

Learning to Stay in the Room: A Phenomenological Investigation of Anger and the
Combat Veteran
by
Meghan Joy Smith

This paper will explore the phenomenon of anger as it presents itself within the traumatized combat veteran population, and my own challenges in learning to tolerate its various expressions. I will apply an existential-phenomenological lens and draw on case vignettes from two of my clients to explore and investigate the lived-experience of anger – how it is embodied, expressed and understood by both my clients and myself. I will consider the necessity of uncovering the meaning behind anger and its repercussions, as well as the role that shame plays. Finally, I will examine the ethical reasons for recognizing the face of the Other amidst the chaos and uncertainty of anger, and discuss the ways I am “learning to stay in the room” with clients that sometimes frighten and challenge me.