

# Rebecca Reid

U1

0:00

A lot of the studies that I read for the book were about the interplay of women and anger, and it all said that because we don't tend to have, like that little steam valve that lets out like a little bit every day, we tend to like, wait until the lid blows off and then blow up. Usually not the thing we're actually upset about, but you've had that catharsis of having shouting for it, or you've stormed out of the house, and as soon as you had that catharsis, you then feel guilty and like you've got it wrong. Because I suppose technically you have got it wrong, but you've been pushed to that point. **Is** Welcome to Women Are Mad, where we invite women to bring their anger into everyday conversation. I'm Selima Saxton, I'm an actress and writer. I'm Jennifer Cox and I'm a psychotherapist. We notice that anger is the one emotion that women aren't allowed to open express. Meanwhile, everything around us is making us absolutely furious. We're all feeling it. Let's get together to work out what to do with it. So, Salma, what's made you angry this week? When I told you something that made me sound about sex, it didn't. Did it make me angry? It made me shameful. And I'm angry at myself about this, right? Yeah. Do you want to. Do you want to tell our dear listeners what you did? Yes. So, um, I. I've just started eavesdropping on my husband's phone calls. Sometimes, particularly when it's about work, I want to know what he's doing, and I found myself listening at the door of the study to see what was happening. And then I got. And then basically, I heard something totally took it out of context, and it was completely wrong and everything was totally fine. Lil what's Lil? I don't really know, but I think that's what it means. Why do you throw these phrases out and you're like, but I don't know what they mean. Anyway. Sounds good. Yeah. So fag and Lil. Yeah. The fag ends of a conversation, right? Yeah. And look this is learnt behaviour of mine from my childhood where I listen to doors in a hypervigilant way to check the temperature of rooms. And I don't mean Celsius. No. Um, so you think because I think this whole point about hypervigilance is really interesting because of course it's designed in an evolutionary way to protect us, and it's like a safety behaviour, isn't it? You'd think, oh yeah, that's sensible. Let me read the room. Let me, let me work out what maybe I need to do to, uh, moderate the behaviours of other people as I go into it. I mean, it's all shocking, even as as I'm saying it, it's awful. Of course, it's never going to work or being of real use. Yeah, but it's definitely, um, something that I did so much of as a child and as a child. I just thought that was a really useful way of controlling the dynamics in my family. It's so sad. Isn't it? Sad? Yeah. Um, and so when I'm feeling wobbly myself, you know, January and kind of wandering about, you know, and then my. Oh, God, I was. I'm so sorry. I won't keep mentioning the fact that my dad died in November, but, you know, he he died in November. Um, so I think when I'm feeling a bit wobbly, I go to these old patterns of childhood. And one of them is kind of half listening to try and ascertain, um, what's going on. It's just really, um. And can I just say what you what? You texted back to me, which was brilliant. You text back, this has this behaviour has no place in your adult life. I'm very strict. I was like, okay, **is** okay, back away from the door. Saliba. Um, yeah. So thank you for that because I was like, I think you even wrote it in capitals. Yeah, that that's my pleasure. Um, yeah. Thank you. Yeah. And now I'm going to introduce our guest for today. Our guest today is a journalist and author. Her revolutionary book, *The Power of Rude*, is a Bible for anyone attempting to challenge their freeze reflex. Going head to head on live TV with the likes of Piers Morgan, shows her capacity to put her money where her mouth is. Please welcome the courageous Rebekah Reid. As launching Rebekah Brooks, could you please tell us what makes you angry? Oh, I mean, the list is long. Great. We're braced. Um, I think the majority of

the things that make me really angry are me or my fault. I'm very intolerant of, like, forgetting things, getting things wrong, being late, those meeting be incredibly angry. And also, I think I find myself any anything that I feel like is confining me. So traffic or buses not turning up or forgetting something, anything that makes me feel like I'm not able to get somewhere. Um, and then I think nearly, probably all of the things that are incredibly unfair about being a mom and having a baby and quite, um, my and I obviously, um, sorry, not obviously, but I have a one year old, um, and previous to having her, I think I sort of knew that the status quo wasn't great for women, but I didn't know how bad it was. I didn't know that basically the whole of the tube network is unusable, the pram ideas, and that you will spend so much like infinite amounts of money on, on childcare, which will often close or you can't use if they're ill and you still pay for holidays, and the people running the and the people running these places don't even make good money themselves. Um, I think that's that's my newest bugbear on on anger. Um, and I think in terms of small things, um, probably anytime somebody takes a cold Diet Coke out of my fridge and doesn't go back in, I think it's a hate crime. How dare what that is? That's vicious. It's cruel. It's so true about the tube, though, isn't it? I think, um, what was also really vile in that in those years for me, was how you try and get one of the people that you know, were at the gates to maybe give you a hand down the steps or whatever, and they just go, oh, sorry, love, sorry, love, health and safety can't do it. <sup>1s</sup> I was at Clapham Junction on Wednesday and I got to the I got to the gate and he said oh were you trying to go? And I said, Louis. Oh. And he went, oh. And I thought he was gonna say the train was cancelled. He went, there's no way you're going to get the pram up those steps. There's no left. And I was like, gosh, between. We think of any way that I might add. Well done steps. And he was like, oh, love. Like you just had to hope someone will. And actually, in my experience, I've never had to wait more than about 30s for somebody, you know, often a woman. It's funny actually, I found it's usually I like men a lot more since I had a baby. Oh. That's good. Maybe they've changed. Um, yeah, I think maybe they've changed. Or also, I mean, I do dress fairly provocatively now, so. Okay. Okay. That's very interesting. What post having children. Uh, post being single as being single. Yeah. Fair enough. Great. All of my clothes were sort of nice Mormon tents, and now I. Now I have to date again. I had to try and find something that showed either my wrists or my ankles at one point. Otherwise, you know, not really advertising. <sup>2s</sup> Um, I'd love to bring this closely to your brilliant book that as as Rebecca knows, I ended up giving somebody on the tube because she saw me shed a little tear at the end of it, and we got into a discussion about assertion and rudeness, and I passed it on. I've told Rebecca this already. So, Rebecca, there was a sentence in your book, um, I'm going to read it out, actually. So I get it right. My desire not to be rude made me the absolute worst version of myself, which I love. So just in your quest to redefine rudeness, I suppose to assert. Anyway, how do you express yourself when it comes to conflict or or in anger? So I think what I spent a lot of time trying to do before was like, put my feelings for a sort of Google Translate so that I can come up with like a confusing, euphemistic statement which would convey what I wanted to say without actually ever having to say it in a sort of like Jane Austen comedy of manners format. And I realized that actually, that's it does everyone an enormous disservice because it's tiring, it's emotional labor trying to work out what someone's actually trying to say. And also then it leads. It leads you to bad habits where, you know, I'd be having an argument with my best friend, and I would use full stops at the end of every sentence on WhatsApp, you know, in order to convey my display, rather than saying, Stephanie, you're not replying yesterday really pissed me off. It's an easy like, it's so much easier to be direct and it's actually less rude to be direct. Um, if you talk, depending on what kind of rudeness you're talking about. So I've, I've really tried to strip away that sense of like euphemism. And so it's almost like double entendre, this pretense, you think you're not feeling a certain way and be really, really to being really transparent. I'm like, at the moment I've got a writing partner who I love working with his brilliant, but he is so avoidant about committing to plans. Oh, I really, really love

and I hate this. We hate this. And I used to be quite like, um, okay, well, look, maybe next week we should talk about. And now I'm just like, I will be at the cafe on Tuesday at 4 p.m.. And if you're not there, I'm going to be furious. So, like, if you don't want to fight. And I think there's and I think there's a levity to it and there's a lightness to it. But the point still stands. It's not trying to like, reshape your whole personality and communication to try and avoid provoking events. And also, I noticed in your book that, um, humor really features so strongly. And actually what we were writing started in the 90s, so is brilliantly humorous. But that's what I love about it, because you really showed us how to be direct, ask for what we want. We rude in inverted commas, but not resort to well, what I have often resorted to in the past, which is a fawning state or a people pleasing state. So do. Yeah. Um, you know, which is why I think that your book is particularly good for people like me who have defaulted to that in the past. Um, what are the what is it? Phoning, fighting. Floating or freezing, right? Yeah. Yeah. Um. Yeah. And I've definitely always gone to fawning in the past, so I don't really I get that. And, you know, obviously I wrote the book, but I don't get it right all the time. And my tendency still, which I had to fight against, is to really feel my anger and then really convey it, but then not have the kind of like, hurts but to back it up. So after so within half an hour, then be like, I'm so sorry, that was too much. That was too far. Even if it wasn't, and I was actually being really reasonable. Um, and I think there's, there's, there's two levels of confidence. You need to be able to kind of use your own way. You've got to deliver it, and then you've got to stand by it. And that's. Yeah. And not kind of backtrack. Exactly. And backtracking is so tempting because you get I think for me, a lot of the studies that I read for the book were about the interplay of women and anger, and it all said that because we don't tend to have like that little steam valve that lets out like a little bit every day, we tend to like, wait until the lid blows off and then blow up. Usually make not the thing we're actually upset about, but you've had that catharsis of having shouting or, you know, you've, you know, thrown a saucepan across the room or you've stormed out of the of the house, whatever you've done. And then and as soon as you have that catharsis, you then feel guilty and like you've got it wrong, because it's because technically you have got it wrong, but you've been pushed to that point is, generally speaking, not your fault. So I think it's about learning to stand by your anger, but part of that is delivering it in a way that doesn't give you that immediate sense of like, okay, it's gone now. Um, because that's a false security. That means you don't deal with the real problem. Well, I was just going to say about this point that for me is so crucial, which is the identifying the anger in the first place, because I just think women are not great at it. I mean, we're not taught how to do it. We don't have a vocabulary for it. It's not encouraged. It's it's so we're sort of really swimming against the tide, even just trying to. Located in our cells as a feeling. So I think that's, for me, a major part of, you know, the importance of your book, actually, and also taking up the space, right, is okay to take up that kind of space. And then, as you quite rightly say, Rebecca, not shrink afterwards and kind of like vacuum clean that space up afterwards and go, sorry, sorry made a mess. You know, like that. I had a friend who I can't remember what it was that she did. I think she was having a really, really, really rough time. And she and she said, threw a pot of spaghetti bolognese on the floor. And she'd been provoked, like, for hours and hours and hours. And it was entirely not her fault. And then, of course, she spent the whole evening cleaning it up and apologizing. But that, that so that coming. So I'm going to say with so many times coming back to your book, but coming back to your book, Rebecca, um, if one does follow a lot of that advice, which is standing your ground in many different situations, be that medical. My gynecologist, for example, the hairdressers paying for the hen weekend, that was the one that really resonated with me. Um. I can really see how it not it no longer becomes. Yeah, a death by a thousand cuts. If one just shows up for oneself constantly. Spaghetti bolognese moment, it becomes far less likely. Right? Exactly. Yeah. Because you're not you're not driven to it and that it's a muscle. And the more you use it, the better you get at using it. And it's a skill and all of those things. So it's practice. And then

you learn to pick your battles and you don't you're not you're not waiting for breaking point all the time. It's so true because I think Selima and I definitely are completely obsessed with honesty, you know, honesty and friendships and just being able to firstly identify the feeling and then secondly, just name it in the here and now and not let it build and and also not feel shame for having a feeling and and not feel and not assume that the other parts are going to really badly react to it. Yeah. And the funny thing about that is that we've kind of come out through the other side, but it's still the same problems. So now there's this sort of hyper therapist way that some people communicate, or they sort of has messages where you say, like, are you in a position to receive some information that may be distressing to you and very hyper American therapist way of talking, which is actually the exact same thing. It's it's dressed up as more or less, but it's not. And in reality, like my university friendship group with a policy that if you're too hung over to turn up for something. We started this obviously when we were young and fun. Um, it's always not calm if you've got a hangover, but you can't lie about it. You have to say, I'm, I'm I'm hungover. And that's why I'm not nice. And I think it's in that culture of honesty and expectation and transparency and that culture where you say, the way that you spoke to me the other day really made me angry, rather than waiting and waiting and waiting and then sending a nine paragraph WhatsApp. Yeah. Or being ghosted as well. That's another. Yeah, exactly. Just kind of leaving somebody hanging because you can't bear them anymore. Um, <sup>1s</sup> which is I'm also, you know, that's fair enough if you can no longer bear somebody. But it shouldn't get to that point. It should be a conversation that you kind of gradually have. We can just say, like, what on earth are you doing? Yeah. And also, I think the ghosting thing is complicated, but I think there's a social contract that we all have. And I would expect that if I had a relationship with any description with somebody, that I would be able to afford to send them a couple of lines of message. And I think again. <sup>1s</sup> This ghosting is a good example of a phobia of rudeness and a phobia of anger, pushing you to bad behavior because it makes you avoidant rather than doing the grownup thing and saying, this isn't working for me anymore. You just run away. And that's actually much worse. It makes you almost as bad as the person you'll try to run away from. And also as someone who has been ghosted, actually, the you know, one then feels quite mad because there is no conversation about it. And then, you know, I've definitely exhibited some kind of seemingly unhinged behaviors because I was just kind of so bewildered. That's because I was, you know, looking into space, going, what? Where? Well, it's sad to be robbed of the opportunity to kind of work on yourself and work on the friendship. Yeah. You know, you can get yourself to a really different place, actually, when you really sit and do that. And if they don't want to do that, then that's totally fine too. But then I think you've been robbed of the opportunity to know what, like, you know, to at least take some, some information into. And also, I think there's just something horrible about having information withheld from you. I hate it, but I got my, um, one of my best friends dumped me many, many years ago, and I think she probably had a point. Like, actually, I think I was, I think I was the problem. Um, but it took years and I was like, I still check her Twitter every now and again, like I've never well. And that was just a ghosted. She walked. You never heard why they were supposed to be. I mean, I sort of know why. Um, I was slacking her off to another friend and somebody videoed it and sent it to her. So like that, I understand why my criticisms were fair, but I shouldn't have been saying about about her behind her back. I was also, in my defense, I was like 23 at the time. Yeah. Um, who the hell sent her that, you know? And where did she stay? Friends with the person who did the video sending who I think is the bigger villain. Yeah. Is that a kind of flying monkey narcissist type thing? Yes, very much so. But she she was she just blocked me on all platforms and we never talked about it. Um, and I think what I would really like to apologize, like, properly apologize. <sup>1s</sup> Um, if you're listening. I'm sorry. Yeah. <sup>2s</sup> But also I often think with relationships, be they, um, you know. Partnerships, lovers, friendships, whatever. If you have had love for one another at any point, then surely there has to be some kind of recognition. There is a

kind of straightforward, um, rude in in your face conversation to be had, right where we all assert ourselves and say how we feel, and then we have to hug and kiss all the time. And the investment you've put in to that relationship. Exactly. Surely it deserves that, doesn't it? Yeah. And I think in all breakups, friendship, platonic or otherwise, it's exactly that. It's saying, I know I hate you right now, but there was a time where I did love you, and I'm going to act like that version of myself, not the version of myself that I feel like today, because I know that the version of me who was obsessed with you and wanted to be around you all the time would want me to behave this way. Yes, this is it. I, um, it's funny, actually, that going back to when you said that you just never heard properly back from the performer best friend. We've said, haven't we, about how horrible it is. Um, to just not know. Not not be told to not hear. It's a really, really, um, uncomfortable state for a human. I think, like, you know, we just won the, the news essentially. You know, even if it's hard to take, we'd rather know. Yeah. And I think I all of the most of the worst issues with anxiety have all been based around not knowing, not understanding, not feeling like I had all the pieces of the jigsaw and filling in the gaps in kind of crazy ways. Yourself and your brain will. Your brain will always find the meanest possible explanation for any. Of course it will. And I think that. But it's it's amazing how much will punish each other to try and avoid making each other angry. Right. Oh, that's a very good point. That's powerful. Deep. Well, we'll avoid that. But also to avoid thinking of ourselves as angry people as well. Right. Not not even for the other person. I think it can be for ourselves. Because. Because we as women, perhaps might sometimes like to think of ourselves as calm and considered and compassionate, so we will not be angry and have an uncomfortable conversation where you might make me inflamed or furious, or say something I might regret. I will just smile sweetly and keep walking because we can't sit with that part of ourselves. That angry part because it's messy, isn't it? An ugly and the. A lot of the research I did was about, um, why women are more gossipy and more likely to talk behind each other's backs. Um, and why that sort of semi sexy stereotype is true. And the research also also basically because women, particularly teenage girls, are not encouraged to have any kind of physical outlets. Broadly speaking, generally. But also, you know, they don't fight with it, they don't play contact sports. They tend to look for it mentally and emotionally or on direct aggression. Exactly. And yeah, and and then it sets a pattern for the rest of your life because, you know, I arguably were just as hormonal as boys, just in different and in a slightly different way. And we're in the same pressure cooker of emotions, but we need outlets for our physical, um, strength and frustration. And we probably do need to be able to fight a little bit with each other because that sort of. Yes. Um, but in reality, what happens is, yeah, you just say, oh my God, did you see that? She thought she was somebody who could wear denim shorts. That is not what I thought. Huh? Well, that kind of stuff is brutal. But also and also the recognition that we are not all Mary Poppins or full of sugar and spice. That we are complicated, contradictory creatures who can act appallingly. And then you can say slimy. You've acted appalling and even really awful. Or also often you're living in the graveyard of other of other problems. So you will be here on Tuesday is actually about something that happened in November. And then the thing that happened in November was actually about something that happened in sixth form. And you never properly resolve any of these things because you never really get angry and clear the air. Yes. Aggregates. ARP builds and builds, is layering on layering. Rebecca, can you tell us about your angriest moment? Is that possible? I went to many of them. Is Or was there a phase in your life, you know? I think I am quite an angry person. I do, I feel things very deeply and very strongly. I think the other day I had one where I am and it's a fairly logical, but I was waiting at the bus stop and I find, um, I find parenting a challenge. I adore my daughter, but I'm not one of life's like natural. Give me nine babies and I want to move to a cottage kind of people. And I needed to be somewhere. And, um, the bus arrived and there were already two problems on the bus. And the bus driver, just, like, shook his head and drove off, and I was just like, so Earth Shatteringly furious with the universe that the world

exists where women literally cannot take transport because of having a baby. And there was just something like about the. And it wasn't his fault, obviously. And it's a horrible job and I shouldn't be angry with him, but it was just like, from the bottom of my heart, you like this is I just needed to get on your bus. Um, and I think those I have had those sort of abject moments, um, particularly. But what I'm really gratified by and it's complete lark, is that I've had friends who've had postpartum anger issues where they found it really hard not to be angry with their baby. And I've just through luck, not through anything I've done. It's funny that the one person I never get angry with is my daughter and I don't have. I've never felt angry with her, ever. Um, I feel angry with myself all the time for getting things wrong, but I don't know if I agree with her. And I think that's a real gift because, um, I know a lot of women really struggle with it, and there's so much stigma around postpartum anger. Um, <sup>1s</sup> but it's interesting, isn't it? Even with that example, you can see how the capacity for it to be displaced onto the baby like hell, essentially, it's to do with the universe, it's to do with shit treatment and basically how hard it is to be a mom in this world. It's really easy to see how it could be located in baby, and I completely understand it. And I think I've got quite a lot of friends whose mums lost their careers through having children, and who've never been able to totally untangle those two things. And it's a little still a little bit angry with their daughters, for course. But also, you know, we were talking before we started recording about, you know, the the shifts between, you know, pre children and children. It's so vital that we all speak as openly as we possibly can once we've had children, or it doesn't have to be to many people, but even just to like your sister or your cousin or your your best friend who's having a baby and just to just to say. Just to say it. Just to say that. Yeah. If you're going to be up all night with your baby. Yeah. You might not be. You might not be able to concentrate on a meeting in the morning like you thought you were going to be going to. It's not awful to feel angry that you that you can't concentrate. It's not awful to feel these things. It's the honesty is the honesty finding those people around you all. And I've always because I, you know, I went back to work after six weeks and I, you know, was back being a columnist for a broadsheet. Within eight weeks. I was on television seven weeks after you phone, but I formula fed. I had a, um, planned section. I had a night nanny two nights a week. Um, and, and and because I'm a single parent, I think people sometimes look at how I manage things and it looks like I've really got my shit together. But the reality is, I have incredibly supportive parents and siblings, um, and all of that infrastructure and have had childcare since she was some child currently since she was six weeks old. That's why I can do those things right. And it's been tempting. I'm not going to lie, to have pretended that she was an amazing sleeper because I was just so good at breastfeeding. Not because she was mainlining the optimal like it would have been tempted with clawed back some dignity and being like, yeah, she just sleeps 14 hours and like, you know, she's just really happy playing on the wall. But if you'd done that, you'd have located something in those women, your own sense of reality or something back in them. And so you broke that. And I think we should be grateful. Yeah. On behalf of the blind, thank you for doing it. Now, seriously, Rebecca, thank you so much for coming to talk to us. We really appreciate it. It's been brilliant, actually. Magical. Um, thank you guys. So much fun. <sup>3s</sup> So it was really refreshing talking to Rebecca and hearing about everything that she obviously spent so long with. In terms of the research for that book, and in terms of thinking in her own life about what she needed to change. I think particularly this point about telling friends that you're angry with them or that you don't like something they've done, and that you want to try to do things differently in the relationship. This is this is all a brand new landscape, I'd say, for most men and the stuff of nightmares. <sup>2s</sup> I mean, okay, it used to be the stuff of nightmares for me, but now I am increasingly strict about who my friends actually are or my close pals. I think I would say all of my close pals I can do that with now. I would agree, I think for both of us, our circles have shrunk to such a tiny, safe <sup>1s</sup> size. Yeah, that basically includes each other. Yes. And and just sort of hoard of trusted confidants. Yeah. And also, look, I'm a lot more

hierarchical about friendships in that way in, um, and I think all my friends will appreciate this because, um, they possibly didn't want me in any inner circle either. I was just kind of barging my way in. So I am very clear now as to who these few are. So don't ever leave me or die. <sup>1s</sup> But, you know, I know that, um, the scary thing about it is because you become very, very dependent, obviously, on on the chosen. Chosen one. Um, yeah, but but look, I think it's a it becomes. You just get a lot more clarity, don't you? Because I know I can go to you. For example. I really don't agree. I don't like that. You were really weird. Then why did you do that? Am I being an idiot? Should I do this? Was I awful to you last week? And I know you'll go. Yeah, you were a real dick. What were you doing? And I feel safe enough to let you tell me I'm a dick as well. One. Also, I think we've been able to do that so much now that it's it's quite exciting because I always think, oh, where is it going to lead us to? Because we know that we get to much more interesting, creative places. Yeah. You say, what are you doing? Yeah. And I'm like, oh my god. Yeah. What was I doing? Good point. Thank you. Okay, I'll try again. Yeah. So it saves so much time. Oh, God. Yeah. That's the main thing. It's just saves. So, so much time. You know it. You sort of save in one sense, but also you, you allow yourselves this whole new universe that can be filled and filled and filled with really productive, intentional stuff. Yeah, yeah. And also, look, the quicker you find out you're not doing something well or you've you've misunderstood something or you're upset somebody, the quicker you can rectify, it's the whole, you know, my thoughts on this, the whole ghosting mysterious, you know, past age kind of behaviors. You know, that I have sent me mad in the past because I've just thought, but just tell me, tell me. Yeah. Am I am I, you know, have I, have I behaved terribly? Okay then tell me. So it is in a way in terms of like recommending to other people that this happens for them, choosing those people that they feel so comfortable with, maybe because of safety. Yeah. And I suppose testing out, you know, can have this friendship take it and you really I suppose you don't know until you try. Yeah. And you just have to keep trying to keep leaping and keep being brave and then believe what you see, isn't it. That's the old adage. You see it. You feel that they can't or they just don't want to with you. Which look is fair enough? You're not for everybody. I'm not for everybody. And the sooner we know that, the better. That's right. And that's your evidence. Then these are your people or these are not your people. Yeah, yeah. And no hard feelings, right? No hard feelings. We're not for one another. That's okay. Yeah. Right. And I guess if there are lingering, um, issues with that, then that's you take that somewhere, you go and figure that out. Like to keep putting it back on that person. I hate them, they let me down or they're responsible for something bad for me. Um, that's not really useful to anyone. For them, it's not really them either. Um, indeed. <sup>1s</sup> Uh, onwards and upwards. Indeed. See you next time. See you next time. <sup>5s</sup> Thank you for listening and sharing in our anger. <sup>1s</sup> And remember, you're not mad to feel mad. <sup>2s</sup> Please like and subscribe. It helps other people find the podcast.