

## Anger and ill-will

Ill-will is anger going as far as wishing harm on another, and it is to be completely avoided. If it arises we need to seek to withdraw from the situation in some way or another. If we can calm the mind we will arrive at anger, then we can listen to ourselves or be listened to and can assess its causes.

In my experience very little of people's anger constitutes genuine ill-will. People are overly critical of themselves for anger which is an expression of desire or even of need. The only person free of anger is one completely free of desire, even to survive. They are people who have no attachment to the body, seeing that it is not who or what they really are.

Anger, like lust, is a hindrance to the meditation, an obstacle to the refined mind and to such seeing. Calming meditation is hence used to suspend any anger in order to see deeper and resolve its cause. Opposite to lust, which needs to be restrained or the desire questioned, anger needs a response. It needs acting on in order that we avoid acting it out. We listen and assess what is a skilful course of action. This already requires a degree of calm so we would usually respond immediately by going straight to our meditation object.

The universal preventative medicine and skilful response is kindness, when we can find it. If we cannot respond with love, or our love lacks sufficient direction, anger will persist. Then it needs more investigation, the need or desire underlying it needs to be exposed and reflected upon skilfully:  
“I feel angry because I ....”

If we cannot listen to or act on anger we freeze or we go dull, apathetic. Most people realise this and think that the only solution is not to suppress it but to act it out. This is not correct. Neither is it correct to say that we somehow store it up inside if we don't act it out. What gets stored up inside is not the anger but all the needs or desires it represents. The way I see it is as that the anger is a lack of response to the underlying need yet all the energy of our desire has gone in to that anger. To get our energy back we have to go back to the anger with a calmer mind and listen to it, find out what it really wants and look for a skilful response.



I offer this for your reflection.

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