SESSION TRANSCRIPT · THE MISSING PIECES OF PERIMENOPAUSE

# Reclaim Your Anger & Calm Your Anxiety

with Tanicia Baynes · Day 4 · Thursday, October 29 · The Unfamiliar Feelings

Hello, and welcome to Reclaim Your Anger and Calm Your Anxiety. Before we jump in, I just want to have a little check-in. Take a minute and think about the last time you snapped at someone you love and, in retrospect, realized, hmm, that didn't really have much to do with them. Or the time that anxiety just popped up. Maybe you weren't doing anything out of the ordinary, but your body went into this sense of panic and anxiety over something. Or my personal favorite, the brain fog that comes in and stops you in your tracks. You go to your phone, or you walk into a room, or you start a conversation, and then you're like, what was I even saying?

I'm sure you can relate to one or all three of these, as I know I can. And if you can, I want you to know you're not alone. I'm sure many of your friends are in a similar place, and I'm excited to be here with you and share what I know and what I've learned along the way.

My name is Tanicia Baynes. I'm a women's coach and a couples therapist, and I've worked with the nervous system, breathwork, shadow work, reparenting, and all the things that go into helping the body navigate spaces that feel challenging. Then you add something like perimenopause into the mix, and it makes it even harder to stay in alignment with the woman we really want to be, because things start to feel so out of our control.

The tools I'm going to share with you today will help you navigate some of these feelings. But one of the things I find almost more important is understanding what those feelings are trying to communicate to us. So today I'm going to share something I wish I had known from the very beginning. We're going to cover three things: why this season feels so different in your body, biologically; anger, which we're going to reframe so you have a new way to be in relationship with this part of you; and anxiety, with a couple of tools you can use in the moment when it pops up.

I'm 47. I'm right in the middle of my own perimenopause journey, and I have definitely experienced more anxiety and anger in this past year than I probably ever have. I'm a mother to twin boys. I've been with my husband for nearly 20 years, we homeschool, and I'm running two businesses. So I have had ample moments where my bandwidth has been incredibly thin and I fall into reaction.

One minute I would feel completely fine. I'd wake up feeling good, and then as the day progressed, all of a sudden I just wouldn't be. I'd have a tone with my husband, I'd snap at my kids. And sometimes it was the complete opposite. I would go inward and be in a depressive state for a week or so, uncaring and numb to the things going on around me.

I tried a lot of different things to work through that, and I'm sure you have a lot of tools in your tool belt as well. But once I understood what was happening in my body, and I could be in relationship with the more challenging emotions like anger and anxiety, I started to understand why my bandwidth had changed. I started to understand what my anger was communicating and what my anxiety wanted to tell me. And once I had a better relationship with these two aspects of myself, things started to change.

Instead of seeing these things as something to manage, or as ways I was failing myself or my family, I dug deep into the roots of my knowing and my inner wisdom and asked, what are these qualities trying to communicate? When I did that, I became so much more intimate with myself. I was more connected to my emotions and my feelings, and I was able to show up more present and grounded for my family and friends and engage in life in a different way.

So first, we're going to check in on the biology piece, because that really sets the foundation for why anger and anxiety feel more intense, or more present, than they used to.

We've all heard some version of "perimenopause means a decline in certain hormones." While that's true, it's not exactly right. As we can probably testify, it's not a nice, gradual decline. It's more like the swings at the fair. It's fluctuating. It goes up, then down, then kind of down, then kind of up, then really up. A lot is happening that doesn't feel like something we can find stability in.

There are three things happening at once here. First, progesterone. When it's steady, it breaks down into a compound that helps our brain and body find their own natural calm. It works on the same receptors in the brain that anti-anxiety medication works on, so it's like our own natural anti-anxiety. When our supply of progesterone becomes unreliable, so does our ability to regulate.

Second, estrogen. Estrogen supports serotonin production and keeps serotonin circulating longer before it breaks down. So when our estrogen swings, so does our access to stable mood regulation. This isn't just about calm, or your access to feeling grounded. It's the baseline sense that things are okay that starts to change.

And third, as if those two weren't enough, your stress response gets louder. The same hormonal fluctuations increase our cortisol response. So the things in our life that used to

register at a 3 or 4 on our stress scale are now hitting a 9 or 10. We're way more reactive than we used to be.

One of the things I teach everyone I work with is that there's a distinct difference between reacting and responding. Reacting is in the moment, like a fire in the pan. A quick reaction. That's what we see when our stress response becomes more sensitive. Responding has breath in it. There's a pause. And that's what we're going to look at today: how to give you more of that breath and that pause, and help you understand what the anger and anxiety are telling you.

There's a term I want you to keep in mind. It's called your window of tolerance. If you've done nervous system work before, you'll be very familiar with it. If you haven't, it's important to know, because our anger and our anxiety are directly connected to our nervous system.

Think of it as a window of space. When your window of tolerance is really big, you can take on a lot before you flip into reactivity and feel triggered. When your window is narrow, you tend to react faster, because you don't have the bandwidth or the energetic resources to stay at a stable baseline. With the biology happening in our bodies at this particular time, our window is narrowing. That doesn't mean our bodies are broken in any way. They're doing what they're meant to do at this age. But it does mean we get to work with it differently.

Here are some ways to tell if your window of tolerance has narrowed. You don't need all of these. Even two or three are worth noticing. Things that used to roll off you now stick and stay. You wake up already feeling tense. Nothing's happened, you're still in bed, but your body wakes up ready for something. You need more time and space after a reaction to find your way back. You feel fine one day and flooded the next, while nothing obvious has happened around you. Or, one I really relate to, that feeling of "I didn't used to be like this."

That's a big one I hear from a lot of my female clients. This feeling of not really knowing themselves anymore, and a lot of shame and confusion, in particular around anger and anxiety. So we're here to arm you with wisdom. Your body is so smart and capable, and hopefully we can move a little of that shame through.

So we're going to start with anger. I have to say, anger might be one of my favorite emotions, and I'm hoping that after this talk you'll see why.

There's a book I fell in love with by Karla McLaren called The Language of Emotions. I love it because she frames emotions as very wise messengers. It's about understanding the message a particular emotion is here to share with you, and choosing whether or not you want to listen. In her book, she uses the image of a castle, so that's what we're going to use today.

When you think about a castle, there are three different ways humans express anger. First, I want you to picture a guard walking the walls. Obviously medieval comes to mind. I'm picturing an armored guard cruising the wall, keeping an eye on things, making sure nothing's out of whack. That archetype of anger is reactive. The guard sees something in the woods beyond, maybe a rabbit goes by, or a fox, or a leaf rustles, and it charges ahead.

This is the part of our anger that's very reactive, that says things we later regret. Maybe it even throws things. I refer to it as the little reptile, because it's literally the reptilian part of our brain. When anger activates that part of the brain, it has only one mission: to annihilate the thing it's angry at. It's not a part you can reason with or talk to. It's just enraged. This is often what we associate with anger. We think of it as toxic, and sometimes as very masculine. It's probably the most prevalent way our society expresses anger, and it's why so many people feel so uncomfortable around the emotion.

Then there's the second one, which retreats into the castle. I call this one the Keeper, because it goes into the keep inside the castle. You can imagine it walking the wall, and it sees something it doesn't like. It sees a boundary being crossed. Maybe someone says something unkind, and this archetype just makes excuses. Oh, they didn't mean it. I'm sure it's fine. I'm okay. It wasn't that mean. I'm just being sensitive. It's all right.

This archetype doesn't feel comfortable with anger. Maybe they grew up around someone like the Guard, where it didn't feel safe to express feelings or communicate anger, because anger was a volatile emotion in their home. Or they were taught that their needs and wants needed to be tucked away. So this archetype has learned to pacify whatever's going on.

And then there's the third. I call this one the Wise Sentry. This one also walks the castle walls, but it notices, and it has discernment. It can communicate what it's angry about and what boundary was crossed. It knows how to hold its power in a way that's communicative and authoritative, but kind. Instead of attacking, yelling, and making the other person wrong, and instead of running in the opposite direction and hiding from the anger, it shows up and says: what you did is not okay. That's a boundary. I'm not in alignment with this. This doesn't feel good to my body. I'm incredibly angry. This hurt my feelings. Whatever the truth behind the emotion is, it communicates it. And when necessary, it establishes a boundary. Clear, authoritative, respectful.

I want to add a little aside here. This isn't specific to anger, but I want to clarify what a boundary is. A boundary is not "you aren't allowed to treat me this way," or "I'm angry, and my boundary is you can't be mean to me." We can't set a boundary that requires someone else to act on it. We can only set boundaries that we ourselves have control over. So the boundary would be: what

you said to me was unkind. I'm incredibly angry about what you did. And if you do this again, I am going to do this. It's a little aside, but boundaries and anger go really well together.

The Guard and the Keeper serve a real purpose, and how they express themselves is rooted in a lifetime of learning. These are patterns and habits our bodies established, either learned through our family system or as a way of keeping ourselves safe. It's how our nervous system responds based on old habits, old situations where it felt like we needed protection. The Wise Sentry is the pattern both of them are bridging toward.

Because expressing your anger isn't the problem. Anger is such a powerful catalyst for change. It communicates to our bodies, and to the people around us, that a boundary needs to be established, or a boundary has been violated, or a toxic pattern is forming and we aren't okay with it. Anger is so incredibly wise, but it's gotten such a bad rap because of how it's traditionally been expressed, and because of the lack of education around how to express it in a way that feels safer.

The other piece I want to share is this. Because we're in perimenopause and our window of tolerance is narrower, we react to things faster than we used to. This is where we want to call in discernment, because some of it might just be our hormones playing tricks on us. We might rage out because there's no cold water left in the fridge. That level of anger toward something small is something to be aware of. Like, whoa, I'm really going out of bounds on this one.

But the seed is worth acknowledging. And this is what I really want to anchor home about anger: women's emotions are valid. We might not always express them in the best, most ideal way, anger especially. But the seed that's there is worth noticing and paying attention to. And if it's truly something that matters to you, it's worth communicating to your loved ones and the people you share space with.

So I'm not here to tell you how to manage your anger so you can become more palatable to other people. What I want to help you do is understand that anger is a wise messenger. We have tools for working with anger, and then we can see what the little gem at the center of it is, the part that wants to be seen and heard.

So think about this for a second. Which one do you most identify with? The Guard, the Keeper, or the Sentry? That's a really good place to start.

Next, we're going to talk about anxiety. Anxiety is also a nervous system response. We're going to keep the castle theme, because I think we're painting a good picture here. We've got the castle and the styles of guards. That's our foundation. Anxiety is something that rolls in, so I call it either the Storm or the Fog. This is how our body responds to things that create anxiety.

The Storm is the anxiety where things are fluttering and moving. It's a more heightened panic state where we can't quite form our thoughts. Our heart is racing, our thoughts are spinning, we're snapping at people, we can't sit still. It's a very active, activated state of anxiety.

Then there's the more fog-like state of anxiety. Here we still have that internal panic and dysregulation, but it comes with a foggy, numb, can't-really-engage feeling. You might see it as a functional freeze state, where our nervous system is kind of frozen. It's often associated with procrastination, putting the thing off, not being able to engage, feeling a bit shut down.

I'm going to share two tools here, one for each. There's also a guidebook I have for you that covers tools for anger and even more tools for anxiety. So I'm not leaving out the tools for anger. They're all in there. In consideration of time, I've put a lot in the guidebook that comes with this talk, so definitely take a look. But we'll do the anxiety ones live, and I'll say this first one also works really well for anger.

For the Storm, when things are really panicky, this one is so amazing. It's called the physiological sigh. I call it "take another sip," because I think it describes what you're doing. You inhale all the way, take another little sip of air to top it off, and then exhale. You inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth.

Let's do it together. Inhale. Another little sip. And exhale. We want to lengthen the exhale, like you're blowing out a candle across the room.

Here's why it works. When we're anxious, we take short, shallow breaths up in the chest without even realizing it. That actually causes some of the tiny air sacs in our lungs to collapse, because they're not being used, so we're not getting in as much oxygen. When you take this kind of double inhale, you reopen your full lungs and get a ton of oxygen, which helps you find calm. Then the long exhale moves your diaphragm in a way that slows your heart rate.

Let's do it again. Inhale. Take another sip. Exhale, nice and slow.

This is one of the tools used with soldiers who have PTSD, because it's one of the most fast-acting tools for anxiety. I'm not kidding. Just those two breaths and I feel a little loopy. It's incredibly effective. So that's for the Storm.

For the Fog, here's another one. Like I said, in the Fog you're kind of detached. There's a bit of dissociation. You're anxious, but it comes through as numbness, because your body hasn't learned to feel the intensity of whatever is triggering you in the moment. This tool is very gentle. It's called orienting. There are a couple of different ways people teach it, but I keep it really simple, because we don't want anything complex when we're feeling anxious.

I look in front of me and just notice the room. That's the first level, just noticing the room. What this does is help orient our bodies to the present moment, so the body knows we're not running from a tiger, and there's no one climbing over the castle wall. We're just here, in this present space. So you look forward. Then look to your right, just noticing the room. I'm noticing that there is a room, and it's safe, and nothing is coming for me. Then look to the other side and notice that part of the room. You can also look behind you. Just noticing. Oh, there's nothing there. I'm good.

Now, if you're in that fog state, feeling numb or dissociated from your body, coming back to the present moment can actually feel a bit jarring, and not super safe. So take it slow. If you feel you have access to more presence, you can start noticing specifics about the room. Maybe you're in your living room, and you notice the couch, the color of the couch, the texture of the pattern, the window. You look to your right, and there's the kitchen. You notice the cabinets and the cabinet doors, whatever it is. You can play with those two ways of doing it: just noticing the space around you, or noticing the space with some extra detail.

So we've covered a lot. We've covered what's happening biologically that makes us more reactive, with both anger and anxiety, and why they're showing up more and with bigger swings. And we talked about reframing anger. If this is the only thing you take away, please let it be this: anger and anxiety are so, so wise. They just want you to be aware of what's going on under the surface. Give yourself permission to feel them, and then use the tools to help manage the feeling within your window of tolerance, so you can feel better and more clearly communicate the gem at the center of that feeling.

Now, the hormones. Hormones are going to hormone. They're going to fluctuate and do their thing at this time in our lives. The tools I shared, and the ones in the guidebook, aren't going to change that. They won't stop your hormones from fluctuating. For that, you'd want to see a medical provider to learn what's right for your body. But they will help you be in relationship with the emotions those fluctuations create. They'll help you understand yourself, and they'll help you express the truth of who you are through those feelings.

So we get to have the anger. We get to have the truth the anger is trying to tell us, the catalyzing, active force of change. That's what anger is. It's so powerful. And we get to feel that power and use the tools to communicate it and take appropriate action in our lives. It's so freaking amazing what we're capable of when we use our emotions as messengers.

Anxiety is the same way. Something feels off. Anxiety is interesting, because in the brain and nervous system it can get played on repeat, even when nothing in our environment warrants it. Just because you feel anxious doesn't mean something bad is going to happen. Sometimes

your body thinks something bad is going to happen, but you're completely safe. That's where the tools help retrain your body to be less reactive. They stamp a new response over the old ones.

On the anxiety side, I also want you to think about which one you tend toward. The Storm or the Fog? Like I said, the guidebook has practices for both.

I'm going to close with one more thing. This is what I call a maintenance tool, and it's also in the guidebook. It's EFT tapping. If you've heard of it, it's fantastic. The tools I shared today, and the ones in the guidebook, are for the moment when things are happening and you need to make a shift. EFT tapping is a phenomenal tool for maintenance.

There are a plethora of YouTube videos on it, and I walk clients through it in real time, one on one. It's a very powerful tool where you tap on acupressure points on the face and upper chest while speaking your fears and concerns out loud. It helps you process the intense feeling both verbally and physiologically, whether that's anger, anxiety, dread, worry, procrastination, any intense feeling you feel stuck in.

But for you today, here's one that's very simple. There's a tapping point here, and all you have to do is say: I am safe. I am safe. It is safe for me to feel angry. It's safe for me to feel anxious. I'm safe. I fully and completely love and accept myself. I feel anxious right now, and I fully and completely love and accept myself. It's very simple and doesn't draw a lot of attention. You could do it anywhere. Like I said, it's a phenomenal tool for maintenance.

So let's wrap this up. My takeaway for you today is that your anger and your anxiety are not flaws. They are incredibly wise messengers. In this particular season, they're speaking a little louder than they used to, partly for biological reasons. But now you also know you can find the gem at the root of those feelings and communicate it more clearly.

To get started, you don't need to overhaul your life. Just pick one tool, one moment, and practice it on repeat. That's how our bodies learn: through small, sustainable choices we make consistently. So think about how anger shows up for you, and how anxiety shows up for you.

Everything from today, including reflection prompts, is in the free guide, Reclaim Your Anger and Calm Your Anxiety. And if you're ready to go deeper, there's also the full toolkit. It covers the tools in the guidebook plus a bunch more, with video tutorials for all of them so you can watch me do them in real time. There's also a downloadable meditation geared toward anger, and an even bigger guide with more information and more reflection questions to help you get to know yourself.

So again, my name is Tanicia Baynes. You can find me on Instagram at The Rooted Experience. I would love to connect with you in any way that feels good to you. Give me a shout-out on Instagram, or email me at hello@therootedexperience.com. Pop me a note and let me know what you found most helpful. I hope to hear from you soon.

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