



Understanding Why We Get Angry

One of the steps in helping children control their anger is to recognize four causes of anger. After children have settled down and you debrief with them about their anger, talk about what's causing it. You and your child may see patterns and then be able to head off the problem earlier next time.

1) Blocked Goals. This is the kind of anger that happens to you, as a parent, when you want to do a project in the playroom and find that Billy has left his Legos all over the floor and you keep stepping on them. Or, Billy may want to play with the train set only to find that his sister is using it. Those are blocked goals

2) Violated Rights. That's when you, as a parent, are in the bathroom and your daughter keeps knocking on the door. You believe you have the right to go to the bathroom in peace. Your daughter may get angry because her brother came into her room and took her favorite CD. Those are violated rights.

3) Unmet Expectations. You had expected that when you got home you would be able to rest but instead you find a big mess. Or little Jackie thought she would be going to McDonalds but instead you chose to go to Pizza Hut. Those are unmet expectations.

4) Experiencing Unfairness. When someone takes a toy from a younger child, you may feel angry as a parent because you see unfairness. Or, Tom may feel angry with his teacher because she picked someone else for a privilege he thought he deserved. Those unfair situations can provoke anger.

Whatever the situation, after a child has settled down, talk about the cause. Discuss the value of laying down rights, readjusting goals or expectations, and handling unfairness in a godly way. By examining the causes of anger, you can help children gain greater perspective and develop long lasting strategies for managing their anger.

["Eight Secrets to Highly Effective Parenting."](#) by Dr. Scott Turansky and Joanne Miller, RN, BSN