



TRANSFORMING ANGER

AN EXPLORATION OF ANGER IN OUR LIVES & CLINICAL PRACTICE

Presented by Leanne O'Shea & Tony Jackson

WEDNESDAY 13 - FRIDAY 15 JULY, 2022

A Three Day Experimental Process for Therapists.

OVERVIEW

This 3 day workshop will deepen awareness for anger as an expression of love & justice or as destructive & controlling. We will attempt to rescue anger as transformative, an energetic resource for change. It will be an exploration of necessary supports for a healthy and life affirming anger in our personal lives and in our work. We will also grapple with the political dimensions of an anger that seeks to change the world.

BACKGROUND

The media confront us daily with stories of the impact of anger. Domestic violence, aggression towards minorities, and the destruction of the environment are endemic. No matter how remote we are from this violence, we are impacted by the harm it causes. We often feel powerless in the face of those who unleash their rage.

For each story of violence and destruction, there can be another anger stirring. This anger is born of grief. It is a refusal of injustice, a call for protest and a demand for change. How can we distinguish the anger that destroys from the anger that transforms?

At the local and interpersonal level, anger is ever-present. Much of what stirs in our bellies and disrupts our sleep often has something to do with anger (be it resentment, frustration, rage, or despair) and a poor relationship to this complex feeling. Feeling anger in our relationships, work, family life, reactivity to government decisions and inaction are all part of the necessary mechanism for navigating the world. Anger can therefore support compassionate boundaries, protective behaviours and justice.

As therapists we are often required to work with our clients' problematic relationships to feelings, experiences, and expressions of anger. As therapists we also struggle with these issues. Do we respond compassionately (attune) to the anger of our loved ones and clients? Do we attend to our own feelings of anger toward people in our care? How courageously do we advocate and agitate for change? How generously is irritation made explicit (worked with) in the dialogic space - in the here-and-now?

David Whyte wrote 'anger is the deepest form of compassion'. Yet we are often unpractised at finding heartfelt and creative ways to welcome this feeling. What we think about as anger is mostly a poor representation of its true potential. Because we don't live in a culture that supports anger, we rarely see it as healthy and transformative. Because it is often met poorly, we learn that the expression of anger will be met as if we are dangerous. When we expect zero-tolerance towards our own anger, we transmute it, and this may be the cause of much personal and interpersonal distress. We need to build skills for tolerating, even welcoming, anger. By increasing our capacity to be with anger, we can move from thinking of anger as unsafe towards simply uncomfortable.

When we see anger this way, that is as rising organically in context, it can be truly transformative. The energy of anger is necessary and can be harnessed for growth. Freed from ideas of 'good and bad', anger can be lived as a true expression and support for contact.

STRUCTURE

This workshop will use a mixture of theory presentation, discussion, experiential exercises, and skill practice. There will be a strong focus on experiential inquiry, practice development and clinical application.

Day One: Listening to the Still Small Voice of Anger / Rescuing Anger.

Sometimes anger rises in subtle ways, perhaps seen first resentment and frustration.

We will explore anger through the lenses of personal style, temperament, developmental story, gender and other cultural dimensions and how this impacts our response and relationship to anger. We will explore the supports required to contain (think and feel) the initial stirrings of anger more creatively – creating safety to respond to the underlying needs, fears, and longings in this experience. Looking beyond the intrapsychic lens, we will also explore situational dimensions of anger, understanding what the effective expression of anger has to do with the context.

Day Two: Anger and Transformation / Healthy Anger

When anger is felt fully and space for reflection is possible, it points to a need or disturbance in the field. When we can find a healthy expression for this anger something can change, or at least we can signal for the need for change. When supported in this way, anger is transformative. On day two we will explore the necessary therapeutic conditions for anger to be felt and expressed to facilitate change and growth. We will also explore the political dimensions (imperative) of anger surfaced in the room.

Day Three: Aggression and Destruction / Unhealthy Anger

Even as we reflect on the beneficial aspects of anger, we are confronted with expressions of anger that are controlling, hateful and destructive. Often what is at the heart of this anger can be understood as being 'helpful', but the expression causes too much harm. On day three we will grapple with the issue of poorly expressed anger and the reality of violence and control. Thinking of the ways that our clients relate to others and exercise their power, or how they may be subject to abuse, bullying etc in their relationships at home or work. We will also look with courage at our own practices and explore the role of anger in our work.

ABOUT THE FACILITATORS

Tony Jackson is the Managing Director of the Gestalt Centre. He is a psychotherapist, facilitator and educator with 20 years of experience. He is a clinical supervisor working with teams and individuals. Tony is interested in the way that our patterned responses to life's challenges constrain spontaneity, and how to restore flexibility and choicefulness.

Leanne O'Shea is a psychotherapist, supervisor and educator. She studied the Gestalt approach in Melbourne and London. In addition to her private practice work, she holds a number of teaching positions, including the Director of Training at GTA. She is also an Associate with Relational Change in the UK. She is interested in creating greater awareness of and sensitivity to our relational responsibility and is particularly passionate about the place of sexuality and the erotic within the therapeutic relationship.

General Information

Venue / Gestalt Centre (Parkville Campus) 27 Royal Pde, Parkville.

Dates / 13 - 15th July 2022 Time / 9.30-5.00pm

Fee / Full Registration \$975* / GTA Enrolled Students \$795*

Early Bird / Enrol by by 10 June \$875*

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