

Video Transcript: Impact with Integrity - Module 3, Lesson 4

Hey friends. So today I want to talk to you about anger and put on the table the possibility that anger is an essential emotion for creating change in the world and especially for advancing justice in the world. I think, in the nonprofit sector specifically, but maybe everywhere, that anger kind of gets a bad rap. What I want to encourage us to think about is productive anger, healthy, anger, right? Right. Just righteous anger. That is actually a really, really powerful emotion. If you direct it in the wrong way, it's actually quite toxic. So I get it, why it gets a bad rap. But, what I want to talk today is about actually really healthy, productive anger. So, and, and by the way, you're human, you're going to get angry. Anger is completely natural response when a boundary has been crossed or when an injustice has occurred. It's just automatic.

We are wired for this. Okay? The question is, what are you going to do about it? So, I want to share, from the conscious leadership forum, some words that are synonyms for angry, and the energetic levels, so you can kind of tap into and get a sense of your emotional range when it comes to anger. I guess one big question I have for you is, do you allow yourself to even feel it in the first place and as a social change leader, do you welcome anger when it's in your workplace? Do you say, "Oh, there's some wisdom. What can we learn from you? Thank you for sharing us with your anger." This is a gift, right? Because, I'm a fan of bringing your whole body to work with you and your anger is...I mean, you might feel that little flash of red in your brain...but anger is in your whole body.

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So, where anger is located is, it can be in our back, it can be in our shoulders. Like, holding our shoulders. It can be in our neck. If you see someone holding their neck a lot, my curiosity is like, maybe they're angry. Um, temples, right? This is where anger can be. Or, our jaws., Definitely jaws is where, like, clenching your jaw. All those are places where your body is saying, like, something's not right here. Like boop, boop, boop, pay attention. Something's not right. So let's just get some of the language for how you might...the range of palette of anger. So, low anger, low energy anger--these are words you might hear or , connotations you might have. So annoyed, bored. Bored is anger. Yeah. Bothered, dissatisfied, irritable, or tense. By the way, I've noticed that people would just come up with all kinds of euphemisms for angry. Sometimes I think it's just to be like, I feel angry. See what happens. What's the worst that can happen. You're just noticing something and speaking unarguably, right? So those were low rate, low energy anger. Medium energy anger can be agitated, disgusted, frustrated, indignant, irritated, and resentful. Then high energy anger can be enraged, furious, hostile, livid, outraged, or vengeful. Right? So, that's just to begin to wrap our arms around what some of that It might be.

Anger, productively directed, productively channeled, is an incredibly, incredibly powerful force for change in the world. Right? If you're feeling angry. Woo! All right. Just welcome that.

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This is what I want to challenge everyone to do, is if you're noticing you're feeling angry to be like, "Oh gosh, I feel angry. Okay, grr, I'm still angry," but like to appreciate yourself for even noticing that you're feeling angry. 'Cause I think a lot of us have been socialized not to feel feelings that are, and I'm gonna put this in air quotes, "bad," like anger or fear or sadness. Right. But yeah, great. You're angry. Good. But, also to welcome anger and people around us. To be like, "Hey, is anybody feeling a little irritated about this?" Or just, is anybody feeling anything that would be useful? Because when anger comes at me, my first instinct is to be self-protective in some way because I'm afraid that that angry person might hurt me or might be vengeful or something like that.

But what I've really learned is someone else's anger is really a gift that I can, like, it's almost like, tell me more, help me understand what's going on, what boundary has been crossed, because I believe in justice too, right? How can we do this together? So, your curiosity helps just to have that anger become something we can use versus someone feels like they need to stifle down. Feeling it is great. Right? And so sometimes it helps to match with our bodies, that feeling. So, To like stomp around some. Again, you don't want to do something that's harmful or destructive, but get moving. And, one of our fellows yesterday was saying that she's been boxing a lot. Like, find a punching bag. I did that once when I was particularly angry and I think I bruised my hands, but it moves the adrenaline through, right?

Like, something to get that fight or flight, mixed with anger, often. They often get mixed together.

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Moving through, right. Move the energy. And on the other side of that, the question is what boundary has been crossed, right? What injustice do I want to address? What's no longer serving me or others. Right. What's not working anymore. And what wants to be stopped, changed or ended. Right. So, these are really important questions. Anger is a real gift. If someone is willing to share their anger with you, receive that as the gift it is. Okay. Thank them. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that with me. And then, after that's moved through, let it move through, and then, okay. Where's the boundary been crossed? Where's the injustice. How can we restore that boundary? Okay. What can I do to restore that boundary? All right, hope this is helpful. Anger, yay! The more you can expand your capacity as a leader to be with, to be able to be present with, and hold a fuller range of emotions from low medium to high, of anger, sadness, fear, joy. The more we can expand our ability to be present, the more we can actually create change in the world. The more we are a person that other people will trust to bring their full, authentic selves to work with. And that is where the unleashing just really gets outta control.

Okay. Good luck.