

Families of feelings

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There are many, many classifications of emotions and I think it is safe to say there is never going to be a consistent one that is accepted by all, or even accepted by a large majority, or even a small majority.

So I thought I would make my statement as over the years I have written a great deal about pathognomy. When I first came across the word - pathognomy - I thought it was referring to sick garden gnomes. But pathognomy is the study of emotions or feelings. Dyspathonia is a disturbance of emotions or feelings.

I use the concept of the "Families of feelings". Like the human family unit, there are groups of feelings which have a similarity but all differ as well. There is about nine such families and they all fit around the central or pure feeling.

This is from my book on feelings:

"A pure feeling is that emotion which is not a derivative of another feeling. Due to our genetic constitution, humans are provided with such a set of pure feelings. The number of combinations or derivatives of these pure feelings is almost unlimited. These derivatives or combinations are called complex feelings. For example, jealousy is a combination of the scare of abandonment, and anger at rejection; frustration is stifled anger; hurt can be inward directed anger; depression is stifled sadness; and sleepiness can be inward directed sadness. The number of possibilities is enormous, Roget's Thesaurus defines over 480 words which could be equated with sadness, the majority of these represents some derivative of that one pure feeling". (White (1986))

The nine pure feelings (or families) are:

Sad
Scared
Shame
Happy
Love
Grief
Despair
Sexual
Anger

This list is not meant to be a complete statement as there are other feelings like hunger and thirst. But it does provide a statement that is by and large comprehensive for human relating and psychotherapy.

So when people use a words to describe their current feeling I can begin to understand it by which group it belongs to. For instance with primary feeling of anger we have the following complex feelings:

Fury = Tempestuous anger

Rage = extreme anger

Hurtful = punishing anger

Resentment = stifled anger

Resistance = stubborn anger

Rebellious = fighting anger

Annoyance = mild anger

Hate = deep rooted anger

Spite = biting anger

Loathing = disgust + anger

Sarcasm = intellectual anger

Assertion = controlled anger



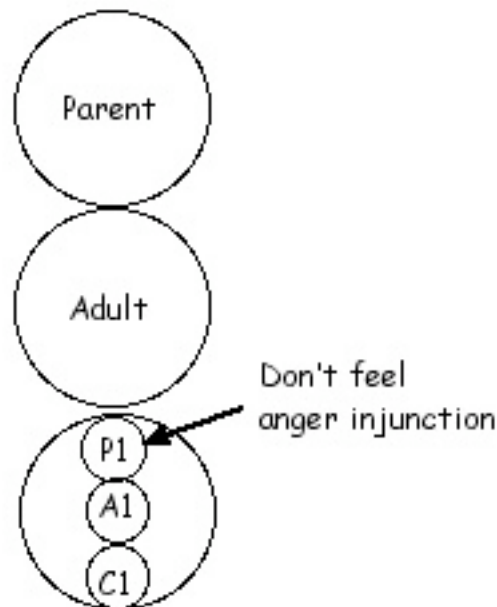
(Anger - A universal emotion for sure)

This list shows one small part of the angry family of feelings. They all have a commonality (anger) but they all differ in some way, just like members of a human family. The advantage of defining what basic group the feeling is, it then lets one know what to expect and how to deal with it. And where the person is psychologically at that point. Of course from a psychotherapy point of view this is critical.

Forms of anger dyspathonia

Projected anger;

In this instance the person finds their own feelings of anger as unacceptable. This can occur for a number of reasons but most commonly it is because the person has accepted the injunction Don't feel anger.



This means that as this person goes through life they will come upon situations where they have a natural angry reaction to. This causes them a problem as they have this message inside their head which says they are not allowed to feel anger.

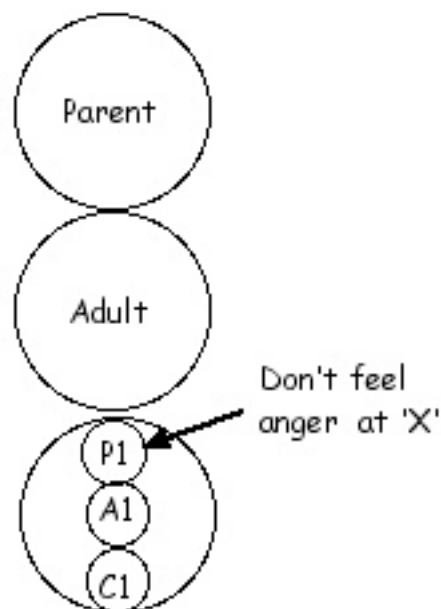
This can happen for a number of reasons. Some times the parents will say it outright to a child. They may say to a young girl, "Good girls don't get angry". Or they may say anger is a bad or dangerous emotion or say "Good christians don't get angry". Some times the parent has their own fears about anger and so when the child starts to get angry the child notices that the parent starts to become scared or feels uneasy and the child then concludes that there is something wrong with their own anger. Another common way the child can make a decision not to feel anger is when they come from a physically violent background. The child quickly learns that when people (Parents) get angry this leads to physical

violence. So the child concludes that the way to avoid physical violence is not to feel angry in the first place.

The problem is that people who have such messages in their head will at times feel angry. One way to deal with this is to project it onto someone else. So when the wife feels angry at her husband she will perceive the husband as being angry. She places her anger out onto someone else and thus the Don't feel angry injunction is satisfied. This person will see those around them as being angry when in fact they are not. This is a very common psychological mechanism in the passive aggressive personality.

Displaced anger

Sometimes it is OK for people to have angry feelings at only certain people. So they have the injunction, Don't feel angry at 'x'.



Again the injunction resides in the unconscious of the P1 ego state. One thing more inevitable than taxes and death is that children will get angry at their parents. One thing for sure is that parents have to continually frustrate children. They have to regularly say no to things that the child wants. Anger is a very common reaction to being frustrated. Some times parents do not want their children to have angry feelings towards them. This can also be because they have their own discomfort with anger. Or some parents believe that the child should honour the parents. Showing anger at the parent could then be seen as disrespectful and thus the child develops the injunction of, Don't show anger at parents.

So what happens when the child has this injunction and feels anger at his parents. One thing he can do is displace the anger. He will direct his anger at someone else. This is a common cause of excessive sibling rivalry. It is unsafe to show anger at a parent but safe to express anger at a sibling. So all the anger felt to the parents gets directed to the siblings. Hence there can be ongoing anger, disharmony and angst between brothers and sisters.



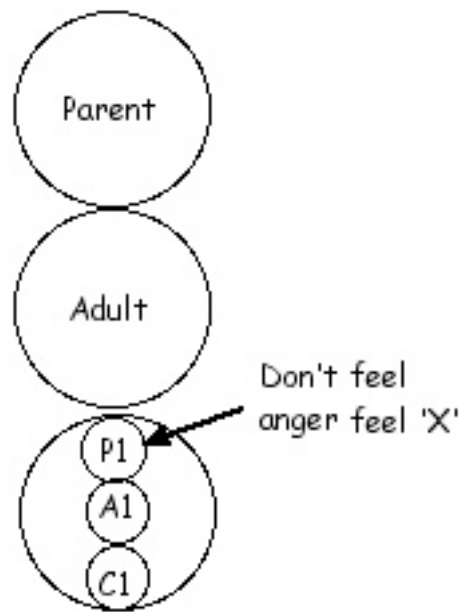
Sibling rivalry

This can also cause marital disharmony. People will tend to show emotions to those who they feel most close to or secure with and that can be a spouse sometimes. A wife may have considerable anger at her parents but it gets displaced onto the husband because she feels more emotionally secure with him.

Feeling substitution

People with a don't feel angry message can deal with their anger by substituting it for another feeling. This is common in the training of our young girls. Little girls are often discouraged when feeling angry. Girls are often stroked for being pretty, polite and delightful. Anger is the antithesis of such things. When a young girl is being angry she can often be told she is being 'bitchy' or not lady like and so forth. So she learns that showing anger is not 'right'.

At the same time girls are encouraged to have feelings like sadness (crying) and scare. It is OK for girls to be crying or scared. So she can develop the injunction - Don't feel anger feel 'X' instead, as is shown in the diagram below.



In such circumstances when the girl feels angry she switches to another more acceptable feeling. So when this girl starts to get angry all of a sudden she is crying. (How many times have you seen grown women do that!). Or when she gets angry she starts to feel scared. The feeling of anger is unconsciously substituted to another feeling and thus the injunction is satisfied.



(Being good gets lots of positive strokes)

Young boys get the same but with different feelings. Boys are allowed, even encouraged to feel angry. But if a boy cries in the play ground what happens?. He gets called a sissy, a girl, a woose or much worse. So in adult life when the man starts to feel sad all of a sudden he is angry. Or if he get scared then he quickly feels angry about something. The unacceptable feeling is substituted for another more acceptable one.

Reference:

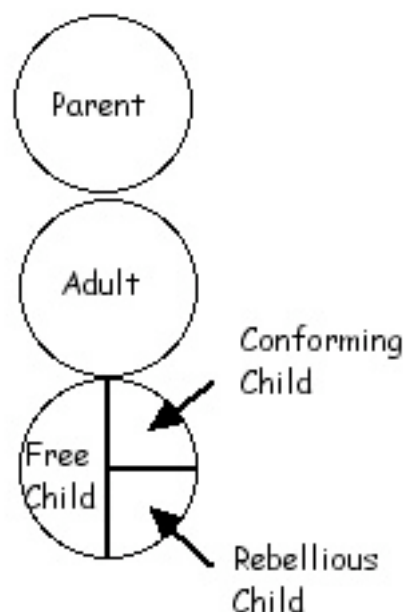
Tony White.

1986. *Creative Feeling: How to understand and deal with your child's feelings.*

TA Books.

Ego states and anger

The three parts of the *Child* ego state can all display anger. The manner and reasons why they display such anger can vary considerably.



Of course anger is a normal human emotion that we all feel and when it is "here and now" anger then one is feeling and displaying Free Child anger. This most often happens in reaction to frustration, or if you feel you have been insulted or violated in some way. So the feeling occurs in reaction to a specific event that really did occur and where anger is an appropriate response.

Whilst most would agree that anger is a normal human emotion there is

considerable disagreement as to what you do with the angry feelings. There are basically two schools of thought. The catharsis approach is to express the feeling in some cathartic way and then drop the feeling. The CBT (Cognitive behavioural) approach is to think about the feeling and thus the feelings get 'thought away'. Like examine what circumstances led to feeling angry and plan how you can avoid similar circumstances in the future. So you analyse the feeling.

The CBT approach says there is a danger with expressing the feeling and that is that it encourages, strokes and reinforces angry feelings. This can then lead to people who are chronically angry. They do have a point as that certainly can and does happen. That is why the cathartic approach must also include the dropping of the anger after its expression and this is often not done. If one drops the anger then you avoid the development of chronic anger. The problem for the CBT approach of thinking the feelings away is that there is no anger expression release. There is a very large body of research evidence which shows that the non-expression of anger can lead to some very unpleasant psychosomatic conditions. The most severe being a contribution to the development of cancer and heart disease and other things like asthma and eczema. (Weekes & Waterhouse (1991))

Rebellious Child anger obviously is a demonstration of anger that is a rebellion against something. That is the person perceives another person as an authority figure and they will react with anger to that person because of that perception of authority. In psychology this person is seen to have an "authority problem". This is very common in the criminal population. As soon as they see signs like this they will have an urge to do it just because they are told it is not allowed.



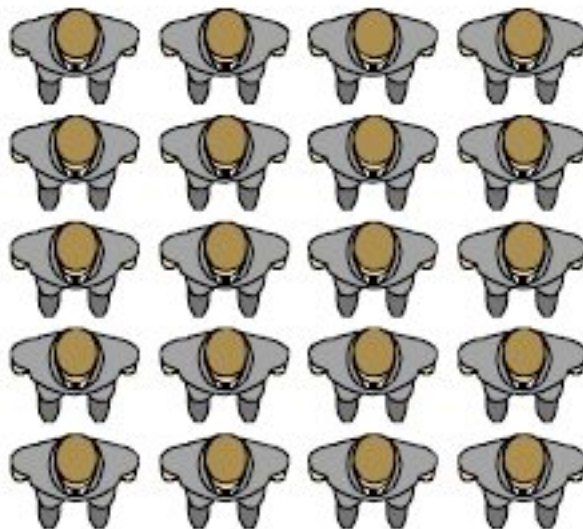
These people get involved in fights that they don't need to get involved in and can waste so much time and energy for no practical gain. The gain they do get is that they can yet again express their anger and displeasure at authority. They will continually do this without even realising and just get themselves in more and

more trouble. This type of anger is often quite self defeating. When I worked in the prison system I saw numerous occasions when inmates would react in such a way. They would fight the system and know that in the long run they would be worse off and the system always wins in the end. But they get that instant of pleasure when they say no to authority and defy it. That is worth the loss of privileges, fines, or more prison time to the person with an authority problem. The person with an angry Rebellious Child.

An example of Conforming Child anger is "transferential" anger. This is the opposite to 'here and now' anger that is found in Free Child anger. This person reacts in the here and now (2007) with anger about an event that may have occurred 30 years ago. The person transfers that old anger onto a situation that is occurring to them in the now, and they are usually quite unaware of it.

CONFORM

Your one of us now



Why do people do this? Because by transference we are seeking to finally resolve the old problem. At that earlier time we had some innate need that was not met or dealt with properly. Transference is an attempt by the person to finally get that need met or issue resolved now.

For example, the individual may have had a father who ignored her achievements and the child felt anger about that. She wanted father to acknowledge her, which is all pretty normal for a young girl, but he never did. So she felt angry about that many times in her developing years

Years later when she is married she will have a tendency to see hubby as ignoring her and not acknowledging what she has done. She might say angrily, "You only see me as a housewife and that means nothing to you". When in fact he does not think that at all. Hubby is getting the anger that is really about her father's behaviour years earlier. She is transferring the past onto the now in the vain attempt that at last, this time, it will be resolved. Most often that does not happen. Usually the transference anger is also quite out of proportion.

The psychological process of transference often plays quite a part in a person's selection of a marital partner. This may go some of the way to explaining the turn of phrase, "You hurt the ones you are closest to". People certainly transfer onto the one's they are closest to. If there is little emotion about another person then there is far less likely to be transference occurring.

Reference

Weekes, B.S. & Waterhouse, I.K.

"Hostile attitudes and the Coronary Prone Personality". *Australian Psychologist*. 1991. Pp 33 - 36.

Two tasks children can learn about anger

The development of all feelings over the child's life is interesting but anger in particular can go through a number of transformations. Compared to an emotion like embarrassment, anger is such a basic human emotion. Human anger or aggression is as primal as the human drive for food, love or the human sexual drive.

However anger is one of the most problematic feelings for humans and one that most societies do not deal with at all well. One thing that separates anger from most other emotions is that it can lead to acts of physical violence. The two are intimately connected. Very few other emotions do that and thus we see the inherent danger in the emotion of anger as compared to other emotions. If someone is depressed or scared they are not likely to lash out and punch someone. Some people who are angry will punch and assault others.



(There is an inherent danger in anger,
which is not the case for other emotions)

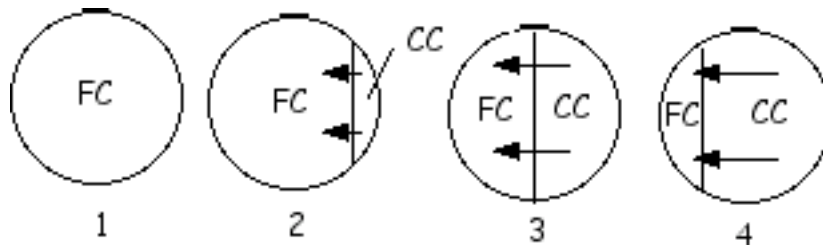
FRUSTRATION

Another close link in emotions is between frustration and anger. The two are closely connected. When a person is frustrated they can very quickly become angry. If you are late for an appointment and every traffic light you come to seems to be red then you are being frustrated from getting to your destination on time. In such circumstances I think it is safe to say that we have all, become angry, at one time or another.



Some can't get no satisfaction. So they are constantly frustrated.

A child's life however, is full of endless frustrations. One of the main goals of a parent is to frustrate the child. The new-born child is born with almost complete Free Child ego state. It has to slowly develop more and more of an Conforming Child (CC) or it will become an "anti-social" adult. The more CC develops the less Free Child remains



As long as the CC does not get too much (and in Australian society it often is too much) then the person develops a frustration tolerance. They learn how to tolerate frustration so they do not get angry and then vent that anger on someone else. A young child will naturally tend to hit out when it gets frustrated and angry. It is a normal human thing to do. The more frustration tolerance one develops the less likely that is to happen. So this is one way anger develops through a child's life. It is meant to learn how to tolerate frustration and thus not get angry so quickly and with apparent little provocation. Sometimes you hear people say, "He has a short fuse". Put another way one can say he has a low level of frustration tolerance.



Frustration tolerance

VIOLENCE AND ANGER

Another way anger transforms over the child's developmental years is the relation between the feeling of anger and physical hitting out. In Australian society it is illegal for an adult to express their anger by hitting another adult. It is legal for a child to hit another child (as long as its not too severe) and it is legal for an adult to smack a child (as long as its not too severe).

So a child must transform its anger in such a way where as in childhood it could naturally hit out, but as it gets older it learns how to not do that at another person. It has to learn how to draw that line because physical assault between adults is a serious matter in this society.

One of the main points it needs to learn about, is the problem solving nature of physical violence. Physically hitting someone solves a problem. If a person hits their husband or wife then it is very likely that the person being hit will change their behaviour. They will quickly start to behave in a way that the hitter wants them to. Thus the problem is solved. Physically hitting some one often works and I suppose that is why some people continue to do it.

The only difficulty is that in the longer term it creates more problems. Firstly, if a relationship gets to a point where either party is hitting the other then the quality of that relationship is very poor. The Free Child of either party will have very little interest in the relationship and thus the quality of the relationship is severely damaged. However some people seem to have no difficulty living that way.

Another problem is that when you physically hit someone then you are introducing third degree negative stroking into the relationship. So it becomes acceptable in the relationship. That means it is very likely that the other party is going to hit back sooner or later in a third degree way. That can be with physical violence itself or by taking legal (or illegal) action directed at you.

Finally, human relationships are no different than international politics. If Iraq can be forced into submission though physical violence then all that happens is the opposition go under ground. They fight back more surreptitiously, which can drag on for years. So you always have to watch your back and sleep with one eye open. The hitter certainly has not 'won'. The same applies for human relationships. Even if you can force the other party into submission they sooner or later get you back some how.

A young child very quickly learns that physical violence solves problems swiftly. It works, but there is a down side to it. Thus, hopefully it learns about the short term and long term impact of physically expressing it anger. In Australia some

children learn this and some do not. Some only recognise the short term solutions that physical violence provides.



An example of what happens when one does not learn about the relationship between anger and violence