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Chapters

turning the pages through grief



How can I be
ANGRY with you now that you're gone?

• By Paulette LeBlanc •

Not every relationship is perfect. We are unique creatures, sharing unique connections with every person in our lives. Relationships range from healthy and thriving, to downright abusive, to simply estranged and everything in between. Death is apathetic to the condition of our relationships when it comes calling. You may have been angry with the person who died. Perhaps in your grief you remain unsure about what to do with that anger. Maybe the deceased was angry with you and you never got a chance to work through your issues with them.

First of all it is important to decide on the merit of your anger. A spouse who always forgets to take out the garbage

may have died having neglected to do it for the umpteenth time. This is an example of something that will easily fade and in time may even become endearing or funny. What about more deeply engrained trespasses? For instance, an abusive parent or spouse who passes may

never have acknowledged what they've done or apologized. This can leave the abused in a state of confusion. You may experience pangs of anger and waves of grief simultaneously.

Remaining angry will certainly hurt you more than the deceased person, however it is important not to simply ignore your wounds because the other person died in the middle of an abusive relationship. Though the living cannot know with any degree of certainty that the deceased are now aware of pain they may have caused and are remorseful, it may be more comforting to assume that they do. After all, forgiveness does not require the offender's repentance. Forgiveness can happen at any point that the aggrieved has



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*"Speak when you are angry and you'll make
the best speech you'll ever regret."*

~Laurence J. Peter

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acknowledged and worked through his or her own pain.

There may be much uncertainty about whether or not an estranged person thought about us before they passed. Estrangement seems to happen most often in familial relationships. Perhaps this is because we do not choose our family. A blood tie to someone does not necessarily ensure that we will always see eye to eye. If a family member has died with whom you were estranged, living in guilt for not having had a relationship with them is not a healthy way to grieve them. Though it is certainly understandable that we would grieve the relationship we wish we'd had.

Disagreements are a natural part of any relationship. While some people seem to argue more than others, there are also those who choose to stifle their grievances in an effort to keep peace. If a loved one passed away while you were in the midst of a disagreement it is certainly normal to feel a certain degree of absence in your resolution. Never having had a chance to make up with them may leave us feeling as though we've left something permanently undone. Most especially when a death is sudden and there is not time for a proper goodbye, or an apology, it can leave the aggrieved a bit confused about what to feel.

There is no law against finishing an

argument yourself. You may find it comforting to say all that you had to say to the deceased, even though they are no longer around to hear it. If your relationship with them included regular disagreements as a way of clearing the air, you are free to continue to do so.

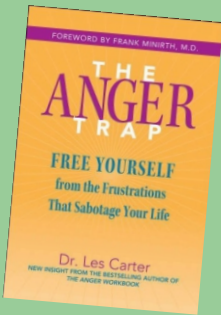
Conversely, if you are the type of person who stifled your feelings in an attempt not to upset the person who has passed, you may find it rather liberating to say everything you were not comfortable saying to them while they were alive.

Remember there is no "proper" way to grieve a relationship. Be kind to yourself in this time.

Paulette LeBlanc is a published author, editor and freelance writer, who currently lives on the Gulf Coast of Florida.

bookmarks

It's easy to identify rage in people who lose their temper at traffic jams, unruly children, unresponsive coworkers, and unrealistic bosses. But we may not recognize more subtle manifestations of anger, such as being uncomfortable with loose ends, acting impatiently, or being overly critical. That is anger, too. And, as is so often the case, angry folks don't seem to realize that the behavior causing them problems at home or at work actually stems from unrecognized and unresolved pain and emotional injuries from the past. Is all this negative emotion inevitable, or are there choices about how to respond, choices that can improve personal relationships as well as emotional health?



The Anger Trap is a landmark book that strips away the myths and misconceptions about anger and reveals how you can learn to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy anger so that you may choose—or help someone else to choose—a better, more spiritually enlightened path. The book examines the root causes of anger and can help you realize your patterns and break the destructive cycles of criticism, frustration, and irritation that hurt you and others around you. Drawing insight from timeless spiritual wisdom as well as cutting-edge research, Dr. Carter offers practical techniques to free you from anger, its hidden insecurities, fears, and selfishness and thereby improve the quality of your home and workplace life.



• take a break •

Fun Facts About Four-Leaf Clovers

- * There are approximately 10,000 three-leaf clovers for every "lucky" four-leaf clover.
- * There are no clover plants that naturally produce four leaves, which is why four-leaf clovers are so rare.
- * The leaves of four-leaf clovers are said to stand for faith, hope, love, and luck.
- * If you're lucky enough to find a four-leaf clover, look for more! If a clover plant produces a four-leaf clover, it's more likely to produce another four-leaf lucky charm than plants that only produce three-leaf clovers.

Just in case you needed a reminder:

It isn't your job to learn and grow from grief. It isn't grief's job to teach you lessons. Lessons, for better or worse, often happen along the way. But if you're putting pressure on yourself to grow from your loss, breathe in deeply and then let that pressure go. Your only 'job' while grieving is to grieve. And hopefully to show yourself some self-compassion while you do.



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