

FACING AN ANGRY CHILD



WHY FACING ANGER IS HARD

A child's anger is triggering and feels like a threat to our authority. It unknowingly brings out repressed unprocessed pain from our past.

Reactions to an angry child usually result in 3 things:

- Lash out in anger, blaming, criticizing, or judging.
- Stay rational by fixing it, distracting from it, talking them out of feeling it, numbing, telling them to change, or excusing it away.
- Disengage from the intensive interaction, but subsequently feel resentment or uncertainty.

SEE ANGER CLEARLY

- Anger is a messenger emotion to get us to pay attention. Something matters.
- Anger tells us something is important and we need to find out what needs to be stopped or changed.
- To ask, 'what's going on under the surface? What is the unmet need?'
- Sometimes anger is expressed to cover up feeling powerless or afraid

THE STEPS TO GET FROM STUCK IN ANGER TO CONNECTION & UNDERSTANDING



S.T.O.P can be described as both a metaphor and a practice. We must stop doing what we usually do because what we learned about anger makes it worse. This is the time to pause and practice S.T.O.P.

SEEING WHAT'S POSSIBLE

When A Child Is Feeling Anger

“ Meet them where they are and validate their feelings. ~This builds self-esteem and empowerment in the child. ”

LEARN TO S.T.O.P. TO CONNECT

S. ' Something matters. What do I need to know? '

This is not the time to distract them, diminish their feelings, or be rational with them. It's important to meet them heart to heart before you can rationally solve, fix, teach, correct, or tell them what's wrong.

It's time to focus on THEM. To be aware of their emotions. Their anger is not about YOU.

T. Threat/No threat: Anchor + send them safety signals to help them feel less threatened.

Signals to help them overcome their fear or sense of threat:

- Get on their level so there is no hint of a power dynamic.
- Validate their emotions. Reflect and honor what you see. "You makes sense. It is understandable that you are mad right now."
- Sing or hum a song that you both enjoy and are familiar with.
- Give them space if that is what they want and return later.

Pro tip: If you are having trouble letting go of the belief that they are manipulating you, or that they are wrong or to blame, it's okay.

O. Own and stay with the discomfort: it has a message and a purpose.

Anger is experienced as sensation in the body like tension, heat and fast breathing and has a purpose.

These emotions have a specific message telling your child and you what is important and what isn't. What matters. What you are needing; Partnership? Understanding? Ease?

It's exactly the same situation as your child's in right now. What matters? What do they want changed or stopped? What are they needing? Being seen + heard? Understanding? Choice?

P - Purpose & Perspective

An angry child wants validation and support. This isn't about your authority or respect. Even when they direct anger at you, it's a message about them and their needs. It has a purpose.

Yes, they can learn to express it in more constructive ways other than yelling and hitting. But this will be more possible once you build trust with them by being curious and listening. This moment is about curiosity.

