

to identify conflict. They're concerned about what you'll do next. Going blithely on makes you seem either too weak to handle it or too dumb to have noticed it. Or that you think the *audience* is too dumb to see it. When someone is hostile or angry, you have to deal with it publicly.

Allow the Anger

- *The anatomy of anger*

We all handle anger in two basic ways: We either fly off the handle and vent spleen, shouting, etc., way out of control. (Let's call him Type A.) Or we become *extremely* cool and deliberate, obnoxiously slow, lethally rational, and insufferably superior. (Let's call her Type B.) Taken from anybody's home notebook, this difference results in the following typical exchange and response:

Type A (flailing arms wildly, screaming): "*X#!X*! You always do that and I hate it and . . ."

Type B (slowly, deliberately, in an icy, low voice): "Look at you! How can I possibly discuss this with you when you're so irrational and out of control? Now, when you can calm *down*, I'll be glad to talk about it. . ."

Result? *Aaagh!* The argument escalates as Type A reaches new heights of fury and rage! Why? Because Type A *is* out of control and knows it! If he *could* calm down and choose another means of behavior, don't you think he would? Irrational rage is an involuntary response and secretly embarrassing to the rager. But for Type B to point it out, at the same time rubbing it in by becoming even more superiorly calm, is enough to make Type A blow a gasket!

- *What to do*

Allow the Type As to be angry, *their* way! No judgment on anyone's part. One way isn't better than the other; it just is! It's how people are put together.

To allow the Type A in your audience to be angry and to still turn this around rationally, name the anger or hostility. Describe it, in a flat, factual, but sympathetic (not patronizing) way:

"I see you're very concerned (passionate, upset, feel very deeply) about this issue," or, "I see you're very committed to a point of view about this."

This provides an instant antidote. The person railing has been given a way out. "Yes, I am, " is his response. You've actually implied, "It's okay. I understand that you're mad," by your behavior. You've taken him out of the realm of feeling defensive about the fact of his anger or hostility