



ANGER MANAGEMENT

ANGER TEST

- | Yes | No | |
|-----|-----|--|
| ___ | ___ | 1. I don't show my anger about everything that makes me mad, but when I do -- look out! |
| ___ | ___ | 2. I still get angry when I think of the bad things people did to me in the past. |
| ___ | ___ | 3. Waiting in line or waiting for other people really annoys me. |
| ___ | ___ | 4. I fly off the handle easily. |
| ___ | ___ | 5. I often find myself having heated arguments with the people who are closest to me. |
| ___ | ___ | 6. I sometimes lie awake at night and think about the things that upset me during the day. |
| ___ | ___ | 7. When someone says or does something that upsets me, I don't usually say anything at the time, but later I spend a lot of time thinking up cutting replies I could and should have made. |
| ___ | ___ | 8. I find it very hard to forgive someone who has done me wrong. |
| ___ | ___ | 9. I get angry with myself when I lose control of my emotions. |
| ___ | ___ | 10. People really irritate me when I lose control of my emotions. |
| ___ | ___ | 11. If I get really upset about something, I have a tendency to feel sick later, either with a weak spell, headache, upset stomach, or diarrhea. |
| ___ | ___ | 12. People I've trusted have often let me down, leaving me feeling angry or betrayed. |
| ___ | ___ | 13. When things don't go my way, I get depressed. |
| ___ | ___ | 14. I am apt to take frustration so badly that I cannot put it out of my mind. |
| ___ | ___ | 15. I've been so angry at times I couldn't remember things I said or did. |
| ___ | ___ | 16. After arguing with someone, I hate myself. |
| ___ | ___ | 17. I've had trouble on the job because of my temper. |
| ___ | ___ | 18. When riled up, I often blurt out things I later regret saying. |
| ___ | ___ | 19. Some people are afraid of my bad temper. |
| ___ | ___ | 20. When I get angry, frustrated, or hurt, I comfort myself by eating or using alcohol or other drugs. |
| ___ | ___ | 21. When someone hurts or frustrates me, I want to get even. |
| ___ | ___ | 22. I've gotten so angry at times, that I've become physically violent, hitting other people or breaking things. |
| ___ | ___ | 23. At times, I've felt angry enough to kill. |
| ___ | ___ | 24. Sometimes I feel so hurt and alone I feel like committing suicide. |
| ___ | ___ | 25. I'm a really angry person, and I know I need help learning to control my temper and angry feelings because it's already caused me a lot of problems. |

If you answered true to 10 or more of these statements, you are seriously prone to anger problems. It's time for a change.

If you answered true to 5 statements, you are about average in your angry feelings, but learning some anger management techniques can make you a happier person.

If you answered true to even 1 of the last four questions, your anger is at a dangerous level! You need to get your anger under control or your life will be out of control.

GOOD ANGER

If used wisely and controlled, anger can be a good thing:

1. Anger can give us energy for tough jobs. Our body's physical reactions can give us fuel for the fight. Anger can make us work harder to achieve our goals.
2. Anger gives us information about people and situations. It is a signal that tells us there's something unfair, annoying or frustrating happening and we need to handle the problem.
3. Expressing anger in a good way--no uncontrolled ranting or raving--can communicate negative feelings, relieve tension and solve conflicts. It can bring people closer together.
4. Sometimes anger can give us a feeling of control. Anger can be converted into energy. That energy can be used to take charge assertively and make positive changes

BAD ANGER

1. When we're in a rage, we don't think clearly. We act on impulse and don't consider the results of our anger.
2. Uncontrolled anger can lead to revenge and violence. We often take out our anger on someone or something.
3. Anger is often used to cover up feelings of embarrassment or hurt. It is easier to get angry than to face inner feelings of helplessness, disappointment or hurt.
4. The way we express anger may cause others to fear us, avoid us or 'pick a fight' with us. No one listens to what we say.

You **HAVE A RIGHT TO BE ANGRY** when someone deliberately, intentionally and with full knowledge of who you are hurts you or treats you unfairly.

YOUR ANGER IS UNFAIR when your own thoughts and interpretations create anger. Ask, "Is my anger helping me in this situation?"

*****If you can't change a situation (or person), use your anger positively to prevent the situation from happening.*****

THINKING MORE SPECIFICALLY ABOUT ANGER

Anger is ALWAYS the second emotion (or even the third or fourth) that we feel. We NEVER get angry FIRST. We feel some other emotions before we get angry. We may feel fear, frustration, hurt, humiliation, embarrassment, helplessness, rejection, sadness, or something else. Often times because we do not know how to handle these feelings, we express these feelings through anger.

For example, a mother who has lost a child in a department store may spank, slap or yell at the child when he is found. What emotions do you think the mother felt before she got angry?

ANGER IS MADE OF 3 THINGS:

THINKING: We talk to ourselves in negative ways which build anger.

ACTIONS: What we do to express that anger and our physical reactions--body changes which occur because of our thinking and feelings.

FEELINGS: Our emotions, what caused the anger in the first place; the real "why" of our anger.

FEELINGS:

Describe three situations when you were angry.

1.

2.

3.

In these three situations, what emotions did you feel before anger?

1.

2.

3.

Why?

1.

2.

3.

In each situation, what did you want to happen or what did you want the person to do?

IRRITATIONS:

List as many things as you can that irritate you.

List as many things as you can that irritate you about other people.

Are there times when you are more easily irritated than others?

When and why do you think that is?

DEALING WITH ANGER

Anger is a natural feeling. As stated earlier anger can be "good". It is when anger gets out of control that it becomes "bad" and becomes a problem. Learning to change our reactions to anger and our behavior when angry can help us learn to deal with anger in more positive and even productive ways.

By using positive self talk and rational thinking, it is possible to cool down anger before it explodes. Here are some ideas that can help:

1. **ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR OWN BEHAVIOR.** Our problem are usually of our own making. We all want to have our way and then blame others for hurting us.
2. **LISTEN TO OUR NEGATIVE SELF TALK.** Become aware of our negative thinking. A lot of negative thoughts begin with "what if" or "he or she should", "it's not fair" or "it's not right." Other negative thinking is defiant, "nobody tells me what to do" or blaming, "she made me do this", or demanding, "I want this done now, in this way" or denying, "I don't have a problem! It's your fault" or self righteous, "how dare they! Who do they think they are?" or insulting, "What a fool!"
3. **COUNTERACT THESE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS WITH POSITIVE . LOGICAL THOUGHTS.** For example: anger - building thinking: It's not fair. I always get the shaft! Positive thinking: I'm not the only one that this has happened to.
4. **ASK YOURSELF:**
What am I feeling?
Why am I feeling this way?
What can I do about it?
What am I going to do about it?

TIME OUT

Leaving the anger causing situation will help calm your anger and protect you and the other person. You must, however, make it clear that you will return after a specified time. If you do not return to solve the situation, anger will continue building. The problem will worsen.

Leave the situation for an hour. This gives your body time to cool down, to calm down.

Do not take drugs or drink. You need to have your wits about you when you return to discuss the situation.

Do something physical such as walking, jogging, cleaning the garage, etc. . . . Physical activity can discharge some of the energy and angry tension in your body. Be careful not to hurt yourself. Don't overdo your physical activity.

If you find yourself thinking about the situation STOP. Replaying the scene along with negative thoughts will build your anger instead of calming you. Take a mental time out as well as a physical time out. Deliberately turn your thoughts away from the problem. Get busy with something else.

Taking a "time out" can help you to control your anger. It allows you time to calm down. Once calm, you can use rational thinking and positive self talk.

Sometimes it's impossible to take a physical time out. For example, you may become angry in a car or a meeting or even a restaurant. If you can't leave the situation, the **CREATIVE TIME OUT** can be used to interrupt your anger process and give you time to cool down. Some examples of creative anger time outs:

1. In a car: Listen to three songs on the radio, stop and get gas, stretch your muscles out, walk around the car.
2. At work: Take a ten minute break, get a drink of water, go to the bathroom.
3. Restaurant: Go to the bathroom wash your hands, put a cool paper towel on your back of your neck.
4. In a meeting: Breathe deeply, count to fifty, change positions, imagine a sunny garden.

1. List three things you can do when you take a time out. Having a plan now will make it easier to know what to do when you have to take a time out.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
2. List one creative time out that you can use in the following situations (think of your own):
 - a) At school
 - b) In a car
 - c) In a restaurant
 - d) At a social gathering
3. List five reasons why taking a time out when you are angry will help you:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

Once you have taken a time out and you are ready to return and discuss the situation, here are some tips that can help in resolving conflict. Keep in mind all the factors involved. Where and when should the talk take place are important considerations to review. Know how long to talk and when to stop talking.

1. Focus on the issue at hand, not each other.
2. No threats. What happens if threats are allowed?
3. No audience, only the persons involved need to discuss the situation.
4. No labels or name calling. What can happen if this goes on?
5. Stick to the present, don't dredge up the past.
6. Acknowledge, accept, and share your responsibility regarding the conflict. Why is this difficult?
7. Look for feelings deeper than anger, such as sadness, grief, and pain.
8. "I" message will help you to express yourself assertively. What are "I" messages? Telling someone in a non-threatening way how you feel about their behavior. This message has four parts:
 - a) Begins with "I . . .", "I feel . . ." or "I get nervous . . ."
 - b) How it makes you feel "I feel afraid . . ."
 - c) Exact behavior that upsets you "I feel afraid when you shout . . ."
 - d) The result of that behavior on you, (i.e., when you shout at me while I'm driving, it makes me nervous and afraid and I might have an accident because I'm not paying attention to the other traffic.

Other anger coping skills:

NUTRITION: Bad eating habits also cause anger. Too much sugar, fat and/or caffeine can increase blood pressure, cause tiredness, irritability, headaches and low self-esteem caused by being overweight. Avoid fats, bake or broil meats, eat fresh fruits, vegetables and whole-grain breads. Eat slowly. Instead of eating when angry, write your angry feelings, then rip up what you have written.

EXERCISE: Exercise relieves tense muscles and works out anger energy; don't overdo and be consistent.

LAUGH: When you laugh, physical and mental tension is released. For a moment, you can forget your troubles. A good sense of humor can reduce pain and anger. Laughter stimulates the brain to produce natural pain killers (endorphins) and hormones (catecholamines) which cause us to feel alert and happier.

PLAYFULNESS: Taking time to have fun relieves mental stress and physical tension.

1. What is a form of exercise you enjoy?
2. Who or what makes you laugh?
3. List as many things that you can do in two minutes or less to have fun.
4. List as many things you can do in ten minutes or less to have fun.

5. In an hour?
6. In a day?

9. Recall at least three situations in which you were angry.
Write five "I" statements which tell how you felt.
{(example) I feel angry that you lied to me.}
{(example) When you don't close the door, I feel frustrated and angry because I have to stop what I'm doing and shut the door.}

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

10. Write five statements which clearly and simply tell what you want or need to happen.
{(example) I would like you to be honest with me.}
{(example) I would like you to shut the door each time you go in or out.}
{(example) I do not like you calling me names. Calling names hurts my feelings and makes me angry.}

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

11. Why are statements that start with "you" problematic?
{(example) You should have been honest with me.}
{(example) You should know how I feel.}

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To the Rescue ...

Fair Fighting!!!

Rules of Conduct for Constructive Conflict Resolution

At best, having fair fighting rules may seem like a contradiction in terms. At worst, it may seem utterly impossible. In fact, fair fighting provides a framework to resolve conflict, solve problems and help people get on with their lives.

Some of these fair fighting rules will seem utterly and ridiculously simple. And others will be just the opposite – unbelievably difficult to imagine accomplishing. And yet, thousands, perhaps millions of people have successfully applied these rules of fair fighting to their lives. Try them and see what you think.

Fair Fighting: Ground Rules

- Timing is everything. Find a time and place that will work for both of you. Blurting out your concern the moment you see the other person is definitely not a fair fighting technique. Scheduling a time to fight means that you must be in enough control of your emotions to be able to delay the discussion. This takes practice but is absolutely achievable. Pick a time when you aren't tired, hungry or rushed. (For some of us, sadly, that could mean a very long wait!) Never talk/fight in the presence of your children or others. Pick a location that is relatively neutral.
- Remain calm. Try not to overreact to difficult situations. By remaining calm it will be more likely that others will consider your viewpoint.
- Express feelings in words, not actions. Telling someone directly and honestly how you feel can be a very powerful form of communication. If you start to feel so angry or upset that you feel you may lose control, take a "time out" and do something to help yourself feel steadier – take a walk, do some deep breathing, pet the cat, play with the dog, do the dishes – whatever works for you.
- Be specific about what is bothering you. Vague complaints are hard to work on.
- Deal with one issue at a time. No fair piling several complaints into one session. Some people call this "kitchen-sinking" – talking about everything including the kitchen sink!
- No "hitting below the belt." Attacking areas of personal sensitivity creates an atmosphere of distrust, anger, and vulnerability.
- Avoid accusations. Accusations will cause others to defend themselves. Instead, talk about how someone's actions made you feel.
- Don't generalize. Avoid using statements such as "You always ..." or "You never ..." to describe a person's behavior. Such generalizations are usually inaccurate and will heighten tensions. Use "I Messages" instead ... such as "I think it would be better to _____," or, "I need to understand you, so give me more information."

- Don't stockpile. Storing up lots of anger and hurt feelings over time is counterproductive. It's almost impossible to deal with numerous old problems. Try to deal with problems as they arise.
- Avoid clamming up. When one person becomes silent and stops responding to the other, frustration and anger can result. Positive results can only be attained with two-way communication.
- Establish common ground rules. When parties accept positive common ground rules for managing a conflict, resolution becomes much more likely.

Sound Impossible?

Fair fighting rules help you switch from fighting and getting nowhere to actually solving problems. It takes time to learn a new behavior. So keep trying. Remember the old adage – practice makes perfect. Every time you avoid a down and dirty fight by problem solving instead, you will feel better. Not to mention the fact that you will actually get resolution to the problem. That's worth a lot.

When Nothing Seems to Work

Sometimes, despite our best fair fighting efforts, a disagreement or conflict seems insurmountable. When this occurs, talking with a trained professional can help. A trained mediator can help you communicate more effectively and eventually work your way through to a solution. Parkview's EAP provides short-term counseling for Parkview employees and their families who have difficulty managing conflict, as well as counseling about other concerns you might have. To schedule an appointment for counseling services call 584-4770. All calls are confidential.

A Final Word

Conflict is normal, inevitable, and even healthy in most cases. When managed well, it can be used to enhance and strengthen relationships with friends, family members, co-workers, and partners. Fair fighting provides the tools and techniques to help you achieve positive results when problems arise.

THE DECISION IS MINE !

I AM IN CONTROL

A STATEMENT OF HOPE !

Everything I do is intentional.

The actions I take, I take because I choose to do so.

The reasons and excuses for an action can come from anywhere,
but the response comes from me.

Every action, every moment, determines the direction of my life.

I have made the choices and taken the actions that have led me to this point.

More importantly,

I will make the choices and take the actions that determine my future.

I can learn from the past, but the past does not control me.

Just because I have used poor judgment in the past
doesn't mean I have to continue doing so.

I can change my life the moment I decide to change.

I am more than my past.

I am more than my mistakes.

My life is whatever **I** decide to make it.

I look forward to a life of being responsible for the choices **I** make.

I AM IN CONTROL !

I AM RESPONSIBLE !

