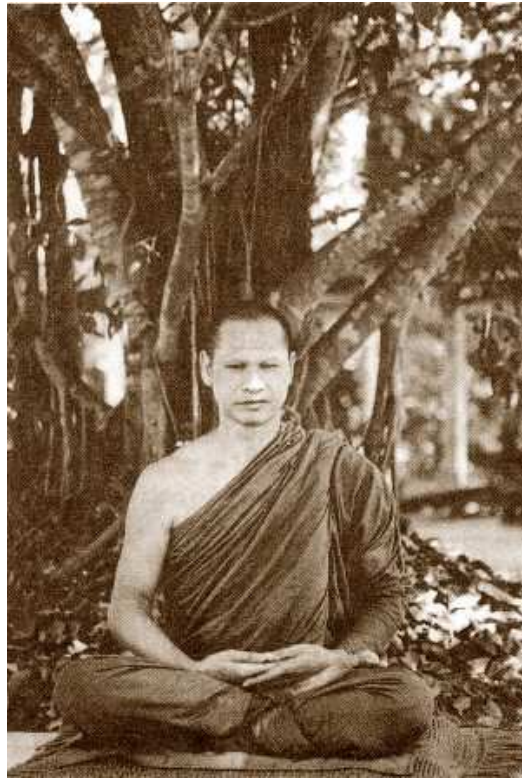


THE ABANDONING OF ANGER

Venerable Luang Por Plien



The Abandoning of Anger

A Dhamma talk by Venerable Luang Por Plien

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“It is the spirit of *dāna*, freely offered generosity, which has kept the entire Buddhist tradition alive for more than 2,500 years.”

Sabbadānam dhammadānam jīnāti
‘The gift of Dhamma excels all gifts’

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The Abandoning of Anger

I would like to share the teachings of the Lord Buddha with you to help clarify your wisdom and enhance your faith and confidence. Why do human beings born in the world so often live in conflict, argument and with suffering? We see it among our friends, family, and relatives, amongst all classes and in all countries. The Lord Buddha advised us to look in our own hearts and minds to find the causes of this unhappiness and conflict.

To live together happily requires us to be mindful of how we think, speak and act towards one another. It is a fact that unwholesome mind-states like greed, anger, and confusion have been causing us suffering for many lifetimes. Therefore we must be mindful - in what we say, think, or do - or these unwholesome states will overcome us. Being dominated by them, it will be very difficult to abandon these old habits and thus train ourselves properly.

Anger can arise in many different ways. For instance, it arises when one is displeased by another's actions that are opposed to our desires. Suppose we give somebody a nice watch and then see that person not take care of it properly. We might become annoyed and upset. Or in the case of a parent who allows their child to drive the family car, instructing the child to drive it from here to there. But the child does not use the car properly, driving it carelessly or going elsewhere. Consequently, the parent becomes furious because the child did not properly follow their instructions.

One can become angry by seeing others act in ways perceived to be inappropriate. For example, some people may talk behind another person's back, saying that they are bad, ugly, messy, or behave poorly. When that person hears what has been said, they get outraged, even uncontrollably so. Their minds can go on and on, asking over and over why these people gossiped about them, saying such hurtful things.

Other people can trigger our temper as well. Let's say that we hear critical things said about us, but remain composed. Then a third person comes and provokes us, saying, "Why, I wouldn't stand for that sort of treatment if I were you!" Then we find ourselves infuriated. Thus hatred can be caused by instigation. Another example of this is when anger is aroused by indulging in gossip and discussing the intolerable behavior of some third person.

Aversion can often arise in family situations. A husband might say something to his wife who then reacts abruptly, without patience, to what has been said. Both then get emotionally worked up and begin to exchange harsh and bitter words.

Anger arises between parents and children as well. Parents advise, their children to be good, but if the child answers back or otherwise reacts improperly, the parents can become irritated and upset.

Misunderstandings and conflicts can occur between friends as well. This can generate negativity and destroy friendships. When one thoroughly contemplates anger, it is easy to see how dangerous it is and the misery it causes.

From the above examples it can be seen that there are numerous ways that anger can arise. Some people easily get upset over minor matters. Others are able to tolerate intense situations before they get to a point where they can't take it any longer and then anger explodes through speech or action.

Anger has many causes. The root cause however is defilement in the mind. Also, a lack of enough mindfulness and wisdom to restrain anger with patience. People allow their minds to dwell on unwholesome thoughts and this becomes the cause for angry outbursts. Invariably they lose the ability to remain mindful, and to practice patience and humble endurance.

We need to realize just how dangerous aversion is. Suffering arises the moment we get annoyed or aggravated. The Lord Buddha said "Nahi Sathu Kotho," meaning "aversion is not good." If we cannot see the disadvantages of anger and the harm it causes, then we will not be able to restrain our anger. We will not be able to purge it from our minds. When anger dominates our minds, all it yields is suffering for us and harm for others.

There are numerous ways and circumstances in which aversion can arise and completely dominate our minds. For example in the workplace: co-workers can become so upset with each other that all cooperation ends and they end up as antagonists shouting at each other. Riling in this way is harmful both to those who indulge in it as well as to those who bear the brunt.

Anger can be a strongly ingrained tendency in certain people or between certain individuals that has developed over many lifetimes. When they meet each other again in this life either as husbands, wives, brothers or sisters, then those habits of resentment, which have built up over these past lives, will make it easy for them to get on each other's nerves again, even over little things.

Sometimes one has spent a number of past lives with the same group of people. Some families always seem to be upset and argue with one another. There is no harmony in their lives. The power of their kamma, their past deeds, is such that they are pulled to live with each other.

In some cases parents and children may live together, yet not be able to get along. Their lives are filled with sorrow, a sorrow which repeats itself over and over again, lifetime after lifetime. For such people even to look at the other or hear the other's voice can cause resentment and negativity. When people are inter-linked in this way, just thinking about that person can cause so much suffering and ill will that the mind whirls out of control. Fighting and even killing can be the result.

So it is evident that those with clouded minds experience sorrow and suffering. They find themselves in constant conflict with others and their vexation is expressed through speech and actions. The Lord Buddha said that being angry is like being stabbed with a sword in the heart. The pain of anger penetrates the heart and perpetual suffering is the consequence. Karma is created by this habitual action.

If two people are always getting in a row, it may be that in former lives they adopted this tendency to get irritated every time their paths crossed. Even when they attempt to talk together amicably, trying to be considerate, they misunderstand each other and get into arguments. This is because of unskillful habits formed in previous lives. In those past lives they might have fought and squabbled, constantly provoking and counter-attacking each other.

There is another kind of anger that can arise because of love or lust. Consider the case of a husband and wife who love each other very much. However, if they allow possessiveness to stain their love then feelings of ownership and jealousy arise. If one of them returns home late, then the partner worries until feelings of jealousy and mistrust are generated. When one of the partners feels ignored or not heard, a sense of resentment and frustration can result. This type of anger arises from love, attachment, lust and jealousy.

Similarly, sometimes the more parents love their children, the more they expect them to comply with their words. Parents can become very upset when their child does not behave in the way they expect. A parent may have taught the child to speak kindly, but then they speak rudely or swear - such disobedience can exasperate the parent. Their ire is actually rooted in love and attachment. The beloved child is expected to be considerate and well behaved, fulfilling the parent's expectations by following their advice. The child receives much love and care from the parent, and the parent in turn wants the child to be sensitive and caring to others. When this doesn't happen, the parent is angered.

We see that anger can easily spring out of love, be it between husband and wife, parents and children or between friends. A lover can fly into a rage if their loved one does not follow their wish, criticizes, blames, or gossips about them. It is a ubiquitous and ingrained impulse in beings that have been born together in this world, to feel hurt and piqued when those they love do not fulfill their wishes and desires.

Hatred is the most intense form of anger and can be very difficult to control. Revenge is even more intense than hatred. At the other end of the spectrum, negativity or minor feelings of frustration are among the less challenging facets of anger, and can usually be restrained. If these milder forms of resentment arise and agitate the mind, but are then not allowed to express themselves through one's speech, expressions or gestures, they will more easily run their course and fade away. However if a person's rage intensifies, they may completely lose control. Minor fuming may turn into abusive utterances and actions and end up in a fight.

Resentment or aversion is a mood that forms in a mind which has lost its ability to be patient and humble. The inevitable result is pain and suffering. It can grow into

a craving for revenge and even to thoughts of murder. When unwholesome thoughts totally dominate the mind, a person can even feel a sense of elation at successfully murdering another. Unrestrained thoughts lead to unwholesome courses of action, and yield enormous physical and psychological suffering.

Remember, anger is a choice - a negative emotion allowed to run amok in one's mind. Nobody actually "makes" another person angry. Anger arises in oneself. Anger can even be directed towards oneself. For example, if an activity undertaken does not yield the desired outcome, one might be disappointed and disgruntled at one's own performance.

Whether anger is directed at another or at oneself, it is the same mechanism at work. An unwholesome thought arises in the mind - such as self-criticism because something didn't happen the way one wanted - and that unwholesome thought is then perpetuated and clung to. Before long the person becomes angry, perhaps even to the point of losing self-control, because he is not able to get what he wants.

If one has not learned how to check and discipline the mind, then one may say wrong things at the wrong time, or say something nasty or otherwise act inappropriately towards someone else. Later, one feels guilty and regrets behaving in that way. This causes one to get even more upset with oneself. But nobody else makes one angry. One makes oneself angry.

Some people get upset as a consequence of their own self-critical and judgmental attitudes. Let's say a person falls seriously ill and gets so enfeebled that traveling or doing things with others is no longer possible. They may start to feel sorry for themselves and wonder why they have such weakness and bad health. Thinking, "What bad luck or karma I have," they might become extremely frustrated and angry with themselves.

The process of anger is important to contemplate and understand. To see how it works is very interesting. If this dynamic is not clearly understood, ignorance and confusion will result rather than clear comprehension. One must closely note that anger arises through one's own thoughts, not through anyone else's.

Dissatisfaction arises from craving for unwise things, talking unskillfully, or working in a careless way. For example, one may get upset when ill, or feel frustrated over not being as good looking as someone else. Why does dissatisfaction arise like this? It is because of a lack of self-awareness, and of breaks in mindfulness. When mindfulness and clear comprehension are not present, dissatisfaction can arise.

Some people can even get angry at themselves over their meditation! During meditation, they try very hard to calm and concentrate the mind but fail to do so. Their mind wanders here and there, thinking of many things other than the task at hand. The mind refuses to settle down and stay with the meditation object no matter how hard they try. Finally, they give up, exasperated because their mind is so out of control.

Each one of us intimately knows the face of anger. We believe that external things

trigger it, but actually we have to understand that it is self created. A person who does not behave correctly, who does not speak gently, nor knows the right time and place to say things, will inevitably find he cannot be tranquil and concentrated when meditating. When a person lets unwholesome states inhabit the mind, the latent agitation easily swells into anger. One's self-awareness disappears when this happens. Only misery and bad effects follow. People really suffer because they don't understand this process.

When a person is really furious, everyone can see it written on their face and punctuated in their words and actions. The mind of wrathful person is clouded, withered, and filled with suffering. Like a rotten egg, it's of no use to anybody. Even if a person dresses smartly in expensive clothes and fine jewelry, but then allows anger to adorn their heart, there will be only misery, ugliness and pain for that person. The Lord Buddha said that "anger is like a fire burning our heart," and that very fire can inflame our speech or actions. He said "Nahi Sathu Kotho," meaning anger is totally blameworthy and ignoble.

Contemplate whether anger is good or bad. How many times since our youth have we lost our temper? It has happened many times to all of us. Now we are getting older. Some of us may be even grandparents, and we still get incensed by those around us.

Every time anger arises, nothing beneficial comes from it. We go on getting provoked over and over again. Aren't we fed up yet? Will we just go on letting this unworthy, unwholesome substance fester in our hearts, making us so sad and miserable? Why can't we just kick out anger? It's because we lack mindfulness and wisdom and thus fall under the sway of negative thoughts.

Anger is unwholesome. In our lifetime, we have gotten angry over and over again for such a long time that you would think we would be tired of it. Why have we not changed? It is because our minds are still unhealthy. As if our minds are diseased and constantly feverish, burning us and causing endlessly agony. This disease just keeps on making us get sick over and over again while we grow older by the day. We keep accumulating these rotten, unwholesome thoughts. Defilements are foul and cause misery for ourselves and others! But instead of purifying our minds, we allow all this rubbish to stay, never making an effort to get rid of it.

The Lord Buddha said we are not wise if we do not relinquish anger and negativity: these are useless emotions and do not yield happiness. It is like storing a fermented, foul smelling thing in our house or carrying it in our pockets wherever we go. Wherever we go everything smells awful. Why do we carry such things around with us? We lack wisdom! Carrying something foul around is a simile for holding on to anger.

Sometimes people get annoyed at their friends, children, nephews or nieces, spouse, grandparents and then they catch themselves and regain mindfulness, realizing that they are doing an unwholesome thing. They understand that they have to live together with these people and they should not be averse to them. Even so, they feel incapable of avoiding such behavior. Few are the people who are able to exercise caution, and thereby train themselves to not be overcome by anger.

Please reflect: is anger a good thing? How long have we been holding on to our aversions? Aren't we fed up with negativity? Does the burning rage inside make you happy? Don't you want to purify your mind of it? Don't you want to live happily? Or would you rather hold on to it and lead a miserable life? If you want your life to move in a positive direction, then inwardly reflect and look at the consequences of anger. You will see that its conquest is the most important thing.

So now that we have exposed anger as a really bad thing, how can we cut it out of our lives to live happily? To answer this question, we must closely introspect in order to understand things clearly. If we fail to do this, we will live an unhappy life. It's that simple. The Lord Buddha taught us to never respond to an angry person with anger. If we respond in the same way, we are even worse than them, even more foolish and certainly not in any way better than them. It is useless to respond to aversion with aversion. Let us find a way to avoid, abandon, and purify ourselves of this foolishness. Reflect on ways to abandon this stupidity.

Now, how can we do this so as to be happy? If we realize the worthless and painful nature of anger, it is easier to give it up. We need to wisely reflect with mindfulness: "I have been caught in this endless ongoing cycle of anger which has perpetuated itself since beginning less time". So what should we do first to curb this emotion and then completely abandon it, banishing it from our hearts and minds? This is achievable through the practice of patience and humility. Here's an example: Let's say we want something to be done in a particular way and instruct an appropriately skilled person on the specifications. Despite meticulous instruction it does not get done that way. This may rile us. But rather than getting irritated, we can develop composure and remain silent, containing any arisen frustration within ourselves. By acting in this way it just ends there.

A parent may give a child a new toy and then later find it broken. Rather than getting infuriated, the parent can reflect on the impermanent nature of all things. It is natural that things like toys will wear out and eventually break, regardless of how they are treated by the child. If the parent merely focuses on the child's carelessness with the toy, they will no doubt be upset. Would that be of any use? They would still have to accept the truth that all objects wear out and break.

In whatever social setting we are, we should endeavor to abandon feelings of vexation. If we do get upset and can no longer endure a situation, then it's best to remove ourselves from that situation. Not having contact with those who annoy us will help subdue the resentment. This is a means of temporarily abandoning ill will. It will check the anger until we meet that person or situation again.

Sometimes when a couple is conversing, they speak in a way of "point scoring" creating arguments and disagreements thereby. They do not even listen to each other. Instead they ceaselessly hurl verbal barbs at each other. In the same way children will argue and contend with their parents, not obeying their advice. So then parents get angry even though they love them.

What should parents do? When they are extremely annoyed, then that's the time to let go of the situation, to drop it. This gives a chance for the anger to subside. Even

though it may reappear when the same situation occurs again, they're getting some breathing space by subduing the process for a short time. Please understand though that this is not a permanent method for preventing anger from arising.

We tend to have a lot of self-hatred. Even when we try to develop loving kindness we can end up frustrated with ourselves. We may become very self-critical when we make a mistake. For example we make an unsound decision at work or when shopping make an unsuitable purchase. This can leave us discontented and mired in self blame. We condemn ourselves as foolish and get upset. This focusing on faults is how anger arises and is sustained.

Rather than getting caught in self-condemnation, we should reflect that making a mistake is normal. No human being can avoid making some mistakes. If we are upset because we have made a bad purchase, or are dissatisfied with how something has turned out, there is unwholesome craving and desire at the source of our thoughts and actions. While it is extremely hard for human beings to not at times be overcome by such anger, remember to be patient and humble. A mind that has not been well trained is difficult to control. So contemplate and reflect wisely in order to develop an understanding of how anger works.

In the same way that we can't control our own mind, we can't control the minds of others, such as our children. They will not always follow our wishes because they are somebody else. Our children don't belong to us. We can't force them to only do as we want, so it is useless to fret over them. Instead, we need to learn from them, to know their temperament and character and understand how they react and respond in various situations. When we can discern other people's temperaments and character traits then we better equipped to deal with them.

Avoidance of people who anger us cannot resolve the situation. Instead, we try to cultivate forbearance towards those who trigger such feelings in us. Endeavor to find skillful ways to see things from their perspective, their point of view. By understanding them more completely, we learn to live together amiably, communicate harmoniously, with less argument, anger, ill will or prejudice.

This is a crucial point. If we do not understand those around us, we cannot avoid getting angry. We will only be able to subdue these feelings in a temporary or intermittent manner. Instead, we need to abandon anger by cultivating patience and persistently letting go of the arisen negativity.

We need to develop our skills of listening and communication. When a husband is speaking, then a wife should endeavor to listen quietly without criticism. Similarly, if a wife is speaking, a husband should be patient, and not just answer back abruptly. By being patient, the couple will not get annoyed with each other. They will acquire the skill of harmonious communication. When a couple continually squabbles, the conflict can become so intense and loud that the neighbors know all about it. Everyone knows for sure that there is no happiness in that house, and they become the talk of the neighborhood. If that couple knew what the neighbors thought, then they might have a sense of conscience and shame. Perhaps some reflection on why they married will help: they had loved each other. Living together over time, things changed, and

they began to argue. If they really reflected in this way, they would be ashamed at the way they have been treating each other.

If the members of a family ponder how much harm disagreements cause, they would be wary of perpetuating arguments. As a result, heated tempers would cool down. By comparing themselves with other families around them, they might observe how others are able to live peacefully and happily. "Why can't our family live with trust and understanding?" If we look at things clearly like this, separating the good from the bad, we will realize that our thinking has been inferior to that of our neighbors! Contemplating this, anger will be calmed.

Instead of reacting to improper treatment by our family members, we can look upon them with loving eyes. We may be temporarily upset, because they did not do as we wanted. But we should ask ourselves: "Is there any use getting annoyed about it?" We may want our children to be well behaved, thoughtful, caring, and sincere, but we have to accept the fact that people are born with different characters and behave differently. It is natural that people living together have disagreements. We need to learn about each others temperaments and character traits so as to understand each other's actions. Some people work hard, have pleasant manners, speak well, and are quick learners. Others are dull, slow, untidy and speak crudely. People are very different. When there is understanding, then it is much easier to forgive and not get caught in negative reactions. One should use common sense to remedy difficult situations.

To understand our children's behavior, we need to understand their temperaments and characters and to know that each has their own personality. Even though we may wish that our children always behave well, some will perform better than others.

We need to closely study our children's habits and character traits. If a child misbehaves, then as parents we need to instruct and counsel them. They are children and not yet as wise as adults. We love them dearly and wish them well. Through such observation, we can work out how to approach them and teach them how to achieve their very best. We also need to encourage them, showing them by example how to behave well and speak kindly.

Counsel your children. Teach them to understand the consequences of how they behave and speak. If they do something wrong, we should practice forgiveness, knowing they are still lacking in self-awareness and wisdom. We teach them how to improve by having understanding and patience ourselves. They are our children, not objects of our anger.

Explain to them the difference between right and wrong. Point out the results of actions, and patiently show them the consequences of doing the wrong thing. We should not exhibit any annoyance while instructing them. Rather, develop friendliness and kindness and be filled with acceptance. They are still in need of our advice and guidance - and our love.

People tend to get angry at those closest to them - their husbands, wives, children or friends and co-workers. Try to constantly reflect on the fact that people are very different. Develop the ability to study and observe people whoever they are, regardless

of their sex or age. We can teach and train ourselves in this way. We observe, for example, that it is natural that when people get older, they tend to complain more. Sometimes they get upset about things without reason. If we understand this, then instead of getting frustrated, we can change our outlook and attitude towards them. We act with kindness, first discovering our own weaknesses, and then carefully, with love, dealing with the situation. If we work on ourselves rather than trying to change others, then the positive changes in us will become evident to them. When they notice this, they will be at ease and have fewer grounds for complaint.

To see the danger and pain associated with anger is the very method for abandoning it. Self-hatred can arise in our hearts to the point where one loathes oneself even while trying to do loving kindness meditation. The mind wanders and we end up getting annoyed at ourselves. What's the use of that? We are angry and this is a defilement of the mind. The mind wanders due to a cause - the lack of mindfulness, clear self-awareness and wisdom to guide the thinking mind to calm and concentration. We shouldn't be upset with this wandering mind. When you reflect on it, it's laughable that we get angry even at ourselves. Anger and negativity are in the mind and that is where they are overcome and abandoned. There is no logic in getting angry at oneself.

During times of meditation our minds are sometimes elsewhere. What do we gain then by getting exasperated? That only increases our lack of mindfulness, making the mind even more unstable and prone to wandering. Self anger is ridiculous - there is no reason for such emotions.

We should develop a lot of awareness around speech. Sometimes we allow sharp words to slip out without thinking. We say hurtful things because first we think hurtful thoughts. Anger has originated in the mind. The harsh words come out because we have lost our mindfulness, wise reflection and patience. Having said something wrong or offensive, we can often suffer from guilt and self loathing. If we train ourselves to develop more awareness around speech, then we can eventually overcome these negative speech patterns.

Unwholesome thinking will affect our work, making it disorganized and lacking quality, resulting in our goals remaining unachieved. We may wish to do something well, but if the outcome does not comply with our expectations, we get angry at ourselves. Why? There is no point in getting upset. Anger is an unwholesome state and unbeneficial. Is there any sense in getting incensed? It's worth recognizing and acknowledging how much self-criticism and anger we are filled with. Think about it.

Whatever we do, whether we are standing around, walking, sitting down, or even when asleep, the mind can get caught up in unwholesome, negative thoughts. These defilements are in the mind. Defilements seek satisfaction and fulfillment of desire, but when those desires are frustrated, discontent results. Aversion leads to unskillful speech and action. We need self-awareness, mindfulness and wisdom to investigate and contemplate the causes of anger. We need to carefully look inward. Consider your character and personality - how do you speak to people? How do you do things? How do you think? Use wisdom to catch your own bad habit patterns. It's only after having understood these patterns that can we abandon them. This is how we come to reduce the intensity of anger in the mind.

What should we do when we try this but fail? One thing we can do is to really study the disadvantages of anger. Carefully notice how it has a gross negative effect on our relationships. We can then see the suffering arise right here and now as a result of aversion.

Use intelligence and wisdom to clearly comprehend the ill effects of hatred. By doing so, we will gradually find it easier to refrain from getting outraged. Learn to observe other people and study their habits and idiosyncrasies. We may see that their mannerisms of body and speech that upset us are the norm for them. They are who they are. This understanding can enable us to give up being annoyed by them.

It is important to note the way we react and to the process of our reaction. For example, when criticized, sound is heard by the ears and it is recognized by the minds. Then it is stored in memory and becomes a part of consciousness. This is how it is known in the mind. If we are angry we also know this in the heart and mind. Why cling to that memory of a sound? It has ceased to exist. It is not-self. Why do we hold on and attach to things? Why do we attach to unwholesome thoughts and moods? When we consider this process of what's happening it helps us abandon anger and ill will. The more we let go, the less intense these defilements get. The next time we are criticized, we will be even less bothered by it. We don't want to react with aversion because we have seen how dangerous and painful it is for our hearts. We no longer attach to things that allow anger to arise.

All criticism, abuse and condemnation can be looked on as not-self. Contemplate these things according to their true nature, that they are impermanent, suffering and not under self control. We can see these three characteristics of all experience. We cannot control things. Other people are not us and not under our control.

We have no power over the sound that comes out of other peoples' mouths. People are composed of the four elements. If someone is alive, they talk and gossip. Only the dead do not talk. The sound of talking cannot be controlled. This is a logical fact. Criticism and gossip are just conventional forms of expression.

If someone criticizes us as being a bad person when we have been good, why get indignant? We can just carry on doing the right thing. But if we have actually done something wrong and someone points that out, then we shouldn't get upset. They are pointing out a true fault. When we see they are right, think of them as our teachers. When they point out our shortcomings, they want us to improve, so we can be a better person. Why be angry at them?

Unfortunately, people don't want to look at themselves. They always think they are right, having the attitude that they are better than others. If anyone disagrees with them they become furious. If we really are right, then continue acting correctly, doing what's right even through criticisms. The more good acts we can do, the less we will incline to anger.

If we are actually misbehaving and people point that out, then we should accept that criticism so as to improve and mature. We should aim at self-development. If

someone helps to point out areas in which we can grow, then have appreciation instead of sulking about it. A parent should teach a child by example and practice non-anger if they want their child to also be composed and not easily angered. The child will emulate the parent and improve their behavior.

When we say or do something wrong, we are often disappointed with our so called inadequacies. We are frustrated with ourselves because of the fault finding mind. As a result, we are not in the right frame of mind to meditate peacefully. If we observe this situation with awareness and wise consideration, we will see that it is obviously unskillful. That anger has many disadvantages and ill effects, and is due to lack of self-awareness will become evident.

There is no happiness in anger. At all times it only brings affliction and suffering to us and others. With enough self-awareness and wisdom, one can see that anger is suffering, a self inflicted pain. It burns the mind every moment that it is present. At such times there can be no contentment whatsoever.

Who could possibly consider anger as good? Just view its effect on our minds and hearts to see the damage it causes! Then it is easy to see that we have been in a state of suffering for a long, long time. It can persist until our last breath and then continue to saddle us in future lives as well. This can be of no use at all. If everyone understood the harm caused by anger using the clear understanding of Dhamma, then we would all give it up and live with light hearts and minds.

In the case of a quarrelsome couple, they should refrain from behaving impulsively, on the spur of the moment. Instead, they should wait until the situation calms down. Then they can sit down together and talk reasonably. This is true for parents and children as well. When anger begins to arise, parents should compose themselves for a moment before saying anything to their children, and then advise them calmly.

Actually, everyone should be treated this way whether its great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, children, brothers and sisters, and friends. When anger occurs, the emotion should be allowed to cool down before acting. Try to be patient and humble. Don't express unskillful feelings. Have forbearance. Don't show your negativity through facial expressions. Instead of scrunching our eyebrows together, we can smile, or at least look at the other person without saying anything nasty or expressing our emotions. Be calm. If we can be equanimous in the face of difficulties, then we will be happy.

If we reduce and then abandon anger, we will all live together in peace and harmony, whatever our race, creed, sex or religion. The whole of society can live in happiness. If we remove aversion from the mind we will be blessed with contentment and serenity. We will experience a cool refreshing ease of the mind at all times. We won't be walking around with a pulled face and a frown, but rather be joyous and cheerful. This is the reflection of a blissful mind. It is the result of the conquest of anger. Each one of us should strive to overcome anger so it can never poison us again.

Actually, we don't have that much anger in our hearts that it can't be overcome. Anger however, has an inflammable quality, so it can easily flare up. We must have

large reserves of patience. We can see by observing others that once anger grows into rage it can lead to physical abuse, conflicts, and great suffering. Nobody really wants to experience pain themselves or to cause others pain. No sensible person wants to torment themselves or others.

Pain is a direct consequence of anger. If we don't let go of it, then revenge festers. Fights and even murders can result. The perpetrator will then also suffer the consequences in their next life. Now that is suffering! If we intend to kill others, they will come back and kill us! We reap what we sow. Sorrow starts from simple, unchecked emotions: someone got upset, felt their sense of indignation was justified, and then got carried away. That is how violent acts occur.

We should learn how to quell our anger. We need to tackle it before it arises. Developing mindfulness and wisdom is the way to do so. With patience and humility, we can improve, little by little. Gradually we will become more aware and will be able to prevent being overcome by anger.

We can abate the cause of anger just as we can abate the cause of a fire. If just one match is lit, it is both simple and quick to put out. Don't let the fire get to the stage of destroying a house, property or even a city. By not adding fuel, the fire dies by itself. Preventing anger is just like preventing a fire. Whenever anger flares, we put it out right away through patience and humility. But we have to be extremely mindful so as to see unpleasant feeling as it arises before it develops into anger, resentment or pain. If we can do that, all of us, family, friends or whoever, will live happily.

If we want to live together in peace and solidarity in society, we can all learn to work together harmoniously, intelligently, and with kindness. We need to learn to be aware of each other's characters and to easily forgive and forget. We should always have benevolence and kindness in our hearts and look at each other with smiling, happy faces, speak to each other using kind, gentle words, and think in friendly, generous ways. This positive outlook is something we practice and develop throughout our lives.

When we base our life in goodwill and kindness, then all human beings, no matter what their circumstances, can live on this same planet Earth in happiness. Should they suffer, we wish them freedom from suffering. If they are happy, we wish their happiness to continue. We focus our every word and deed on goodness. As we do this, we begin to experience great calm and peace. When we learn to think and act wisely, we can live happily. If others are still appear to act unwisely, we can be happy anyway, and learn to share our happiness with them.

We have understood that anger arises because of the defilements of aversion and clinging just as greed arises because of the defilement of sensuality. The problem is to overcome these defilements. Not understanding the problem is delusion. We must abandon these defilements and strive for goodwill and kindness. Then we will live happy lives. The Lord Buddha said that anyone who can give up anger will live a happy and joyful life. He went on to say that anyone who abandons anger can stand, walk, sit or sleep anywhere without sorrow, living with physical and mental joy.

So let's summarize the ways to abandon anger. First, we can just walk away from a situation or the person who is provoking angry feelings before we speak or act unskillfully. Second, we can watch and learn from the people around us to understand their habits and characters. Next, we can learn our own habitual anger patterns, to see which gestures, words, and thoughts bring us to losing our temper. Also, make the effort to analyze oneself and others as described. Then with greater understanding, we will see how useless anger is. We will see how it only bestows unhappiness. Then as intelligent beings, we will be able to abandon it. As we succeed in this, our minds will know peace.

After hearing this teaching of the Lord Buddha, we must remember to apply this Dhamma in daily practice. In what we think, say or do. This way we can completely rid ourselves of anger and learn to live joyfully.

I wish all of you well. Before you heard this Dhamma today, you may have lived with resentment filling your hearts. Now we have comprehended that anger is a completely unwholesome quality. Thus if we are able to follow these teachings and abandon anger in our daily lives, we will all live comfortably and at peace. Please try to do this.

I have been speaking for an appropriate length of time. It is time to end.