



## ANGER TALK & EXERCISE

**TIMING:** Saturday AM, after breakfast (should not go longer than 45 minutes total)

**EXPECTATION:** May use notes but must be very familiar with content so as not to rely on notes

**PURPOSE:** To increase awareness about anger, how we do it, avoid it, express it. To give women the experience, maybe for the first time, of expressing anger, which sets the stage for Rock Work.

**ENERGY:** Authoritative, instructive, interested, intentional, and direct

**MATERIALS:** Pool Noodles, ear plugs, and iPod Playlist: WATC 4 Anger Process

**JOB ASSIGNMENTS:** Anger Speaker, Anger Debrief, 8 to 10 staff models

**PRE-WEEKEND PREP:** In addition to sending the Anger Exercise document, Anger Coordinator/Team Lead emails the following to members of the Anger Team:

*“Before the weekend, each Anger Team member should identify about 20 things that you are angry about or have been angry about. This could be about anything; however, go deep!”*

*EX: I’m angry that – my marriage is in trouble, women’s role in the church, sexual objectification of women, judged for homeschooling/public school, I’m alone, I can’t have children, I was abused, I was raped, I had an abortion, my husband watches porn, etc.*

*There is no pre-weekend meeting; we will meet as a team on Friday morning to practice.”*

### **WEEKEND PREP:**

1. Anger Team will meet on Friday morning during the Staff Meeting to practice.
2. Prior to the process, Anger Team Lead will clarify with iPod person when to start/stop the music.

## ROUND ONE - Using Words: Anger Speaker

**Say the following:** Get your big rock out of your bag and bring it back with you. We are going to form one large circle. Staff, join the circle and spread out among the attendees.

Please place your rocks in the middle of the circle in a pile please.

Earlier we took a look at emotions and how important it is to identify them and own them in our lives. If we don't own them, they can drive us in directions that could be destructive in relationships. Right now we are going to look at anger. Anger can be a tricky emotion for Christian women. Many of us believe that being angry is bad. However, the scriptures say, "Be angry, and sin not." There is a way to experience anger that is healthy and mature. God is not afraid of your anger, and He doesn't judge you when you are angry. He knows when you are angry and when anger is within you. It is important that we not be afraid to acknowledge our anger before God. It's ok, God sees it. We want to encourage you to give yourself permission to connect with your anger in a way that is not going to harm anyone.

This is a safe place where we can simply experience and give space to what might be inside us. The process we are about to do is not something we recommend that you do in real life with other people. However, it might be a good way to let go of anger when you are alone, or when you are talking to God. We all have anger. So you might as well go ahead and let God hear your heart. King David did this. He was very expressive of his anger in the psalms.

Anger, when exercised appropriately, can actually be a good and necessary thing. Think about Jesus in the Temple chasing out the money changers. And also, remember when Peter spoke the words of Satan, when he said that Jesus would not die? Jesus said "Get behind me Satan." Jesus drew a boundary in both cases. He drew a line in the sand against lies and abuse of God's Temple.

Sisters, you are God's Temple. Many of you might be harboring lies about yourself that rob you of living in the truth of who you are as God's daughters. Some of you, for years perhaps, have allowed God's temple, which is you, to be overrun with distortions and lies. Anger would be an appropriate response to this. Some of you may want to fight for yourselves today and for those you love.

One other thing we want you to know is that sadness and anger are connected. Many of us connect to sadness more easily, but there's anger underneath. Sadness can be a safer emotion for women. If you find yourself crying or shutting down in sadness, can you dig deep and ask God what is underneath it? Or if you are someone who goes to anger easily, can you let it out in a way that allows you to look at what is fueling that anger? Is there sadness under it?

Unexpressed anger does not go away. Often it gets pushed down into our bodies, and left there, it can cause us stress or harm. Anger that has been pressed down will come out in other ways and can cause us and others harm in ways we do not intend.

We're going to give you an opportunity to look at anger and to express some of it in the next few minutes. If during this next exercise you feel overwhelmed by the emotion being expressed around you, or perhaps you feel grief, sadness, fear, or discomfort come up for you, we want to ask you to stay present to whatever is coming up in you. This is a safe space. We invite you to observe yourself and others and to step into the opportunity to engage this emotion that we as women often avoid or are not allowed the space to openly express.

If the emotions shared by the women in this room feel familiar to you because of your past experiences or your current connectedness with anger, that is welcome. We invite you to become aware of this and to stay present to it. Stay open to this strong emotion and see if you can identify what other emotions, thoughts, or needs might be behind the anger you feel.

First of all, I'd like you to become aware of what has made you angry or what makes you angry in life. You may not be feeling it right now, but there are things that you have felt. So go ahead and close your eyes. Just breathe. Breathe in through your nose, exhale through your mouth, just become present to anything in this world that has brought anger up inside of you. Maybe you feel it in a certain place in your body. Where do you feel anger in your body normally? I feel it right in my \_\_\_\_\_. Place your hand, with your eyes still closed, on that place in your body where you feel anger typically. Where does it settle in? Maybe where it's been stuffed down. It could be anywhere in your body. If you don't have a place, that's ok. Just be aware that it's in you. Keep holding space for your anger. You can be angry about anything. It could be about your own life history. Things that have happened to you. You can be angry for someone else and what they are experiencing. You might feel anger about:

- Being objectified as a woman
- Being abused
- Being rejected
- Being single
- Not having children
- Having a child or family member with a terminal illness
- At the injustice in the world
- About politics
- [Speaker: fill in your own examples...]

In a moment we're going to have you open your eyes, and we're going to have you begin to just say what you are angry about one at a time. Try not to speak over each other. And you're going to speak it right to the rocks. The rocks represent all the things you are angry with. They will symbolize the objects of your anger so that no one gets hurt by you expressing your anger.

So we'll begin, one person speaks, then the next person speaks. "I'm angry about..." or "I'm angry that..." Ready, go ahead and begin right now. "I'm angry that..."

**NOTE: The staff team has been prepared to interject things that they are angry with. They should have been instructed to speak what they are angry about to get the ball rolling and to keep up the momentum when the attendees stop sharing. Interject with prompts to keep going, especially if you observe a lull among the attendees.**

Keep going... what are you angry about?

**[All of the following are examples to prime the pump for those who are not connecting with the process yet or who are afraid of voicing anything. Don't say it all at once. Use it as a tool to get women to engage.]**

- If you haven't said anything yet, I encourage you to simply speak at least one thing that you know you are angry about. You don't need to be feeling it right now. Just speak it out.
- All of us are angry at times. Anger is a result of unmet needs. What are your unmet needs? For love, respect, value, friendship...
- Things that happened to you. Things that you've done.
- Is your marriage in trouble? Women's role in the church? Being objectified by men? Are you alone? Do people judge you because you have certain values?
- If you haven't said anything yet, take a risk and repeat what someone else has said if that fits for you.
- Take a risk and use your voice. Own it. If you don't own it, it's going to go down, deep into you, it's going to stay there and fester.

**[Give enough time for the ones who are reluctant to find courage to speak.]**

Tell the women to "Stop."

## **ROUND TWO - Using Body and Voice: Anger Speaker**

Now, when I say go, the Staff is going to take a risk and step into their anger with their bodies and with their voices. For some of you, this may feel overwhelming and loud. This may be hard for some of you. You may feel overwhelmed with tears and you may feel the need or desire to leave the room, to flee. It is our encouragement that this is a safe place. The strong expressions of your sisters here will not cause you harm. We invite you to take a risk to be fully present to what is coming up for you. Give the feelings that rise in you permission and space. Whatever comes up for you is welcome.

If needed, ear plugs are available. **[Have staff pass out earplugs if requested.]**

Ready, go.

**[Anger models yell and express their anger with their bodies and pool noodles, focusing on the rocks in the middle of the circle. Go for about 10-15 seconds.]**

When I say go, don't think, just get into your bodies and use your voice to express what anger feels like. It doesn't have to be about anything specific. It can be about some of the things you said you were angry about or something you haven't even been willing to say yet. Let your body and voice express itself. Ready, everybody yell with no words, use your bodies focusing on the rocks which symbolize all that you are angry about. Ready, go.

**[All of the following are examples to be interjected throughout this process in order to inspire and direct the women to take risks.]**

- Don't sell yourselves short, keep going, just keep going.
- Use your body. Use your voice.
- It's inside of us, it's OK.
- Some of you have been holding this in for years.
- It's ok if you're not feeling it. There is no judgment here.

**[Let this go on for about 20 seconds.]**

Ok, Stop.

## **ROUND THREE - Using Body and Words: Anger Speaker**

I know this feels strange and it may be triggering some people. That's ok. We're here and we're going to be with you, ok? Trust the process.

Close your eyes. Now become present to a situation, a person, a condition, past or present, with which you are or have been angry. **[Pause]** There are so many unmet needs—so many things that have happened or are happening to bring up anger. Connect to one or more of these right now. Open your eyes.

The Staff is going to model expressing this anger with their bodies and using their words. Staff, go.

**[No music]**

OK, stop.

Now, with your body and voice – using words, express this anger. We're asking you to trust this process right now, ok? Ready, Go!

**[Play loud WATC 4 Anger Process playlist during part of the process.]**

**[All of the following are examples to be interjected throughout this process in order to inspire and direct the women to take risks.]**

- Take a risk, it's ok to express anger. No one is getting hurt here.
- God is not judging you. This is the BE ANGRY part, there is no sin in this.
- If you're not angry about you, be angry about things that have happened in the world, or to your sisters, to your children, or to your husband.
- Let it go, take a risk. It's ok. Keep going.
- You don't have to yell, you can just say the words. I know this feels odd for some of you, that's ok. Give yourself permission to just say your truth.
- Step in close to the rocks now, finish this off. Anything you've held back, anything you want to say again, just look down. What are you angry about? What needs to be released? It's ok. It's ok to feel it. It's ok to say it.

Tell the women to "Stop."

## **DEBRIEF AND PRESENCING: Anger Debrief**

So just breathe and close your eyes. Inhale [**Pause**], exhale [**Pause**]. Again, take a breath in and let it out slowly. Gradually let your breath slow down. Let go of your judgments right now. Whatever you're judging right now, just let it go, be fully present here with yourself, be here with your sisters. There is no expectation that you experience anything in particular. It is what it is. It's where you are at right now. Whatever is coming up for you now is welcome.

Breathe. You're safe. It's ok. Open your eyes and have a seat on the floor.

### **Debrief**

What did this bring up for you?

What was it like to speak out loud what you are angry about?

How did you feel as you witnessed others expressing things they are angry about?

### **Remember**

- Repeat what they say so everyone can hear
- Whatever you offer is welcome.
- Say more about that.
- Instruct to use "I" statements

**Presencing the Women** [This is an example to follow, not word for word, but in spirit.]

So this is a lot like life, in the way you are exposed to something and it activates you. You react with different feelings – maybe anger, or maybe you simply shut down and you don't know what to do with it. What we want to teach you now is that you have the power and ability that God has placed in you through His Spirit to access that great emotion and to come back to a centered place within – safe and anchored. Here, you can reconnect to Him, to connect to love, to connect to peace. Sisters, God has given you a spirit of power and love and self-control.

I'm just going to take you through a quick process here, I want you to reform your circle and close your eyes. Breathe in through your nose, out through your mouth, let your jaw relax. We carry a lot of tension in our jaws. Get into your bodies. This is a time to get out of your head, and connect with your body. Begin to become aware of your body, feel areas of tension, feel your breath, take it in. Allow it to go all the way through you. Feel your feet on the ground. As you feel your feet grounded on the floor, feel the strength of this body that God has given you. Take your hand, put it on your heart. Become present to the beat of your heart. Keep breathing, do that consciously, deep breaths, slow, exhale, connect to your heart.

Allow God to meet you right now in your heart—right where you are—with everything that this process has brought up in you. Now, consent to His presence. To his love and care. Yield to him. Open your eyes and move the circle in tighter—connect with your sisters. Shoulder to shoulder. Close your eyes. Risk being with each other in community. Lean into each other, feel the sister on your right, feel the sister on your left. You're safe. You're not alone . You are held. You are connected. You are here.

When you are ready, go ahead and open your eyes and look around the circle, make eye contact with your sisters. Take a moment. There is so much love in this room. Beneath the fear, the sadness, and the anger, there are such deep, deep longings for love, acceptance, to be seen to be valued and these are some of the things we are angry about. As you look at your sisters, just see the beauty, the depth of the longing that is in the women around you, within you. Just open your heart and welcome, welcome them all. Welcome yourself. You are so loved. You are safe here in the love of God.

Take a big deep breath. Exhale. One more. The word “breath” in Genesis 2 and John 3 is the same word for spirit. When we ask you to breathe we are asking you to connect to God's breath, His Spirit. And we breathe deeply as a way to intentionally connect to the reality that we are filled with the Spirit.

Well done. If you haven't already done so, open your eyes.

We are now going to take a 5 minute break. Get your rocks, put them back into your bags. There are cough drops at the snack table.