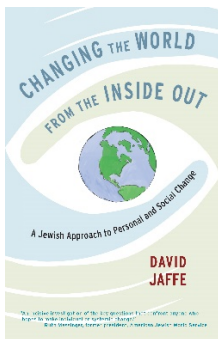


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FIGHT LIKE A MENSCH

WEXNER HERITAGE PROGRAM  
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**Channeling Anger for Social Change**

**Hot Anger and Cool Anger**

Anger and grief are rooted in our most passionate memories and dreams – a father whose spirit has been broken by demeaning work or no work; a brother or sister lost to violence or alcohol or drugs; a church burned down by an arsonist; a college career sabotaged by a substandard high school; a neighborhood of shops and families and affections and relationships ripped apart because banks wouldn't lend to it, because insurance companies wouldn't insure it, because city officials wouldn't service it, because youth wouldn't respect us, because teachers wouldn't teach in it. Anger sits precariously between two dangerous extremes. One extreme is hatred, the breeding ground of violence. The other extreme is passivity and apathy, the breeding ground of despair and living death. Anger that is focused and deep and rooted in grief is a key element in the organizing of black churches.

-Roots for Radicals: Organizing for Power, Action and Justice, Edward T. Chambers, p. 108

**Hot Anger?**

*Psalm 137:8-9*

ח בַּת-בָּבֶל, הַשְּׂדוּדָה: 8 O daughter of Babylon, that are to be destroyed; {N}  
אֲשֶׁרִי שִׁשְׁלָם-לָךְ-- אֶת-גְּמוּלָךְ, happy shall he be, that repays you as you have served  
שְׂגַמְלַת לְנוֹ. us.

ט אֲשֶׁרִי, שִׁיֹּאחֵז וְנִפֵּץ אֶת-עַלְלֵי-ךָ- 9 Happy shall he be, that takes and dashes your little  
אֶל-הַסֶּלַע. - ones against the rock. {P}

**Cool Anger?**

*Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Human Dispositions 1:4*

One should not be of an angry disposition and be easily angered, nor should one be like a dead person who does not feel, but one should be in the middle – one should not get angry except over a big matter about which it is fitting to get angry, so that one will not act similarly again.

<p><i>Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, Advice, Anger 1</i></p>	
<p>You must break the force of your anger with love. If you feel yourself becoming angry, make sure you do nothing cruel because of your anger. You must make a special effort to have compassion for the very person you are angry with. Sweeten your anger with compassion.</p>	<p>צריך לשבר את הכעס ברחמנות. הינו כשבא לכלל כעס, לא יפעל בכעסו שום אכזריות. רק אדרבא, יתגבר אז ברחמנות גדול על זה שרוצה לכעס, וימתיק הכעס ברחמנות.</p>

<p><i>Tomer Devorah/The Date Palm of Devorah, R. Moshe Cordovero</i></p>	
<p>“Who is like you, God...’ – this teaches us the reality of God as a derided king who suffers insult beyond belief. There is nothing hidden from God’s watch. There is not a moment in which a human being is not sustained from the flow of divine abundance. There is not a wrongdoing that a person does, in which, at that same moment, the divine abundance isn’t sustaining him...While the human is committing this wrongdoing with this very power from God, God suffers the insult. Don’t think that God doesn’t have the power to stop the human from the wrongdoing by cutting off the flow of divine abundance... This is why Micah the prophet calls to God, ‘Who is like you, God...’ You are a God of kindness, doing good. You have the power to take vengeance, but you are patient and wait for people to return in tshuva. Behold, this is a mida that people need to acquire – patience. To be able to withstand insult and still keep their good flowing to the other”</p>	<p>המדה הזאת מורה על היות הקב"ה מלך נעלב, סובל עלבון, מה שלא יכילהו רעיון. הרי אין דבר נסתר מהשגחתו בלי ספק, ועוד אין רגע שלא יהיה האדם נזון ומתקיים מכח עליון השופע בו עליו; והרי תמצא שמעולם לא חטא אדם נגדו שלא יהיה הוא באותו הרגע ממש שופע שפע קיומו ותנועת אבריו, ועם היות שהאדם חוטא בכח ההוא לא מנעו ממנו כלל, אלא סובל הקב"ה עלבון כזה להיות משפיע בו כח תנועות אבריו, והוא מוציא אותו כח באותו רגע בחטא ועון ומכעיס והקב"ה סובל. ולא תאמר שאינו יכול למנוע ממנו הטוב ההוא, ח"ו, שהרי בכחו ברגע כמימריה ליבש ידיו ורגליו, כעין שעשה לירבעם (מלכים א' י"ג, ד'). ועם כל זה, שהכח בידו להחזיר הכח הנשפע ההוא, והיה לו לומר כיון שאתה חוטא נגדי תחטא בשלך ולא בשלי, לא מפני זה מנע טוב מן האדם ולא סבל עלבון, והשפיע הכח והטיב לאדם טובו. הרי זה עלבון וסבלנות מה שלא יסופר. ועל זה קוראים מלאכי השרת להקב"ה מלך עלוב (פרקי היכלות פכ"ה). והיינו אומרו "מי אל כמורך", אתה אל בעל חסד המטיב, אל בעל כח לינקם ולאסוף את שלך, ועם כל זה אתה סובל ונעלב עד ישוב בתשובה: הרי זו מדה שצריך האדם להתנהג בה, רצוני, הסבלנות, וכן היותו נעלב אפילו למדרגה זו, ועם כל זה לא יאסוף טובתו מן המקבל:</p>

**ימתיק הכעס ברחמנות.**

**Sweeten anger with compassion**

**- R. Nachman of Breslov, Advice**

**וכן היותו נעלב...ועם כל זה לא יאסוף טובתו מן המקבל**

**I will keep my goodness flowing to you**

**- R. Moshe Cordavero, The Date Palm of Devorah**

## Savlanut/Patience Practices

### *Focus Phrases:*

Choose a phrase to repeat out loud for a minute or two each morning. You can adapt the phrases to your own language. Write the phrase on an index card and put it somewhere you will see it each morning. Some people tape the card to their car dashboard or computer.

ימתיק הכעס ברחמנות.

"Sweeten anger with compassion" - R. Nachman of Breslov, Advice

וכן היותו נעלב...ועם כל זה לא יאסוף טובתו מן המקבל

"No matter how I feel I will keep my goodness flowing to you" - R. Moshe Cordavero, The Date Palm of Devorah

### *Kabbalat*

Choose a person who angers or bothers you in some way. Decide to stay connected by feeling or expressing compassion in his or her direction at least once each day. This can be someone in your personal life or a public figure.

At least once/day when you feel angry, imagine what it would mean to infuse this anger with compassion.

### *Journaling*

What is a choice point you experienced today on the continuum of anger and patience?  
In what ways did you notice anger and patience being used effectively or ineffectively in a social change effort?

### *Partner check-in*

1. Trade turns listening to each other for 2 minutes talking about a good point from the day and anything else the speaker wants to get off his or her chest
2. Journal quietly for five minutes about the questions
3. Trade turns listening to each other for 10 minutes talk about the experience with the focus phrase, kabbalat and journaling. Then discuss any insights or challenges with patience and anger that came up during the week. End with a commitment for practice for the next week.