been murdered in disputes over parking spaces, and moments of intemperate rage can irrevocably damage precious relationships.

Second, anger is toxic to our bodies and health. A recent review of more than forty scientific studies has confirmed the strong association of anger and hostility with the onset of coronary heart disease in healthy people as well as a poor prognosis for those already suffering from it. When someone with risk factors for heart disease, like high blood pressure, goes to the doctor, she is likely to be prescribed medication, which often has the effect of further masking the anger that is partly to blame for the problem, thus making it harder to deal with.

Finally, it's an understatement to say that when we act out of anger, it is likely to be irrational and contrary to our best interests.

An attorney friend was less than a model husband. In fact, he was such a cad that his wife decided to leave him after just a few years. She made her grand exit when he was out of town. She took his Mercedes out of the garage and then rammed it from all four sides with her car. Both cars were totaled as a result, and later when the community property was divided, she was surcharged for the damage to the Mercedes. The greatest irony is that she was angrier after the colossal expression of her rage than she was before.

Western Approaches to Anger

In our culture, there are three generally practiced approaches to dealing with anger.

First, we can suppress it or, in today's idiom, "stuff it." When a spouse or a boss makes us angry, we are expected to grin and bear it. We may have been so thoroughly conditioned to stifle our anger that we are no longer even aware of its existence.

Second, we can acknowledge the anger, but act it out vicariously. This means that if you are mad at your boss, you may end up venting that anger by lashing out at your spouse, your children, or your pet.

The third conventional route is so-called anger management, which relies on detailed techniques to be used in specific situations, and often includes psychotherapy.

The first option, stuffing it, is generally chosen when dealing with someone who is important to us—our boss, our spouse, or someone else whose good regard is essential to our well-being. The problem with stuffing it is that it keeps the pressure inside, which can do damage to our bodies and psyches. In addition to physiological effects like strokes and heart attacks, suppression requires psychological energy. If we are walking around holding anger inside (like restraining an angry beast), the result is likely to be fatigue and the loss of vital energy for creative pursuits.

When you take your anger out on some unsuspecting third party, that person feels abused for no obvious reason, and gets angry back. Damage to that relationship may create another source of anger in your life.

A once-popular psychotherapeutic remedy for venting anger was to beat on a pillow or yell where no one could hear you. In group therapy, people were supplied with pillows to hit while screaming things like: "Mr. Jones, I hate