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Getting angry

Why we must direct anger at the situation at hand and not the individual involved

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I was driving my car and inadvertently cut into the lane, not realising another car was approaching. My car screeched to a halt as did the other person's car. He got down from his car and began to abuse me.



While I apologised and reasoned with him, he continued to lambast me, even as I tried to explain the situation that had forced me into his lane. We parted, he fuming and I feeling lousy that he had abused me without restraint.

That evening, I chanced to read Rabbi Harold Kushner's book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, in which he has written about misplaced anger.

When anger is directed at someone else, it either scares that person or raises his hackles. When it is directed at ourselves, it causes us to become depressed. Yet, if we can consciously direct the anger at the situation that caused it to arise, we can rant and rave about it, and since it is not directed at any person in particular, it permits us to discharge our anger without causing injury or hurt to a person.

When I reflected on this, I realised that I could have explained the circumstance which forced me into the lane of the oncoming car; then perhaps, we may have been able to part less upset, for he would have appreciated my predicament, and I his anxiety and fear at what might have happened if our cars had collided.

All it takes, therefore, is to recognise the situation, divorced from the person involved, and direct anger at the situation and not the individual.

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