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dispute

## Dealing With A Quick-Tempered Spouse

In marriage, passionate nature shouldn't include one-sided outbursts. Use these tips to deal with a quick-tempered spouse.

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You should never be fearful in your marriage. Address hot-tempered outbursts from your spouse.

A husband gets angry and yells: his wife cowers. A wife gets angry and yells: her husband leaves.

These are common outcomes when a spouse flies off the handle, especially when the anger is a one-sided outburst, having nothing to do with a fight. It doesn't matter which spouse is expressing their upset with anger, anger frightens the other.

Dealing with anger is a challenge! It is inevitable in a relationship as close and intimate as a marriage, for in marriage we tend to let our hair down, to be less inhibited than we would be with say, a co-worker or out in public.

Anne's husband, for example, was fundamentally a good man. He was basically honest, reliable, trustworthy, responsive, responsible, appreciative of other people, and caring. He had none of the hallmarks of an abusive individual. He did, however, have a quick temper. He would flare up at minor annoyances and yell. He got away with it because he attributed his explosions to his passionate nature, and others accepted this characterization. His temper took its toll on Anne, however, as she became "a little mouse of a woman."

Should you find yourself in a relationship with an otherwise good but quick-tempered person, here are guidelines for how to deal with their angry outbursts.

## How to Handle Outbursts

When you first witness an outburst, wait until the two of you are in a calm mood and then ask your spouse in a matter-of-fact, neutral tone what hurt or bothered them to set your spouse off. If, indeed, it's something that might disturb anybody, let your partner know that you understand that what happened annoyed them, but that their anger is frightening, and that this behavior is not healthy for either of you, and certainly not conducive to the wellbeing of your marriage.

If your spouse can hear you and is willing to accept responsibility for their temper, you can the move on to the next step: develop a "time-out" signal for each other, like the time-out sign used in sports, to cut short any outbursts. Agree with your husband or wife that when you make that sign, everything has to stop, right then. Once you've made the time-out sign, calmly let your spouse know that you need to take a break, and that you're going to take a walk or a bath, or just go into another room—whatever works for you.

If, however, what set your beloved off is not understandable to you, or if he or she does not take responsibility for their anger, it's imperative to get professional help as soon as possible. Similarly, if your spouse cannot deal appropriately with their outbursts despite both of your best efforts, you should seek help. It is not acceptable for you to live in an atmosphere of fear. It will ruin your marriage.

*Noelle C. Nelson, Ph.D., is a relationship expert, popular speaker in the U.S. and abroad, and author of nine best-selling books, including "[Your Man is Wonderful](#)" and "[Dangerous Relationships](#)." Dr. Nelson focuses on how we can all enjoy happy, fulfilling lives while accomplishing great things in love, at home and at work, as we appreciate ourselves, our world and all others. For more, visit [www.noellenelson.com](http://www.noellenelson.com) and follow her on Twitter [@DrNoelleNelson](#).*