

TIPS TO AVOID ANGER ON EREV SHABBOS

In the winter, when Shabbos is earlier & Fridays are shorter, getting ready for Shabbos tends to be more stressful. Our anger is tested more frequently during these short Fridays. Therefore, let's prepare ourselves with the following tips before these stressful situations arise, by realizing that these situations will probably test our patience. In this way, we can hopefully be much less angry when those stressful situations arise. Then we can bring in Shabbos more peacefully for ourselves & for the whole family.

1 DON'T TALK ABOUT WHY YOU'RE ANGRY. The first step to prevent your anger from getting worse (when we find ourselves getting angry) is to realize the reason that made you angry, Do not continue to think about what has just happened & do not express it verbally either. If you keep thinking or talking about what made you angry, this is like blowing wind on a fire, & the anger will continue to burn & get worse.

2 HESECH HADAAS (Taking Your Mind Off It). Take your mind off what's angering you, and instead focus on a pleasant kind of thought. In order to use this advice, have a stock of pleasant thoughts which you like to think about. These will interest you more than the present anger. Get used to steering your mind to one specific thought when you are angry.

3 PUSH OFF THE ANGER FOR LATER. Our Sages advised that one can try "putting off" the anger for later. Usually the anger will subside in between, "slowing down" the "fuel" of your inner "fire" which is brewing. Getting used to this method can greatly weaken one's anger by constantly interrupting the anger so that the fire of the anger is not given a chance to ignite. (This does not completely get rid of the anger. But it certainly lessens the degree of the anger which is worthwhile.)

4 RESTRAIN YOUR ANGER A BIT. Even when a person is very angry and he feels the anger burning, he can still practice minimizing his feelings of anger as much as possible. Although he is still angry, he is still lessening the intensity of the anger, which is worthwhile. The very act of trying to lessen the anger will certainly prevent the anger from getting too out of hand, and it will place some restraint on the anger, preventing it from spreading.

5 REVIEW THE VERSE "REMOVE ANGER FROM YOUR HEART". Rav Yisrael Salanter said that when a person wants to fix a particular negative trait, he should study the parts of Torah that explain that character trait, and even more so, he should also contemplate Torah verses that speak about the character trait. Based upon this, we can uproot anger when we keep reviewing the verse, "הסר כעס מלבך", "Remove anger from your heart".

6 DAN L'KAF ZECHUS. (Judging The Other Favorably). A person's anger is directed at others in most cases. That being the case, one of the ways to lessen anger is to judge others favorably. However, this advice will only be practical for those who: (1) Can maintain extraordinary self-control over their emotions in all situations; (2) When one's anger was not that intense to begin with; (3) For those who are regularly involved and immersed in the *avodah* of judging others favorably and they apply it to all areas of their life. Such people are able to judge others favorably even when they are angry at others. If anyone doesn't meet these three conditions, however, it is impractical to try to be "dan l'kaf zechus" others amidst anger.

7 AWAKEN YOUR AHAVAS YISRAEL (Love For Another Jew). Another method that can be used to lessen anger is to awaken one's *ahavas Yisrael* (love for the Jewish people). The more a person feels a deep connection in his soul to all Jews, with no exceptions, the less angry he will be at others, even when he is actually angry. Even if one's anger is awakened at another, one's love for another will be reawakened with it, and the love will overcome the anger, as stated in a verse, "Love conceals all faults."

8 AWAKEN YOUR EMUNAH (Faith In Hashem). Anger is usually directed at others. The stronger a person's *emunah*, the more one can recognize that nobody else can harm him unless Hashem has decreed that it happen. It is not "this" person or "that" person who has hurt you - it is Hashem's will that it happened. The more you have this *emunah*, the less angry you will be at the person who has harmed you. The depth of *emunah* is to see Hashem as the sole Performer behind every action and every person you encounter. The more a person lives with *emunah*, the weaker his anger will be. This does not mean that he will never get angry anymore. It means that when he gets angry, the anger will be noticeably lessened,

9 I WANT WHAT HASHEM WANTS. (Which is, not to get angry). Awaken the inner *ratzon* (will) of our soul, which is: "*Retzoineinu Laasos Retzoncha*" ("It is our will to do Your will.") Nullifying one's will for Hashem's will therefore does not mean that I don't want my *ratzon* anymore. It means that I want what Hashem wants. This is what is meant by "*Chaim b'retzono*" ("Life according to His will.") This is the deepest & most fundamental way to prevent & uproot our anger.