



# *Literacy Volunteers of America*

## *Essex & Passaic Counties*

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### **New Jersey Association for Lifelong Learning Adult Learner Writing Contest 2017**

**Category:** Non-Fiction  
**Title:** Anger: A call for healing  
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#### **Anger: A call for healing**

Why do certain circumstances get you angry? The typical answer to this question is, “because I am like this”. Have you ever wondered why are you like that? Is it just a matter of chance that some people get angry at foolishness, others at injustice or disobedience, and so on and so forth?

The answer is NO; anger is never just a matter of chance. Anger is always a result of an event in our childhood where we suffer emotional pain and then is stored in our minds. We are not aware of this event but we are always projecting it on others. We are always watching this projection in everybody else and the particularity of this is that we are always wanting to change it, just like if we tried to fix our hair in the reflection of a mirror.

This mechanism works like this, our mind is always collecting information from the exterior and comparing it with the information we had already acquired. When the mind finds any information that matches an episode of emotional pain, it recalls the emotion but not the occurrence so we need a justification for that emotion and we grab it from whatever is going around on the outside, so that we always blame the person next to us.

Let's say you are walking by the street and a dog is approaching you. In order to find the appropriate reaction to keep you safe, your mind looks in its files for all the information regarding dogs. If your previous experiences with dogs were positive then your reaction will be positive, otherwise you would experience fear or panic. So, your reaction doesn't rely on the dog itself but on your previous experiences with dogs.

Now let's take a look to some real examples:

- A young lady came to me claiming that she always got angry at her son when he didn't understand how to do his homework. She was always yelling at him calling him names. When she noticed the fear in her son's eyes, she realized she was doing wrong but even though she didn't want to keep mistreating him, she couldn't help it. I asked her how had she been treated as a child in the same situation. She closed her eyes and started looking for that memory. Her lips tightened and while her eyes brimmed with tears, she replied for me with a tone full of sadness that her father always yelled at her too. I asked her how



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she felt back then and she told me that she felt sadness and fear. Then I asked her how she thought her son feels when she yells at him. She looked down and with a sad expression she replied me that he would feel the same way as she did when she was a child. At that point she realized that she was repeating with her son the same history of her childhood but now she was acting as her father and her son was acting as herself. I guided her into that particular memory in her childhood and showed her how to heal that negative experience. A week after that, she got in contact with me to say that she was very happy because after healing that episode in her life and forgiving her father, she was more patient with her son and didn't yell him at all. The most important thing was that their relationship changed for good because he wasn't afraid of her anymore.

- Another day a man came to me because he used to get angry at foolish people. He couldn't stand foolishness and was having many problems with this, especially at work because he got mad at his subordinates and actually yelled at them. When he was talking to me about his problem he suddenly realized that during elementary school he had been treated as a fool by his classmates. I asked him to recall one of those memories, to feel what he felt back then, and compare that particular emotion to the emotion in the present when he noticed people doing foolish things. "It is exactly the same emotion", he said. "Now that you are sure where this pattern is coming from, do you want to get rid of this?" I asked him. He replied that he was ready, so I guided him into forgiving his classmates and he told me he felt that he was getting free of the heavy burden he had been carrying for more than 30 years. In the next days he called me to tell that it worked like magic, he had changed from night to day; he went through the same exact situations like before but now he didn't get angry at all.
- My daughters wanted to have a pet, but they were too little to take care of a cat or a dog, so my wife and I decided to buy hamsters for them. So we did and they named them Charlie and Cauliflower. One day my daughters were playing with the hamsters and they weren't careful enough and I saw the hamsters falling from their hands to the ground a couple of times. I got really mad and yelled at them because they were mistreating their pets. As most people do, I thought I was right for getting angry because it's not good to mistreat any creature, but as I have been dealing with many anger problems in my practice I told myself, "Hold on, don't fool yourself, this has something to do with you, there is something inside you asking to be healed". I asked myself, what happened to me that watching my daughters mistreat their pets made me feel so angry? The question was so precise that I got the answer immediately, I remembered an episode from my own childhood where I mistreated a parrot I had as a pet. I couldn't understand then why I did it, and I had never forgiven myself for doing that. Now I could look at everything with different eyes and suddenly everything was so clear. When I was a boy, my father used to yell at me and I felt sadness and anger. I could never defend myself from his mistreatment and I felt that everybody else was stronger than me except the parrot, so I used it to repeat the pattern, trying to relieve myself from the pain without knowing it.





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When I saw my daughters --according to my judgment-- mistreating their pets, what I was really looking at was myself mistreating my parrot. I forgave myself for mistreating my parrot, I sent love to my parrot for being there so I could learn this important lesson and forgave my father because he was repeating a pattern, giving back what he had received from his parents just as I had done with the parrot. After that, I talked to my daughters explaining everything to them and asking them to forgive me for yelling at them, which they did, understanding the situation completely.

As you can see with these stories, anger is not something to be taken for granted. It is like an alarm telling us that there is something to heal in ourselves. Just remember, whenever you feel anger again, try to stop for a minute and ask yourself this question: “What happened to me that this situation makes me feel angry?” and when a memory comes to your mind, watch it carefully, understand the situation and forgive whom you have to forgive imagining that your forgiveness dissolves all your emotional pain and turns it into light.

