

I'm Angry!"

Teaching Christian children healthy, constructive ways to release anger

Q: As a parent, I deal with being angry quite often. Yet I feel it is best not to vent this anger on my children. One of the ways I handle anger in doing my housecleaning very fast. It helps release a lot of aggressive energy and helps me settle down. Since I'm a Christian, I'm then able to take a break and tell Jesus all about it. Then I know how to take care of the situation.

I know the way I handle anger may be somewhat unorthodox, but it works. Do you have any ideas on how I can teach my kids to vent their anger in a constructive way?

A: The question you asked concerning ways to vent anger is one of the most often asked questions counselors hear from clients. People of all ages tend to struggle with this one.

Your idea of cleaning the house "very fast" is great! It sounds like for you it's important to gain a physical release, which calms you so you are able to sit and "tell Jesus all about it." You are then ready to go to the person directly and deal with the issue or work through any circumstance that has angered you. What is neat about your method is you are growing toward a resolution and you are not letting the anger fester within.

Experts agree that anger unexpressed grows like a cancer in one's heart. This can lead to many physical ailments. Since anger is a very normal part of our existence and God's Word tells us in Ephesians 4:26 to be angry, but not sin, we need to be able to dissolve the anger. This is one of the reasons parents are encouraged to role model and teach children appropriate ways to handle anger. No one way works for everyone, but here are some ideas that other children and their parents have found work for them:

- Boy/Age 12 - "Shoot baskets until I'm calmer, then go inside and draw how I'm feeling."
- Boy/Age 9 - "Kick cactus, run around the house five times, then talk to mom."
- Girl/Age 10 - "Tear a great big phone book into tiny pieces, then draw a picture of what happened in my anger book."
- Boy/Age 8 - "Use my plastic bat and hit my pillow as hard as I can, then draw in my anger book, show the picture to mom, and talk about it."
- Boy/Age 13 - "Go outside and jump on a trampoline."
- Teenage Girl, Age 17 - "Ride my stationery bike, then write a letter to Jesus and pour out how I'm feeling."

RECOMMENDED READING:

["Bringing Up Kids Without Tearing Them Down"](#) by Dr. Kevin Leman

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