Sue Parker Hall

Anger, Rage and Relationship

An Empathic Approach to Anger Management

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Anger, Rage and Relationship presents a radically new way to understand and work with anger and rage issues. Taking a relational approach to anger and rage, the book presents a positive view of human nature, supported by recent research findings and illustrated with case studies, with individuals trusted to be essentially pro-social.

Rather than promoting strategies and techniques for eradicating anger, Sue Parker Hall puts forward an approach which seeks to not only work with, but to differentiate between, anger and rage. Anger and rage are constructed as entirely different phenomena, originating at different developmental stages, having different functions and relational needs and requiring different aspects of relationship in the therapeutic process.

Further areas of discussion include:

- the positive aspects of anger
- practitioner protection
- the therapeutic implications of working with both anger and rage

This book will provide invaluable reading for practitioners dealing with anger and rage in the therapeutic setting, as well as being of great interest to all counsellors and therapists in the related field.

Sue Parker Hall is a BACP accredited therapist and a supervisor in private practice, a freelance trainer and an HE lecturer. She has developed her relational approach to anger and rage over the last decade and has presented her models to a wide range of helping professionals.

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'Anger and rage are typically presented as problems by the person concerned and those in close relationship with them. This book offers a deeper and more positive analysis of anger and rage and their therapeutic potential. Essential reading for anyone working with these primary feelings.'

Professor Tim Bond, University of Bristol.

'This is a powerful and timely work that enhances and extends the field of "anger management" considerably. Reading it has given me many points of reflection and its richness and clarity have already helped me personally as well as professionally in the role of therapist. An inspiring read.'

Jim Holloway, Independent Counsellor and Psychotherapist

'This is an important book. The author is to be commended for the breadth of its scope, as well as the depth and rigour of her analysis. The distinction she draws between anger and rage is both important and useful. She critiques existing models and approaches to working with anger and violence, and promotes a practice and a process of "empathic anger management" which acknowledges the human organism's capacity for life and for processing our experience of life. The author also emphasises the importance of positive aspects of anger and "adult rage", for example, in responding to social injustice. The book stands in the tradition of social psychology, and is clear about the social context of anger and rage which, the author argues, is endemic in British and American culture. I highly recommend it.'

Keith Tudor, Psychotherapist, Director of Temenos, Sheffield,
Honorary Lecturer, Liverpool John Moores University

To my Mum and Dad, Beryl and Jim, who always did their best; daughters, Libby, Harriet and Nellie and husband, Richard

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Foreword

Jeremy Holmes

Secure attachment in infancy is a robust predictor of future psychological health; conversely, insecure attachment, especially disorganised attachment, is associated with subsequent difficulties throughout childhood and into early adult life (Grossman *et al.*, 2005). Infant security is assessed by the 'Strange Situation', a universally accepted measure that remains in use nearly half a century since it was first devised by Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth *et al.*, 1978). In the Strange Situation caregiver and toddler are invited into a room furnished with easy chairs and toys. The child is then subjected to a series of mild stresses: the mother or father is asked to leave the room for three minutes: first leaving the child with the experimenter; later both adults exit, leaving the child on her own.

The behaviour of child and caregiver on separation and reunion is then studied and classified. A key feature of infants classified as 'secure' is the capacity for 'healthy protest', followed by soothing and assuagement of anger and upset when reunited with the caregiver. By contrast, children classified as 'insecure' show one of three patterns. In the 'deactivating' pattern, protest is damped down; the child gets close to the parent, but not too close, thereby ensuring security, but at the expense of intimacy. In the 'hyperactivating' pattern the child protests but cannot be soothed; anger sometimes turns to rage, manifest by arching of the back and inconsolable crying. Here again intimacy is sacrificed for the sake of physical proximity. In disorganised attachment the child exhibits bizarre patterns of response to reparation and reunion, none of which succeed in achieving intimacy or safety. Lyons-Ruth (Lyons-Ruth *et al.*, 2003) identifies two patterns of response in the parents of disorganised children: frightened or a frightening. In the former the parent seems threatened by the child's anger and so withdraws into a non-caregiving position; in the latter, the child's distress appears to activate parental rage, with blaming and attack (e.g. 'shut up, you're just making this fuss to wind me up') in an attempt to deny and expunge the child's distress.

These seminal relational constellations came to mind when reading Sue Parker Hall's excellent and original book. The capacity for healthy expression of anger is fundamental to psychological health. A child's capacity to express

anger activating recognition and acceptance by the caregiver is characteristic of secure parent–child relationships. Bowlby (1988) originally saw the primary function of anger and protest as a means of ensuring the child's safety in a potentially predatory world ('don't forget me mummy, I can't survive without you'). But the intimacy intrinsic to attachment is much more than a safety-device. It is the nursery in which humans learn to negotiate the social world. The expression of anger is a manifestation of Self ('I am angry therefore I exist'), of primitive potency ('my anger ensures that attention must be paid'), and, through the responsiveness of the caregiver, of the beginnings of affect regulation ('my feelings can be soothed and managed with the help of another, arousal is followed by quietude').

This complex process can easily go wrong in minor or major ways. Parker Hall's distinction between rage and anger vividly captures this. In her formulation anger is a relational phenomenon and serves the function in both children and adults of regulating and repairing the inevitable failures, misattunements, insensitivities and ruptures that beset even the most successful of intimate relationships. By contrast, rage, if I understand Parker Hall correctly, is viewed as essentially an a-relational phenomenon. In 'cold rage', akin to the deactivating strategy mentioned above, anger goes underground, is denied, leading to a range of possible psychological difficulties, including depression, low self-esteem and somatisation disorders.

'Hot rage' aims to destroy or obliterate the threatening or neglectful Other, rather than to activate or inform it about the sufferer's distress. This often has perverse consequences – the more distressed the individual, the hotter their rage, and the more likely they are to eliminate the very possibility of intimacy which they crave. Hyperactivation and disorganisation overlap here, sowing the seeds of lifelong relational turbulence, unless more favourable circumstances, which includes psychotherapy, intervene.

There is a need for a theoretical and practical formulation of the relationship between anger and rage. Rage could be seen, as it is perhaps in the Kleinian approach, as primary; the function of socialisation via the containing breast-mother being to turn beta-elements (rage) into alpha function (anger). Conversely, from a Kohutian self-psychology perspective, rage could be seen as a 'breakdown product' of anger that is not adequately and empathically responded to; the result of faulty attachment. A third possibility would be to formulate the problem more neurobiologically, and to see rage as a primitive 'right brain' self-protective mechanism, activated when the self is in extreme danger, psychologically or physically. Anger would be a more complex 'left brain' phenomenon in which language and meaning inform and guide aggression and self-assertion.

Parker Hall is rightly critical of simplistic solutions to persistent violence, such as time-limited 'anger management' training, which emphasise regulation at the expense of relationship. Equally she sees 'cushion-bashing' and similar disconnected outpourings of naked rage as unhelpful. She subtly links

such attempts to suppress and deny anger in individuals – or its overvaluation – with unabated social violence. For her, anger – which she positively values as a 'pure emotion' – is a manifestation of intrinsic vitality. Liberating the capacity to get appropriately angry is one of the tasks of therapy: activating anger in those who deactivate, channelling autistic raging to more relational expressions of anger in those who hyperactivate or are disorganised. The inevitable therapist–client ruptures that arise in the course of therapy provide opportunities to work on these within the safety of the therapeutic relationship.

Parker Hall delightfully heads each chapter with an apposite quotation. I was secretly glad that she hadn't included my personal favourite on this topic. The first stanza of Blake's *The Poison Tree* (Blake, 1961, p. 76) summarises much of the message of this fascinating book: 'I was angry with my friend:/I told my wrath, my wrath did end./I was angry with my foe:/I told it not, my wrath did grow.' If we want to be friends – with our children, parents, intimates – we owe it to them to express our 'wrath'. If we keep our anger to ourselves either by deactivation, or letting it out in a rageful bolus, then anger turns to hatred, with poisonous consequences for ourselves, those on whom we depend, and the societies in which we live.

The difficult yet inescapable implications of this book are, first, that if we are to love fully, we need, at times, to be able to hate and be hated. Second, that those whose developmental experiences have vitiated that possibility can, with psychotherapeutic help, learn the life-affirming secret of loving anger.

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Lastly, my beloved husband Richard, who co-facilitated the earliest 'anger' workshops with me where we glimpsed the profound importance of anger and the destructive nature of rage and where the models presented here began to emerge; further, he also never doubted that this book would be finished and, while I was most engrossed in my project, 'waited for me' patiently and talked wistfully about the time 'when we would get back together again!'

Chapter 1

Introduction

> . . . a critical response, on pragmatic and ethical grounds, to mainstream interventions for anger and rage.

Anger and rage difficulties are endemic in British and American society and, in spite of widespread concern and a range of governmental and non-governmental initiatives of a social, legal and psychological nature, show no sign of abating. These issues affect every one of us in our personal and professional lives, not just the few who come to the attention of the judicial system or who voluntarily seek help; they impact on us at a profoundly personal level in our intimate and close relationships, and also more universally they colour and texture the social backdrop against which we live out our lives. This book is born out of a strong conviction, based on personal and professional experience, that the phenomena of anger and rage are profoundly misunderstood across society in general, and in the helping professions in particular.

In my view, anger is a pure emotion, a vital piece of intelligence about the immediate environment we are in, and it provides the energy and motivation for the sacred task of self-care (see Chapter 4). It operates as an emotional infra-red sensor in relationships, making it possible for a person to navigate the delicate and tenuous, even treacherous at times, human and relational path between dependence and independence, 'self assertion and mutual respect' (Benjamin, 1988), or 'autonomy and belonging' (Embleton Tudor *et al.*, 2004). The absence of anger (more often experienced by women but increasingly by men) is just as interesting to me as its presence because, without it, individuals can't stand up for themselves and are vulnerable to oppression and exploitation in all their relationships. I will argue that the healthy experiencing and expression of anger protects an individual's uniqueness and constitutes their physical and psychical safety net that enables deep relational connections with others who may be very different. The first important assumption that informs my approach is that anger is a *pure emotion*, a subtle and benign energy that provides an individual's physical and psychic

protection. It is entirely constructive in nature and we ignore it at our physical, emotional and social peril.

The exclusively positive nature of anger remains largely obscured and goes unutilised because of two fundamental misunderstandings about it. First, both British and American dominant cultures value intellectual and behavioural forms of human experiencing and expression more highly than the emotional or intuitive kind. As a consequence, feelings of all kinds are inhibited or prohibited through the influence of well-embedded cultural 'injunctions' (Goulding and Goulding, 1976). The emotion of anger is particularly negatively constructed and is powerfully reinforced through the circulation of a wide range of disapproving, potentially shaming judgements about it, including that it is bad, childish or unfeminine; that it means you've lost control, you're a bully or, paradoxically, it's a sign of weakness. Anger can be perceived as a waste of time, something a person should 'rise above' or, according to Christian ideals, turn the other cheek to, or forgive. Indeed, anger is cited as one of the earliest Christian seven deadly sins whose opposite virtue is patience.

Most helping practitioners acknowledge that anger can be useful but they are often taken aback to discover just how many positive attributes it has (see Chapter 4). What is often more surprising to them still is my critique of the second widely held and mistaken belief about anger, that it is simply a milder form of rage. In my opinion, the concepts of anger and rage are too closely associated in the English language and, as a consequence, this subtle, respectful, life- and relationship-enhancing emotion either goes unnoticed or becomes contaminated through its erroneous conflation with the destructive phenomenon of rage.

Rage is popularly conceptualised as simply a more intense form of anger located at the opposite end of an imaginary anger continuum that spans 'slight annoyance to rage' (Ekman, 2003). I maintain that it is an entirely different psychological process which originates at an earlier developmental stage than anger (see Chapter 4) and is not an emotion at all but a *trauma-related defence mechanism* evoked when a person is overwhelmed by their experience and cannot integrate it (see Chapter 7). It is damaging to relationships, estranges us from ourselves and others and is only ever a destructive experience. Quite simply, rage is an experience-processing problem.

There are four further assumptions that inform my approach. First, that rage is a broader concept than just its most easily identifiable exploding form of 'hot' rage; it can manifest in a variety of ways including the less well recognised phenomenon of 'cold' rage. Second, rage is a natural human defence mechanism which we *all* employ to some degree in varying forms, from time to time, when we cannot, for whatever reason, process our life experience; for this reason I would like to see rage stripped of the shame that surrounds it and understood as the best response a person can muster under distressing circumstances. Third, there is no universally agreed upon

definition of these phenomena amongst helping professionals and the cultural misunderstandings about anger and rage are often mirrored in the helping process (see Chapter 2). Ironically, the relational dynamics that gave rise to a client's inability to integrate his life experience in the first place (see Chapter 7) can be replicated in the helping relationship, causing additional trauma for a client. My fourth point is that the most effective way of working with rage is to support a person to develop or recover the organismic ability to process their life experiences; this is achieved through engaging in a compassionate and humane relationship where all feelings, sensations, thoughts and images are welcomed and the practitioner has absolute trust that, given this most conducive environment, a client will spontaneously integrate their life's events (see Chapter 2). I am directly challenging cognitive, behavioural and feminist approaches that currently dominate state provision.

I have developed a theoretical framework and working models that I hope will clarify these sometimes confusing and anxiety-provoking phenomena and lead to more effective practice in this area. The models originally surfaced as a critical response, on pragmatic and ethical grounds, to mainstream interventions for anger and rage (see Chapter 2). In my opinion, pragmatically, these interventions misunderstand the nature of anger and rage and so are not as effective as they could be; ethically, interventions that focus on changing thinking and behaviour or on extracting statements of responsibility conflate the helping function with functions of regulation and punishment (Foucault, 1977).

One typical form of state-funded help relies on cognitive and behavioural methods and is characterised by an expert/non-expert dynamic – interventions which tend to be directive and seek to eradicate symptom behaviours or irrational thoughts through the use of such means as self-talk, magic words as talismans, counting to ten and relaxation exercises. The Duluth model is another common intervention that is utilised by state agencies in America and, in a greatly reduced form, in Britain; it is feminist in orientation and can be experienced as retaliatory, shaming and oppressive by male participants who are plunged into group work based on a 'one-size-fits-all' programme. Duluth 'recovery groups' and internet self-help forums are widespread in America.

In my opinion, both programmes focus too narrowly on the predominantly male experience of 'hot' raging (although I agree that women raging in this way are becoming more prevalent, or at least more visible); indeed the Duluth model conceptualises rage as a purely patriarchy-induced control issue. There are no gender divisions in my definitions of anger and rage or working models; they include both men's and women's experiences because anger serves in the same positive way for both sexes, and, equally, both utilise rage as a defence mechanism in the same ways. Further shortcomings of cognitive, behavioural and feminist interventions are that they can be experienced as mildly or considerably humiliating for clients because of the inherent power

imbalance in the helping relationship; and they operate on quite a superficial level so do not address underlying trauma and can also constitute yet more life experience that participants cannot properly integrate. I do not dispute that some anger management programmes have a positive effect but I argue that their apparent efficacy is more by accident than design and is linked to qualities of relationship inherent in the helping process rather than specific strategic interventions and techniques. I draw on current research literature to support this idea (see Chapter 2).

Throughout the book I offer comprehensive theoretical models that incorporate information about the nature of anger and rage, and identify specific anger and rage difficulties and the necessary qualities of relationship that facilitate safe and respectful processing of them. I present a wide variety of 'factionalised' case study vignettes, which are created as a hybrid of my personal experience in relationships, as a client in therapy and as a therapist; and extracts from some case studies which have been published elsewhere and from my Masters degree research. These serve to illustrate the working models in practice and, I hope, capture truthfully the anxieties, exasperations, tedium, triumphs and potential pitfalls of a relational approach.

In this first chapter I have introduced the idea that misunderstandings about anger and rage circulate in society generally, are prevalent in the helping professions and inform current interventions in Britain and America. I have contextualised my models as a critique of this provision and begun to introduce my different understanding of, and attitude towards, these phenomena, and to unveil an approach where the therapeutic relationship is the helping tool, rather than techniques and strategies which are instigated by an expert, however mutual and respectful that arrangement is intended to be.

An individual's suffering cannot be separated from their social context and indeed can be caused or exacerbated by it. Chapter 2 discusses the traumatising global and cultural factors that undermine human development, the quality of relationships and the degree of security and wellbeing felt. It is suggested that American and British societies comprise a critical mass of people who are living with hot or cold rage issues to some degree resulting from widespread interpersonal forms of abuse, self-abuse and structural forms of abuse such as racism, sexism, inequitable distribution of resources and war. Many grim statistics and fragments of personal stories are included which reflect the extent and experience of abuse, neglect and other relational difficulties in society and which will evoke a sense of the traumatised energetic arena in which we all live and in which our helping takes place.

Chapter 3 argues the case for a relational approach to working with anger and rage by critiquing the anger management interventions that currently dominate state-funded provision; a review of counselling and psychotherapy research is included which consistently finds that the therapeutic relationship makes an important contribution to positive outcomes in therapy; and the findings of contemporary neuroscience research, which used brain imaging

technology to observe that empathy has a positive effect on the brain, are presented. The rationale, philosophy and practice of a relational approach are briefly introduced. A positive view of human nature is asserted where human goodness and a pro-social character are a given (Maslow, 1949; Rogers, 1951) and where anger and rage difficulties are conceptualised as arising from a person's estrangement from their essentially good nature due to trauma. This contrasts with mainstream approaches which engender a more cynical view of humanity where such difficulties are framed as arising from 'man's' destructive nature (Freud, 1936) which must be challenged or controlled, or 'man' as a Cartesian (Descartes, 1984) intellectual being in need of cognitive reorientation or education. I will argue that if difficulties with anger and rage are conceived of as the inability to process life's experiences due to a backlog of events which have not yet been come to terms with, then it follows that the remedy is to 'feel things through' and a warm, empathic relationship is the best environment in which to do this.

In Chapter 4, I present the *'positive aspects of anger'* model, which identifies the many important ways in which anger supports life. There is an exploration of its facilitating role in the crucial developmental task of 'separation-individuation' (Mahler *et al.*, 1973), which is the task of separating from carers and emerging as a distinct individual, having forged a unique identity. Once individuated, anger continues to be of service in the protection and maintenance of an individual's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual autonomy. Other key functions include being a catalyst for confronting challenging situations, taking action and bringing about change; being an integral part of the grieving and learning processes; and being an antidote to depression and crucial to maintaining good physical health. I offer case examples of two clients who, as adults, used their anger to effect their individuation process which had been thwarted in their childhood and young adulthood. Further case examples show how anger is used for physical protection of 'reasonable force', to step out of the victim role in personal relationships, to manage verbal abuse and in upholding time boundaries. This chapter challenges negative beliefs that anger is 'bad', encourages the healthy expression of it and argues quite simply that anything that looks like anger that is not constructive and respectful is not anger but rage (see Chapter 7).

When anger is not harnessed constructively, in the way that nature intended, it is perverted in a multitude of ways that damage relationships and health, turning people into persecutors, rescuers or victims (Karpman, 1968). In Chapter 5, I introduce the '*how anger gets distorted*' model which, as its title suggests, considers the many creative ways in which we can stop ourselves expressing anger effectively. I use the categories of 'fight and flight' (Cannon, 1914) from psychology to express an emotional response rather than a physiological one, and I add a third classification of 'freeze'. Many case vignettes are presented including examples of how anger in the fight

category is turned against others, in the flight category against self, and in the freeze category remains unacknowledged.

Chapter 6 focuses on practice issues and includes case examples of some of the common struggles and unhelpful responses of practitioners when working with this issue, including failing to hear client anger, responding with fear or feelings of inadequacy, attempts to appease and the tangle that ensues when a client and therapist have overlapping anger issues and coping strategies. Working models are introduced that focus on the helping relationship and identify the specific relational qualities required to support clients to connect with their denied or distorted anger and to express it in a direct way. Examples of effective practice with anger are also included. The '*practice implications for working with covert anger*' model is introduced to support clients who have frozen their anger and are disconnected from it; the '*practice implications for working with overt anger*' model supports clients who rely on fight and flight modes of distortion, and the *'straight expression of anger'* model describes how to express anger in a safe way that is life-enhancing.

One of the major principles that underpin my approach is the contention that anger and rage are different psychological processes and in Chapter 7 I develop this argument further; I introduce the *'anger and rage comparison'* model to clarify the differences. I support my proposal with a range of psychotherapeutic theories including Object Relations, Attachment Theory, Transactional Analysis and Self Psychology. I suggest that rage is an experience-processing difficulty which originates in early infancy as a response to traumatic situations where overwhelming feelings are evoked which are unsupported; it serves as a lifelong emotional safety net which anyone may 'fall back' on at any time of life when there is a lack of support and emotions overpower them. I introduce my *'hot rage'* and *'cold rage'* models to illustrate how this impacts on relationships with self and others. I construct rage as an issue that surfaces where there is a lack of emotional support, and this provides the rationale to argue in the next chapter that an empathic relationship is the most appropriate medium for transforming rage issues.

Chapter 8 outlines the conditions (Rogers, 1961) that constitute the most favourable relational climate for supporting a client to develop or recover their natural experience-processing capacity. The *'empathic "anger" management process'*, a brief therapy model for rage, and the *'therapeutic implications for hot and cold rage'* model are introduced here. Jack and Angela's therapy stories are included to demonstrate the approach in action. I hope these cameos will convince you that clients need no directing or educating; they simply need a respectful and empathic relationship that supports the thawing out of cold rage, the containment of hot rage and the integration of significant life events, one human response after another.

In Chapters 9, 10 and 11, I analyse the roots of anger and rage difficulties and how they manifest in the six different personality adaptations (Ware,

1983), namely, histrionic, paranoid, obsessive compulsive, schizoid, passive aggressive and anti-social (which also correspond to some of the personality disorders cited in the DSM-IV (APA, 2000), and in the borderline and narcissistic personality disorders (ibid.). Mini-case studies are included for all six personality types in Chapter 9, and longer, more detailed ones for the borderline personality in Chapter 10 and narcissistic personality in Chapter 11. In these practice analyses I describe the characteristics of each personality type, identify specific client anger tasks and highlight the aspects of relationship most pertinent to each. I consider the helpful role that client and therapist anger can play in the helping relationship in terms of confronting specific injunctions (Goulding and Goulding, 1976) and drivers (Kahler and Capers, 1974) and asserting individual needs. For example, in Chapter 9, Janine, whose personality adaptation is 'histrionic', is supported to express the anger she feels towards her therapist in response to a clumsy intervention; she uses her anger to enable her to take herself seriously and stand up for herself. Her anger also supports her to go against her 'please others' driver (Kahler and Capers, 1974) by providing her with the courage to risk displeasing her therapist and voice her feelings of anger and hurt.

Chapter 10 analyses therapeutic work with the borderline personality, the client type who most practitioners are referring to when they ask 'how do I work with this angry client?' I describe how this client group is doubly traumatised through being unsupported in both their first and second developmental stages (references include Gabbard and Wilkinson, 2000; Klein, 1987; Joines and Stewart, 2002; and Masterson, 1988). First, individuals within this group are deprived of an empathic relationship and survive this deficit with a legacy of powerfully disturbing and contradictory inner experience which they cannot contain and which often spills out as hot rage. Second, they are not supported in their individuation process and so have no clear self-image and are unable to experience themselves as a separate individual. These two traumas combined mean that these individuals suffer a crippling emotional double bind: a fear of abandonment and being separate coupled with a fear of being close, which makes relationships excruciatingly difficult; the therapeutic relationship is no exception. I present Anna's therapy story, which demonstrates how she is supported to contain and process the rage which was sometimes directed towards herself and at other times towards her therapist. This chapter highlights the important role of the practitioner's anger in protecting themselves in the face of hot rage, resisting the introjection of the hugely distressing feelings which a client like Anna seeks to communicate through the process of projective identification (Freud, 1936), and in maintaining boundaries which are repeatedly challenged in attempts to enmesh with the therapist in order to avoid feelings of separateness and abandonment. The case study accurately reflects how an imperfect, messy human relationship, including the inevitable ruptures, is profoundly healing for a borderline personality and their rage.

Chapter 11 explores the rage and anger issues and therapeutic process of the narcissistic personality. In stark contrast to the borderline personality this type is unaware of their early inner disturbance because they are so well defended against it (references include Masterson, 1988; Johnson, 1987; and Golomb, 1992). For this reason, their rage is mostly cold. However, it can leak out in a mildly hot form as they prop up their inflated self-image (to compensate for their denied real feelings of worthlessness) by criticising others and blaming them for any personal or relationship difficulties. They may experience bursts of intense hot rage if their self-image or view of reality is challenged. The task of therapy is to offer a warm empathic relationship that supports a narcissist to thaw out from their state of cold rage and to make contact with their disavowed feelings. I present Eleanor's therapy story, which explores a relational approach to working with the main ways in which she protects herself from her feelings, and the degree of hot rage she experiences when she does connect with them. I hope that these three chapters demonstrate the rigour and efficacy of a relational approach with a wide range of DSM-IV (APA, 2000) diagnoses, and to persuade you that relational qualities are entirely sufficient for the job.

Anger is essential in intimate relationships if they are to progress to the next deeper stage of connection and intimacy; the *absence* of anger, with all its positive aspects (see Chapter 4), is damaging to couple relationships because it results in the presence of rage (see Chapter 7) with all its negative aspects. The absence of anger in a partner means that they cannot stand up for themselves in their relationship and makes them prone to being oppressed or exploited; cold rage renders a partner unreachable, lacking in empathy and self-sufficient; hot rage cause a partner to be critical and potentially violent. Chapter 12 summarises the origins of couple rage issues and utilises the Karpman Drama Triangle (Karpman, 1968) to analyse some common ways in which the absence of anger and presence of rage affect couple relationships. Finally, a composite of work with several couples constitutes Jimmy and Mitch's fictionalised therapy story, which demonstrates the use of the *'couple's pot'* model (see Chapter 7) in assessing and contracting for rage issues, and elements of the therapeutic process that supported them to address their 'relentless bickering' are included. The work of Maslow, Embleton Tudor *et al.*, Steiner and Perry and Erskine is referred to in this chapter.

Working with rage issues can be risky for clients, others in a client's life and practitioners. Increased numbers of severely distressed clients, who historically would have been supported in a hospital or other form of residential setting where their emotional containment would have been closely monitored, are now being helped in the community in statutory, voluntary and private settings. Intense emotions, which could not be integrated at the time they occurred, may surface in the helping relationship, and the services sector has the highest incidence of violence at work (HSE, 2007a, 2007b; British Crime Survey (BCS), 2005; British Medical Association, 2003). Chapter 13

draws on a variety of government and non-government statistics to indicate the incidence of bullying, abuse and violence in the workplace; it includes a wide range of potential dangers to practitioners, discusses the issue of risk assessment and offers practical measures to maximise safety for helping professionals, who often learn about safety issues 'on the job' by trial and error. I consider particular qualities of relationship that minimise the chance of evoking a hot rage response; the issue of practitioner competence is discussed and helpers are encouraged to voice any reservations they may have about working with some clients; expressing doubt about being able to cope is framed as a respectable and ethical response rather than a shameful one. I include government statistics (HSE, 2007a, 2007b; BCS, 2005; British Medical Association, 2003) and refer to authors who have written on the subject of ethics and safety, including Bond (2000), Despenser (2007) and Leiper (2001), and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy Ethical Framework (2002).

Throughout the book I argue that anger protects an individual's physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual life and provides the energy for them to take action on their own behalf. In Chapter 14 I introduce the concept of 'non-trauma-related rage' or 'adult rage', which derives from the 'integrated adult' (Berne, 1961) or person who is 'fully functioning' (Rogers, 1961) or sufficiently 'self-actualised' (Maslow, 1970); it has a wider application, inspiring constructive social activism in the service of other individuals, communities, nations and the planet. I assert that helpers whose practice is informed by a negative view of humanity or who are influenced by 'trauma-related rage' engage in forms of help that are rescuing or persecutory in nature and which I refer to as 'pseudo-helping'. I describe the qualities of a person who is free of trauma-related rage and who exercises adult rage; I offer a range of examples of communal and individual activism which are efforts to uphold the rights of others and to improve their world. I discuss the writing and actions of bel hooks, a black American feminist, who uses her adult rage to challenge racism and sexism, and I discuss the work of documentary director and producer, Michael Moore, who uses a montage of visual and linguistic devices to dispute the dominant versions of truth that are propagated by powerful groups including the American government, corporations and multinationals. I discuss Moore's ongoing and creative efforts to challenge the Iraq war and the American health care industry. Finally, I explore how adult rage is utilised and ongoing trauma-related rage is processed in relationships with others, in two examples of communal social activism. The peace-making initiative of the Colombian women's collective, La Ruta Pacifica (which translates as 'the peaceful way'), perceives the cultivation of relationships as both the method and the solution for their war-torn country. 'The Great Turning' refers to a worldwide shift in consciousness, comprised of individuals who are courageously confronting the pressing global ecological and social crises of our time. Similarly to La Ruta Pacifica,

their method and solution are the same, involving the fostering of a deeper connection with our planet, and with others, so that the disturbing and potentially overwhelming truth about its condition, and the awesome responsibility of caring for it, can be shared.

A concluding chapter summarises the key themes of the book, re-emphasises the positive nature of anger, the destructive nature of trauma-related rage, the necessary relationship qualities to support its transformation and the subsequent positive consequences for society and the planet.

This book is based on models which are normally delivered in a professional development training environment, and the most common feedback I receive is: '*how valuable it is to spend an extensive period of time talking about anger and rage with others and how few opportunities there are elsewhere to do this*'. I hope this book provides a similar opportunity for you to immerse yourself in the phenomena, and that as you read you will have many conversations about anger and rage with your partners, family, friends and colleagues and that you will find my ideas exciting and useful in all of your relationships, personal and professional.

Chapter 2

The individual in a cultural context

> It's better to light a candle than curse the darkness
> (Adlai Stevenson, address to the United Nations General Assembly, 1962)

To varying degrees, all therapeutic approaches acknowledge the influence of global and cultural content and processes on human development, the quality of personal relationships and the overall sense of security and wellbeing in the world. In my opinion, the social environment in Britain and America is saturated with unprocessed trauma and intrinsic rage, which, directly or indirectly, afflict all of its members. This rage originates from empathic failure (see Chapter 7) when the environment (others, society or planetary conditions) misunderstands or neglects an individual's needs or abuses them. In order to survive this distressing experience, the individual disconnects from their bodily sensations, a vital source of intelligence about their needs in situations; this separation from their self not only puts them at risk because it seriously limits their capacity to care for themselves, but it puts others, society or the planet at risk because the individual cannot extend empathy to them either. Unless or until this trauma is addressed, this person is capable of misunderstanding, neglecting or abusing others without feeling discomfort about it. Rage begets more rage and it spreads insidiously and relentlessly, virus-like through our interactions with each other, our social structures and our planet. Child-, adult- and self-abuse is widespread in British and American societies and occurs against the backdrop of an increasingly precarious global environment characterised by swiftly changing climate conditions, external and internal hostilities and oppressive social structures.

In this chapter, I discuss these disturbing issues that combine to significantly undermine an individual's sense of security and 'continuity of being' (Winnicott, 1960) in the world, threaten esteem, quality of life and, in the extreme, physical existence. I include many grim statistics and fragments of personal stories which reflect the extent and experience of abuse, neglect and other relational difficulties in society and which will evoke a sense of the