

ANGER IS DAIMONIC

by

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When you have been done an injustice, anger flares up before you have the chance to understand what has happened. It's as though someone else is looking out for you and let you know immediately that you have been wronged. Anger gives you the impetus you need to change conditions that need to be changed. In this way, anger is like a dark guardian angel, a daimonic force - a daimon is an unnamed but felt invisible presence - that offers guidance and spiritual support.

But once this daimonic anger has done its job, you are left with personal decisions. If you don't act soon, you may forget what gave rise to anger in the first place. The first task is to show your displeasure, and the next might be to examine the situation and task, "Why am I angry? What exactly has happened?" Anger has content, but if you let it dissipate without reflection and action it may enter a pool of discontent that swirls and stagnates over time. This chronic anger is a corrosive emotion that uglifies everything in its vicinity.

Anger can be so suppressed that you feel a vague discontent, but you don't even know that the root emotion is anger. You have to bring this core feeling to the surface and see it for what it is. It might help to remember the stories of injustice done to you and to make some headway changing those conditions. It also help to find a new reason for being angry, for channelling the rage you feel into a cause worthy of your emotion. Notice that in none of these cases you try to get rid of the anger but rather give it a strong reason for being.

You need some insight into your anger so that eventually you can deal with its specific focus. Anger is only partly an emotion. It has an intellectual component and helps makes sense of your life. If you know precisely what and who angers you, you know where you stand, some of what is going on, and how emotionally to deal with it. Anger sorts out a complex life and constantly restructures it. It may take considerable anger to change jobs or decide on divorce. It's obvious that social wrongs are only corrected when the abused get angry enough and resist.

Anger can draw out of the knight and warrior in you and transform simple emotion into an effective persona. It can make you a different person. Many men and women going through a dark night described how they were changed by it, often by becoming more of a warrior. By warrior I don't mean a violent person, but someone whose has taken on an edge and has discovered unknown power. In some cases, simply owning your power, your eccentricity, or your creativity is enough to chase away the mood that has kept you dark and quiet.

If you don't articulate your angry feelings in some effective way, you may end up turning those feelings against yourself. This is a subtle way of avoiding the anger - by disguising it as self-annoyance. A habit of self-flagellation can lead to a particular dark night of the

soul that is centred on the kernel of anger. You block your feeling, choosing this form of depression over the risk of revealing how you actually feel. The anger wants to flow through your system, from your first awareness of injustice to your final syllable of complaint. That feeling of becoming angry may be nothing more or less than the pulse of life asking for expression. The Sufi poet Rumi once wrote:

*Don't use your anger to conceal
a radiance that should not be hidden*

Anger is your spirit flashing out of you. It is your presence on earth insisting upon itself. It can be overdone, of course, be expressed in the wrong ways, and be confused with many other things. But it is still a force of your life, your precious daimon letting itself be known.

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