

## Episode Transcript

### **TAOLC EP: 028 -**

#### The Hidden Strength of Anger: How to Use it for Positive Change

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00:06 -

Welcome to the Art of Living Consciously podcast, a show designed for out-of-the-box thinkers and mindset shifters who are looking for new ways to evolve. This is an intimate container designed to uplift, inspire and motivate you on your own growth journey. I'm your host, Dannie Reeve. As a certified BNE or Bio-Neuro-Emotion practitioner, I empower men and women to turn their conflicts into stepping stones for growth, because when you question your own beliefs and perceptions and take responsibility for your life, everything else follows. If you ask me, earth is a place where souls are sent to evolve and in this podcast, we will discuss the best tools for our evolution. Hello, hello, my flawsome friends, and welcome to episode 28.

01:02

On my Instagram stories, I did a poll where I asked people what emotion they felt most uncomfortable with. What emotion was it that they had a hard time accepting in themselves and or in others? And the winner was anger. So I thought, hey, why not do a podcast episode on that emotion that has gotten so much bad press over the years? Now, I've spoken about this in other podcast episodes, but emotions all have a purpose. There's not a good or bad emotion, and a lot of the times when we tend to judge an emotion highly, then there's medicine for us. There is something there for us to discover and integrate. So maybe you are a person who tends to judge anger. You tend to find any sort of expression of anger highly uncomfortable, and perhaps you often encounter people who are pretty aggressive or raise their tone of voice a lot or express their disagreement pretty boldly, or can even be violent. Perhaps you're somebody who struggles to express themselves in an assertive way, and so you tend to censor any form of or manifestation of anger within yourself, and therefore you tend to explode out of nowhere when things get too much. Or maybe you are somebody who spirals very quickly, gets out of control very quickly and has trouble managing their own feelings and anger. What is important to know is that either an extreme manifestation of anger, that's to say being out of control, or the absence of anger and the absence of conflict are both the symptom of a poor integration of that emotion. So first I want to give some credit to that emotion that has gotten so much bad press over the years.

03:19

Let's look into what the purpose of anger is. I have talked about this in previous episodes, but according to some thought thinkers, especially Paul Ekman, we have six basic emotions. Those emotions are surprise, joy, disgust, fear, anger and sadness. These six emotions are the language of the body. They are the way your body expresses itself and reacts to sensory input. So, in the face of any events, your body is first going to feel any of these six basic emotions, and then your brain has a capacity to intellectualize those emotions, so to speak. So you would have feelings such as guilt, shame, ecstasy, love, etc. But your

immediate reaction is the reaction of the body, and that falls under those six basic emotions that I told you about early on. And all of these emotions have a purpose and they have a reason for being. They are neither good nor bad. They, they all have a positive intent. Now I'm not going to go into all of the positive intents of every single emotion. I might actually I was thinking do a series on this and go deeper into all the emotions, or deeper into the most problematic ones, the ones that we judge as negative, which are usually fear, anger and sadness.

05:08

But for now, let's look into anger a little closer and what that emotion does for you, because it has a positive intent, as I said. So anger is there for you to be able to gather the energy in order to stand up for yourself in case of a threat. So it's given you that energy to fight. That's really its most primitive purpose and you can translate that into many different ways of quote unquote fighting. It could be giving you the energy to be assertive, to say no, to stand up for yourself, to speak up for yourself. So anger is there to move you into action. Actually, every single emotion is there to move us. It's into action, it's energy in motion, right. But anger has this quality of really wanting you to take action to. It gives you that energy, that fire right for you to be able to establish boundaries. That's why, on an emotional scale, anger tends to rate higher than, let's say, sadness or despair, because it has more energy, gives you a sense of more power and allows you to move out of states of lethargy.

06:38

Let's say, for example, if we take grief, grief will start with sadness and despair, which are emotions and feelings that are so important to feel in order to go within and really have that space to process the loss that you've gone through. But eventually that despair will turn into anger and that anger is what will give you the energy to start facing the world again. It's healthy to feel angry. It's part of the grieving process. So if we continue with that example of grieving let's say that you've lost a relative, it's normal after you felt the sadness and the loss, it's normal to feel angry because, let's say, thoughts come. Is that that person left you alone, or how could this person leave me, or you? Or you're angry at life or you're angry at whatever. It's a natural emotion to feel. The emotion is not the problem. The problem is when you censor that emotion, you see it as unacceptable and so you repress it. When that happens, you are not going through the normal process of grieving in that case and you get stuck in a particular stage of the process, which could be sadness, for example, and despair, which keeps you in a feeling of victimhood and cuts you off from the world. Really Obviously, the time it takes to go from one stage to the other will depend on each person and you might go backwards and forth from one emotion to the other. The problem is when you really get stuck, in this case in despair, and don't allow anger to move you through the motions of your process, of your grieving process.

08:33

In order to illustrate this, let me share a personal story and my own journey with anger, because anger, I've learned, is one of my shadow emotions and we are still learning to communicate with each other. When I was a child, I was exposed to some pretty unhealthy adults who violated my sense of self and my

sense of trust. I don't feel called to go in great detail into what happened exactly, but, as you would know if you've listened to my podcast episodes, trauma is not really what happens but how. What happens on the outside makes you feel on the inside. In the face of what happened, I didn't really have anybody to talk to or to turn to, so I coped the best way I could and the best way a child could at the time, with the tools that I had. My way of coping was to put on a good girl mask to pretend that everything was okay, and I did that in a sense, not to burden any of the people in my life, especially perhaps my parents and my caretakers, and a part of me did a very, very good job at burying all of these intense feelings deep, deep, deep down in my psyche and kind of numbing me from the pain. It's only about, I'd say, a year ago I've lost track of time now when I took a program that really taught me a lot about internal family systems. I talk about internal family systems in episode 26. So you can refer back to that if you don't know what internal family systems are.

10:34

But the main point here is that we did a meditation which was called a parts integration meditation, where you get to establish that dialogue between the different parts of self, and I went really, really deep into that meditation and I was able to access a part of me, a child part of me, who was hurting, and it was actually really beautiful. I asked her where she wanted to go and we ended up going to my favorite waterfall. Where I lived in France. We had a waterfall where we used with a swimming lake, and we used to spend so much time there. I loved it and we just sat on the waterfall and at the beginning it was playful, it was fun, and then she started sobbing, crying, but that didn't last for long. What really came out was this like full-blown rage. There was screaming, there was wanting to punch things and punch people, and it was just this rage that came out. And it was such a pivotal moment for me because with all the work that we had done, I was able to just sit there, hold that little girl's hand and witness her emotions, without wanting to fix them, without wanting to tell her everything was going to be okay. I just was there for her and her emotions and that was so, so healing, was so, so healing. And also it really, really showed me that the real emotion that I had not been processing and not allowed myself to feel was the anger I felt in the face of what had happened to me.

12:23

When I was growing up, I learned to judge anger heavily. My father was somebody who used to shout and express his anger quite a lot. My mother used to freeze and I learned to appease. I learned to be that good girl who would put on that nice mask, do everything people wanted her to do so I would appease the anger in my household. The implicit message I received was that it was not okay to express anger. And so, when I was 19, I got really, really depressed and I felt sad and I felt despair, and I felt sad and I felt despair, and these are feelings and emotions that would really carry on by my side for a lot of my life. And now, looking back, I realized that I had been stuck in my own grieving process. I had been stuck in the despair stage, in the victim stage, because I didn't allow myself to move through the motions of anger. It was socially or culturally more acceptable for me to feel sad than to feel angry, or that's the message that I had internalized. And when I was sitting in that meditation, I realized in my core, in my bones, that anger was my medicine and that reclaiming my power was allowing myself to lean into what I had judged in my father.

14:02

Now, of course, let me make a point clear. I'm not telling you that then you just have to then let completely loose and become this person who's always angry and let's rage lead the way. That's not what I'm saying, but I'm saying that when you judge that quality, usually what you need is to integrate more of it. So what does it look like for me, for example? Well, I'm going to give you a graphic example, like a more tangible example through sports. The feedback I repeatedly get when I am doing gymnastics is that I need to be more angry. I need to bring more anger and power into my skills. Anger is what gives me the power to commit to a skill. It's what gives me the power to bring more momentum into the skill. And the same goes with life.

15:00

Anger is simply an energy that allows you to speak up for yourself, it allows you to be assertive, it allows you to say no, it allows you to listen to that nudge in your body when somebody says something that you feel is not appropriate and speak up for yourself. It doesn't necessarily have to be this big, explosive show of anything. It really is quite subtle sometimes. If I would take, to take an example, what I've started doing is stop censoring my urges. So at work, I received once an email that I thought was not acceptable, and before I would have spent hours not hours, but a lot of time trying to like write the perfect email with the perfect wording, sound quite diplomatic. And what I've started doing is replying on the moment, using that energy in the spur of the moment Sorry, using that energy to just type really quickly and just send it, to just type really quickly and just send it. And because I'm so highly sensitive to anger and I've judged it so much, the response I send more than often is not anyway as bad quote, unquote, as I feel. It just allows me to be more direct and more to the point, and also what I want you to know, is that once you start experimenting with things that you haven't done before and say, well, okay, I'm going to unleash this in me.

16:32

Well, you just have to go for it, and sometimes you'll make mistakes and sometimes you'll express yourself in a disproportionate way, and that's okay. You know you need to try on other shoes and you need to explore that other polarity in order to find your own balance and your own way of being assertive and to the point and direct and have healthy boundaries. This personal example I shared was just to illustrate what can happen when you become so polarized in being a certain person and then you judge a particular emotion as inappropriate, and it's important to understand that there is an appropriate moment for every single emotion. There's not one emotion that is better than the others. They all have a place and a purpose, just as conflict has a purpose in a relationship. You don't want a relationship where there's absolutely no conflict. That is not a healthy relationship. A healthy relationship is a relationship where you can express yourself and you can make mistakes and you can learn from each other, and that requires you to go through conflict, and anger is an emotion that allows you to lean towards conflict.

17:54

Suppressing anger will lead you to avoid conflict at all costs, and hello, I know how that feels. So if any of you here are like, oh my God, I tend to avoid conflict at all costs, I understand you, I feel you, I hear you, and just know that this is a coping mechanism that is actually teaching you to do the opposite, to start leaning more towards conflict, and that means starting to express your needs to voice when something doesn't sit with you well or when you disagree with something, and facing the consequences of that, and that will allow you to start cultivating that energy of anger, of standing up for yourself and opening up communication with the other person. Now, I know that I've touched very little on the other polarity, which would be my father's polarity, the one that I needed to learn from, which is when anger is overused and when there's trouble managing that anger right. But really, what I want to say about that is that also, if you are in that polarity, I feel you and I hear you, and that it is exactly the same root problem, which is to learn how to express your needs and your concerns, as well as knowing how to establish healthy boundaries. There's also an invitation to look at the other polarity and learn from them, which would be to create some space for more introspection, act less impulsively, listen more.

19:45

At the end of the day, the best medicine is usually in what we judge in others. So I'd like you to take a minute to think about the examples that you had when you were growing up. Think about your mother and your father, or your primary caretakers. How did they deal with conflict? Was there one person who would explode, who would scream, shout, who would even be violent? What did the other person do? Did they remain silent? Did they leave the room? How did they handle conflict?

20:27

Maybe you came from a family where nobody ever raised their voice. Everything was always hushed and shushed and nobody really communicated openly about any disagreement. The implicit message there could be that it's not okay to be in conflict or to show any form of disagreement. Who in your family did you judge most? Was it your father or your mother? What did you judge about them?

20:57

Now here, it's really important to know that we usually view our fathers through the eyes of our mothers, that's to say that our perception of our father is very much conditioned through the perception that our mother had of him. That's because we bond with our mothers in a very strong way. Having spent all this time in the womb and for the first three years of our lives, we very much bonded to her feelings, to everything that she experiences. And typically, the father archetype is the archetype that will allow us to establish strong boundaries, to become assertive, because that's the archetype that sets rules, that allows us to feel confident enough to go out into the world and also allows us to separate from our mother and do our own individuation process. So if, for whatever reason, your mother had a negative image of your father and judged him heavily, maybe in the extreme cases because he was abusive and violent, or he was just somebody who tried to exert his authority and raise his voice and establish some rules, but she would constantly emasculate him and not let him do that. So she would be the one who would typically be taking all the decisions and or going behind his back. When he said you can't do that, your mother would be like, oh, it's okay, we won't tell your father, right, we'll do all this. Da, da, da da da.

22:41

In both cases, the message that the child receives is pretty similar: Aggressiveness is to be avoided at all costs. So, now that we've looked into anger and you've seen that anger in the healthy form, just like aggressiveness in the healthy form allows you to take your power back and to establish boundaries, your aggressive qualities will likely have been relegated to the shadows and deemed as unacceptable. What I want you to understand is that we often repeat what we judge either in the same polarity or in the opposite one, and that's why it's good to go back to your childhood and look at your parents through those eyes. What did they do that I judged, what did I not like about them and how they expressed themselves. And if you have trouble dealing with anger, ask yourself how was anger expressed in your household? And what conclusions did you unconsciously make of that? And therefore, now, what are you suppressing in yourself?

24:01

So I'm going to leave you with a practical shadow exercise that you can do in order to reflect more on this. I would like you to list three to five people in your life, and two of them must be your parents or your caretakers when you grow up. And I want you to list three things that you dislike about them, dislike or hate about them. So, for example, when I did this exercise, I realised that a common theme was that I really couldn't stand people who just complained all the time or people who were being really negative. Or what came up with a bunch of relatives was that they were really overly vocal and they would speak their mind and they would be quite aggressive. With another relative. I was like that person just thinks about themselves all the time and doesn't take my feelings into account. So just take some time to do that. Jot down three to five people and then three things that you dislike about them.

25:09

You can specifically think about dealing with conflict, but you can also make it quite general, because really, the qualities that will come up will apply to a lot of different areas of your life. Don't overthink it. Just the three things that come to your mind. The more you analyse and overthink, the more you're censoring yourself. If you need to pause the episode, please go ahead. I'll be waiting for you right here.

25:34

Now that you've done that, I want you to look at that list again with this new pair of glasses, that is to say, look at the list, knowing that, most likely, whatever you dislike about the people's behaviour is what you need to lean more into. In my case, the three aspects that I told you about all have a bit of a quality of anger in them. I need to start complaining more, to start saying when I don't like something or I don't agree with something, I need to accept that there are negatives in life and in people. It's healthy to see the negative sides as well. I remember one of the best pieces of advice that was given to me was when I was working for the Bioneuroemotion Institute. When I got accepted it was like my dream job and I just thought everybody there was amazing and I idealised a lot of them, right, because they had been people I'd been looking up to for so long. I really admired the method that they had put together and I was just in awe, right. I had this childlike awe.

26:44

And one of our mentors, Victor actually Victor Villalobos his name is, he said to us he was like you need to start seeing the negatives. It's not good when you only see the qualities in an organisation. You need

to be able to see the negatives, because that's how you grow as a person. That's how you can make healthy decisions and healthy changes. You have to stop seeing people as if you were a child, as if they are perfect, because that's not a healthy way to see an organisation and to participate in an organisation. I just thought that was such a brilliant piece of advice that I now understand.

27:26

At the time that he said it, it completely went over my head. I was like what does he mean? But now I completely understand. You need to see that people are people, that they're human, and that's the best way to relate to people.

27:42

Obviously, it's like regulating right, when somebody is always in the negative, they need to have a little bit more positive. But when you're always seeing things on the bright side, you're missing out on an important aspect of life and the way that you can evolve through those important aspects of life. And lastly, my relative is inviting me to put myself first. Right, say no to people. So in what we judge is our medicine. So if you are somebody who really judges anger and is very uncomfortable around that emotion, lean into it, start to explore, start to ask yourself where you got those lenses from and what you need to incorporate to become a more complete person, a person who embraces that emotion as a natural and normal part of being human.

28:37

As Carl Jung said and I'm going to leave you with that quote because I think it's such a potent quote I'd rather be whole than good.

And there you have it for today's episode. To find out more about what I do and how I can best serve you, head over to [www.danniereeve.com](http://www.danniereeve.com). And meanwhile, why not hit that subscribe button so you can be notified when the latest episode drops in? I promise the journey will be worth it. Thank you so much for listening. I truly appreciate you and I wish you a flawsome day that is flawed and awesome, just the way we like it.