CUDSAIR

It may seem like a tall order to discuss these issues without getting angry, but following a plan may help. Professor Richard Nelson-Jones has developed a good system to use, called CUDSAIR, which stands for:

- Confront.
- Understand.
- Define.
- Search.
- Agree.
- Implement.
- Review.

Firstly, it's important you confront the problem and not the person. State the nature of the problem and how it makes you feel. Be clear that it's the problem, not the person that makes you feel like this. Consequently, you'll develop a joint definition and ownership of what's going on.

Next, it's important to understand each other's view of the situation. It may help to agree that each person should be able to say what they think about the problem without being interrupted by the other. After this, identify areas where you disagree. Don't discuss the disagreements yet, just agree that you disagree. This is how you define the problem.

The next step is to search for solutions. Here, be as outrageous as you like - but again, don't make personal attacks. Generate as many possible solutions as you can - at the moment, it doesn't matter how unrealistic they seem.

Finally, you have to agree on a solution. This is probably the most delicate part of the whole process. It's important that you both make concessions and acknowledge those that the other person has made. It's also important not to have unrealistic expectations - it's likely that the final solution won't be ideal for either of you, but the resulting compromise will probably be better than the problems the anger generated.

It's important that you both keep to the agreement. It's also important not to overreact to any breaches. Point them out, but there's no need to get angry. You have the agreement to back you up.

However well you both stick to the agreement, it's worth having a review sometime in the future to go through the CUDSAIR model again and see if things can't be improved further.