

CONTROLLING ANGER BEFORE IT CONTROLS YOU

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ABSTRACT

Anger is "an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage". Getting angry is actually punishing yourself with the mistakes of others. Anger is a feeling that makes your mouth work faster than your mind. Holding onto anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. Control your "ANGER" because it is just one letter away from "D"ANGER. The more anger towards the past you carry in your heart, the less capable you are of loving in the present. You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger. The one that Angers you controls you. Don't give anyone that power especially that one who does it intentionally.

Keywords : *Momentary madness, Biggest enemy, punishing yourself, Anger, Shame*

Quoting the words of Buddha ...

"Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned."

Further, I would like to say

"We all feel angry at times; it's a natural response to threats and attacks, injustice and disappointment."

Some feelings are hard to cope with and anger is one of them. If you don't have good ways of coping with it, you can end up behaving in ways that you might later wish you hadn't.

Anger is one of the most basic human emotions. It is a physical and mental response to a threat or to harm done in the past. Anger takes many different forms from irritation to blinding rage or resentment that festers over many years.

Anger is a completely normal, usually healthy, human emotion. But when it gets out of control and turns destructive, it can lead to problems—problems at work, in your personal relationships, and in the overall quality of your life. And it can make you feel as though you're at the mercy of an unpredictable and powerful emotion. This article is meant to help you understand and control anger.

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The spiritual teacher Meher Baba held that anger results from unfulfilled desires:

“Anger is the fume of an irritated mind. It is caused by the thwarting of desires. It feeds the limited ego and is used for domination and aggression. It aims at removing the obstacles existing in the fulfillment of desires. The frenzy of anger nourishes egoism and conceit and it is the greatest benefactor of the limited ego. Mind is the seat of anger, and its expressions are mostly through the activities of the mind.”

Anger is "an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage," according to Charles Spielberger, Ph.D., a psychologist who specializes in the study of anger. Like other emotions, it is accompanied by physiological and biological changes; when you get angry, your heart rate and blood pressure go up, as do the levels of your energy hormones and adrenaline.

Anger can be caused by both external and internal events. You could be angry at a specific person (such as a supervisor) or event (a traffic jam, a cancelled flight), or your anger could be caused by worrying or brooding about your personal problems. Memories of traumatic or enraging events can also trigger angry feelings. According to Mark Twain...

“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.”

The instinctive, natural way to express anger is to respond aggressively. Anger is a natural, adaptive response to threats; it inspires powerful, often aggressive, feelings and behaviors, which allow us to fight and to defend ourselves when we are attacked. A certain amount of anger, therefore, is necessary to our survival.

On the other hand, we can't physically lash out at every person or object that irritates or annoys us; laws, social norms, and common sense place limits on how far our anger can take us.

People use a variety of both conscious and unconscious processes to deal with their angry feelings. The three main approaches are expressing, suppressing, and calming. Expressing your angry feelings in an assertive—not aggressive—manner is the healthiest way to express anger. To do this, you have to learn how to make clear what your needs are, and how to get them met, without hurting others. Being assertive doesn't mean being pushy or demanding; it means being respectful of yourself and others.

Anger can be suppressed, and then converted or redirected. This happens when you hold in your anger, stop thinking about it, and focus on something positive. The aim is to inhibit or suppress your anger and convert it into more constructive behavior. The danger in this type of response is that if it isn't allowed outward expression, your anger can turn inward—on yourself. Anger turned inward may cause hypertension, high blood pressure, or depression. Unexpressed anger can create other problems. It can lead to pathological expressions of anger, such as passive-aggressive behavior (getting back at people indirectly, without telling them why, rather than confronting them head-on) or a personality that seems perpetually cynical and hostile. People who are constantly putting others down, criticizing everything,

and making cynical comments haven't learned how to constructively express their anger. Not surprisingly, they aren't likely to have many successful relationships.

Finally, you can calm down inside. This means not just controlling your outward behavior, but also controlling your internal responses, taking steps to lower your heart rate, calm yourself down, and let the feelings subside. Finally, I would like to say ...

“ANGER doesn't solve anything. It builds nothing, but it can destroy everything.”

When is anger a problem?

Anger becomes a problem when it harms you or people around you. This can depend on whether you express your anger, and how you express it.

Often if you feel angry, it's about something that is happening to you at the time. This is usually something that is over quickly, for example, sounding your horn if another driver causes you to break suddenly. Something happens that makes you angry, you express your anger and then move on.

When you don't express your anger, or express it at inappropriate times or in unsafe ways, this is when it can damage your health and your relationships.

This is especially so, if something has made you angry in the past and you didn't express your anger at the time – because you felt you couldn't or didn't want to – then that anger can get 'bottled up' or 'suppressed'.

This can have negative consequences in the longer term – you may find that when something happens to annoy or upset you in the future, you feel extremely angry and respond more aggressively than is appropriate to the new situation.

Trying to suppress your anger may also lead to other types of behaviour, such as responding in a 'passive aggressive' way e.g. being sarcastic or unhelpful, or refusing to speak to someone. Or you may find that you are getting angry too quickly or too often, sometimes over quite small things. You may feel you are unable to let go of your anger.

If you can't express your anger in a safe or constructive way, this can be bad for your emotional, mental and physical health.

It might lead to:

- depression or anxiety
- sleep problems
- alcohol or drug addictions
- eating disorders
- compulsive behaviour
- self-harm

It might also affect your:

- digestion – contributing to the development of heartburn, ulcers, colitis, gastritis, heart and circulatory system
- blood pressure – driving it too high.

The emotion of anger is neither good nor bad. It's perfectly healthy and normal to feel angry when you've been mistreated or wronged. The feeling isn't the problem—it's what you do with it that makes a difference. Anger becomes a problem when it harms you or others.

If you have a hot temper, you may feel like it's out of your hands and there's little you can do to tame the beast. But you have more control over your anger than you think. You can learn to express your emotions without hurting others—and when you do, you'll not only feel better, you'll also be more likely to get your needs met. Mastering the art of anger management takes work, but the more you practice, the easier it will get. And the payoff can be huge. Learning to control your anger and express it appropriately can help you build better relationships, achieve your goals, and lead a healthier, more satisfying life.

Myths and facts about anger

Myth: I shouldn't "hold in" my anger. It's healthy to vent and let it out.

Fact: While it's true that suppressing and ignoring anger is unhealthy, venting is no better. Anger is not something you have to "let out" in an aggressive way in order to avoid blowing up. In fact, outbursts and tirades only fuel the fire and reinforce your anger problem.

Myth: Anger, aggression, and intimidation help me earn respect and get what I want.

Fact: True power doesn't come from bullying others. People may be afraid of you, but they won't respect you if you can't control yourself or handle opposing viewpoints. Others will be more willing to listen to you and accommodate your needs if you communicate in a respectful way.

Myth: I can't help myself. Anger isn't something you can control.

Fact: You can't always control the situation you're in or how it makes you feel, but you can control how you express your anger. And you can express your anger without being verbally or physically abusive. Even if someone is pushing your buttons, you always have a choice about how to respond.

Myth: Anger management is about learning to suppress your anger.

Fact: Never getting angry is not a good goal. Anger is normal, and it will come out regardless of how hard you try to suppress it. Anger management is all about becoming aware of your underlying feelings and needs and developing healthier ways to manage being upset. Rather than trying to suppress your anger, the goal is to express it in constructive ways.

Some dynamics of anger

- We become angrier when we are stressed and body resources are down.
- We are rarely ever angry for the reasons we think.
- We are often angry when we didn't get what we needed as a child.
- We often become angry when we see a trait in others we can't stand in ourselves.

- Underneath many current angers are old disappointments, traumas, and triggers.
- Sometimes we get angry because we were hurt as a child.
- We get angry when a current event brings up an old unresolved situation from the past.
- We often feel strong emotion when a situation has a similar content, words or energy that we have felt before.

Let me share a short story which I have read recently on how anger can damage us and others. This story is about a father and his son. The little boy had a bad temper and the father decided to find a solution for this. One day his father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, to hammer a nail in the back fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence.

Then it gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.

He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say " I'm sorry', the wound is still there."

A simple story- but is it pinching us somewhere? It will ! When we look back and count, many a times we have created lot of such holes and conveniently forgotten about it. Our inability to control our anger would have created several wounds in others and we never realize it !

"Speaking when angry" is one of the bad habit which holds us back from success says, Marshall Goldsmith in his bestseller book, " What Got You Here Won't Get You There ". Anger has its value as a management tool. But this emotional volatility is not the most reliable leadership tool. When we get angry, we are usually out of control. It's hard to lead people when we have lost control. We may think we have a handle on our temper, that we can use our spontaneous rages to manipulate and motivate people. But it's very hard to predict how people will react to our anger.

The worst thing about anger is that, it restrains our ability to change. Once we get a reputation for emotional volatility, we are branded for life! If we are an angry leader, we have a special place in the minds of our colleagues. When they talk about us, the first words out of their mouth are, "I hear he has a temper".

Can we stop getting angry?

Getting angry doesn't improve the situation and life's too short to waste on feeling bad. It can

only help us to lose our reputation as a person who gets always angry. When we are angry, if we keep our mouth shut, no one can ever know how we really feel !

It's a billion dollar question ! Marshall Goldsmith tells us a good story in his book about a young farmer who was going upstream in his boat through a river to deliver his produce to the village. The young farmer was in a hurry. It was a hot day and he wanted to make his delivery and get home before dark. As he looked ahead, he spotted another boat, heading rapidly downstream towards his boat. This boat seemed to be making every effort to hit him. He rowed furiously to get out of the way, but it didn't seem to help.

He yelled at the other boat, " change direction, you idiot! You are going to hit me. The river is wide. Be careful!" His screaming was to no avail. The other boat hit his boat and he was enraged as he stood up and cried out to the other boat, " You moron! How could you manage to hit my boat in the middle of this wide river? What is wrong with you? "

As he looked at the other boat, he realized that there was no one in the other boat. He was screaming at an empty boat which was going downstream with the current!

The lesson is simple- There is never anyone in the other boat. When we are angry, we are screaming at an empty boat! All of us have people in our lives that drive us crazy, whom we hate with a passion. The best course of action for dealing with people like this is not let them make us angry. Getting angry doesn't improve the situation and life's too short to waste on feeling bad. It can only help us to lose our reputation as a person who gets always angry. When we are angry, if we keep our mouth shut, no one can ever know how we really feel !

When the anger runs through our blood streams, try doing the following :

Simple relaxation tools, such as deep breathing and relaxing imagery, can help calm down angry feelings. There are books and courses that can teach you relaxation techniques, and once you learn the techniques, you can call upon them in any situation. If you are involved in a relationship where both partners are hot-tempered, it might be a good idea for both of you to learn these techniques.

Some simple steps you can try:

Breathe deeply, from your diaphragm; breathing from your chest won't relax you. Picture your breath coming up from your "gut." Slowly repeat a calm word or phrase such as "relax," "take it easy." Repeat it to yourself while breathing deeply. Use imagery; visualize a relaxing experience, from either your memory or your imagination. Slow yoga-like exercises can relax your muscles and make you feel much calmer. Practice these techniques daily. Learn to use them automatically when you're in a tense situation.

Cognitive Restructuring

Simply put, this means changing the way you think. Angry people tend to curse, swear, or speak in highly colourful terms that reflect their inner thoughts. When you're angry, your thinking can get much exaggerated and overly dramatic. Try replacing these thoughts with

more rational ones. For instance, instead of telling yourself, "oh, it's awful, it's terrible, everything's ruined," tell yourself, "it's frustrating, and it's understandable that I'm upset about it, but it's not the end of the world and getting angry is not going to fix it anyhow."

Be careful of words like "never" or "always" when talking about yourself or someone else. "This machine never works," or "you're always forgetting things" are not just inaccurate, they also serve to make you feel that your anger is justified and that there's no way to solve the problem. They also alienate and humiliate people who might otherwise be willing to work with you on a solution.

Remind yourself that getting angry is not going to fix anything that it won't make you feel better (and may actually make you feel worse).

Logic defeats anger, because anger, even when it's justified, can quickly become irrational. So use cold hard logic on yourself. Remind yourself that the world is "not out to get you," you're just experiencing some of the rough spots of daily life. Do this each time you feel anger getting the best of you, and it'll help you get a more balanced perspective. Angry people tend to demand things: fairness, appreciation, agreement, willingness to do things their way. Everyone wants these things, and we are all hurt and disappointed when we don't get them, but angry people demand them, and when their demands aren't met, their disappointment becomes anger. As part of their cognitive restructuring, angry people need to become aware of their demanding nature and translate their expectations into desires. In other words, saying, "I would like" something is healthier than saying, "I demand" or "I must have" something. When you're unable to get what you want, you will experience the normal reactions—frustration, disappointment, hurt—but not anger. Some angry people use this anger as a way to avoid feeling hurt, but that doesn't mean the hurt goes away.

Problem Solving

Sometimes, our anger and frustration are caused by very real and inescapable problems in our lives. Not all anger is misplaced, and often it's a healthy, natural response to these difficulties. There is also a cultural belief that every problem has a solution, and it adds to our frustration to find out that this isn't always the case. The best attitude to bring to such a situation, then, is not to focus on finding the solution, but rather on how you handle and face the problem.

Make a plan, and check your progress along the way. Resolve to give it your best, but also not to punish yourself if an answer doesn't come right away. If you can approach it with your best intentions and efforts and make a serious attempt to face it head-on, you will be less likely to lose patience and fall into all-or-nothing thinking, even if the problem does not get solved right away.

Better Communication

Angry people tend to jump to—and act on—conclusions, and some of those conclusions can be very inaccurate. The first thing to do if you're in a heated discussion is slow down and think through your responses. Don't say the first thing that comes into your head, but slow down and think carefully about what you want to say. At the same time, listen carefully to what the other person is saying and take your time before answering.

Listen, too, to what is underlying the anger. For instance, you like a certain amount of freedom and personal space, and your "significant other" wants more connection and closeness. If he or she starts complaining about your activities, don't retaliate by painting your partner as a jailer, a warden, or an albatross around your neck.

It's natural to get defensive when you're criticized, but don't fight back. Instead, listen to what's underlying the words: the message that this person might feel neglected and unloved. It may take a lot of patient questioning on your part, and it may require some breathing space, but don't let your anger—or a partner's—let a discussion spin out of control. Keeping your cool can keep the situation from becoming a disastrous one.

What these techniques have in common is a refusal to take yourself too seriously. Anger is a serious emotion, but it's often accompanied by ideas that, if examined, can make you laugh.

Changing Your Environment

Sometimes it's our immediate surroundings that give us cause for irritation and fury. Problems and responsibilities can weigh on you and make you feel angry at the "trap" you seem to have fallen into and all the people and things that form that trap.

Give yourself a break. Make sure you have some "personal time" scheduled for times of the day that you know are particularly stressful. One example is the working mother who has a standing rule that when she comes home from work, for the first 15 minutes "nobody talks to Mom unless the house is on fire." After this brief quiet time, she feels better prepared to handle demands from her kids without blowing up at them.

Some Other Tips for Easing Up on Yourself

Timing: If you and your spouse tend to fight when you discuss things at night—perhaps you're tired, or distracted, or maybe it's just habit—try changing the times when you talk about important matters so these talks don't turn into arguments.

Avoidance: If your child's chaotic room makes you furious every time you walk by it, shut the door. Don't make yourself look at what infuriates you. Don't say, "well, my child should clean up the room so I won't have to be angry!" That's not the point. The point is to keep you calm.

Finding alternatives: If your daily commute through traffic leaves you in a state of rage and frustration, give yourself a project—learn or map out a different route, one that's less congested or more scenic. Or find another alternative, such as a bus or commuter train.

Let go our anger : Now that we have our anger under control, we can start expressing it without damaging any relationships or properties. Always remember, anger can really damage our health and its better we let it go than bringing our blood pressure up.

Conclusion :

At the end of this article, I would like to quote famous words of Christopher Paolini that,
“Anger is poison. You must purge it from your mind or else it will corrupt your better nature.”

In summary, we see that human behavior involves more than just a spontaneous reaction. We can learn to control our behavior by working on the way we feel and think. It is comforting to know that it is possible to be and do what we choose, rather than be puppets of someone else. So next time when you start to speak out of anger, better you look in the mirror. In every case you will find that the root of your rage is not "out there" but "in here". You are no more a human bomb who carries anger- the deadly weapon which is the biggest obstacle to our personal and professional success.

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