

Anger

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I wrote an email to someone yesterday stating that I was angry. I referred correctly to my state of mind. I was most definitely angry about the matter to which I referred. What that matter was is not the concern here. Instead I want to discuss anger itself.

Anger can be defined as 'a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility.' I am not sure I felt hostility, and am not sure I ever do, but I note the definitions are alternatives. I did definitely feel annoyance and displeasure, and felt I had the right to say so.

Doing so did, I am sure, upset some recipients of the mail. In fact I am sure I will be told that I have acted inappropriately for suffering a completely normal human emotion.

The last point is what I think is important. If we were to follow what seems to be current thinking, anger is unacceptable, however normal it is. Those suffering anger are told to control it. More so, they are told to undertake anger management courses. To be angry is unacceptable.

I find that very worrying. Why shouldn't I be angry by what I think to be missed opportunity? Why, more generally, should I accept the systemic abuse we now see in society? Why can't I express that, including to those who impose that abuse in my opinion? And how will change ever happen if those angered by an injustice cannot say so?

Currently it would seem that those in power think I should not be angry. They do not like 'my tone'. They think I should change my behaviour. I should be respectful. Perhaps I should know my place. And they might hint I could be a bully, but then to every coward hiding behind privilege a person making complaint looks like a bully.

I have no time for bullying. But I also have no time for those who abuse, and I see too many who do.

My concern is that the current demand that anger be suppressed is part of the narrative of oppression of dissent of all sorts that I think is now a very obvious recurring

neoconservative political theme.

My suggestion is this: you can only demand that anger be suppressed for so long, and then it does turn to hostility. And that really worries me. Anger without hostility is appropriate. But suppressing it makes hostility more likely. Those displaying self-righteousness need to listen to what is said in anger. It might suggest that change is most definitely needed.

Being angry without hostility about injustice is politically appropriate. Those saying otherwise are pursuing an agenda of oppression.