

Anger, emotional intelligence and compassion.

ALVSCE_Bulletin <alvsce_bulletin-bounces@list.cals.arizona.edu>

on behalf of

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Colleagues,

We've seen a lot of expressed anger over these summer months--about racism, the COVID pandemic, at the UA and at home. Expressions of anger are *symptoms*: symptoms of feeling let down, scared, frustrated, unheard, threatened, or hopeless.

I'm sure many at the UA can teach me the science of anger, how it is the same and differs between people, and its neurophysiology. Regardless, expressed anger is always telling us something--if we will just stop and listen. A good friend of mine who teaches that emotional intelligence (EQ) is a key to leadership says: "listen for the song beneath the waves." But before responding to symptoms of anger in others, we first must listen for, and then *hear*, any anger in ourselves.

Another kind of symptom of anger is about to be visited on us. Historically this includes well-known and highly predictable examples like plague, leprosy, HIV/AIDS--targeting, blaming, and alienating those with disease. It drives infected people to hide so they do not become victims of your anger. Ironically, it puts the people expressing the anger more at risk of the very thing they fear and are angry about.

Last week you saw in the news that as college students returned to campuses around the country other universities experienced spikes in SARS-COV2 infection incidence. A few suspended in-person classes while others implemented re-entry more successfully. We should anticipate our own increase in infection incidence. In the next few weeks and months, you could be informed that you have been a "close contact" with someone who tested positive for SARS-COV2. I have been in this situation myself over the summer and sought out testing. If this happens to you, you may experience feelings of anger.

Of course, it's justifiable to feel scared or bitter about behaviors you are seeing by people who you think "should know better." You may feel violated. You will need to respond to this new knowledge appropriately and you may even learn that you have been infected with SARS-COV2. Even though test and trace information is protected, the identity of the infected person can be obvious in small groups.

Please use your EQ to lead yourself.

Before you express your anger toward any infected person know that in addition to all the feelings you have as you wait on your own test results, they will also be fearing what their close contacts will say or do to them if they find out who tested positive. If they are scared and don't feel safe, people will actively hide that they are infected. This will have the unwanted consequence of risking more SARS-COV2 infections. You and everyone else will be at more risk. Your biology will likely make you feel anger; as you do please use your EQ to choose a compassionate response. You may very well not be infected, and you don't want to be at more risk tomorrow because of your response today.

Regards,
Shane

My mask protects you; your mask protects me. We've controlled infectious diseases without vaccines for thousands of years. **Wearing our masks** means we can have a functioning economy and concurrently save thousands of lives.

All UA employees, students and visitors must wear a face covering inside all UA buildings, unless alone in a single occupancy office, and in UA outdoor spaces where continuous physical distancing of at least six feet is difficult or impossible to maintain.

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