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# CHAPTER ONE

## Anger Defined and Explored

Where does rage come from?

What are the seeds of Rage in Borderline Personality Disorder

Anger is a basic and necessary human emotion. Anger is a very powerful emotion. It is an often misunderstood, ignored, denied, and/or suppressed emotion. The feeling of anger, in and of itself, is needed and healthy. Too many people believe that just feeling anger is a bad thing. Anytime we feel anger it is valid. What is often not healthy and ends up being self-defeating, abusive, and generally destructive is how we choose to deal with the anger that we feel.

Anger is a natural reaction (emotion) to threatening or painful events in our lives., a feeling, a communicator and an action-packed reactor and/or responder. Anger alerts us to something that doesn't feel safe or good for us. It also alerts us to dangers, whether they be emotional, mental, or physical. Anger exists as such a primary and necessary emotion because it is a normal response to situations that are or feel beyond our control. Anger can be proactive, protective, and an indication to us that we are meeting our own needs and/or have experienced a violation of our limits or boundaries.

We need to make a very clear distinction between the emotion or feelings of anger and the actions that anger often generates. Anger can be very helpful or very harmful depending on whether it is dealt with or not and how it is expressed.

Anger can be very helpful in the following ways:

- it can motivate us to achieve our goals
- it can be a driving force that fuels creative expression
- it can provide us with a burst of energy to perform physical tasks needed when our safety or security is threatened
- acknowledgment and acceptance of anger leads to growth
- it can be a motivating force for much-needed changes in any area of one's life
- validating and dealing with your anger prevents the suppression and denial of it. We can deal much more effectively with something when we know why it is, what it is, and what it exists to tell us.
- seeking to resolve the problems, stresses, or challenges that create anger within us sets the stage for a healthy emotional release through the appropriate expression of our anger.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RAGE From the Inside Out



Rage is a litany of pain denied. Rage is necessary to feel but futile to act out or act in. Rage is the culmination of unmet needs coinciding with a profound lack of awareness (emotionally - not intellectually) of the pain that one is actually in and why. Rage is powerlessness and helplessness railed against, denied, hidden, and unaccepted. Rage is a potential gift of awareness as to all you really need to heal, change and nurture.

When I was in the active throes of Borderline Personality Disorder (unbeknownst to me at the time) I lived through my false self. I was rage personified. Rage was all I knew. I lived for the first 35 years of my life with so many un-satiated needs. I did not understand that it was my responsibility to meet those needs. I was, at that time, still so enraged about how I was failed as a child. I was lost. I was closed and extremely protective seeking always to get what I needed and not ever worrying about giving what someone else might want or need from me.

I was getting older each year and attempting to live as an adult but emotionally I was still that helpless little child whose needs were not met and whose screams and cries from my crib and beyond went unanswered. I was invalidated. I was abandoned. I was not nurtured.

For years, as an adult, (chronologically certainly not emotionally) I experienced the feelings of powerlessness and helplessness that my unanswered screams met with from my infancy through to my adolescence.

Initially, before therapy, I was not aware that I felt this way. I thought I was okay. I thought I was together. I thought I knew how to cope. I thought I was powerful. I was not aware of the depth of my pain, feeling, and/or actual experience of and in life. I experienced and re-experienced being and/or feeling invalidated and abandoned. I continued to experience a triggering negating annihilating lack of empathy from others or failure to nurture me emotionally on the part of others. I would often experience this whether another person had indeed been empathic or nurturing or not.

Feeling angry about these truths in my life was healthy but expressing that anger through rage was anything but healthy.

## CHAPTER THREE

### MY INTERNAL EXPERIENCE OF RAGE

#### While I was in the active throes of Borderline Personality Disorder

Note: I was not very consciously aware of a lot of this when I would rage. With a lot of therapy I came to gradually over time understand that rage was the surface abusive expression of so much that was buried within my subconscious. My feelings were not the result of what transpired in the present really but were more from my past. My rage was not consciously pre-meditated or thought out. It was part of my repetition compulsion - the playing out of family of origin issues that I would be triggered back to time and time again.

Rage from nowhere that is attached to nothing while floating-freely from deep within me. It lays in wait ready for me to impulsively react in an instant forcefully erupting in what are instantaneous and effortless bursts of unbridled narcissistic entitlement. I have been told that my rage is founded within a false sense of this entitlement but when I'm really pissed I don't care. When I'm really mad it doesn't seem to be about anything false. It's all very real to me. It's all about me.

When I rage it is all about me. I need. I need. I want. I must have. I don't care about anyone or anything else. I demand that you give me what I am screaming for. How dare you not? I have a growing sense that what I'm feeling now I have experienced before, when I was a kid. I just know I stood in that crib and then later, sat on my bed, screaming with real and desperate need. No one came. I was so enraged. I was beside myself with what felt like an unceasing black hole of hatred and lack. I was abandoned time and time again.

I think I rage to give myself a sense of power amidst the feelings of helplessness that are my every waking moment. If I am helpless you are too powerful, no, I will be powerful. I will take your power away so you can be helpless. I don't do helpless. I am power. I must have the power. We can't both have the power. I want what is mine. You are mine right? I am not yours though, I cannot be anybody's because I am not even my own. I gave myself to you. We are each other right? I mean, what's the difference?

Fear rises up without warning and strikes me from all corners of my being. What, what is it that I am not seeing? Is not what I perceive what is really real? Why is it that I am the only one who sees what I see, just the way that I do? What does this mean? Surely this is what is wrong with the world right? I mean it can't be my problem. I am not afraid. I am not scared or weak or vulnerable. I need you..... NO!! ....I am strong and I don't need you. If you let me need you I won't want you

anymore. And if you say I can't have you then I've got to have you. If you let me have you then I don't want you anymore. I want you when you don't want me and I need you when you won't help me. It is the biting and the pain of this cold distance that I know that somehow is familiar and is the feeling that I need to give me the illusion of safety. If I were truly safe I'd be exposed and not safe at all. Get away by coming closer and come closer by getting away. I am exposed most when I hide and hidden when I try to be who I think I am.

Feeling alone, again, abandoned as always, alone, again. I am everyone and everyone is me. I am essentially no one. I often feel like I am a void. I feel like I don't really exist. I am invisible.

Who am I again? Oh yeah, that person, and that person, and what this person, and this person describe and/or want. Where does that leave me when I am alone? Who am I then? Do I cease to exist if I am not in the company of someone off of whom I can bounce my existence and from whom all of my validation must come?

I am not ever understood or validated. I am in such terrible pain. What is wrong with the world? Why can't they see my pain? Don't they know how incredibly much I hurt? Can't they see that I need them to hold some of this pain for me, validate it, and take it away. Surely this pain they have left me with isn't up to me to take care of right? I mean It can't be mine to bear can it? I can't bear it? I can't take it. I can't take this anymore. My soul is drowning in all this pain and agony. Why should I have to bear my own agony? It is not my fault. I didn't do this to me. I didn't choose to hurt like this. I am beside myself with all of this pain and anger and grief as is any infant or young child whose mother is always angry with him or her.

What did I ever do to deserve this? This is so not fair. My mother's face, always tight, mean, judging, invalidating, uninterested, never soft or loving or mirroring to me that I am at all okay, ever. She seems to hate me. She resents anything and everything I need.

What do I do with that angry face? It is not acceptance. It is rejecting me. God I can't take this. I feel like I'm going to die. I need that face to care. I need that face to see me. I am not safe when that face is angry. When her face is angry she can't possibly love me. She hates me. I hate her for doing this to me. Oh, the pain. It's too much. How dare she cause me such pain. What is wrong with her?

What am I to do? I don't know what to do so I put it beside me. Whatever it is, I leave it to sit there, wherever there is, and it builds over the course of a lifetime. It builds and

The borderline dilemma of being chronologically an adult while simultaneously being an emotional child sets one up to appear, to act, and to be, insatiable. The tragedy is that even with the role of this lack of nurture, and whatever other environmental factors one had to endure in the developmental stages of life, the borderline (once chronologically an adult and living on his/her own) then begins the entire of cycle of chronic deprivation (mainly emotional) using maladaptive patterns of behaving and relating. which are attempts to feed the affect-hunger and soothe the rage that see the borderline continue to choose to not take personal responsibility for meeting his/her unmet needs.

I believe, in hindsight, the reason for this comes from a very deep sense of not being worthy enough to be held, to be soothed, to be loved, to be cared for and about, to be spoken to tenderly, to know a kind of emotionally-congruent consistency that one does not have any idea even exists as one grows up in the type of dysfunctional circumstance that breeds BPD.

Borderlines experience such a deep and profound affect-hunger. This affect-hunger leaves them insatiable and filled with frustration that builds to rage. The dichotomy between what the borderline needs and what the borderline cannot tolerate deepens the borderline's already strong sense of ambivalence and leads to the push-pull behavior of "I hate you don't leave me". When I was borderline I wanted to be heard. When I was borderline I was too angry, hateful, and unwilling to extend enough trust to talk honestly about how I felt to anyone. When I was borderline I wanted to be understood. When I was borderline I didn't know who I was, so consequently I did not know how I felt and I was not able to understand myself. When I was borderline I was full of rage. I would rage and scream in endless failed attempts to meet the needs that for a life-time I had not been able to have met.

My rage and my need isolated me more and more. My rage and my determination to have others do what I thought I needed and wanted them to do in order to give me what I wanted the way I wanted it and when I wanted it added exponentially to my already impressive stock-pile of pain. What I didn't know then was that all I so wanted from others was really what I needed to give to myself -- more specifically to my inner-child. An inner-child run amok with anger and rage is a demanding adult who has not yet learned how to accept responsibility for his/her feelings and needs.

Before I had experienced being re-parented in therapy and had begun to learn how to re-parent this raging, demanding, hungry, insatiable inner-child I didn't know my true self. I wasn't in touch with my own authentic emotions. I could not even really



identify the very unmet needs that I so tried to have others meet for me. In essence my protective rage was also trying to exact nurture and empathy and whatever else I wanted out of others because I had not yet learned where they ended and I began.

When I was borderline I wanted to be held, loved, and soothed. When I was borderline I could not let anyone touch me. I was too angry, too hurt, and I could not cope with the vulnerability of being touched, hugged or held. I didn't know how to trust the me I hadn't yet met and the true self I didn't yet know and therefore I couldn't trust anyone else either. Everyone I tried to relate to was my "bad-mother". I had also become the personification of my own "bad-mother" in the ways that I abandoned and rejected my own inner child. That inner-child was abandoned, rejected, neglected, abused, and left alone with primary unmet needs millions of times over. I had become my own abuser. I abused my shadow self and my inner-child and anyone else that I tried to relate to.

When I was borderline no one could soothe me because I would not get close enough. No one could soothe me because all I put out there for them to know was false-self after false-self. When I was borderline I wanted someone to care. When I was borderline I was so incredibly angry and enraged that I would abuse others (re-abuse myself through others) to ensure the repeat of my past, where my needs would go unmet and I would not allow anyone to care about or for me. I felt too damaged. I felt too unworthy.

If things weren't familiar I would feel out of control. I was dissociated from my feelings in a major way. I thought I was protecting myself and fooling others but out of my deeper hunger, unmet needs, and rage I had really walled myself in further. I had trapped myself in my own borderline angst and that was hell.

After all my faulty borderline black and white thinking made it clear to me that if my needs were reasonable or normal then my parents would have met them if they really loved me. And like a child, I believed for some time that because my parents didn't love me (in healthy ways that would have enabled me to thrive and grow) this meant that I was "unlovable". I then repeated this cycle with myself through the invalidation and abuse of my inner-child who needed me to be there for her.

Having been borderline I can now conclude that it was out of a deeper hunger that I was forced to try to protect myself (my ego from total annihilation) using the very same maladaptive coping skills and maladaptive (unhealthy) interpersonal style of communicating and relating (enmeshed and without boundaries) that I had been raised in and with. As I look back over my experience in the throes of BPD and beyond, I

## CHAPTER SIX

# THE TUNNEL OF RAGE

Rage turned outward is abusive. It is a failure to take personal responsibility for your own pain and your own needs. It is an emotionally unevolved and immature way to deal with the underlying pain and loss that fuels borderline rage.

Rage turned inward is self-abuse. It too, is abusive. It is a failure to take personal responsibility for your own pain and needs as well.

Self harm resulting from rage is a desperate attempt to avoid and/or escape the unrelenting distressed and powerfully painful affect of the unresolved wounds that are Borderline Personality Disorder.

The explosive expression of rage is a blinding black-and-white freight train barreling toward a brick wall of self-defeat. It is in this tunnel of rage that all present-day perspective is lost. The tunnel of rage is addictive. Rage takes the place of healthy productive adult feelings and expression. It becomes a patterned habit. It can take on a life of its own if it goes unchecked.

This all-or-nothing, black-and-white polarized thinking obliterates the borderline's ability to comprehend and consciously realize that he/she is actually making the choice to express his/her pain in this violent and abusive self-defeating child-like manner.

Not only is a raging borderline making the choice to rage and to abuse self and/or others but the raging borderline is also choosing to abandon his or her adult responsibility and true self (essentially) in the here and now. What is being expressed in a borderline fit of rage is regressed, dissociated, fragmented pain. Real pain that one day, a long time ago, caused the borderline to feel a BIG enough healthy enough and life-threatening or ego-threatening anger that the response was an explosive fit of rage designed to bring to the infant, toddler, or young child, what he/she needed to actually survive, literally and/or from a psychological perspective.

The tunnel of rage is entered into by the negation (and or lack of conscious awareness) of what have become over the course of the borderline's life, automatic negative reactive protective responses (ANRPR's).



## It Is Your Abandonment Wound That Created Your Rage

As I examine in much more detail in my up-coming ebook about the wounds of Borderline Personality Disorder (please keep checking my website at: phoenixrisingpublications.ca or phoenixrisingpublications.com for its availability) actual or perceived abandonment is one of the major wounds that contribute to a stockpile of anger that often is expressed inwardly or outwardly by those with BPD as rage.

The rage of a very young child having to endure the intolerable experience of unmet needs, needs often required for actual and psychological survival, is a very healthy response to a very real and threatening experience.

The rage that is displayed by most borderlines of all ages and in all kinds of relational situations is this very primitive rage. Borderlines have unresolved woundedness from these thwarted needs that have caused them to fail to master the various tasks required for healthy maturation in many early developmental stages of emotional and social growth.

Borderlines are triggered back to this original abandonment wound that first created the response of this rage. Simply put this is the case because they have failed to develop a known self. This inability to develop a known self leaves the child at risk for Borderline Personality Disorder. By the very nature of what it means to have BPD, the borderline is unable to cope with and tolerate many aspects of adult relationships.

Borderlines, regardless of chronological maturity, continue to relate from the very primitive and narcissistic (egocentric) perspective of a helpless, needy, wounded young child emotionally.

## One More Abandonment Will Lead To Recovery

Abandoned pain necessitates one more abandonment of pain. This subsequent experience of your pain being abandoned will evoke the awareness that is crucial and central in leading to recovery.

Pain that has been abandoned through the repression, denial, and/or dissociation of it finds its way to self-defeating, self-sabotaging, and often self-harming expression for those who have been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD).

an almost complete change, eventually, in how the person with BPD relates to self and to others. Being consistent and building congruence between feelings, thoughts and actions is the way to end the need and/or desire for borderline rage.

Addressing bonding and attachment issues which are examined much more fully in my ebook *The Shadows and Echoes of Self - The False Self in Borderline Personality Disorder* - taking broken connection and triggered regressions and circumventing them in order to learn how to build new and lasting healthier attachments and bonds with true self and others is the landscape of recovery once one has decided to find a healthy and more mature way to express frustration, anger, annoyance, distress and/or discomfort - other than through rage.

The 5 Main Roadblocks to ending borderline rage that keep people locked into old patterns include:

No one can make or influence a borderline to really want to stop any and all rage and abusive behaviour. The borderline him/herself has to want to learn how to end his/her own suffering and transform that suffering into manageable pain. Until he/she can really recover having found a more congruent and consistent way to be in the world he/she and those around the borderline will not be able to know peace. Learning to be more congruent and consistent as the borderline recovers and is more able to relate to self and others he/she will then come to know the experience of episodic self-actualization.

1) Denial - Denying that there is any problem whatsoever. Feeling or believing that how you are, how you rage, how you behave, and how you treat others is fine or that you are entitled to behave in whatever fashion you so desire based upon the strength and believed validity of your thoughts and of your emotions. Believing that the problems encountered by you in your life and especially in your relationships are everyone else's fault.

If you choose to remain in denial no one else can help you. It is not possible to rescue or save a borderline in denial from themselves. Everyone who is in denial is actually actively choosing to remain unaware of what they absolutely know somewhere inside that could - when they choose it- end rage and improve relational skills and ability.

Along with denial there are secondary gains to remaining the same and being invested (consciously or sub-consciously) in the negative and very painful pay-offs of borderline rage. Many borderlines who rage are invested in the belief that their rage is necessary