

A decorative graphic consisting of two parallel white dotted lines that curve from the top left towards the bottom left of the page, set against a solid blue background.

*Manage Your
Anger Like A Pro
And Enjoy Happier
Relationships*

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If you're known for having a short fuse or frequently get into arguments, a little anger management might be in order. ***While some people might be best served by professional help, there are many strategies you can use to tame your anger.***

Chronic anger issues can get out of control and have serious repercussions for your health, work, and relationships. Understanding the reasons behind your anger and the addition of some anger management tools will allow you to better manage your mental states.

Many people find themselves in need of professional help. There is nothing to be ashamed of and seeking the assistance of a professional is a great option. If this wasn't a common challenge, mental health professionals and anger management classes wouldn't even exist.

"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."

- Buddha

Understanding Your Anger

Anger is a perfectly normal emotion and you should expect to feel some anger when you've been treated badly.

The initial emotion isn't the real issue. It's the choices you make after that point that have the potential to be damaging.

If your temper frequently escalates, you might believe that it's out of your control and there is little that can be done. However, you have far more control over your emotions than you think. The key is to discover a way to express your anger without hurting others.

Your needs are more likely to be met when you're able to express yourself appropriately. Like any other skill, managing your emotions will take some work. But it gets easier with time, and the payoff is tremendous. Your life will be happier and healthier. Your relationships and work-life will get better.

Keep in mind your anger is simply a message that some part of you believes something is wrong. At that point, your emotion has served its purpose. Now it is up to you to take the message and respond accordingly to fix the situation in an appropriate manner.

Myths About Anger

There are many myths about anger which are simply not true.

Here are 4 myths you should learn to dispel if you're going to be successful when dealing with your anger:

1. Myth: Anger should always be vented. It is unhealthy to 'hold in' any anger I'm feeling.

❖ *Fact:* Anger should not be held in, but venting anger in an uncontrolled way isn't healthy either. Expressing your anger in an excessive manner only creates more anger and hostility. The person on the receiving end of your anger is likely to become frightened or even angry themselves. Nothing positive is accomplished here.

2. Myth: Being aggressive, angry, and intimidating is just a way of being strong. I am more likely to be respected and get my way by acting this way.

❖ *Fact:* Bullying people never results in real power or respect. Part of being strong is having control over yourself. Others are far more likely to respond

positively to your needs and requests if you treat them appropriately and respectfully.

3. **Myth: My anger is beyond my control. I can't do anything about it.**

- ❖ *Fact:* Your emotions and response to your anger are almost entirely under your control. To this point, you simply haven't been trying to control them or you've used ineffective strategies. Anger can be expressed without resorting to abuse.

4. **Myth: Anger management is all about suppressing my feelings of anger.**

- ❖ *Fact:* Anger is normal and eliminating all feelings of anger isn't a reasonable goal. ***Anger management is about realizing that you're angry and consciously choosing to direct the anger in the proper direction.*** Your response to your anger can be chosen, and your response can make the situation better.

Which of these myths did you previously believe?

"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."

- Mark Twain

The Importance Of Controlling Your Anger

Many individuals have challenges with controlling their anger. They believe aggressively unloading it on the other person is the healthy way to handle it. Commonly, those with anger management issues believe others are overly sensitive and just need to toughen-up.

Realistically, poorly managed anger is very likely to ruin relationships, disrupt good judgment, impede success, and cause others to view you negatively. It has a far greater impact on your life than you probably realize.

Here are several reasons why controlling your anger is so important:

1. **Poorly managed anger damages your physical health.** Stress has been found to shorten one's lifespan. It also increases your risk for many health-related issues.
 - ❖ Some of these possible health issues include: diabetes, high blood pressure, insomnia, and an increase in cholesterol levels. Your immune

system is also weakened. Is over-expressing your anger really worth the threat to your health?

2. **Poorly managed anger damages your career.**

Poorly managed anger harms your relationships with your employer, supervisor, co-workers, and customers. Other employees will have less respect and trust for you. Once you have earned a bad reputation, it can be challenging to change the perception of others.

3. **Poorly managed anger damages your personal relationships.** Intense anger gets in the way of all relationships. Others find it difficult to express themselves or feel comfortable in your presence. They are hesitant to talk about many topics for fear of your reaction.

- ❖ Excessive anger can be especially hard on children.
No child should have to grow up in an environment that includes a person with poor anger management skills.

4. **Poorly managed anger damages your mental health.** Excessive anger requires a lot of energy and disrupts your thought process. It is more challenging to enjoy your life or to concentrate in general when you feel excessive anger. Anger can result in depression, stress-related issues, and numerous other mental health ailments.

"Anybody can become angry - that is easy, but to be angry with the right person and to the right degree and at the right time and for the right purpose, and in the right way - that is not within everybody's power and is not easy."

- Aristotle

Anger Management Tips

These tips could be enough to finally get your emotions under control, or at least to a more manageable level. Just imagine how great that would feel!

Give these suggestions a try and see if they work for you. It's not reasonable to expect miraculous results

overnight. However, you'll never know until you try. Try these tips for a month and see if they help.

Tip#1 - Figure Out What Is Really Driving Your Anger

You've probably been wondering why you seem to get angry so easily. Anger management issues frequently have their roots in childhood. As children, we take many of our cues about how to behave from those around us.

If you have watched others yell, throw things, or act violently when angry, you may have picked up these same responses.

Here are a few ways to determine if something else is making you angry:

1. **Anger is often a way to deal with other feelings.** The only way to have your needs met is to figure out what is truly going on inside. Are you really angry? ***Or is it possible that you're actually feeling afraid, vulnerable, insecure, or embarrassed?***
 - ❖ Is your immediate response to many situations to become angry? If so, there is a good chance your

anger is being used to mask other emotions and needs.

- ❖ If you were encouraged not to express your feelings as a child, this situation is even more likely. As an adult it's more difficult to express emotions other than anger.

2. **There are clues something else might be behind your anger.** Ask yourself each of the following questions and see if they apply to you.

- ❖ Do you have difficulty compromising or admitting someone else is right? Do you struggle to see other's points of view? If so, then practice empathy and looking at things from someone else's perspective.
- ❖ As a child, did the loudest person in your house get his way? Being the loudest shouldn't mean you prevail, but it often does. This is a very immature approach to getting your needs met.
- ❖ ***Can you express feelings other than anger?*** Many people pride themselves on being strong, tough, and aggressive. Are you able to let your guard down around others?
- ❖ Are feelings of guilt, fear, or shame foreign to you? Everyone feels these things from time to time. If you don't, you might be using anger as a means to avoid them.

- ❖ Do the viewpoints of others feel like a threat to you? Is your ego fragile? Are you angry when others disagree with you? Do you feel the need to control the situation? If you cannot accept that others will have different opinions than you, there's a chance that you have control issues in addition to your anger.
- ❖ Are you in touch with your feelings? If there are several emotions that make you uncomfortable, getting in touch with your feelings would be a wise move. Emotional intelligence is important to success in life. ***The ability to properly deal with the wide range of human emotions is the key to happiness and success.***

3. **Increase your understanding of your anger.**

Understanding the root of your anger is crucial to addressing your anger management issues.

- ❖ ***We feel more anger when physically and emotionally stressed.*** Do you find yourself more likely to get upset when you are under pressure, tired, or ill?
- ❖ You're probably not angry for the reasons you believe. Dig deep down and figure out why you are really feeling angry.
- ❖ Many individuals are often still angry from not having their childhood needs fulfilled. It is quite

challenging to release the pain felt during childhood.

- ❖ Anger is often expressed because of pain we experienced in childhood. It is often said that we spend the last 60 years of life recovering from the first 18.
- ❖ Anger can result from current situations that remind us of unresolved challenges from the past.
- ❖ ***We often become angry when we observe a negative trait in others that we don't like about ourselves.***

If you're unable to understand your anger, the odds of improving the situation are minimal. It's not fun to examine our flaws and shortcomings, but ***it's the first step to finding a viable solution.***

"Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be."

- Thomas a Kempis

Tip #2 - Learn Your Triggers And Warning Signs

You might be under the impression that your anger is a sudden response that occurs without any warning. But there are actually many physical indications that anger is on its way. If you can learn to recognize these warning signs, you have a much better chance at controlling your anger and responding more appropriately.

Which of these triggers and warning signs are applicable to you?

1. **Notice the physical feelings in your body when you become angry.** Anger is the label you give to certain feelings that you experience in your body. It's important to learn what those physical feelings are for you. Do you experience any of the following?
 - ❖ Pacing or restlessness
 - ❖ Clenching your jaw or fists
 - ❖ Increased rate of breathing
 - ❖ Headache

- ❖ Difficulty concentrating
- ❖ Rapid heartbeat
- ❖ Nausea or knots in stomach
- ❖ Tense neck or shoulders
- ❖ Any other physical sign that is out of the ordinary for you

2. **Notice the thought patterns that precede your anger.** While it might seem like external events are triggering your anger, the truth is that ***your interpretation of the events is the actual cause.*** Here are several negative thought patterns that can increase anger.

- ❖ **Over generalizing.** When you start thinking in absolutes, anger can result. Some examples include: *"You always do that to me."* and *"You never help me."*
- ❖ **Being overly focused on expectations.** Having an inflexible view of the way things ought to be (in your opinion) can create anger.
- ❖ **Assuming you know more than you do.** No one can read minds. If you don't have all the facts, avoid assuming that you know the truth.

- ❖ **Not letting go of the small stuff.** Small issues can build up over time. If you never let go of the past, things eventually become overwhelming.
- ❖ **Blaming others.** Don't always look to blame others for everything that goes wrong in life. ***Sometimes things just happen and no one is to blame.*** Sometimes it's your own fault, which can be a good thing. At least then you have the power to fix it.

3. **If possible, remove the people and circumstances that bring out your anger.** Are there aspects to your daily routine that seem to trigger your anger frequently? Are there certain people and places you could avoid?

- ❖ For example, do you always get upset when you go out with certain friends or does traffic make your blood boil?
- ❖ Consider if there are parts of your routine that can be altered to lower the likelihood of becoming upset.

Understanding your warning signs and trigger points will help you to recognize when you are becoming angry.

They will also help prevent getting angry in the first place. Make a list of the things that really push your buttons.

"It is impossible for you to be angry and laugh at the same time. Anger and laughter are mutually exclusive and you have the power to choose either."

- Wayne Dyer

Tip #3 - Learn How To Regain Control Of Your Emotions

It's great to be able to recognize the warning signs of an impending meltdown, but recognizing it is only the first step. Now you have to actually do something about it to prevent an outburst. There are many different ways to keep your anger under control.

Try these excellent strategies to gain control:

1. **Focus on your physical feelings.** While it might seem like this would increase your levels of anger, it actually seems to lessen them for many.
2. **Concentrate on your breathing.** A few slow, deep breaths can help greatly. ***Consider that your breathing is the only physical process related to anger that is under your control.***

- ❖ You can't always make your heart rate slow down, instantly lower your blood pressure, or make your headache go away. But you can control your breathing.
3. **Go for a run.** Exercise is a great way to manage feelings of anger. A brisk walk, a challenging run, or some simple calisthenics can do wonders for your mood.
 4. **Become aware of your surroundings.** To become really angry, you have to turn inward and focus on your thoughts. Instead, turn your attention outside yourself.
 - ❖ Describe to yourself what you see, hear, smell, and physically feel.
 - ❖ By focusing on your immediate environment, your anger will diminish.
 5. **Take a time out.** Count slowly to ten while taking 10 deep breaths.
 - ❖ If you can slow the escalation of your anger, your rational mind has time to catch up and take back control of the situation.
 - ❖ Then, if you need to, count to ten again, and again.

6. **Get a grip on reality.** Ask yourself:

- ❖ How important is this issue?
- ❖ Is it really worth all this emotion and drama?
- ❖ Is it worth ruining the remainder of my day or week?
- ❖ Am I responding appropriately to this issue?
- ❖ Is there a better option than getting angry?
- ❖ Is this issue really worth any of my time at all?

Controlling your emotions is an important skill for anyone to develop. ***Learn to prevent your anger from getting out of control in the first place.***

*"When angry count to ten before you speak.
If very angry, count to one hundred."*

- Thomas Jefferson

Tip #4 - Find A More Positive Way To Express Your Anger

Sometimes the situation really does justify feeling angry. In this case, it's important to find the best solution to resolve your anger and rectify the situation. Ideally, your

response will also reduce the likelihood of the issue from happening again in the future.

Some positive ways to express yourself include:

1. **Get specific with yourself about why you're angry.** You might be getting upset because someone is 5 minutes late, but is that really the reason? Maybe you're actually upset because it's another example of that person's lack of respect for you. ***Ask yourself what is really driving your anger.***
2. **Take 5 minutes before you move forward.** If you can sense that your anger is getting the best of you, be strong enough to walk away for 5 minutes and regain your composure. Take a moment to ask yourself why you're getting so upset.
3. **Be fair in your arguments with others.** You can be upset, but if you hit someone below the belt, the relationship may rapidly deteriorate. Express your needs without being disrespectful.
 - ❖ The relationship should be the priority. In many cases, you have the option of being right or being

happy. ***Those who choose to always be right, frequently find themselves alone.*** Resolving the issue should be the priority. Winning the argument is rarely winning.

- ❖ Keep things in the present. When anger takes over, it's common to bring up unrelated issues from the past. ***Leave the past in the past.*** Focus on the current issue and finding a resolution.
- ❖ Not every battle is worth fighting. Emotional conflicts are exhausting and stressful for everyone involved. Is it really worth the time and energy? You're much more likely to be taken seriously if you get upset 3 times a year versus 3 times a month. ***People who are frequently angry find themselves being ignored after a while.***
- ❖ Know when to drop it. Sometimes the best resolution is to agree to disagree. Choose to stop arguing. If there isn't a resolution in sight, it might be best to just let it go.

Expressing your anger appropriately is the real goal.

An appropriate response shares the fact that you're upset in a productive manner. This means the issue has a good chance of being resolved in a way that is respectful to the other party. It also means there is less likelihood of it happening again in the future.

"When you are offended at any man's fault, turn to yourself and study your own failings. Then you will forget your anger."

- Epictetus

When To Seek Professional Assistance

If you give the above tips and techniques a fair chance and anger is still a significant issue, you might require more support. Your community is likely to have therapists and classes specializing in providing help to those with anger management challenges.

Asking for help is not synonymous with weakness. It's actually a sign of great strength.

Meeting others with anger management challenges can be reassuring and provide an effective support system.

Consider professional help if any of these apply to you:

1. **You always seem to feel angry or frustrated no matter how hard you try to control yourself.** If you've given it your best shot to control your anger on your own and you just can't, it's time to get additional assistance.
2. **Your anger negatively affects your relationships or work.** Destroying your personal relationships or threatening your livelihood is a good reason to seek outside help.
3. **You avoid important events because you don't feel you can control your anger.** It's okay to avoid others who trigger your anger. However, if you're skipping your child's baseball game because you can't control yourself, it's time to get professional support.
4. **You have legal issues because of your inability to control your anger.** There are many individuals spending a lifetime in prison because of one uncontrolled outburst of anger. Do you want a similar outcome?
5. **Your anger has resulted in violence.** Anger is never justification to get physical with someone else. Also, keep the whole prison issue in mind.

Anger management therapy can be great for determining why you are so angry. It's difficult to control what you don't understand. ***A therapeutic environment can be a good, safe place to explore your anger.*** It's also a great place to practice strategies to control your anger.

Anger management classes and groups will let you see others with the same challenge. You can learn many tips and techniques that are being used successfully by those in the same situation.

Individual and group therapy can be invaluable tools to aid you in managing your anger more effectively. If you've been unable to reach a suitable level of success on your own, consider these other options.

"There are two things a person should never be angry at, what they can help, and what they cannot."

- Plato

What You Can Do For A Loved One With Anger Issues

If you live with someone with anger management issues, you're probably uncomfortable in your day-to-day living. Nobody likes the feeling of walking around on eggshells all the time. ***Always remember you are not the cause of the anger directed at you.***

You have the right to be treated with care and respect. You also have the right to live without the stress of unreasonable angry outbursts.

Try these tips to help a loved one with anger management challenges:

1. **Be clear about what you are willing and unwilling to tolerate.** It's human nature to push until we get what we want. If you allow your loved one to keep pushing without limits, they're less likely to stop before things get inappropriate.

❖ ***Stand up for yourself and be clear about what is acceptable to you and what is not.***

2. **Wait for the right time.** The right time to discuss your loved one's anger management issue is when they're not angry. It's also not a good time when you are angry. Wait until you are both calm and relaxed.
3. **Walk away.** There's a time to simply walk away when an argument gets out of hand. ***It takes two to argue. You don't have to participate.***
4. **Consider the services of a therapist for yourself.** If you find it difficult to stand up for yourself, you might require the services of an expert to learn how.
 - ❖ It's not easy to change the dynamics of a relationship once they've been established.
 - ❖ There's nothing wrong with admitting you need assistance in dealing with a loved one with anger issues. There are support groups for this exact purpose.
5. **Be safe.** This is one time when trusting your gut is smart. If you feel unsafe, leave. Simply go somewhere else.

Helping a loved one with an anger management issue is challenging. As you can imagine, the issue is likely to make them angry, which is what you've been trying to avoid in the first place.

Some things get even more challenging before they get better. Be strong and take the step to confront your loved one about their issue. How will things ever get better if you don't?

*Beware of him that is slow to anger, for when it is long coming,
it is the stronger when it comes, and the longer kept.
Abused patience turns to fury.*

- Francis Quarrels

Conclusion

Lack of anger management is a serious challenge for many individuals. Anger is often a result of deep-rooted issues from childhood, which makes it a challenge with a long and potentially complicated history.

In order to function in everyday life, it's vital to get your anger under control. Your anger negatively affects everyone around you, particularly your loved ones.

Children suffer tremendously by being around angry people. In turn, they learn poor habits for dealing with their own anger. They can also grow up in an unstable and frightening environment. The negative impact can be tremendous.

Practicing the tips and tools you've learned here will give you a real chance at getting your anger under control.

Many people can successfully manage their anger if they're willing to put forth some real effort and possibly seek professional help. Nothing is a greater show of strength than the ability to control your emotions.

"Confronting our feelings and giving them appropriate expression always takes strength, not weakness. It takes strength to acknowledge our anger, and sometimes more strength yet to curb the aggressive urges anger may bring and to channel them into nonviolent outlets..."

- Fred Rogers