

Where Do Anger And Peace Fit Into An Ag Legacy?

On the Jackson family ranch, tensions were high. Sam, the oldest son, was furious when his father, Jim, decided to sell a piece of land without consulting him. That pasture had been Sam's favorite grazing spot for the cattle, and he had plans to expand the herd.

"You didn't even ask me!" Sam yelled, his fists clenched and face flushed with anger. Jim's shoulders slumped. "I did what I thought was best to cover expenses. We're struggling, Sam." The words hung in the air like dust after a storm. Sam stormed out, slamming the door behind him. But later, he found himself watching the cattle graze and felt his anger slowly drain away.

He returned to the house and found his father sitting on the porch. "I'm sorry," Sam said softly. "I know you're just trying to keep us afloat." Jim nodded, patting the seat beside him. "Let's talk through this—together." Peace settled as father and son began planning a new way forward.



Anger /' aNGger/ noun - A strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility.

(Oxford Languages, Dec. 2020)

Psychology Today describes anger is one of the most basic human emotions, just like happiness, sadness, or fear. It is a strong feeling of annoyance or hostility. When we're angry, our body prepares to either defend itself or run away. This response is known as the "fight, flight, or freeze" response. It's a natural reaction that can help us in difficult situations.

But anger is not just about losing control. It's an emotion that can motivate us to make changes. For example, anger can push us to stand up against unfair treatment or to correct a situation that feels wrong. When used in a healthy way, anger can be a force that drives positive outcomes.

Types of Anger

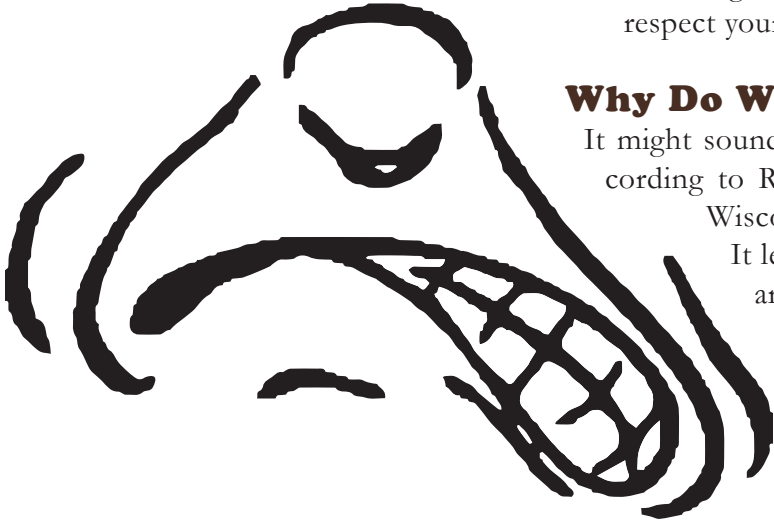
There are different ways we experience and show anger. Your Life Counts, an organization focused on mental health, identifies three main types of anger:

- 1. Passive Aggression:** This type of anger is not expressed directly. People might avoid saying they're angry but show it through their actions. They might give the silent treatment, make sarcastic remarks, or pretend everything is fine when it's not. People often use passive aggression to avoid confrontation, but it doesn't solve problems and can cause resentment to build up over time.



2. Open Aggression: This type of anger is shown outwardly. It includes yelling, fighting, or being physically aggressive. People who show open aggression might act in ways that harm themselves or others. They might use hurtful words, criticize others harshly, or even engage in physical fights. Open aggression can quickly damage relationships and cause long-term harm.

3. Assertive Anger: This is the healthiest way to express anger. People with assertive anger express how they feel calmly and clearly. They talk about what's bothering them without hurting others. Assertive anger means being confident in how you express your feelings but also willing to listen and consider other perspectives. It shows that you respect yourself and the people around you.



Why Do We Need Anger?

It might sound strange, but anger is actually an important emotion. According to Ryan Martin, a psychology professor at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, anger alerts us to problems in our lives. It lets us know when something feels unfair or when our goals are being blocked. Anger can help us identify issues that need our attention.

For instance, if someone breaks a promise or treats us unfairly, anger lets us know that we need to address it. Without anger, we might not stand up for ourselves. Anger can give us the energy and determination to fight for what's right. However, when we feel angry too often or too

intensely, it can lead to problems like health issues, damaged relationships, or difficulty controlling our actions.

Interpreting Anger: Why Do We React Differently?

Not everyone gets angry over the same things. This is because anger depends on how we interpret situations. Two people might experience the same event but react very differently. For example, if someone is cut off in traffic, one person might get angry and start yelling, while another might just shrug it off.

The way we interpret these events affects how we feel. If we see it as a personal attack, we might get very angry. But if we view it as just an accident, we won't get as upset. Learning to recognize and understand how we interpret situations can help us manage our anger better.

Managing Anger Effectively

So, what should we do when we feel ourselves getting angry? First, try to notice when anger is building up. Pay attention to physical signs, like clenching your fists, feeling hot, or having a racing heartbeat. When you notice these signs, take a step back and think about what's happening. Ask yourself why you're feeling this way and whether your reaction is helping or hurting the situation.

If the situation is not worth getting angry over, take a few deep breaths and try to calm down. Think about whether you can change the situation. If not, consider letting it go or finding a solution that doesn't involve aggression. Sometimes, taking a break or shifting your focus can help you cool down and think more clearly.

Using Compassion to Handle Anger

Russell Kolts, a psychologist who studies anger, suggests using compassion to handle anger in a better way. Compassion means treating ourselves and others with kindness and understanding. Instead of just reacting out of anger, Kolts recommends thinking about what you would say to a friend in the same situation. How would you support them? What advice would you give? Applying this advice to yourself can help you respond in a calmer, more thoughtful way.

Kolts explains that it's normal to feel angry and that noticing our anger can be the first step to handling it. When we're angry, we don't have to act right away. We can take a moment to breathe, balance our emotions, and then decide how to handle the situation. This approach can prevent us from saying or doing things we'll regret later.

Family Conflict in Agriculture: Why Does It Happen?

Conflict is a part of any family, but it can be especially challenging in agricultural families. That's because family and business are often closely tied together. When family members live and work on the same land, disagreements about business decisions can easily become personal conflicts.

For example, if one family member wants to try a new farming method while another wants to stick to traditional ways, this disagreement can lead to tension. Conflicts can also arise when decisions are made without everyone's input or when family members feel that their opinions don't matter. These situations can cause stress and disrupt family harmony.

How to Keep Peace in the Family

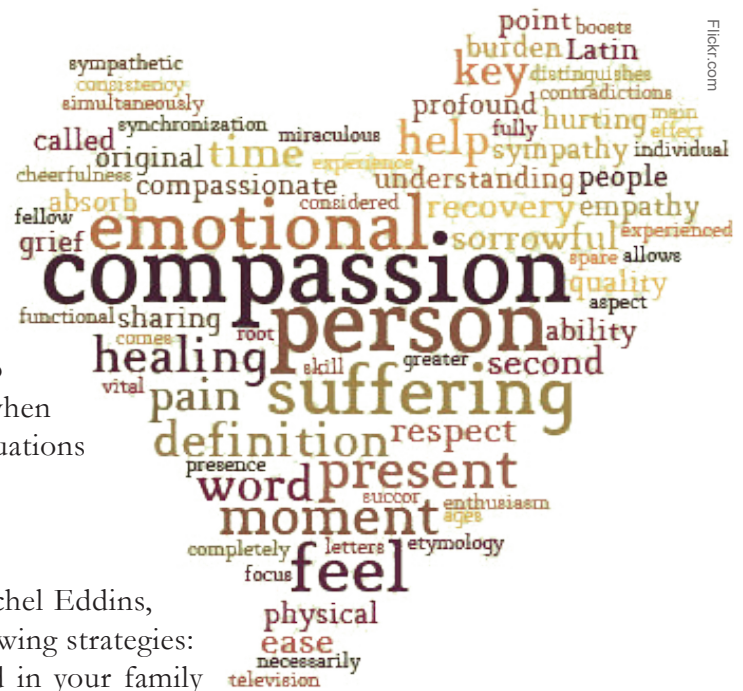
Restoring peace in the family takes effort from everyone. Rachel Eddins, a counselor specializing in family dynamics, suggests the following strategies:

- 1. Think Positively About Others:** Try to see the good in your family members and respect their opinions, even if you don't agree.
- 2. Show Patience:** Take a step back and try to understand the problem from different viewpoints. Consider how you see the issue, how others see it, and how a neutral third person might view it.
- 3. Avoid Abusive Behavior:** Don't use words to hurt or actions to punish. Instead, find ways to express yourself that won't damage relationships.
- 4. Share and Give:** Small acts of kindness, like sharing a meal or giving a small gift, can go a long way in easing tension and rebuilding trust.
- 5. Listen Attentively:** Really pay attention to what the other person is saying. Don't just wait for your turn to speak. Try to understand their perspective.
- 6. Be Ready to Apologize:** Taking responsibility for your part in a conflict shows maturity. Even if you don't think you're completely at fault, acknowledging your role can help mend relationships.
- 7. Forgive and Move On:** Holding onto anger only creates more pain. Forgive others, and allow yourself to be forgiven. Letting go can help restore peace.

Planning for the Future of the Farm

One of the most challenging issues for agricultural families is planning the future of the farm. Talking about transferring management or ownership can bring up fears and anxieties. Yet, planning ahead is essential for preventing misunderstandings and conflicts later on.

Having open conversations about the future ensures that everyone knows their role and understands what will happen. Establishing clear expectations can reduce stress and help family members feel more secure about the future of the business.



The Importance of Succession Planning

Succession planning is about more than just deciding who will take over the farm. It's about understanding each person's dreams, goals, and concerns. Includes everyone's input in the process can make transitions smoother and reduce resentment. Taking time to build a plan for succession of ownership and management will allow family members to find peace and understanding about their future. This also allows them to make plans for their own future.

When families take these steps, they can ensure that both the business and family relationships continue to thrive for generations to come.

Conclusion

Anger and conflict are natural parts of life, especially in close-knit families that work together. But with understanding and thoughtful planning, families can turn these challenges into opportunities for growth. By managing anger in a healthy way and planning for the future, agricultural families can maintain strong relationships and a successful legacy.



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