

COPING WITH ANGER

Anger is a quite natural response to troubles that everyone experiences from time to time. Anger itself is not a problem. Moreover, anger is helpful when you need to change your life or to oppose injustice.

However, when anger turns into aggressiveness, it damages the person as well as the people around him/her and becomes a problem.

Since ancient times, anger has been a feeling that leads human beings to defend against dangerous situations and fight and hence, aids them to continue their species. Nowadays, except wars, we do not confront dangers that require fighting. Threats to survival have been replaced by threats to personal identity. Thus, instead of protecting ourselves from death, we get angry for being dominant or controlling a situation before it gets worse.

What causes anger?

Disrespect: Disrespect to his/her feelings, thoughts, beliefs and needs makes a person angry.

Perceiving as a threat: If the individual thinks that something is threatening to the continuation of a relationship, life style or university education, s/he gets angry.

Paranoid thoughts: Believing that others are doing things intentionally to annoy causes anger.

Life changes: Major life changes such as ending a relationship, leaving home; entering the university environment, etc. may cause anger, since they contain a lot of unknowns.

When does anger become a problem?

Everybody gets angry sometimes because of different reasons. When anger causes stress, health problems, relationship problems or depressive periods, it is a problem.

Anger is always present in some people's lives. These people interpret everything negatively and get angry. They are usually in trouble and in the long run, their possibility of having physical and mental health problems is high.

Accordingly, the important thing is not the anger itself, but how you express it.

What can you do?

In circumstances that make you angry, remaining silent or exploding may not be a solution. Below, you may find some methods to express yourself efficiently:

1. Find the source of your anger. Sometimes the person to whom you are reflecting your anger may not be the one whom you are really angry at.
2. Assess the situation. Settle on your rights.
3. Decide on the appropriate time and place to talk.
4. Express your anger in the most appropriate and efficient way.
 - a. Stay calm. The messages, which are communicated very loud and violently, are not mostly perceived right. The relationship may come to an endpoint. Express yourself calmly and constructively.
 - b. Listen to the other person. You should understand the person well, before you interpret what s/he has said.
 - c. Try to see the events and the people from a different perspective. When you consider your roommate not as "stubborn" but as "someone who knows what s/he wants" or your room not as "messy" but as "a comfortable place", your behavior will change about it.
 - d. Use "I" language. Talk about the effects of the issue on "you". For example: "I feel that you do not care about me when you bring your friends to the room while I'm studying."
 - e. Allow the other person the freedom to deal with the problems in his/her own way.
 - f. Openly tell the things that you expect to change. Talk about solutions rather than negative things. You try to create solutions and let the other person do that.
 - g. Aim that both sides will win at the end of the discussion. Remember; if one side is defeated, this will return negative in the future.
5. Get information about this issue.

Under circumstances in which you can't control yourself:

In some circumstances you may have momentary explosions and then regret.

The following suggestions may help for those a few difficult seconds:

1. Stop the film. Imagine that you have a 'stop' button and you press it.
2. Count to 10.
3. Look at the surrounding and start describing the place to yourself.
4. Look at the things one by one in order, not people.
5. Think about the things you should do that day.
6. Listen to music.
7. Move. Walk. Exercise.
8. Do relaxation exercises. (Breathing, muscle stretching, etc.)
9. Use your imagination. Visualize a scene that relaxes you and imagine being there.

If you can't stop yourself and give harm to yourself or your environment, you may consider getting help from a professional.

When you could overcome the moment:

When you could stop yourself and calmed down at the first a few seconds by using the methods above,

1. Quickly think about what scared you
2. Determine what triggered you
3. Re-evaluate the situation.
4. Consider the alternative responses you can give. You can come up with more efficient coping strategies than overreacting.

Defending one's rights is undoubtedly important. However, if the issue that makes you angry is not so significant, ask yourself, what is important: to be happy or to be right?

For More Information

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