

Why we all need

SHERINE CONYERS
conyerss@gst.newstld.com.au

ARE you feeling angry at someone?

We've all dealt with it. Tailgaters who like to give a funny kind of wave with their middle finger, people who jump ahead of us in the supermarket queue. Angry people in the shops, on the roads, it seems everyone is getting angry.

ABC breakfast radio presenter Spencer Howson recently introduced listeners to Alistair Coleman, a UK journalist who started a blog called *Angry People In Local Newspapers*.

Mr Coleman said one of the angriest papers he had come across was *The Sunshine Coast Daily*.

He said it was his "favourite angry newspaper in the whole world" because it had a talent for "having very, very angry people usually wearing shorts".

Dr Rachel Sharman, lecturer in psychology at the University of the Sunshine Coast said, sadly, anger bred anger.

"In its most primitive form anger is one emotion that's called an approach emotion," she said.

"When you're angry you're usually trying to remove an obstruction.

"It's a fight or flight mechanism. What's happened is the person who is getting angry is viewing you as an obstruction to their goal." Dr Sharman said western cultures that rewarded narcissistic individualistic behaviours, were more likely to be angry.

"Anger is a very culturally defined emotion. It's acceptable to get angry in some situations and in others it isn't. It varies in different cultures.

"The unfortunate thing is it fuels anger. If that's rewarded, well guess what, that's what I'm going to try next time.

"If we want it to be reduced we have to introduce punishment.

"If there is no punishment and no reward they certainly won't reduce that behaviour.

Dr Sharman said it was a



TOO SLOW: Road rage is on the rise along with other displays of irritation in our

case of 'monkey see, monkey do'.

"If we model anger and if children see that anger gets them what they want then they adopt it," she said.

"It certainly sets up a negative emotionality.

"People will either become upset and distressed or get angry back. Anger begets anger."

Dr Sharman also said anger in media helped normalise the behaviour and allowed others to see angry reaction as more acceptable in society.

"Seeing and reading about anger in the media either incites fear or normalises it," she said.

"The more violence and aggression and the more normalising in media, the more people will think it's perfectly ok to behave that way."

FRIENDLY FRIDAY

■ The *Journal* will be launching Friendly Friday, in a few weeks as an opportunity for you, the reader, to turn negatives into positives and breed good behaviour from bad. Pick up next week's paper to find out more

SNAPSHOT

So is society making us more angry?

"It's certainly making it more narcissistic, anyone who is like that is thinking it is all about them, they don't consider consequences of others because they don't care," she said.

"They could then see other people as an obstruction, or because they are only thinking about themselves, they may become an obstruction

to someone

Dr Sharman anger really taking a laughing.

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