

## Support Information for Ad On

Bonus: Here is are four excerpts from my book: *The Art of Fear, Why Conquering Fear Won't Work and What to Do Instead*.

- First is the section about PTSD.
- Second is the section on Anger.
- Third is the section about the pairing of Fear and Anger. (Serial Killer Siamese Twins)
- Fourth is the section on: How you know when you get Fear and Anger right. (Fear and Anger and Shadow Voices: Getting It Right)

Enjoy

### **PTSD**

This is a very delicate subject, because some might take offense at my comparing PTSD from extreme sports (which are supposed to be fun and epic) to PTSD from being in a war (which is horrific and soul-crushing). I want to be sensitive to this obvious distinction.

David Brooks wrote in the *New York Times* that “most discussion about PTSD thus far has been about fear and the conquering of fear.” All this bad advice out there about how conquering Fear is the solution to PTSD drives me nuts. In my experience—for I have had PTSD—it is the cause of PTSD. More specifically, not willing to feel Fear, or any emotion, is the cause of PTSD. It's unfelt Fear turned into stone in someone's mind and body, weighing them down.

Everyone is so afraid of examining that stone, especially the soldier who has experienced tremendous trauma, because it seems it'll be too dangerous—it might erupt out and roll over everything in its path.

Without Fear, few of us humans, actually, would have ever amounted to anything.

That may even be true if someone has a lifelong, calcified history of not knowing how to feel. Or a lifelong history of having it come out as rage.

I've spent several years now being fascinated with wounded warriors who suffer from PTSD. I want to help them, and have gotten to know that world enough to comment, the caveat being that I know that sports and war are obviously very different, and I'm coming at this from a respectful place.

Both pro extreme athletes and pro soldiers start at the same place, consciously signing up for a high-risk life/career, and they also commonly end up in the same place: lifelong injury and PTSD. What they experience in between, however, is very, very different.

Yet, as a Fear educator/facilitator, I see that what's true for an extreme athlete and what's true for a soldier, in the end, are often the same thing: They suffer.

And suffering, no matter where it comes from, is suffering.

Tragically, in school, learning how to feel your emotions is not taught. And then, in the military, becoming stoic is explicitly taught. The image of the soldier standing there blankly as the drill sergeant yells in his face is hard to forget. Repress. Repress. Repress. And you will pass your training and be ready for action.

I get it. It works. Anything else might put their lives at greater risk.

Same with extreme sports: While there's no drill sergeant, repression of Fear is still standard. And it also works. I know it did for me, for years.

But at the end of a military career, at the end of an extreme sports career, you'll find more and more soldiers and athletes who are struggling. They saw a lot of their friends get violently hurt or killed. They miss the high of the battle. They may suffer from chronic injuries. They may suffer from adrenal fatigue from living in a state of excessive Fear and adrenaline for too long. The body doesn't know the difference between getting chased by a lion, getting shot at, and jumping off cliffs every day.

They also may feel dead inside, depressed, as though life has lost its meaning. And yes, they may have PTSD. I know I did. Which is probably why I wanted to work with wounded warriors.

Yet if emotional intelligence—your ability to experience and feel your emotions in a healthy, productive way—were taught in schools and in the military, my prediction is that there would be no PTSD.

It would also severely reduce depression, mass shooting rampages, and other mental disorders.

**ANGER**

You also have a major employee called Anger. Anger is another emotion from which your human experience is created. Just as no one is without Fear, no one is without Anger. Also manufactured by the Lizard Brain, it's used alongside or instead of Fear for specific situations. For example, if a caveman encounters a saber-toothed tiger, Fear is the right choice. Fear is flight. Run! If, however, the caveman encounters a dude trying to steal his woman, Anger is the better choice. Anger is conflict, battle, fight! It makes him throw a vicious punch. The Lizard Brain, being all about running or punching, sends out Fear for running and Anger for punching.

Anger, much like Fear, is simple, with a deep, ancient wisdom. Sharper than Fear, abrupt, more active and specifically targeted, its intention is to push away whatever is in its path. It's a "not on my watch" burst of energy felt in the body, with an unmistakable and purposeful message: Take immediate action and protect against boundary violations. It's supposed to right all wrongs.

Sadly, this wisdom is rarely available anymore in its pure form because of social conditioning. When you're young, Dad says, "We don't do that" about Anger (I call it Anger shaming), and the madness begins.

You think controlling Fear is tough? Try controlling Anger. It's intense and mighty, and the Controller has to really step it up. It takes its biggest sword and three of its deepest breaths to tame that dragon. The Controller can successfully monitor your tone, choke back what you really want to say, or walk you away from an argument. Then, after a spell, you can come back more peaceful, feeling pretty good about yourself for calming Anger down.

Yet consider: If you were the voice of Anger—whose job it is to be angry, not joyful or playful—and you were told, "Go away and never return" by billions of people every day, told to shut the hell up, dismissed as unwelcome, unwanted, embarrassing, and childish, would that make you less angry, or more angry?

Exactly.

Because so few people have a welcoming relationship with Anger, at this point all we know is its repressed version. It shows up, and holes get punched in walls. People get thrown out the window. You get attacked. Or go on the attack. Drama, violence, rage, and angst ensue.

Tell me to go away? says Anger. A few days later it comes back, holding a mightier sword than before, and cuts your silly little peanut head off.

It's a vicious cycle. You repress Anger, it seemingly departs, but now it runs amok in your unconscious world. It's down there gathering strength, until it sees a chance and, alongside Fear, explodes out in weird, disjointed, often embarrassing ways. Which makes you want to never, ever let it out of the basement again. So you repress it even more.

Every therapist, self-help course, and mentor supports your doing this. They may start out saying, "Anger is natural; you must allow yourself to feel it," but they inevitably finish with "Okay, now let's get it under control." That's like saying, "A child is a blessing; now let's beat her." So you take three even deeper breaths, sign up for more Anger management or meditation classes that promise a better future, and repeat mantras like "I am calm. I am peaceful," which makes the emotion go underground further, becoming even more covert and twisted in ways you can't see. And the war between you two is reignited again and again.

Until, after all these years, Anger is pretty pissed off. Its pure, wise form long forgotten, Anger no longer represents its natural intelligence and purpose. Today, it mostly represents its own angst.

## **SERIAL KILLER SIAMESE TWINS**

Why, in a book about Fear, am I writing so much about Anger?

Because behind the Anger is always Fear.

With Fear, adrenaline starts the heart beating faster, providing more blood as its energy comes up the spine and out the limbs, propelling you to action. Thus you have the strength to run (legs) or punch (arms).

Like the mama bear protecting her cub. She stands up with arms high and wide, flooded with energy and blood, claws out, ready to rip your head off. She looks angry, right? But look again: It's Fear. She's afraid you'll hurt her cub. Add a drop of intensity, though, and it's Anger.

Because they are so intimately tied together, it's hard to differentiate between these two emotions. So here's where things get sketchy. The chilling truth is: If Anger is made up mostly of Fear, and the Fear behind the Anger is pathological and twisted, naturally the Anger will be, too. If you have rancid flour? The pastry is gross. Fishy ice? The Popsicle is repulsive.

No wonder the Anger you see is so dramatic and vicious. Anger not only represents its own angst at being abused; it also represents Fear's angst. So at this point, probably 95 percent of what you consider Anger isn't Anger at all; it's Fear from the basement asserting itself. Anger gets mistaken for Fear most of the time.

Which is why today, a man punching someone is repressed Fear, not Anger. Modern violence is repressed Fear, not Anger.

And this is why Anger management courses seeking to help you control Anger are just a band aid. These courses rarely address the disowned Fear behind the Anger. Plus, teaching repression and control of Anger itself, which is the only resource that seems to "work," actually exacerbates the problem, as we've learned.

If I were in an Anger management course, I would be really pissed off about this.

All this repression and abuse toward Fear and Anger has turned two otherwise nice kids into serial killer Siamese twins. Similar to other shadow voices, these twin emotions currently express themselves in one of two ways:

1. You may be very aware of Anger as the bubbles of Angst, Violence, Blame, and Accusation percolate through your day. Or it may be mostly dormant, building until the moment your guard is dropped, and then out it comes, roaring, sudden, and explosive, in the form of externally directed rage.

I say “externally directed” because, often working alongside Blame, Drama, or Self-Righteousness, Anger starts its sentences with the word “You.” It comes out as “You are making me angry. You are doing this to me.” It points fingers and feels justified. You feel justified, which seemingly gives you a free pass to do or say whatever you want.

This is how Fear and Anger work together from the basement, intending to control and manipulate other people. Anger wants a reaction so it can continue its rampage, and it will get one. We’re all familiar with the cycle of abuse: If a parent is abusive to the child, that child tends to grow up abusive toward the world. It’s called displaced aggression. The same thing occurs with emotions: When you try to control and manipulate Fear and Anger, they will in turn grow up trying to control and manipulate others. They’re very good at it, too.

And usually the people you’re pointing fingers at get engaged with the drama, because they’re repressing Fear and Anger as well.

2. On the other hand, if you don’t identify with this first style and think, “Oh, no, I’m simply not an angry person,” this second pattern is for you. Of course, no one is without Anger. If you think you’re an exception, likely you’re just really good at refusing to feel it, and Anger (and therefore Fear) now gets contorted and comes out in other covert ways.

Here’s a short list of what you may feel instead of Anger:

- Nothing. Numb, bored, and lacking motivation. Passion and fire are severely limited.
- Powerless. Like a doormat. You’re shy and meek. If you run away from Anger, you run away from power.
- Socially reclusive. You retreat far inside yourself, building thicker walls to protect you from having to deal with Fear or Anger, and you won’t allow yourself to get close to anyone.
- Indecisive. If you don’t even know how you feel, it’s very hard to make clear decisions.
- Excessive Sadness or Depression. In society, we’re taught that Sadness is more acceptable than Anger (or Fear), so that is what you feel instead.
- Excessive Joy. You cling to that one experience. An overcompensating smile on your face, this can come across as inauthentic and prevent you from having a deeper life experience.

- Helpless or hopeless. Which feels awful, so you kick the dog or yell at a stranger, because even a wee bit of Anger feels freeing.
- Stressed, anxious. You feel it all the time, like you're in prison—tight, confined, not free. One must hold a lot of tension to not have any cracks.
- Neglect or Hurt. Being a victim feels safer than being a perpetrator.
- Passive-aggressive, manipulative, controlling. More politically correct than Anger, but it's still looking for a reaction, and, like Anger, it will get one.
- Justified for bad behavior, like cheating on a spouse, stealing, or lying. Don't get mad, get even, right? It's an action you can take that indemnifies the rage.

I could write a whole book on this subject. You may also act judgmental, gossipy, or condescending. You may complain a lot. You may become dominant, self-righteous, and impatient. You may act conceited, or cocky. You may become defensive, which is much easier than being offensive.

This last one is interesting. Have you ever said in defense, "I'm not an angry person," or "You're the one who's angry"? Many don't see themselves as angry (and therefore afraid), and while they might never raise their voices, or feel afraid, they appear to others as the angriest (and most afraid) of all. So often, how you see yourself is not what others see.

Ask your friends, or better yet a newly acquainted stranger, if they see you as an angry or fearful person. Hopefully they can be honest. Other people usually see what voices are running your life covertly and coming out in dark ways. They see your shadow immediately, for either you wear it like a cloak or you project it onto others.

The first one, numbness, is also interesting. Chronic pot smokers often get high in order to not deal with Anger. How do I know this? Because among my clients, chronic pot smokers—when they decide to quit—often report feeling very angry. Anger finally has a chance to come out of the basement. Which suggests that they smoke to self-medicate, so that they don't have to deal with Anger (and the underlying Fear). Basically they opt for stupidity (it's called dope for a reason) to not have to feel Anger.

Are any of these a good trade? I don't know. It's up to you to decide.

## FEAR AND ANGER AND SHADOW VOICES: GETTING IT RIGHT

You may be wondering, while honoring Fear, Anger, and all the shadow voices, whether you are doing this right. My answer is: probably not. At least not yet.

Here's how you'll know you've gotten this practice right:

- Fear or Anger doesn't overtake you all the way.
- They don't hijack your mind or get the Ego involved.
- There are no stories behind the emotions—it's Fear instead of "fears."
- No one else is to blame for them.
- You also take responsibility for your life, and the choices you make.
- They motivate you to take care of yourself and your environment.
- They motivate you to set boundaries and influence change.
- You understand what you're now doing, with clarity.
- You understand that how you act has a huge impact on other people.
- You have compassion and tolerance for others and their own emotions.
- You have clarity for other people's struggles.
- When someone is being a jerk, you see the Fear beneath it.
- You know you, too, can be a jerk, and are curious about that realization.
- You may still feel judgmental, frustrated, angry, revengeful, even hateful, and own that, too.
- But these voices don't make you aggressive.
- You feel mostly perplexed. Curious about it all.
- Until everything they're trying to teach you becomes clear.
- You then express them in a sacred way, with integrity.
- Until they run their course and run out of things to say.
- Until a new emotion arises, where you use that, too, as another step in your climb.
- Each step you take, like when trying to learn anything, you get better and better. Stronger and stronger. More and more living in integrity, over time.