

# CONNECTIONS

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## On Expressing Your Anger



The following article is written by recognized anger management expert, **Newton Hightower**. He has provided permission for this article to be reprinted. For further information, see [angrbusters.com](http://angrbusters.com).

### **HOW DID COUNSELING AND I GET INTO THIS MESS OF EXPRESSING YOUR ANGER?**

“The 60’s”

I was in Los Angeles in the late 60’s and 70’s when the encounter group movement was in full swing. Expressing anger was then seen as a matter of psychological and physical health. The idea that “I have a right to my anger” was born then. Some counseling was part of a cultural/sub-cultural rebellion against “the repressive/destructive” ways of the culture...Rules, Government, Sexual repression, etc.

This repressed, good Methodist boy from Texas, born in 1944, was at the first “Love In” in Griffith Park, Los Angeles in 1967. This was a year before the Summer of Love in 1968 when Haight Ashbury became the Mecca for Hippies... “It was groovy man!” And Yes, believe it or not, many of us deluded therapists thought that the age of Aquarius was coming and we should help by assisting people to let their anger and their repressed sexual desires out.

We were under the assumption that once you let your anger out, you were going to be peaceful and loving, then...”peace would guide the planet and love would steer the stars.”

Self-Help Books - Another way that counseling got into this mess with anger was the explosion in the self-help book sales. Who buys self-help books? Actually, women buy 80% of them - - then and now.

The books said that women need to learn to express their anger and are entitled to it. No one dare challenge this in the beginning of the Women’s Movement. There was, however, one voice of reason in the forest of insanity, a book by the title “The Dance of Anger: A Woman’s Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships” by Harriet Lerner.

Then the Battered Women’s Movement in the early 1980’s began to make us aware that encouraging some men to express their anger was definitely not a good idea! Shortly after that we saw the Men’s Movement of the 1990’s. Again they were saying that men’s anger (this time) is good and we were encouraged to get it all out in a “safe setting.” {There were leaders thinking the cure of all problems was to beat on pillows or to throw rocks at a man dressed as a woman (this was on 20/20 with Hugh Downs).}

Freud - Freud’s model, from 100 years ago, exists without a single thread of evidence. Many still believe that the resolution of anger MUST include a two or three year trip to your childhood to resolve the traumas.

### **WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE ABOUT ANGER TELL US?**

Shut Up! “Emotions left to themselves will dissipate.”

Don’t Express Your Anger to HELP your HEART. “In experimental studies, when male students bottle up their anger, blood pressure goes DOWN, and it goes UP if they decide to express their feelings. Anger Expression RAISES blood pressure for women as well.”

When angry, act the opposite to how you feel! “...friendliness in reaction to trespass lowers blood pressure.”

Gratitude “Gratitude amplifies the savoring and appreciation of the good events gone by. And rewriting history by forgiveness loosens the power of the bad events to embitter (and actually can transform bad memories into good ones).”



Reference: *Authentic Happiness*, by Martin E. P. Seligman, Ph.D. (Free Press, 2002) pages 69 & 70. (Dr. Seligman is the Former President of the American Psychological Association).

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# The Power of Charisma

by Don Benson

What do Michael Jackson and Senator Ted Kennedy have in common? How do a superstar entertainer and the “lion of the Senate” engender such mass public appeal? After all, these two individuals would seem to have very little in common. They were of different generations and took widely different career paths. Nevertheless, their recent deaths have created an outpouring of grief and have generated massive interest in their lives.

Both had a special gift that touched people in very profound ways. Certainly not all people. There were many detractors for both men. However, their lives and their passing left indelible marks on American culture, not to mention their international influence.

It cannot go unnoticed that both men were marred by scandal, having their personal flaws exposed to the public eye. Their imperfections reminded us that they were indeed human. In a strange way, we needed these reminders. After all, how many of us watched Michael Jackson in 1983 “moon dance” to his hit song, “Billie Jean”? He appeared to float through space during that performance. How many of us remember Senator Kennedy’s run for the presidency in 1980 and his impassioned speech at the Democratic convention?

While Jackson and Kennedy would appear to be an unlikely pairing, the closeness of their deaths and the power of the public response have brought them together. How can such disparate individuals have such an impact? We must look within ourselves for these answers. People like Jackson and Kennedy strike at something deep in the human psyche. We project onto them those parts of ourselves that need expression.

We can realize our fantasies through identification with them. Jackson’s talent is an expression of our fantasy, just as Kennedy’s power and influence are an expression of those desires in us.

Negative projections are just as likely. Our distaste for them may represent the revulsion we may feel for certain parts of ourselves. Jackson’s pronounced androgyny was no doubt threatening to many, just as Kennedy’s liberalism was.

You may suggest that this is nonsense and that they were liked or disliked simply based on their personalities. Even more basic, Jackson’s brand of music and Kennedy’s politics were just not to your liking. Perhaps. But judging from the intensity of the reactions to their deaths, they possessed a mystique about them. A Jungian might say that they embodied perfect archetypes (models) that were receptacles for our unconscious needs, both positive and negative. As we often hear about such individuals, they may be as influential in death as they were in life.

So is there anything wrong with this hero worship? Not if it merely serves as an inspiration to be the best we can be. The hero archetype has always existed and is probably inevitable. It should not, however, diminish or impede our own efforts to actualize ourselves. Moreover, it should not be a substitute for our belief in ourselves or give us an excuse to not live our lives as fully as we can. Michael Jackson and Ted Kennedy are worthy of our admiration, but cannot ultimately be vicarious replacements for living our own lives. Nor can anyone else for that matter.



*“Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.”*

*C. S. Lewis*

*“And in the end, it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”*

*Abraham Lincoln*

# On The Lighter Side



A man is flying in a hot air balloon and realizes he is lost. He reduces height and spots a man down below. He lowers the balloon further and shouts:

"Excuse me, can you tell me where I am?"

The man below says, "Yes, you're in a hot air balloon, hovering 30 feet above this field."

"You must work in information technology" says the balloonist.

"I do," replies the man. "How did you know?"

"Well," says the balloonist, "everything you have told me is technically correct, but it's of no use to anyone."

The man below says, "You must be a corporate manager."

"I am," replies the balloonist, "but how did you know?"

"Well", says the man, "You don't know where you are, or where you're going, but you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were before we met, but now it's my fault."

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ANSWER BELOW

## THREE TRAILS EMPLOYEE & FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Three Trails Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is a counseling agency designed to respond to the needs of eligible active and retired employees, spouses, and dependent family members of participating businesses and organizations.

Our mission is to provide professional assistance early and in a timely manner so that problems do not worsen. Such concerns may include workplace stress, marriage and family tensions, alcohol and drug abuse, and other difficulties that may impact individuals. Counselors at Three Trails assess the scope and nature of the presenting concerns and will either provide counseling or refer the individual(s) to specialized services as necessary.

Three Trails EFAP is staffed by three counselors and an administrative assistant. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 237-5750 or stop by the office at 812 South David Street.

### OFFICE HOURS:

Monday & Wednesday 9:00 to 6:00 pm  
 Tuesday & Thursday 9:00 to 7:00 pm  
 Fridays 12:00 to 5:00 pm

We are closed through the noon hour, although noon sessions may be arranged.

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