

# ANGER

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Anger is a heavy emotion. You can be angry any time, in any season, although anger may seem more suited to the iciness of winter rather than the freshness of spring. Sometimes just the appearance of the first daffodils or the sight of iris peeking through the last thin crust of snow is enough to fan the embers of anger. Sometimes, anger sweeps across the soul as we hear a robin's call or simply see people smiling or as we catch the faint smell of newly mowed grass. Seems abit silly to be angry about nature, but anger doesn't have to be rational to feel real.

Sometimes anger has a name and we can clearly focus on its face: the drunk driver, the murderer, the disease, the injury, the event. Sometimes we have people, places and events that "deserve" (at least in our mind) our anger. Sometimes we don't have a specific target for our anger and it becomes unfocused and more universal. We may find ourselves "unsettled" or anxious, filled with the emotions of anger, but with no outlet. We want to "do something", but may not have effective or appropriate avenues of expression. Anger left unacknowledged and unfocused can turn inward and become fertile ground for depression.

We may feel helpless, powerless and overwhelmed by anger and that can become depression if left untended. A sense of despair can quickly follow unresolved or unrelenting anger and it can become more and more difficult to find any sense of peace, comfort, or joy in living. When anger is ignored, it can grow into rage and rage, whether focused internally or

externally, can destroy. Anger has the power to destroy even good memories and leave us feeling even more isolated, helpless and hopeless than ever.

There are some things we can do to ease the edges of anger's sword:

1. Grow quiet inside yourself and learn to listen. Become **AWARE** of your feelings. **ACKNOWLEDGE** those feelings openly and honestly. How does your anger feel? What does your anger look like? Writing your feelings down or talking about them with a friend often helps. Once you become aware of your anger and acknowledge it, then you can **ACT**. Be specific in your awareness. Do not generalize. "I'm angry at..." is more accurate than saying, "I'm just mad all the time."



2. Become thoughtful about anger. What is your anger telling you? What am I upset about? What need or want of mine is being blocked? Am I really angry w/this person or mis-directing it? What do I want to be different?

3. Plan your **ACTIONS** by creating some personally non-destructive physical activities that will help your body release the physical symptoms of anger. Your body prepares itself to "fight or flee". Unless those hormones and chemical messengers can be released, they stay within the body, creating an unhealthy internal environment. Anger causes great stress, both physically and emotionally. Anger is so powerful that it can **RAVAGE & DESTROY** or **BUILD & CREATE**. You can be **CONSTRUCTIVE** with your anger or you can seek **REVENGE** and **DESTROY**. It's your choice and that often makes us angry, too. The feelings of anger in having to "take the high road" and act responsibly and maturely instead of giving in to a temper tantrum sometimes

simply amplify the emotion. Learn to express emotions responsibly,  
without guilt or fear



4. Pound something.... a pillow, a punching bag. Pounding a nail into a piece of wood sometimes helps as does using a child's toy hammer. Just remember not to pound people, pets or plants!

Kneading bread is a great way to release some of the energy that anger creates and then you can serve it to your family, saying, "I was thinking about you today...!"

5. Throwing things helps too. Try tossing marshmallows. Buy some garage sale china and throw it against the garage door (after placing a blanket on the ground to catch the shattered pieces). Throw beanbags or maybe even a temper tantrum. A brief, but well-timed temper tantrum (especially when you are alone) can be very therapeutic!

6. Yell...a verbal tantrum. You can yell in the shower or while driving the car. Keep the radio on and the windows rolled up. Everyone will think you are singing and you are...singing your way to sanity in a world gone mad. Just don't yell at someone or lose control of the car. Adding to your anguish does not help.

7. Weed a garden. Yank out weeds, yell at dandelions. When you are done, you have a fertile field where hope can grow.

8. Embrace your anger. Express it in a safe, non-destructive way and then move on. Set boundaries and limits to erase fear of losing control. Use a kitchen timer for 5

minutes and let release your anger until the bell rings. You can always reset the timer or use it another time. It helps keep you safe and combats the fear of being consumed by your anger.



9. Convert negative anger into POSITIVE POWER, ENERGY.

Focus your anger on something constructive. Join an advocacy group and work to change procedures, policies and laws. Many positive steps have been taken with focused, constructive energy that anger can generate.

Once anger has been acknowledged and released physically, then talking and exploring its source can also help. Find a listening ear (or two) and do some searching for causes, reasons and further expressive options.

Anger is as normal, natural and necessary as all the other emotions of grief. Don't be afraid of the intensity of your anger. Learn to become AWARE of what you feel, ACKNOWLEDGE those feelings and ACT constructively on them. Anger has the power to destroy memories, emotions and us. We can be consumed by the flames of anger or warmed by the energy it generates.

Hate and love are merely opposite sides of the flame. Yet, more has been built with light and love than has been burnt by the flames of hate. Work to release the anger so love has a place to grow.



*May love be what you remember the most.*

