

## How to stay loving when others aren't

It's quite normal to feel anger when we see harm being done, but anger doesn't change anything and actually makes it worse for us, and those we are trying to help (unless this is a life and death situation where anger can help you survive, that is not the harm I am talking about here). Anger stops people listening to what you say and creates a 'them and us', which is the least effective way to change things. This isn't about being soft and giving in - let me be clear - I am so unsoppy, and to me love is a fierce and strong feeling. It takes a lot of guts to stay loving and kind when others aren't, there is nothing soft about it. The soft approach is giving in to anger and doing what is proven not to work! The soft approach is blaming others for our fear, and expecting them to change so we don't have to.

Love is fierce - it demands action to stop someone hurting themselves or others, but it does so in a compassionate way to help them learn better. It knows that only someone who is broken and in pain will ever be anything but loving.

Love creates a willingness to put you in a hopeless place and believe in a better future, even in the face of opposition. That kind of love makes one strong.

It also protects us – the more love we feel the less other people's fear and anger can dint us, it's sort of like a wolverine healing power!

Love also helps us see clearly, and to see what will benefit all. It sees when others are trapped in their own pain and lashing out, and that adding more pain will not benefit anyone.

When I got annoyed I used to try looking at those causing harm kindly but really struggled, until I realised I needed to start with me first, sending love to me, then overflowing to them.

So how? Oh boy, how...it can be so hard to feel kind when others are being abusive – but remember people are only abusive when they are scared, and lacking love. I'm learning that by filling myself up with love so much that it overflows, it is easier to feel it for others too, then act from that strong place. This is not the soppy 'I love myself' kinda thing – I am so against soppy love! This is a powerful feeling, kinda amping up the healing energy. Makes me feel better and then I can look at others more objectively and see more possibilities. Win win. I found that trying to be kind to others first just fails, if I focus on me and then them it happens naturally.

It can help to start by ranting what is pissing you off first, and feeling how you feel – no story, just feel. Anger can point you to what needs to change – either in you or external. Don't lose that message.

You need to stop and take time out to reset yourself before you re-engage though. Play around with any, or all, of these to find what works for you:

Firstly I stop, sink my attention down and say hello to my heart – sounds kinda cliché but I find it really works in starting a good feeling. I also have a mantra that I say to myself about how I want to feel, can even set an intention I want to feel love.

I love the self-compassion thing of saying *'this is really hard right now, how can I make it easier'*, and remind myself I am doing my best, and deserve kindness as much as anyone. And breathe deeply.

William Bloom talks about cultivating an inner smile – imagining your organs smiling! Then spread that feeling out.

In NLP they talk about the characteristics of feelings – where in the body, what temperature, texture, colour etc. By intensifying some of those characteristics you can intensify the feeling, ie if you make it warmer or spread through your body. I imagine a fountain spurting out love.

Some people imagine a white light beaming out, or down into them.

You can think of someone, or thing, that makes you feel love as a starting point, then amp it up.

Anything that fills you up with a calm, kind feeling. When this is strong you can then think of others, or how you will deal with a situation, from that point.

Radiate love and state facts.

This is like building a muscle – the more you do it then the easier and stronger it becomes, and you create a short cut too.

And remember – only the brave choose love.

*(other articles I have written go into parts of this more deeply, eg when systems do more harm, dealing with people we find difficult etc)*