

Parenting Tools:

- Handling Anger -



HOME
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Parenting Tools: *Handling Anger*

At 9-years-old, your child may exhibit a high level of emotional intensity. He or she is concerned with being right or wrong and is in the process of developing strong friendships. This is a good time to talk about and model how to handle anger. Explain that we all get angry, but how we handle anger makes all the difference in our ability to maintain healthy relationships with others.

We all tend to expect certain things out of life such as fairness, appreciation, or agreement with our perspective, and we can get hurt and disappointed when our expectations are not met. When this happens, our disappointment can turn to anger. In other words, when life doesn't go according to our plans, we can become angry. James 4:1–2 speaks to this: “Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.”

Some parents write off their children's anger as “just the way they are” and allow their children to control them with their anger. Other parents can fuel anger in their children without realizing it. Most children become angry when they get frustrated. Ephesians 6:4 reminds us, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” By understanding several of the major sources that can frustrate and exasperate a child to anger, we can better understand how to help our child learn to handle anger. Below is a list of common root causes of anger for children:

- **Parental impatience**

A parent's constant attitude of impatience toward a child makes the child feel he or she is in the way and is unable to meet the parent's expectations.

- **Parental inconsistency**

Inconsistency in parental supervision, discipline, or rules is very frustrating to a child. Children feel confused when boundaries are constantly changing.

- **Fear**

Fear of rejection, abandonment, and/or failure often manifest themselves as anger. Some children internalize pressure to excel in academics or sports.

- **Poor modeling**

A child's anger can come from acting out what he or she sees in the family. Whether subtly or blatantly, parents can poorly model anger to their child. Just as children learn to walk and talk by watching parents, so they will learn to imitate displays of anger. Kids learn from both our good examples and our bad examples.

- **Birth order**

A number of middle children exhibit anger about their place in the lineup of offspring. Also, anger can develop within a child who feels less intelligent, less physically capable, or less talented than an older sibling. Parents must give careful attention to these issues.

Some authorities think that modeling is not just the best way to teach character and anger management to our children, but that it is the only way. The way you manage your anger and frustration

provides children with the best possible model of handling their own. When you feel the warning signs that your anger is brewing, just remember that while anger is a feeling, behavior is a choice. Then proceed wisely—choose understanding, patience, resolution, and forgiveness. Choose to live in harmony with those you love the most. Be a model of Colossians 3:12, which instructs us, "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering."