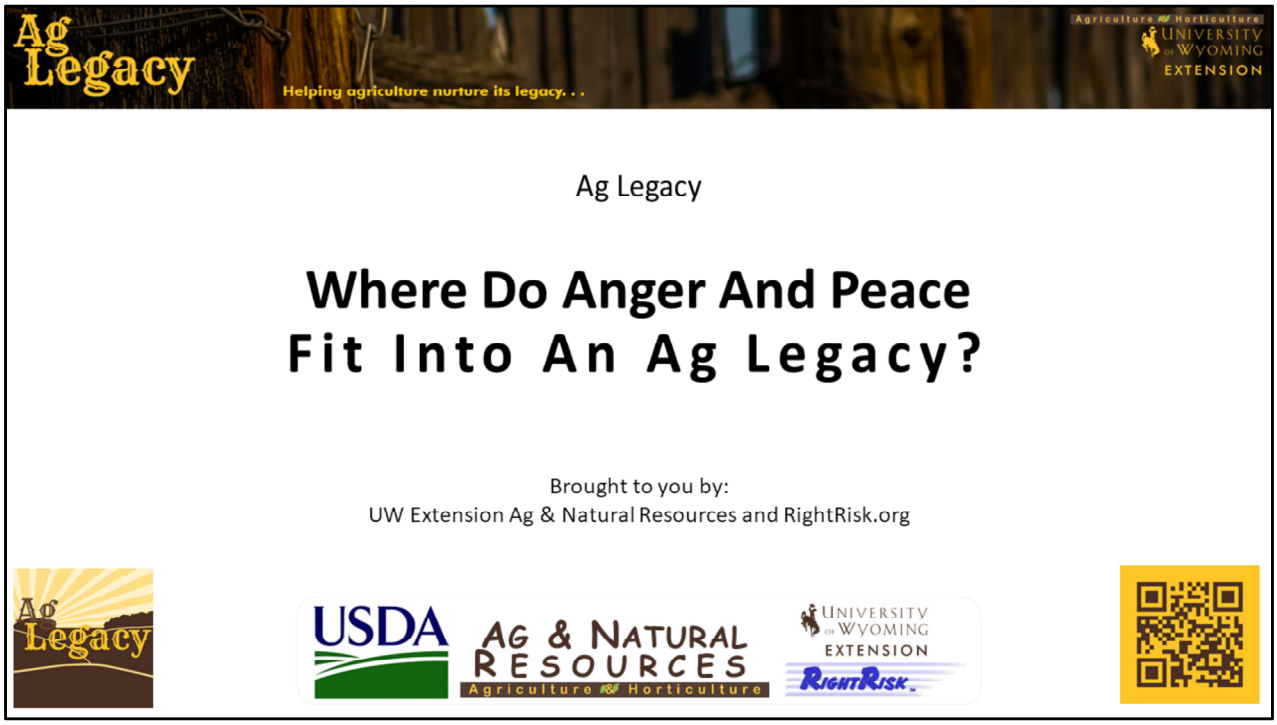

Welcome to another AG LEGACY recording.

AG LEGACY is a series of presentations and other online materials intended to assist rural families in creating their own legacy by beginning the thought process and opening the lines of communication.

Today's recording will address the topic Where Do Anger and Peace Fit into an Ag Legacy?

I'm John Hewlett Farm/Ranch Management Extension Specialist in the University of Wyoming Department of Ag & Applied Economics

I will be your speaker for today's AG LEGACY presentation

"Conflict is a natural part of human interaction, especially in family-owned agricultural businesses. In these settings, anger and peace play crucial roles in how families interact and work together.

On the other hand, peace plays a critical role in maintaining those relationships and business success.

Today, we'll explore why these emotions matter and how they can be managed effectively to support both relationships and business operations."

ON THE JACKSON FAMILY RANCH, tensions were high. Sam, the oldest son, was furious when his father, Jim, decided to sell a piece of land without consulting him. That pasture had been Sam's favorite grazing spot for the cattle, and he had plans to expand the herd.

"You didn't even ask me!" Sam yelled, his fists clenched and face flushed with anger. Jim's shoulders slumped. "I did what I thought was best to cover expenses. We're struggling, Sam." The words hung in the air like dust after a storm. Sam stormed out, slamming the door behind him. But later, he found himself watching the cattle graze and felt his anger slowly drain away.

He returned to the house and found his father sitting on the porch. "I'm sorry," Sam said softly. "I know you're just trying to keep us afloat." Jim nodded, patting the seat beside him. "Let's talk through this—together." Peace settled as father and son began planning a new way forward.

First, I invite you to reflect on this short scenario:

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What Is Anger?

- Anger is a basic human emotion like happiness or sadness.
- It's related to the "fight, flight, or freeze" response.
- Can motivate positive change if managed well.

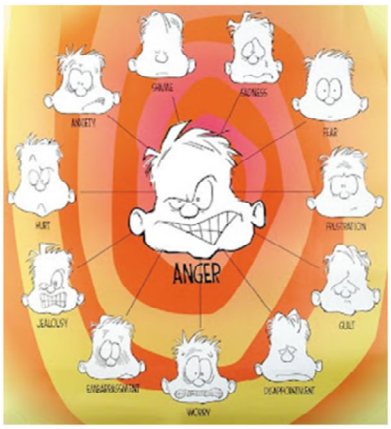
We might begin by asking "What is Anger?"

"Anger is a basic human emotion that everyone experiences at some point. It's often triggered when we feel threatened, frustrated, or perceive something as unfair.

Anger prepares our bodies to respond to challenges, and it can motivate us to take action to resolve issues. Understanding what anger is and its role is the first step in learning how to manage it effectively."

Types of Anger

- Passive Aggression: Avoiding direct confrontation, staying silent, or sulking.
- Open Aggression: Shouting, fighting, or being verbally abusive.
- Assertive Anger: Expressing feelings calmly, without hurting others.



"There are three main types of anger: Passive Aggression, Open Aggression, and Assertive Anger.

Passive Aggression involves avoiding direct confrontation but still showing anger through actions like sulking or giving the silent treatment.

Open Aggression is when we express anger outwardly through yelling, criticizing, or even physical violence.

Assertive Anger, on the other hand, is the healthiest way to express anger. It means communicating feelings calmly and clearly without hurting others."

Why Do We Need Anger?

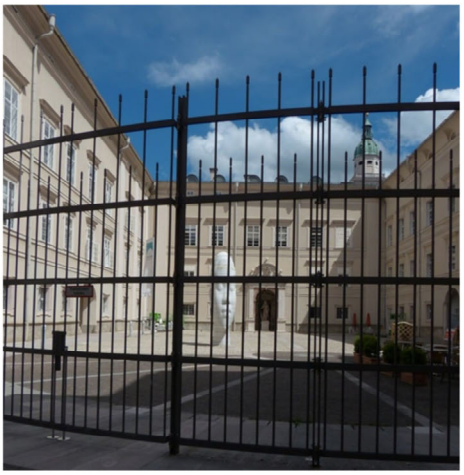
- Anger alerts us to problems or injustices.
- It can motivate us to take action.
- Without anger, we might ignore issues that need to be addressed.

"Although we often see anger as a negative emotion, it actually serves an important purpose. Anger can alert us when something feels wrong or unfair. It can motivate us to make positive changes and stand up for ourselves.

According to psychologist Ryan Martin, anger helps us notice when we are being treated unfairly or when something needs our attention. Without anger, we might not address these issues."

Understanding Anger's Purpose

- Anger often arises when we feel blocked from achieving goals.
- It's a signal that something is wrong or unfair.
- Helps us identify issues in relationships and business.



"Anger often arises when we feel blocked from achieving our goals or when situations seem unfair. It's a signal that something needs to change.

Anger helps us push through frustrations and motivates us to resolve conflicts. But it's important to remember that anger doesn't happen in isolation—it often comes along with other emotions like sadness or fear."

Interpreting Anger

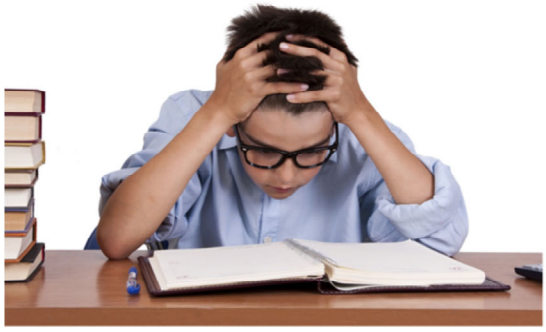
- How we interpret situations affects our anger.
- The same situation can cause different reactions in different people.
- Ask yourself: "Why am I interpreting this as angering?"

"The same situation can cause different levels of anger in different people. Why? It all depends on how we interpret what's happening.

If we see something as a personal attack or injustice, we're more likely to get angry. Learning to recognize how we interpret situations can help us better understand and manage our emotional responses."

Managing Anger

- Notice when anger starts building.
- Identify the reason behind the anger.
- Decide if the situation is worth reacting to or if you can let it go.



"When you notice yourself getting angry, take a step back. Ask yourself why you're reacting this way. Decide if the situation is worth getting upset about or if it can be handled differently.

Often, taking a few deep breaths or shifting your focus can help calm you down before you react."

Using Compassion to Handle Anger

- Treat yourself with the same kindness you'd offer a friend.
- Take a moment to breathe and calm down before reacting.
- Think about how you can resolve the issue constructively.

"Russell Kolts, a psychologist who studies anger, suggests using compassion to manage it better. Compassion involves treating yourself and others with kindness and understanding.

Instead of just reacting out of anger, ask yourself how you would support a friend in the same situation. This helps you respond in a calmer and more thoughtful way."

Conflict in Agricultural Families

- Family and business are closely tied in agriculture.
- Conflicts over management decisions can escalate quickly.
- Self-reliance and strong opinions often lead to clashes.

"Conflict is especially common in agricultural families because family and business are so closely tied. When family members live and work together, disagreements over business decisions can quickly become personal conflicts.

Issues like differing opinions on farm management or lack of communication can cause tension and disrupt family harmony."

Why Conflict Happens in Farm Families

- Disagreements over new ideas or changes in management.
- Lack of communication or involvement in decisions.
- Uncertainty about the future of the farm.

"Conflicts in agricultural families often arise over new ideas, management decisions, or when individuals feel their opinions are not being heard.

The self-reliance and strong opinions that help family members succeed in farming can also lead to clashes when those opinions differ."

How Stress Affects Family Harmony

- Business success is linked to family well-being.
- Stress from the business can spill into family relationships.
- Unresolved conflicts can lead to long-term resentment.

"In agricultural families, business success is tied to family well-being. Stress from business operations can spill over into personal relationships, and unresolved conflicts can damage both the business and family harmony.

This is why it's important to address conflicts early on and find solutions that work for everyone."

Restoring Peace in the Family

- Think Positively: Respect each family member's opinion.
- Show Patience: Understand issues from multiple viewpoints.
- Avoid Abuse: Use calm language and avoid hurtful words.

"Restoring peace after a conflict requires effort from everyone. It starts with respecting each family member's opinion, showing patience, and avoiding hurtful language.

Addressing conflicts calmly and openly helps maintain family bonds and ensures that the business continues to thrive."

Strategies for Conflict Resolution

- Share and Give: Small acts of kindness rebuild trust.
- Listen Actively: Don't just wait to respond—truly understand.
- Apologize and Forgive: Admit mistakes and let go of grudges.

"Some strategies for resolving conflict include sharing and giving small gestures of kindness, listening actively to understand others' perspectives, and being willing to apologize when necessary.

These actions help build trust and promote healthy communication, which are essential for resolving disputes."

Importance of Planning

- Succession planning is crucial for reducing future conflicts.
- Establish clear expectations and roles for all family members.
- Discuss plans openly to ensure everyone is on the same page.

"One of the biggest sources of conflict in agricultural families is uncertainty about the future of the farm. Succession planning—discussing who will take over the farm and how it will be managed—is crucial for preventing misunderstandings.

It helps set clear expectations and reduces anxiety for all family members."

Steps for Effective Succession Planning

- Identify potential successors early.
- Discuss each person's goals and concerns.
- Create a transition plan that involves everyone.

"Effective succession planning involves identifying potential successors early, discussing everyone's goals and concerns, and creating a transition plan that involves all family members.

This process helps ensure that everyone is on the same page and can prevent conflicts from arising."

Benefits of a Well-Organized Plan

- Reduces anxiety and uncertainty about the future.
- Helps family members align personal goals with the farm's success.
- Prevents misunderstandings and conflicts.

"A well-organized succession plan helps reduce stress and provides clarity about the future. It ensures that business operations can continue smoothly and that family members feel secure in their roles and futures.

Planning ahead also helps families avoid the kinds of disputes that can arise when expectations are unclear."

Managing Anger and Peace

- Conflict is inevitable but manageable.
- Use anger as a tool for understanding and problem-solving.
- Approach conflicts with compassion and openness.

"Conflict and anger are inevitable, but they don’t have to damage family relationships. By managing anger in a healthy way and using compassion, families can turn conflict into an opportunity for growth and understanding.

Planning for the future and communicating openly can help maintain family harmony and business success."

Key Takeaways

- Anger and peace are both necessary in family relationships.
- Effective communication and planning are essential for harmony.
- Building a strong legacy requires addressing issues openly.

"Anger and peace both play important roles in family relationships. Understanding why we get angry and how to manage it is crucial for maintaining strong bonds.

Effective communication, conflict resolution strategies, and succession planning are key to ensuring that family businesses thrive for generations to come."

If you have found this presentation helpful, we also recommend that you check out the newsletter on the same topic. You can find it on our website at Aglegacy.org.

And while you are there, be sure to check out our other materials including modules, newsletters, and additional materials to help you in creating your own Ag legacy.

Thank you for tuning in!