
ANGER

Anger is a normal, usually healthy, human emotion. However, when it gets out of control and turns destructive, it can lead to problems – at work, in your personal relationships and in the overall quality of life. When your mind becomes focused on negative thoughts such as placing blame and seeking revenge, your behavior may become impulsive, and hurtful with actions or words that may be regretted later. When anger is used to intimidate others this can cause them to become defensive, hostile, and uncomfortable. Anger can impair your health by putting yourself at higher risk for physical illnesses such as high blood pressure or heart disease and emotional illnesses such as depression, mood swings, or emotional outbursts. The illnesses can make you feel as though you are a victim instead of an individual trying to seek a solution.

Anger can be triggered by both external and internal events. You can be angry in response to a specific person or event, and could also be a result of worrying or brooding about personal problems. When we are angry our body reacts through adrenaline and other chemicals being added to the bloodstream; the heart pumps faster; blood pressure rises; muscles tense. These changes generate energy that is needed for action and shift the body into “high gear”. Memories of traumatic events can also trigger angry feelings with these resultant bodily changes.

Since anger is often a natural response to real or perceived threats; it inspires powerful feeling and behaviors, which allow us to fight and to defend ourselves when we feel physically threatened. A certain amount of anger is necessary to our survival against those threats. However, a past history of unresolved emotional, mental, or physical situations (for example, abuse, neglect, disappointments, or feeling disrespected) can accumulate into anger over time. This accumulated emotion can often come out in bursts of anger when similar situations in the present trigger the unresolved emotional memories of the past.

To recognize the emotions that causes problems, ask yourself these questions:

- Do you think you have to yell at people so they don't mess up?
- Do you see the world with cynical mistrust and believe anger is justified?
- Do you get upset quickly when something disappointing happens?
- When you are driving, do you get angry when another driver gets in your way?
- Whenever you get upset do you yell, argue, stomp your feet, slam the door, throw things, hit (or want to hit) people?

If you experience some of these actions you may be reacting with anger that is controlling you.

TREATMENT SUGGESTIONS

If you are frequently angry, chances are there have been circumstances in your past that have created the habit of angry responses. Counseling can be very beneficial to learn the origin of this emotion and begin to change how you respond to life situations. The emotional, spiritual, social, and vocational needs should be addressed, as they become appropriate. Along with management anger techniques, there are treatments that can eliminate the origins of the anger in order to eliminate the inappropriate anger response.