

MULTIPLE REALITIES

One hallmark of emotional maturity is to recognize the validity of multiple realities and to understand that people think, feel and react differently. Closeness does not mean sameness. We have a right to everything we think and feel, and so does everyone else.

Many of us search for the 'ultimate truth of the matter' so that we can justify our views and the needs and demands of others. What many fail to appreciate is that there are multiple ways of perceiving the same situation and that people think, feel and react differently. This is a very different concept to grasp and hold on to when we are angry.

Conflicting wants and different perceptions of the world do not mean that one party is 'right' and the other 'wrong'. Feelings are neither right nor wrong, neither legitimate nor illegitimate. We have a right to everything we feel and our feelings deserve our attention and respect. But our right for example, to be angry at our partner does not mean that our partner is to blame.

Chronic anger and resentment towards a person is a signal that we need to re-evaluate our participation in our interactions with that person and consider how we might move/act differently with that person in an important relationship.

The *Dance of Anger* by Harriet Lerner, PhD. is one book – equally valid for men and women alike – that provides an excellent read on understanding and dealing with chronic anger and resentment towards our partner.