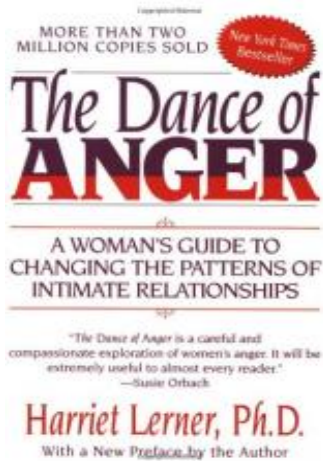


# The Dance of Anger

by Harriet Lerner

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## About the Book

Women have long been discouraged from discussing anger. We are the nurturers, the soothers, the peacemakers, the steadiers of rocked boats. We learn to fear our anger, because it not only brings about the disapproval of others but also signals the necessity for change.

The taboos against expressing anger are so powerful that we may not even know when we are angry. Or we may vent anger in a way that leaves us feeling helpless and powerless ensuring that change does not occur. Or we may wrap feelings of guilt and self-blame around ourselves like an old familiar blanket. Many of us feel guilty if we are anything less than an emotional service station to others.

The Dance of Anger shows readers how to identify the actual sources of anger and to use anger as a tool for change. Lerner illustrates how getting angry gets nowhere if we do not identify and change our own part in the pattern.

## Discussion Guide

1. What are the forces from family and culture that encourage us to deny our own legitimate anger? Why is women's anger threatening to others and ourselves?
2. What are the typical ways we manage anger (for example, venting, distancing, blaming) that don't work for us over the long haul? Discuss case examples from the book that illustrate "anger gone wrong" and see what you learn from them.
3. Discuss the following concepts and themes that are illustrated by case examples in The Dance of Anger. Move from the examples in the book to examples in your own life.

4. Emotional pursuer-- emotional distancer (Chapter 3)

5. Anger at our mothers (Chapter 4)

6. Triangles (Chapter 8)

Remember, there are important "how to" lessons contained in each woman's story throughout the book. A group situation is an ideal place to connect these with your own life and formulate new steps to move differently in relationships. **Quotes for Discussion**

"Anger is a signal and one worth listening to." (Page 1)

"Those of us who are locked into ineffective expressions of anger suffer as deeply as those of us who dare not get angry at all." (Page 5)

"It is not just anger and fighting that we learn to fear; we avoid asking precise questions and making clear statements when we unconsciously suspect that doing so would expose our differences, make the other person feel uncomfortable, and leave us standing alone." (Page 93)

## Author Bio

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