

My problem with her anger



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A Critique of Eric Bartel's " My Problem with Her Anger"

When most people get married, they go into the marriage with the expectations and hopes that everything will go as planned, that they will always get along, and that the responsibilities will be evenly divided between both spouses. And for two working spouses who have children, they share the expectation that no one parent will be more of a caretaker than the other.

Eric Bartels, a feature writer for the Portland Tribune in Portland, Oregon, feels as if he has personal experience as to what it is like to be on the receiving end of his wife's irrational—or at least in his eyes—anger. Bartels informs his readers of the anger his wife projects on him, which he believes should be saved for people who are portrayed as angry people and who do not tend to care about the people they are taking their anger out on.

While Bartels does a well job at being understanding of where his wife is coming from with all of her anger, he personally does not take any of the blame for the problems in the marriage. Eric Bartels explains how he feels himself to ultimately be the more dominant parent and his wife has much built-up anger that she constantly takes out on him. After working many hours, along with helping to take care of the kids, he gets yelled at by his stressed out wife about the things that he did wrong and the things that he could have done right.

Bartels provides probable cause as to why his wife is so angry, such as motherhood and professional success, while also admitting that he did make

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mistakes before the marriage. Bartels ultimately feels that he does not deserve any of her anger because he has not done anything wrong making her the only one with faults and who is being the harsher one in the marriage. In this article, Eric Bartels does a poor job at showing her side of the story and admitting to lashing out on her every now and then.

He only provides the reader with instances where she was the big bad wolf, per say. After bathing his kids and while putting the kids to bed, his wife “ walks into the bathroom and scornfully asks no one in particular ‘ Why is there still water in the bathtub? ’ ” (438). Another time his wife “ stomped into the kitchen as I was cleaning up after a dinner that I may well have cooked and served and announced in angry tones that she needed more help getting the kids ready for bed than I had been providing” (438).

So while his wife is portrayed as this woman who snaps at her husband at any moment she can, he is portrayed as this perfect, innocent little angel who just can't catch a break. Bartels does not mention instances where she has been on the receiving end. He only points out a few slip ups he had before the marriage, such as “ I would occasionally lose my cool, kicking a cooler door closed or angrily sending an empty bottle smashing into a bin with an ear-splitting explosion”).

So although he admits that he had a bad past and lost his cool before the marriage, he doesn't take any fall for the marriage issues and wrongly blames his wife for it all. While Bartels does a poor job at owning up to any of the tension in the marriage, he does understand where his wife is coming from with her anger. He understands the hardships of marriage by saying “ I think it's fairly well established by now that marriage is a challenge, a

creaky, old institution that may not have fully adapted itself to modern life, one that now fails in this country more often than not.

Put children in the picture and you have an exponentially higher degree of difficulty" (439). He also understands the troubles caused from motherhood by saying " Motherhood asks the modern woman, who has grown up seeing professional success as hers for the taking, to add the loss of a linear career path to an already considerable burden: child rearing, body issues, a shifting self-image and a husband who fell off his white horse long, long ago. I suppose this would make anyone angry" (439).

So although he does not approve of her anger and is not pleased by it, he understands why she might have so much built up anger that she feels the need to take out on her husband. So in essence, he is arguing fairly. When Eric Bartels decided to get married, he was not aware of all of the problems that would arise and the wrath that he would experience from his wife. Bartels informs his readers of the anger his wife projects on him, which he believes should be saved for people who are portrayed as angry people and who do not tend to care about the people they are taking their anger out on. While Bartels does a well job at being understanding of where his wife is coming from with all of her anger, he personally does not take any of the blame for the problems in the marriage. Even though his wife is very bitter for certain reasons, Bartels still loves his wife and is willing to make things work in the end.