

and into the beginnings of talking about what he's angry about. And you've saved face for both of you.

So, in order to move out of the smoke and fire, don't put someone's anger down or ask for more self-control. Just say that you see it, you're sympathetic to it then let them talk it out—their way.

Understand the Anger

By absorbing the reasons why people get angry and hostile that I mentioned earlier, you can handle them better. When you identify the *real* source of someone's hostility, you can find a way to connect their anger to a point of view you can talk about.

"I understand how you must feel. My point of view sounds like it will change something you're very committed to. But let me show you how that's not quite true."

Pinpointing the discussion to the underlying issue helps cut the anger out of the conversation.

Get Out of the Personal Realm

Since hostility often turns to personal attack, don't start out defending yourself. The goal is to get to a factual level, not remain on the personal one.

"I know that your main goal is to get to the bottom of the issue, not necessarily to have a personal grudge match with me. Actually, we don't even know each other! So, as I hear it, you're concerned about ..."
Another way:

"This sounds like one of those 'Kill the messenger' moments. I understand that your anger (disagreement) about the subject has included me. Let me rather be the method for clearing up a disagreement."

Find Something in Common

"You know, although we seem to be disagreeing, we actually have something in common. We *both* care very much about this issue. I see why you're so worked up. So am I!"

This surprising approach works well not just to dilute your opponent and get you both talking. It plays *very* well for the audience. They see that you're not patronizing your opponent or looking for the upper hand. You seem to actually have room to hear and absorb dissident viewpoints and still hold your ground.