

Anger E-Course

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This anger e-course was developed to help people work through their anger at their own pace. This is not a replacement for counseling or therapy. Rather, it is to be used as a self-improvement tool.

If you would like a more in-depth anger management experience, I would be happy to book an appointment with you.

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About the author:

I am in private practice in Lafayette Indiana where I specialize in stress, anger, and relationships. Prior to opening my private practice, I worked for two community mental health agencies where I was a Therapist. I have clinical experience helping adolescents and adults with a wide range of problems including relationship issues, marriage counseling, couples counseling, substance abuse, anger management, anxiety, depression, and a variety of sexual problems.



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Anger Pros and Cons

There are good and bad things about anger. If there was nothing good about anger, then nobody would chose to continue to be angry. Fill in the list of pros and cons for anger. It will become apparent if anger is working for you.

| Good things about anger | Bad things about anger |
|------------------------------|---|
| Example: Getting your way | Example: Getting thrown in the slammer |

Anger is Not the Main Emotion...

Believe it or not, anger comes from some other emotion. Anger is the emotion that is most easily seen and felt. However, if you ask yourself what feeling you had right before you got angry, you will probably be surprised to realize there is at least one other emotion.

Think of anger as an iceberg (see page 29). The part sticking out is the anger that is obvious to everybody. The emotions below that anger are hidden and you are the only person that is able to discover the cause.

Some examples of emotions that cause anger:

- Disappointment
- Disgust
- Fear
- Sadness
- Feeling disrespected

Name the last three instances where you became angry and identify the emotion behind the anger.

Anger Chain

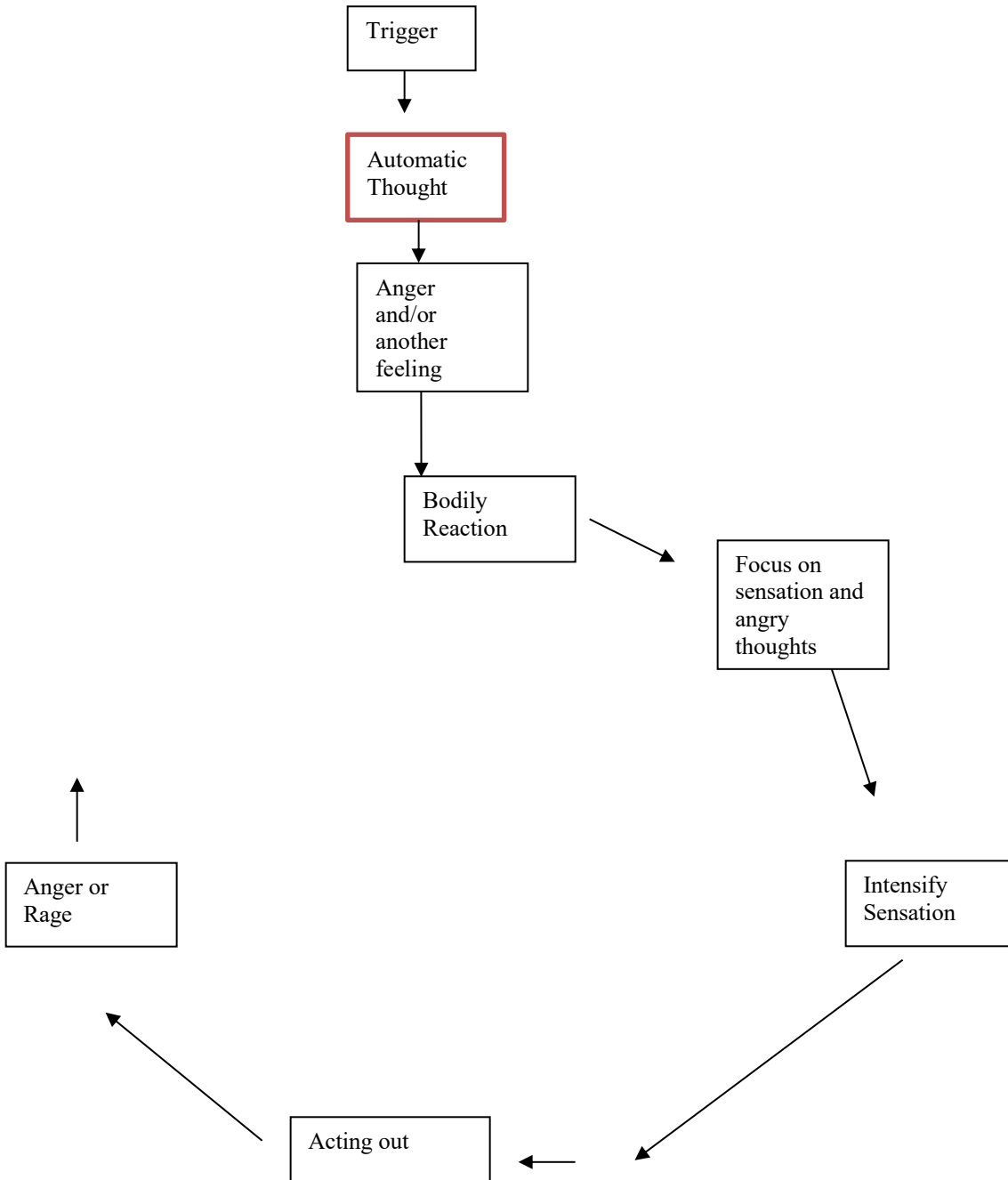
Anger is often a chain of events.



What is your anger chain?

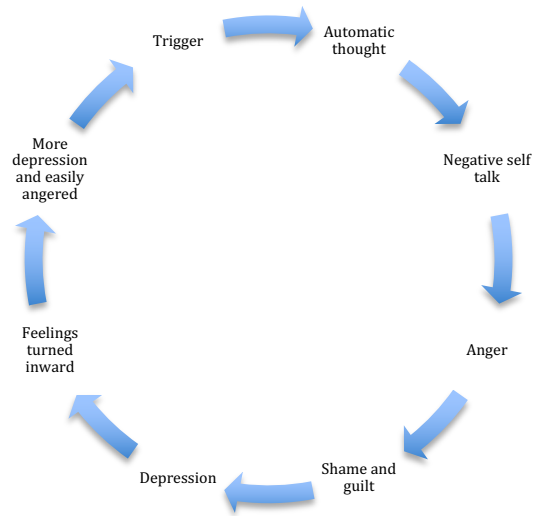
Think of when anger has been a one-time event. What failed?

Identify Each Item Below.



Anger Cycle

Anger can be a cycle of events. What do you need to change?



What is your anger cycle?

Think of this as a reoccurring theme in your life

Depression and Anger

People often have anger that stems from depression—Especially Men.

Signs of depression

- **Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions**
- **Fatigue and decreased energy**
- **Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness**
- **Feelings of hopelessness and/or pessimism**
- **Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping**
- **Irritability, restlessness**
- **Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable, including sex**
- **Overeating or appetite loss**
- **Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease even with treatment**
- **Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings**
- **Thoughts of suicide, suicide attempts**

Signs of depression that may not seem typical

- ◆ Frequently disciplined at school or work
- ◆ Frequently angry for no apparent reason
- ◆ Just not a social person
- ◆ This can all happen without sadness, crying, or difficulty getting out of bed

Listen to Depression

- ◆ Likely, depression is there for a reason.
 - ◆ Find the root of the problem
 - ◆ Environmental?
 - ◆ Grief (death or other loss)
 - ◆ A particular trigger?
 - ◆ Negative ways of thinking?
 - ◆ Alcohol/other drug use?
 - ◆ Abuse?
 - ◆ Genetically based?

Things You Can Tell Yourself When Angry

When we are angry, it is very easy to get carried away and say all kinds of cruel and absurd things to ourselves (and others!). One of the most effective ways to decrease anger is to cut out those bad things we say to ourselves *and* change our point of view.

Next time you get angry, give these a try

- Will it matter next week, next month, next year?
- What right do I have that is being violated?
- Visualize getting along, walking away—Instead of kicking the person's arse!
- Look at the person/situation making you angry as a test to see if you will become angry.
- If you allow others to make you angry, you are allowing them to control you. Do you really want others pulling your strings?
- No matter how tough you are, you'll find your match
- The only person responsible for your anger is you
- Imagine what the world would be like if everyone had anger like you
- Anger is energy. Are you going to use this energy for something productive or destructive?
- Learn to laugh at yourself
- Keep a journal of absurdities
- Find the comedies in the tragedies—It's a matter of perspective.

1. Upsetting Thought: I'm going to get angry.

Realistic Alternative: I'll probably do all right, but even if I don't, it's not the end of the world.

2. Upsetting Thought: I can't stand it.

Realistic Alternative: I don't like it, but I can stand it.

3. Upsetting Thought: I'll never amount to anything.

Realistic Alternative: It may be difficult, but if I try, I can Accomplish a lot.

4. Upsetting Thought: That's awful and I'm going to blow my stack!

Realistic Alternative: It's bad, but it could be much worse.



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5. Upsetting Thought: I must be a loser because this person doesn't like me.

Realistic Alternative: I want to be liked, but not everyone will like me.

6. Upsetting Thought: I need love and I'm getting angry because I don't have it.

Realistic Alternative: I want love, but I can live without it.

7. Upsetting Thought: That S.O. B.!

Realistic Alternative: I don't like some of his actions, but he is not all bad.

8. Upsetting Thought: I'm not in the mood to do that.

Realistic Alternative: Tough! If I want the advantages of doing this, I had better go ahead and get it out of the way.

9. Upsetting Thought: I'm going to get fired.

Realistic Alternative: I might be fired, but probably won't be. Being fired would be a setback, but I can deal with it.

10. Upsetting Thought: I need a drink.

Realistic Alternative: I want a drink, but I don't need it. I might feel better now, but I'll regret it tomorrow.

What are the top three things you want to say to yourself the next time you are angry? Is there any reason you think they won't work?

Angry Behaviors

Of course your thoughts can make you angry, but your behaviors can also cause anger. Most people don't think about this one.

When you are getting angry, make sure you:

- Keep your palms open in order to avoid making fists
- Press open palms against legs if your urge to make fists is too great
- Relax your jaw and other muscles that might be tight
- Change your environment by walking away and taking a timeout

Think about this...It might feel better at the time, but these actually maintain and practice anger:

- Punching bags
- Boxing rings
- Breaking things
- Violent video games
- Angry music
- Substance abuse

Anger reducers:

- Exercise to burn up that angry energy
- Throw yourself into a hobby or some other kind of distraction
- Work on communication skills (Call me up about this one)
- Journaling- write out those things that really get to you

What angry behaviors do you have? Think of this the next time you get angry and list them out. Then we'll find a way to avoid them.

Anger Relapses

A lot of people think that just because you have been working very hard to manage your anger, you will never fly off the handle again. Many people go on to think that if you slip up, then you are a failure and your anger management skills are not working.

It is unreasonable to think that you will never get angry again. Remember that it is healthy and expected for people to become angry. If you do have a slip that causes you to have some sort of angry outburst, it is best to look at it as a learning experience. You have likely been angry for years. Don't expect to completely control your anger within a period of weeks or a few months. It's important to recognize the progress you have made and continue to build on your successes. How are you going to get better if you are stuck on the negatives?

If you have had an anger outburst lately, answer these questions.

Did anyone get hurt?

Did you do anything you regretted?

How did you stop yourself?

Was this time better than the usual anger outburst?

What would it take to avoid this situation again?

What will be different next time?

Conflict Resolution Tips

Do

- Be assertive rather than aggressive
- Accept the person, not the behavior
- Be nice to the difficult person
- Learn what anger/bothers the person (and avoid it if possible)
- Make compromises when appropriate
- Use active listening (repeat what you are hearing)
- Determine what is causing the conflict
- Distance yourself when you feel the person could become violent

Don't

- Don't yell or try to show your authority
- Don't match the person's aggressive body language
- Don't label the person as immature, bad, or a troublemaker
- Don't cut them off (The person needs to be heard)
- Don't ignore signs that the person is going to be violent
- Don't let yourself have clenched fists, fast breathing, pacing
- Don't be afraid to leave the conflict or call for help

Which tips might work for you? Why?

The Link Between Anger and Stress

Have you ever looked at the role stress has in anger? Many people say that stress is more prevalent today than 20 years ago. Likewise, others say there is more anger (road rage,



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workplace violence, and so on). Stress can certainly create a variety of problems. If you are prone to anger, then stress will likely increase your angry behaviors.

Stress is healthy when controlled. Healthy stress (Eustress) is what gets us out of bed in the morning and makes us pay attention to the details throughout our day. This type of stress does not cause anger or irritability. For those who do not have enough stress in their lives, they are often referred to as “lazy” or “unmotivated.”

Distress, on the other hand, is a type of stress that causes many people to be irritable and sometimes downright angry. This happens when the stress is too much and is no longer a motivator. You can think of this as when there is a combination of stressors and things just keep piling up. One day, the person does not know how to handle this anymore and there is an anger outburst.

What feeling is behind stress? I have asked the same question about anger in a previous article. When you are feeling either stressed or angry, there is some other feeling that is fueling this. Often, it is being overwhelmed, feeling disrespected, helpless, fearful and so on. It is very important to look at the feelings behind the stress to better understand why you are having this reaction. Once this insight is gained, then steps may be taken to relax and feel much better.

Once you have identified the feelings and thoughts associated with your stress, take a look at your environment. Do you live in a chaotic home environment or perhaps a have a work environment that is adding your stress? When you identify your environmental stressors, take some time to identify ways to limit these stresses in addition to changing the ways you are thinking.

Substances that often increase stress and anger:

- Sugar
- Caffeine
- Excess food
- Nicotine

Stress and Anger reducers:

- Exercise
- Hobbies
- Learning communication skills
- Journaling
- Engaging in social activities



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Here are a few of quick quips for managing stress:

If you allow others to make you stressed, you are allowing them to control you. Do you really want others pulling your strings?

Look at stress as a test. Do you want to fail that test by getting stressed out?

The only person responsible for your stress is you.

Stress is energy. Are you going to use this energy for something productive or destructive?

Will it matter tomorrow? Next week? Next Month?

Anger and Social Media

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and all the other social media websites make communicating so much easier. I really enjoy using these sites and I don't know of any other method to get my thoughts out there as quickly and easily. However, there is a downside to social media—the ability to broadcast angry thoughts instantaneously to masses of people. To top it off, these angry messages are often for all the world to see and are archived on the Internet for an indefinite period of time.

Usually, social media is used for good and is very helpful. However, I see angry discussions on Twitter and Facebook several times per week. Often, these arguments appear to be between two people, but are made public. Would these two people really have such an argument in front of a huge crowd of people who can hear every word? The distance of the written word, and often the fact that you have not met the person in real life, is often a recipe for sending messages that you usually would not communicate in a face-to-face setting.

I frequently see another problem related to anger and instantaneous communication in my office. Couples who text angry messages, instead of talking face-to-face, are appearing before me at an alarming rate. Again, texting allows a person to convey a message immediately. When a person is angry, they are not logical. Therefore, any means of instant communication is very dangerous when at the hands of an angry person.

Tips for limiting online/texting arguments

If you wouldn't want it posted in the courthouse or in the newspaper, then don't put it on the Internet.

If you have a disagreement with someone, do not make it public. Instead, contact that person directly.

If you see a disagreement happening between two or more people, don't join in or take sides. This will cause more trouble!

Ideally, if you are in a disagreement with someone, talk in person. Communication is difficult enough between two people. When verbal and non-verbal cues are lost by text communication, things can become more heated. The phone is still a better method of communication than text.

Even if you think your disagreement is private, if you put it in text, others may gain access to it.



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Pick your battles. Ask yourself if you really want to even start an argument with someone. Is it worth the energy? Will whatever they said even matter tomorrow?

Most people use social media to network with others. If you show your friends and followers that you are hot headed, is this the message that you really want to send?

I urge everyone to use social media responsibly. They are great technologies and should be embraced. Just as with anything else, responsible use is key.

Follow me on Twitter: @BuckBlack and @TruckerTherapy
However, let's not get into an argument! 😊

Anger May Stem from Alcohol and Other Drugs

There can be more to the anger iceberg than just feelings. Often people come to my office because of anger management issues and when I assess them for the reason behind the anger, they have extensive alcohol or other drug use. Others may have a brain injury.

In cases where drinking or other drug use is present, anger is often the symptom of the drug's attack on the brain. Often, the more and more a person uses drugs, the angrier he or she becomes. There are many reasons this results in anger, namely the withdrawal once a person runs out of drugs, the family problems stemming from the drug use, the drug user's guilt, and the chemical attack on the brain as a direct result from the use.

I want to stress that anger management is usually ineffective for a person who is angry and frequently using alcohol or other drugs. You can do anger management with such a person until you are blue in the face—and it will not work! Believe me, I have tried this in my office during my younger days in my career. Yes, I even fell into the thinking that an anger management program was the answer for a drug user who was angry. Now that I know drugs are often the cause for anger, I refer this type of client to a substance abuse program. Once he/she has completed such a program, the anger is often gone. Occasionally, there is a need for anger management once the substance abuse program has been completed and the client has remained clean and sober. I am always glad to have such a client in my anger management program. A 12-step program, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) or Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is an excellent long-term program that helps many to stay clean and sober and it does not cost a dime!

Another cause for anger can be a brain injury. The frontal lobes of the brain, located behind the forehead, are responsible for controlling impulses, such as anger. A simple injury, such as a car crash, falling and hitting your head, or other accident can turn a rather mellow person into someone full of rage. Actually, it is rather scary how easily one can damage his/her brain and become easily angered.

For cases where brain injuries are the primary cause for anger, I recommend seeing a neurologist before starting anger management. Often there are medical interventions that need to occur before an anger management program is appropriate. In these cases, there is often a need for psychiatric drugs in combination with anger management. Depending on the client, various other forms of other therapy can also be beneficial. Although many people believe brain injuries do not get better, there is often hope. I have personally seen many clients learn to control their anger in spite of having a brain injury. However, I will admit



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that it is difficult and takes a great deal of work. Remember, it is possible to calm yourself and lead a much better life.

Anger Throughout the Generations



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Anger often runs in families. Frequently, people can think back to their parents, grandparents and other extended family as being angry people. Many think this is a genetic condition. However, most experts agree that anger is a learned behavior, assuming that it is not stemming from bipolar disorder or any other mental illness.

A family teaches a child how to express feelings such as being happy, sad, scared, and even angry. If the family members do not handle anger appropriately (frequent verbal and/or physical anger outbursts), then the child is likely to exhibit that same behavior. Remember, to the child, the entire world handles anger (and other emotions) the same way as his/her family.

Keep in mind there are no ideal parents. This stems from Transactional Analysis' idea that each person's parents have flawed ways of parenting, which is passed on to the next generation. If a family has problems in the way in which they handle anger, it can be passed on from generation to generation. It is up to the individual to decide if their behaviors are helping or hurting the family, instead of carrying on the same behavior patterns because that is what he/she knows.

What can you do if you are passing anger on to your children? First, remember that you are the role model. If you are able to control your anger, then you really do break the chain of anger that is being passed along through the generations. Just think about how amazing it would be to help the next generation of your family lead a calm and successful life.

When family members become angry, it is important to take the time to talk with them about their feelings. Remember that anger is never the primary feeling. Depression, sadness, fear, anxiety, and a host of other emotions can be at the root of anger. It is important to encourage a family environment where all members are able to talk freely about their emotions without being criticized. Rewarding good behavior and acknowledging successes in controlling anger is a great way to encourage a family to work towards happiness.

What can be done to address anger in the family?

-Take steps to reduce your anger

*Anger is energy. Are you going to use this energy for something productive or destructive?

*Will it matter tomorrow? Next week? Next Month?

*If you allow others to make you angry, you are allowing them to control you. Do you really want others pulling your strings?

*Look at it as a test

*The only person responsible for your anger is you

-Model appropriate communication skills with your partner



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- Educate your child about anger
- Discuss ways the family can cope with anger and other feelings
- Encourage exercise
- Participate in family therapy to formulate a plan on how your family will handle anger and other emotions. Individual therapy or anger management may be appropriate.
- Learn Choice Theory by William Glasser, MD.

Anger Iceberg

Anger is what we all see. When someone is angry, it is obvious by the look in the person's eyes, the clenched fists, sweat on the brow, and loud voice...

Upon closer inspection, anger is like an iceberg. The tip represents the anger, which everyone sees. However, there is 90% more of that iceberg hidden below the surface of the water. This tip of the iceberg is actually the symptom. The more complex feelings responsible for this symptomatic anger varies widely from person to person. Generally, anger icebergs often include fears, insecurities, frustrations, hurt pride, feelings of disrespect, and various other emotions.

Given that it is usually quite easy to see a person's anger, but difficult to see the underlying issues, the task of helping a person reduce his or her anger often takes a bit of detective work. The best way to control anger is to ask, "What is making me feel this way?" When the person examines his or her feelings that cause the anger, then the problem can be addressed. If there is simply a focus on deep breathing, counting to ten, and meditation, this will only treat the symptom and is doomed to fail in the long run.

The anger iceberg is great to use to control your own anger. However, it is also helpful to control your reactions to others. For instance, lets assume that you see someone's angry actions and you then become angry. By using the anger iceberg, it will quickly become apparent the other person has feelings causing him or her to behave in this irrational manner. It is much more difficult to become angry with someone when you recognize they are showing anger out of fear, insecurity, jealousy, or hurt. When one recognizes this, it is much easier to use empathy to understand their situation. This will then enable you to help that person deal with their anger, or at least help you to stay calm in this situation.

My last point I want to make is that many people, especially men, subscribe to the notion that it is okay to show anger by being violent. However, it is not okay to show other emotions, such as sadness, guilt, fear, shame, and inferiority. It is no mistake that many of these

feelings fit the part of the anger iceberg that is hidden below in the water's depths and do not surface because of societal expectations. I challenge everyone to discuss their true feelings, instead of taking the "macho" route and only express the symptomatic anger.

Remember to look beneath the anger and deal with the true emotions. Ask yourself, "What am I feeling other than anger?" This will certainly increase the chances of reducing one's anger, while helping to change how our society treats emotions.

Anger Iceberg

Anger and Blame

I don't like it when...

I resent...

I hate it when...

I'm fed up with...

I'm tired of...

I really get mad when...

I want to strike out when...

Hurt and Sadness

I feel sad when...

I feel hurt because...

I feel awful because...

I feel disappointed because...

I feel like crying when I think...

I feel so hurt that ...



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I feel betrayed when...

Fear and Insecurity

I feel afraid when...

I am afraid that...

I feel scared because...

I am scared when...

I become afraid when I think that...

I feel scared when I remember...

My greatest fear about us is...

Guilt and Responsibility

I am sorry that...

I am sorry for...

Please forgive me for...

I did not mean to...

I made a mistake when...

I know I was wrong for...

I really regret that I...

Love, Forgiveness, Understanding

I love you because...



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I love when...

Thank you for...

I understand that...

I forgive you for...

I want to work it out because...

I want for us to...

Bipolar Disorder and Anger

Anger is always the symptom of a problem. A person's beliefs, use of alcohol and other drugs, or a combination of past emotional hurts may be at the root of anger. However, some people have anger that is based in imbalances in brain chemistry, instead of emotions or drugs introduced into the body.

For those who have anger stemming from bipolar disorder, it can range from mild to wild. Often, there is no particular trigger that sets off anger. Rather, the person may simply wake up feeling angry. In other instances, the person may be sensitive to particular actions that invoke anger for the majority of people. There are some cases where a person will significantly over-react in a very angry manner to an event that the majority of people will only find as an irritation or inconvenience.

A person with bipolar disorder has a condition that is linked to chemical imbalances in the brain. The symptoms are comprised of going through cycles of depression and mania (too much energy, poor decision making, and/or racing thoughts). A significant portion of people with bipolar disorder also have moderate to high levels of anger. It is accepted that most people with bipolar disorder need medication to help correct chemical imbalances in the brain. Therapy is often very helpful because thoughts, environment, and social/family support are all very important factors in controlling bipolar symptoms. Making an appointment with a psychiatrist, nurse practitioner, or primary care physician who has training in mental health is another avenue to pursue. In most cases, a person with bipolar disorder will have the most success when participating in therapy and taking medication.

There are various types of therapy and medications that have been shown to reduce bipolar disorder symptoms. Keep in mind that each person will respond to therapy and medications in different ways. A prescription that helps one person with bipolar disorder does not



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necessarily help the next. This also holds true for therapy. Anger management can be very beneficial for some. However, there is often the need for CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy), which has a focus on changing negative or angry thoughts to positive thoughts, as well as changing behaviors that promote anger. Therapy is also useful to help the client identify strengths and members of their support system. Focusing on these strengths and supports allows the client to have additional means of coping with anger and other symptoms of bipolar disorder.

Remember that self-care needs to be a priority. This means keeping all of your therapy and doctor appointments, taking all medications as prescribed, and also being an active participant in therapy sessions. Outside of your doctor's and therapist's offices, it is important to make sure that you are getting out of the house and taking part in some kind of activity, whether it be interacting with family, going to social events, exercising, or participating in a hobby you enjoy. There are great community resources in most areas, such as free support groups at Mental Health America (<http://www.nmha.org>).

Anger May be a Symptom of Your Beliefs

There are a variety of reasons a person may become angry. In previous articles, I have discussed the **primary feelings that result in anger** and the high expectations one may have, which result in disappointment and subsequent anger. I now want to introduce how a person's belief system can cause a great deal of anger, which is based on the work of Albert Ellis.

What are your beliefs? Which ones do you hold dear? Which beliefs do you have that do not serve you anymore—or even cause you harm? A belief is something that you hold to be true. You can think of it as a value system or a list of “shoulds and should nots.” For example, you could have a belief that everyone should be kind to one another, you should always get your way, or being a nice person will get you far in life and people will never take advantage of you.

Many of these beliefs are formed when you are a child. They often are instilled by a parent, teacher, or other person you saw as an authority figure or mentor. Often, these teachings,



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(which frequently turn into beliefs) are a fantastic asset. However, we all develop beliefs that cause problems later down the road. For example, the people who believe they should always get their way are likely to be substantially angrier compared to those who do have more rational beliefs, such as knowing that you cannot win every time.

The next time you get upset, take a look at what belief you have that is making you angry. Then, ask yourself “is my belief rational?” Many times, that belief is not practical or rational. Once you recognize the problem with this belief, then you can make an adjustment as needed. For example, you may realize that a certain belief you have is so irrational that there is no way you can **remain calm while continuing** with this belief. Once you find those beliefs that are more irrational or absurd, you are so much more likely to be able to control your anger. **Another adjustment may be to** add some understanding to your belief. For example, if you believe you should always be treated fairly, it may be helpful to tell yourself that you deserve to be treated fairly, but you know that there will be times that people try to take advantage of you—that’s life! In my experience, I get many people in my office who are able to significantly reduce their anger when they find ways to roll with it, instead of taking it head-on.

You might be thinking, “What if my belief IS rational?” Testing your beliefs may help you to learn when you have justified anger. Remember, anger is helpful when used appropriately. Just think of the people who use anger to appropriately stand up for themselves when they are being taken advantage of. If it were not for justified anger, there would be fewer civil rights, women would not be voting, and there would be so many more injustices in the world. When anger is justified, remember to use that energy in a positive manner, instead of being violent, verbally abusive, or doing something else that will end up hurting yourself or others.

Road Rage (For Truckers)

Many argue that these are the most stressful times ever. Whether it be lack of loads, demanding dispatchers, or breakdowns, there is no lack of stress. To top it off, there are general stresses of everyday life. Likely, this is why road rage is rampant. You see it in four wheelers all of the time. Often, truckers get caught up in this by no fault of their own. Other times, the stressed out trucker may be the one to start it. The road is simply another place to act out the anger that so many of us have.

Professional drivers are not immune to road rage. They are people too! Really, isn't this equivalent to anger in the office or in the factories where many work? What gets truckers angry behind the wheel? Often, everyone wants to focus on the anger itself. However, if we look at it from a therapeutic point of view, it is not really about the anger. There are feelings driving anger (no pun intended!). Once the feelings below the anger are addressed, then the anger subsides or is significantly reduced.

Road rage really isn't about the anger you see on the road. Rather, its more about the existing stresses and the incident on the road was the straw that broke the camel's back. Don't forget, anger is not the primary emotion. Disappointment, feeling disrespected, depression, stress, and a whole slew of other emotions are the true emotions that cause anger. Remember to ask yourself what your main emotion is the next time you get angry.



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By identifying your root anger feeling, you will be able to address the problem, instead of focusing on your anger.

The next time you are feeling a bit of rage behind the wheel, think about this: How many people yell, scream, and get in a physical fight when someone steps in front of them on the sidewalk? How about if they bump into you? In fact, I don't think I have ever heard of this happening. Why does this happen if you are in a vehicle? Many experts on the subject believe it is the separation of people that causes this. For example, each person is in their rolling bubble, where they feel more anonymous and a lot less personal. Therefore, they can get always with anything.

I want to add that I appreciate all of the professional driving that 99.99% of truckers do. It is a shame that truckers are often quick to be labeled as having road rage and if they are involved in such an incident, they are almost always blamed as the root cause. While writing this road rage article, it reminded me of a trucker client I once had who told me that no matter how fast he drove, cars passed him. He said that he thought he was a big obstacle that cars had to pass—no matter the speed. Remember, the way others on the road drive is not a reflection of you. It's a reflection of their prejudices and, likely, ignorance other drivers have about trucks.

Tips for reducing road rage:

- If you wouldn't yell and cuss at the person on the sidewalk, why do it in your truck?
- Avoid negative exchanges with the other driver, whether it is on the CB or gestures.
- Is this person really worth your time and energy?
- How can you express your anger constructively? Instead of yelling and raising your blood pressure, it may be more appropriate to call 9-1-1 for an unsafe driver.
- Free will—you can't control others. They make their own decisions and suffer the consequences. (Hopefully you don't suffer the consequences of their decisions too!)
- Maybe the driver who upsets you is a poor driver or they have too many distractions in their life.
- Will it matter next week, next month, next year?
- What right do I have that is being violated?
- Look at the person/situation making you angry as a test to see if you will become angry.
- If you allow others to make you angry, you are allowing them to control you. Do you really want others pulling your strings?

- The only person responsible for your anger is you
- Anger is energy. Are you going to use this energy for something productive or destructive?
- Its ok to let off a little steam by making a few comments about other drivers out there...just don't get carried away with it!