

Angry and posting? What you should do instead.

In this age of social media, we always have an outlet for our thoughts, whether they be insightful and informative, or whether to express our frustrations and complaints.

If we want to share golden nugget from a conference, there's Twitter and a hashtag. If we want to lash out at our boss, there's Facebook (where we aren't friends with our boss). If we want to rant (or rave) about anything, we can post about it at length on our blog.

Most of the time, there's no harm done. Except if you post when you are angry.

When you are angry, you are caught up in the (negative) emotion of the moment. You are looking either to vent your frustration or to exact some sort of revenge. When you vent in anger in person (and not on social media), there are often (immediate) consequences. You may insult or offend someone and ruin your relationship with that person. You may escalate a situation (and in some cases, this can even lead to violence). Or you may blow off steam, and calm down.

But when you are angry and you post on social media, the consequences can be greater and more long-lasting. Social media is the great amplifier. Your angry thoughts can go viral. And even more so, they become permanent. They can't be easily retracted. They are searchable and they can definitely be attributed to you.

We've seen case upon case of people tweeting in anger (whether justified or not), and then facing consequences. There have been a few cases of passengers getting booted off a flight. Or people being fired for tweeting something.

Here's the thing: Anger does not allow you to think clearly. You may not see the consequences.

Angry and about to post? Take a pause. Put your thought into a draft. Wait.

A few weeks ago, I had an unfortunate meeting with someone and I felt very angry and upset afterward. I came home and wrote a blog post, which would have upset that person had I published it. Instead, I wrote it and let it sit in the draft file. I still haven't published it. My anger is gone, and now I realize I don't necessarily want to have those thoughts, about a specific person and meeting to be "on the record." Perhaps what happened was not as bad as I perceived it. Perhaps this person meant no harm.

If you must vent, write it but don't tweet it. As a speaker at an event a couple of years ago said (I wish I could remember her name):

Never Twitter when you're bitter.

So, write it. But don't post it...yet. Come back to it when you are not as angry and frustrated.

Once you are calm, and revisiting your post ask yourself these questions:

- Do you really want to put it on the record?
- Is this important enough to ruffle feathers?
- What do you expect to gain from this?
- And, is it worth it?

Have you regretted posting something you wrote while you were angry? What were the consequences?