

ANGER MANAGER

“When anger rises, think of the consequences”

- Confucius

As the image below keenly illustrates, anger encompasses a lot more than a single emotion. It’s also important to recognize that anger is not necessarily a *bad* emotion. In fact, feeling angry can help you express yourself honestly or stand up for something you believe in. It’s when anger leads to aggression, outbursts, and self-destructive behavior that it becomes problematic. The same goes for those more prone to being passive rather than rightfully assertive who keep anger “bottled up.”

However, as with the likes of confidence, our priorities here have less to do with the underpinnings of its causes as much as they are to provide practical, real-time techniques to manage your anger by preventing, mitigating and defusing it as well as expressing it more healthfully.

It’s also fair to say that most people’s temperament and anger responses – by and large – are ingrained character traits. There’s no magic wand that can offer swift, dramatic behavior changes. But you will come away with some mindset shifts that can affect changes significantly enough to improve your life and enrich your relationships with others.



One significant barrier to managing anger can be our own ego, especially when a conflict involves both parties digging in their heels because both think they’re in the right. There are two techniques you may find beneficial. First is to acknowledge how perception skews actuality. Here’s where two rights don’t necessarily make either person wrong. If you’re willing to give the other person and/or yourself some benefit of any doubt, it can help you be more willing to back down and still save face. Allowing anger to get the better of you is also a clear example of being less than kind to yourself.

The other technique dates back thousands of years, at least according to our shout out above to Confucius. Here’s where to ask yourself whether allowing any situation to escalate is worth the consequences. Sure, part of it is about “picking your battles,” but the real trick is that you’re giving your ego a different, even better win. And, because you are the one being intentional in backing down or compromising, you retained control of both the outcome and yourself. If this paragraph didn’t fully sink in, it’s worth re-reading.

Given the intensity of this topic and to assure your WellBeing Reset continues to do well by you, the better part of this Anger Manager will rely on others' expertise to guide you through. To put things into context, let's jump right into some self-reflection.

ACTIVITY I: KNOW THY EXPRESSION MODE (TIME: 5-10 MINUTES)

The adjacent chart is self-explanatory. While each of us handle ourselves in various ways in any number of circumstances, read through each section of thoughts, feelings and actions to assess with which mode you identify. In addition to your primarily being passive, assertive or aggressive, you'll also recognize a secondary mode. Naturally, the goal is to be assertive. With which of the other two modes needs improvement?

For our purposes, it matters less whether your passive or aggressive mode is primary or secondary. Use the space below to simply acknowledge in what ways you can improve certain ways that you tend to act and any initial self-suggestions to do just that.

3 MODES OF EXPRESSING ANGER			
	PASSIVE	ASSERTIVE	AGGRESSIVE
THOUGHTS	I'm probably wrong. I'm not worthy of happiness or success. I'm too weak to stand up for what I want. I'm undeserving and unable to get things.	It would be better for me to do this instead. Both of our opinions are valid, so let's try to work out a solution. I'm going to take time for myself, but will be flexible if necessary.	I must get what I want. I know what's best so it must be my way. Everyone is awful and stupid if they don't agree with my way. I'm mad I can't win!
FEELINGS	Sadness Anxiety Shame Resentment Hostility	Concerned Apprehensive Self-Aware Annoyed Disappointed	Anger Hostility Anxiety Guilt Depression
ACTIONS	No action Self-Sacrificing Apologizing Giving In/Up Indirect Manipulation	Calmly Reason State Opinions Explain Desires Set Realistic Goals Compromise	Yelling/Cursing Slamming/Throwing Threatening Inflexible Enraged

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MODE I CAN MOST IMPROVE (passive or aggressive):

EXAMPLES OF TRIGGERS/THOUGHTS/FEELINGS/ACTIONS (OR INACTIONS) I CAN IMPROVE:

-
-
-

WAYS I CAN IMPROVE (note: you may find it better to complete this at the end):

-
-
-


ACTIVITY 2: PREVENTION, SYMPTOMS AND REMEDIES (TIME: 10-15 MIN.)

One core theme still ahead in Being a Life Athlete is how the best way to manage a crisis is by preventing it from happening. This hints at what may be the most effective skill, which is to improve your ability to recognize your warning signs and their progression as you start to feel angry. Doing this puts you in a good place to lower your temperature before getting really worked up and lashing out. Let's get to work.

ANGER	SYMPTOMS	YOUR SYMPTOMS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sweating pounding heart tight chest shaking anxiety pacing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> being snappy or defensive gritting your teeth feeling argumentative being overly critical of someone temporarily losing your sense of humor getting a 'flash' of a bad mood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Next, look over the "Anger Thermometer" to identify how you tend to act, how high you tend to escalate AND look over what you can do about it (including to "Tell an adult" 😊).

Anger Thermometer



How Do You Act?	What Can You Do About It?
Enraged Explosive Furious	Yelling, Stomping Arguing, Refusing Temper Tantrum Shutting Down Throwing Things Destructive Impulsive Meltdown
Angry Hot Mad	Loud Voice Stomping Feet Clenching Fist Arguing Negative Attitude
Frustrated Irritated Stressed Out	Sigh Loudly Growl Eye Roll Glare Raise Voice
Annoyed Disappointed Upset	Smiling Relaxed Body Engaged Paying Attention Enjoying Yourself
Calm Peaceful Relaxed	Count to 10 or 100 Tell an adult Stop, and walk away Take deep breaths Squeeze a stress ball Get a drink of water Get or give a hug Talk to friends or family Smile & practice gratitude Help someone else
Move your body or exercise Take a nap Practice grounding techniques Shred paper Take a warm/cold shower Journal about your feelings Get some fresh air Listen to music Use kind & positive words Take steps toward your goals	Talk yourself into being calm Tense and relax your muscles Think of a peaceful place Brisk walk Meditate/Pray Do a hobby you enjoy Move away from the "trigger" Keep listening Write about your successes



MINDSET RESET



Anger Management is one of those topics that is sometimes best served by seeing and approaching it from a young person's vantage point. Some of the most elementary resolutions can be the best ones.

We've also considered some of our internal indicators and external behaviors to catch and stop anger in its tracks. Again, anger is often a normal or understandable response in some situations, such as when you or someone else is being treated unfairly. Then again, there may also be other contributing factors that could be important to recognize. For example, some other reason why you might be feeling angry include:

- Being under a lot of pressure
- Experiencing bodily or hormonal changes that cause mood swings
- Frustration with other events in your life

Identifying and dealing with any underlying sources of anger could make all the difference.

YOUR REMEDIES

We'll be sure to revisit any number of coping skills as they apply to the various facets of your WellBeing Reset. With your Anger Manager, use the right column below to list whatever coping skills resonate from the Thermometer chart, the left column below and/or your own techniques to control your anger.

MORE COPING SKILLS	YOUR COPING SKILLS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeat a mantra• Mentally escape• Stop talking• Focus on most immediate solutions• Rehearse your response• Picture a stop sign• Change your routine• Talk to a friend• Laugh• Set a timer• Write a letter• Imagine forgiving them• Practice empathy• Find a creative channel• Know when to seek help	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••••••••••••	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•••••••••••••••

Hopefully you found these activities provide you with real-time techniques to recognize, prevent, mitigate and defuse your anger as well as express it more healthfully. If, for whatever reason, your experiences here lead you to believe that additional support may benefit you, please consider other resources, including to seek help from a professional.