

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host
Lisa Smith

[Real World Peaceful Parenting](#) with Lisa Smith

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

Welcome to *Real World Peaceful Parenting*, a podcast for parents that are tired of yelling, threatening, and punishing their kids. Join mom and master certified parent coach Lisa Smith as she gives you actionable step-by-step strategies that'll help you transform your household from chaos to cooperation. Let's dive in.

Welcome, welcome, welcome. Welcome to today's episode. I am so excited to be with you here today. Because today, I'm going to attempt to blow your mind. I have a secret to share with you today and next week. This topic is so important, and so big that I'm going to break it up into two parts. So today I'm going to share part one, and then next week we'll dig into part two.

Now, today's episode is so valuable and multifaceted that you're going to want to take your time tasting and digesting this and breaking it down into small bites. Are you ready? Are you with me? Here is one of the greatest secrets. Anger, yes, anger can be your gift. You heard that right. Anger can be a gift.

Now many of us, myself in the past included, would shame ourselves for our anger. We'd want to run from it, avoid it at all cost. For some of us, we've been conditioned to believe that anger highlights our weaknesses, our insecurities, and our lack of self-control. So we feel great shame when the anger shows up.

Or maybe you're in the camp that has been conditioned to believe that anger is a negative motion, and reflects weakness and lack of self-control. So you go out of your way to hide or avoid it. This might be because you grew up in a household where anger was dominant, perhaps modeled by a parent who used it against you as a tool for compliance, as a tool for control. Does that sound familiar? I sure can relate to that one.

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

Now today as parents, you may find yourself resorting to anger when you feel trapped in moments of surprise, fear, frustration, and/or disappointment. If you're anything like me, maybe you swore you would never use anger as a weapon against your kids. But then at times you find yourself trapped in those moments of surprise, fear, frustration, and disappointment. You just don't know any other way other than to get angry over it.

You might feel like it just shows up on the scene and takes over. Comes from out of the blue, and you don't know what to do. You feel so upset after an angry episode. Then you fall into the cycle of beating yourself up for being just like the parent you swore you'd never be. Does this cycle resonate with you? I get it, believe me, because I've been there. But hear this. Hear ye, hear ye, hear this.

What would you say if I told you that instead of feeling ashamed of anger, you could actually use anger to your advantage? What? What are you talking about Lisa? I know it sounds a little crazy if this is the first time you're hearing it, but it is true. I promise you that you can use anger as a tool that benefits you, your kids, your parenting, and your relationship with your kids.

Now, let me tell you why. Anger is an essential emotion that can help you. Yes, you, it can help you in every area of your life. When we learn how to use it, it can become one of our greatest tools. One of the key purposes of anger is to help you recognize what's truly important to you. It's a beacon. It's a guide. It's how I want you to think about anger. It's my beacon, and it's my guide.

By identifying what we value, we can express our values to our children when we're in a regulated state. So think of anger is like a map. It gives you

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

clues to what's important to you. Or said another way, anger can serve as a pointer highlighting the things we hold dear. I know, it sounds a bit crazy.

Especially if, as a child, your anger was something you were made to feel bad about. You felt ashamed whenever you got angry at a family member or a situation, and your parent made you feel that there was an urgency to shut that anger down. We are locking that thing down.

If you fall into that camp that was your childhood, then what I'm saying is going to feel wild and different. But I just want you to take it in. Anger helps us highlight the things we hold dear. The true purpose of anger is to help you, number one, as I said recognize what is truly important to you. Number two, uncover the negative emotion underneath the anger.

So let's talk about number one, recognizing what's truly important to you. To grow in connection with another human being, it is important for them to know the things that are important to you. Let me say that again. To grow in connection with another human being, I don't care who it is. Partner, co-parent, child, adult child, neighbor, boss, mother-in-law, cousin, best friend. To grow in connection with another human being, it is important for them to know the things that are important to you.

But sometimes we're not consciously expressing all those things to them until we recognize and define them first. I have to know what's important to me before I can communicate it to you. This is how anger can be used as a tool. Because anger is the beacon that helps you recognize and define what's important to you.

So I like to think of anger as something that I use to my advantage when it bubbles up rather than feeling ashamed of my anger. I like to tell myself that anger is an essential emotion. That when properly understood and harnessed can become one of my greatest tools because it helps me

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

recognize what is important to me. It helps me uncover the underlying negative emotion underneath the anger.

Think about this. Things that have little or no value to us, things that are not important run right off our backs, right? The things that are important to us can really get us going when they aren't followed or recognized or respected or when they are violated.

So for instance, to one parent, it may be extremely important to keep a clean and orderly home. To another parent, this might fall quite a bit lower on the list of what's important. So when each parent allows their teenager to have friends over in the evening, and the teenagers make a big, gigantic mess in the kitchen from making homemade pizzas, and then wander off to the TV room.

The first parent may get extremely upset, angry, and dysregulated that there's such a giant mess in the kitchen. The second parent doesn't really like it, but isn't angry about it. It just rolls with the fun of having friends over and simply cleans up the mess later, or instructs the teenager to clean it up.

Now there's no right or wrong, parent one, parent two, and there's no judgment towards either parent in this scenario. It's just that the first parent's anger just points to the value that he or she puts on a clean home. It's really important to that parent. So the anger allows them when they're regulated and calm to explain this to their teenager.

Now, here's the secret sauce. When we realize what it is that we hold with such great value, we have a fantastic opportunity to share this with our kids when we're both regulated. This is where connection happens. Honest feelings and vulnerability generate connection. When we verbalize what we value and give importance to, we're opening ourselves up to vulnerability. We're identifying our values. We're setting boundaries. All of these things

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

help us develop honor, respect, healthy relationships, and grow in our ability to love.

As a side note, then we're able to model all of this for our kids. This is why I say anger can be our greatest tool because it helps us identify our values. It helps us really understand the keeping that kitchen clean is really important to us. It allows us to hone in on that and then communicate that to our teenagers when we're calm and regulated.

Now maybe you don't have a lot of confidence in these areas. Maybe you're not comfortable with conflict. Maybe you don't know how to have honest conversations about what's important to you and what you're feeling. Using anger as a tool to point you to what you value most and then sharing what we learn about ourselves with those we want to connect with will help us grow these muscles. It's a process.

Anger teaches me what's important to me so that I then can communicate it to the people around me. You can even set a limit that honors you both. So back to the pizza teenager kitchen mess example. The teenager wants to enjoy food with their friends at your house. Totally understandable, and the parent who wants or feels a great need to keep the kitchen clean, you can set a limit over this.

So let's say you set the limit by communicating to your teenager. I love when you invite your friends over. You're welcome to use the kitchen and eat the food, but I need to ask you, because I value a clean kitchen, that when you're finished eating, I expect you to clean up after yourself before you go to sleep and leave the house.

You can clean up with your friends and ask them to help, or you can clean up by yourself. But it is your responsibility to restore the kitchen back to its original state. So don't just dump all the dishes in the sink and leave them. I

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

need them cleaned and put away or in the dishwasher. I need the counters wiped down, and I need all the food put back. Because keeping a clean house is really important to me, and I value it.

If you choose not to clean up the kitchen before you go to sleep or leave the house, then you will be responsible for cleaning up the kitchen for the next three days. Let's say you set that limit. You have taken the opportunity to understand what is important to you, and you've given your kid an opportunity to honor it because you've communicated it.

Now let's take this a step further. Let's say your teenager opts for the latter choice, to leave the kitchen a mess, as they go to sleep or leave the house. Now they've given you an opportunity to practice so many things, right? Because you wake up the next morning, and the kitchen is a disaster. You're angry.

So now you have the opportunity to practice so many things. Holding the limit, not taking it personally, Withholding judgment, and feeling all your feelings. What? Screech, halt. Wait, what? Was the last thing you said Lisa? Feel my feelings? Yes, yes, yes, you heard me. This is step two, to use anger as a tool instead of a weapon, to uncover what you're really feeling and allow yourself to feel those feelings.

Now here's some late breaking news for all of you. We interrupt this regularly scheduled episode of *Real World Peaceful Parenting* to bring this news to you all. Feelings are meant to be felt, not fixed. Let me say that again. Feelings are meant to be felt, not fixed or suppressed. Okay, back to our regularly scheduled episode.

Anger is a cover emotion for other emotions underneath it. It always masks an underlying emotion. Anger does not come on its own. There is always a

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

precursor to the anger. Typically one we don't want to feel. That's just the honest truth.

Typically, one emotion will show up first, like disappointment, frustration, resentment, fear, uncertainty, shame, discouragement, jealousy, envy, not feeling in control, Feeling left out. Feeling powerless, judged, blamed, scolded, lack of affection, lonely, ignored, lied to, manipulated, uncared for, trapped, frustrated, unloved, unsafe, forgotten. One of those emotions enters the scene first. Because they're so uncomfortable, anger often comes along as a cover emotion to mask the emotion underneath.

Now, for some of you, this might be the first time you've ever heard this. So I really want you to take this in. Anger never shows up alone. There's always a sidekick, at least one. The way this works is one emotion shows up, typically one that we don't like. That we're uncomfortable feeling. So we mask it with anger.

To compound this, many of us were raised to believe that all these other feelings that I named, the whole list, are bad, and that we're weak when we have them. Or we're raised to feel that we need to hide them or ignore them or push them down or negate them. So we think that anger is our go to emotion. It feels safe and comfortable.

But that right there is the instigator to our problem, the problem that's causing us to lose our shiz and often feel disconnected from our kids. The lack of understanding that anger is a cover emotion and never shows up alone on the scene.

When we use anger as a tool, step two. When we really understand that it's a cover emotion, we invite our being to uncover the emotions underneath the anger. We allow ourselves to feel the underlying emotions. Now, this is a process because a lot of us, as adults, and I know I was this way for a

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

long time, we don't know how to sit with our so called negative emotions. No one modeled for us or taught us or created a safe environment for us to feel excluded, powerless, jealous, judged, blamed, disrespected, trapped.

When we stormed, our caregivers focused only on the anger, you better take that anger and go in the other room. You better cut that out right now. No one taught us that hey, there might be something underneath that. Let's see if we can dig down and figure out what it is. We didn't learn how to process and uncover and grow from these uncomfortable negative emotions.

When we're not willing to feel our feelings, we learn to react to uncomfortable situations and emotions with anger. Welcome to the scene, anger. Come right in, take a seat. Then we get focused on that. That becomes the only conversation in the room instead of getting curious about, I wonder what this anger is really teaching me or showing me or pointing to me.

Learning to work with anger instead of suppressing it to the point that it explodes is one of the most important skills you can learn, practice, and model for your kids. It is one of the greatest gifts you can give your kids is to help them understand that anger is always a cover emotion, and to dig deep into what's underneath it.

Now this requires being willing to be vulnerable. It requires being willing to sit with it and be uncomfortable. It requires digging deep and asking a lot of questions. It requires learning a vocabulary of emotions. But what I know for sure is when we develop the skill of sitting with these uncomfortable motions and processing them, we can react to challenging circumstances with understanding instead of anger.

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

Let me say that again. When we develop the skill of sitting with these uncomfortable emotions and process them, we can react to the challenging circumstances with understanding instead of anger. Learning to work with anger rather than suppressing it is a vital skill and can lead to emotional maturity and regulation for you. It's a vital skill both for your own personal growth and for your kids. You have to model this for your kids, for them to be able to learn it.

Next week, in part two of this important topic, I'm going to provide you with practical tools for maintaining and regaining regulation when anger arises. Next week, in part two of this topic on anger, I'm going to teach you how to use it as a tool instead of a weapon. As I mentioned, I'm gonna give you simple, actionable tools for keeping and regaining regulation when anger strikes. So good, right?

Okay, here's this week's homework. I want you to work on this. I want you to open yourself up to learn what do I value most? What is my anger here to teach me? What can I learn from it? When you uncover two or three things, uncover two or three of your values, take a pause when you start to feel angry and ask yourself what's important to me?

Figure out how you want to express that to your kids. They're interested, I promise, if you come to it with a calm and regulated conversation. How can we use anger in this family to communicate things like values and priorities and limits? How can we do it without triggering us into dysregulation and storming? How can we use anger as a tool?

So in summary, I encourage you to discover what you value most. Envision how you can express that to your kids. By setting higher brain limits that honor both the parents values and the child's needs. You create an opportunity for growth and connection. I love it, don't you?

Ep #130: Anger Can Be Your Gift Part 1

All right, I'll see you next week for part two, work through your anger. Remember, it's a beacon. Remember, it's a cover emotion for something deeper going on. Okay, so I'll see you next week for part two. Until then, I want you to embrace the power of anger as a tool and explore how it can benefit you and your children on your peaceful parenting journey. Until we meet again, I'm wishing you peaceful parenting.

Thank you so much for listening today. I want to personally invite you to head over to thepeacefulparent.com/welcome and sign up for my free peaceful parenting minicourse. You'll find everything you need to get started on the path to peaceful parenting just waiting for you over there at www.thepeacefulparent.com/welcome. I can't wait for you to get started.

Thanks for listening to *Real World Peaceful Parenting*. If you want more info on how you can transform your parenting, visit thepeacefulparent.com. See you soon.