



UPPER ISLAND ASSESSMENT & RESOURCE SERVICE

How to Manage Your Anger

- 1. RECOGNIZE THE COMPONENTS OF AN ANGER PRODUCING SITUATION**

Anger has three parts: intellectual, emotional and physiological. If you can attribute angry feelings to tiredness, stress, hunger, tension or other various body and mental situations, you can realize anger is often a result of being tense, run down, aroused or frustrated. Understanding this allows you to put blame on the real culprit and the source of your irritability, and not on innocent people around you.
- 2. BE AWARE OF THE VARIOUS SOURCES OF TENSION AND IRRITABILITY**

Take stock of all the things around and within you that contribute to tension and stress, then lead to anger. Internally, it could be too much coffee, alcohol or drugs. It could be too little or too much sleep, too little exercise or activity, poor posture, or various aches and pains. Outside yourself it could be the condition of your environment: messy apartment, poor ventilation, workplace too noisy, drab colours in your living room, non-communication or unresolved differences with family and friends. Become aware of all the situations that add to the feelings of irritability and tension.
- 3. IDENTIFY THE MESSAGES YOU TELL YOURSELF THAT CREATE ANGRY FEELINGS**

Listen to your “self-talk”. Are you telling yourself that it is unfair or bad that people treat you like they sometimes do? If you do, these thoughts make you angry. Remember, other people cannot be controlled by you, nor do they live by your rules. When you tell yourself that they must, you naturally become angry when they don't!
- 4. ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR ANGER**

Remember, people or situations do not make us angry! We make ourselves angry by our “self-talk” about those people or situations.
If you are feeling angry at the world, take time and ask yourself where the anger starts. You will probably find that you are feeling badly, frustrated, alone, scared, rejected, abandoned, criticized, etc., yet you are pushing the blame for your feelings on the world.
- 5. LEARN ALTERNATIVES TO ANGER**

Anger is usually accompanied by feelings of arousal, energy and agitation. There are alternative ways of expressing this energy. Go for a run, cycle, walk, dance, cook, or do whatever you like. Put your whole self, mind and body, into the activity, instead of telling yourself that you must remain angry.

6. **CULTIVATE A SENSE OF HUMOUR**

Quite frankly, in the entire scheme of things, many of life's mishaps and "troubles" are not serious. Enjoy and find humour in events you have previously catastrophized over or became angry with. It is not hard to change your attitudes, if you give it an honest try. Many things are "problems" only because we label them as "problems". We are capable of changing the label.

7. **PRACTISE RELAXATION EXERCISES REGULARLY**

All of us need time each day to restore tranquility and restfulness. Sleep just doesn't do it all! Pursue some active relaxation daily, and after two or three weeks, you will notice a difference in yourself. So will others!

8. **ACQUIRE AN ART OF EMPATHY AND LISTENING**

You will never be able to control the behaviour of other people, only your own behaviours. Stopping yourself from endlessly trying to influence others helps you learn to really listen to them, and is the start of understanding their wants, hurts and needs too.

9. **CONSIDER STRENGTHENING ETHICAL VALUES, SPIRITUAL AWARENESS AND EMOTIONAL WARMTH**

Many people who seem to have an inner calmness and serenity about them have deep-seated ethical and spiritual beliefs and feelings. Beliefs and feelings of an ethical or spiritual nature provide stability, reassurance and confidence during difficult and trying times.

A way to begin developing a personal base with which to deal with life's problems, especially anger, is to acquaint yourself with many historical spiritual teachings. Practically every religion and philosophy has something to say about anger. Reading passages regularly reinforces the messages and often creates feelings of reassurance and relaxation.

10. **IDENTIFY THE REWARDS OF NOT BEING ANGRY**

Next time your are feeling relaxed and at peace with the world, stop for a moment to be still and enjoy how good you feel. Taking the time to really notice how good it feels to be relaxed and agreeable with life is the best way to appreciate the rewards in not being angry.

MANAGING YOUR ANGER IS REWARDING

Remember, you do have much more control over your anger than you think you do. However, managing your anger effectively requires awareness, commitment and practise. The benefits are worth it. You will feel more relaxed and contented, you will enjoy life more, you will think of yourself in more positive ways, and those around you will thank you.