



## WHAT DO I DO WITH ALL THIS ANGER

### **ALWAYS: Stop and Think! Evaluate!**

- What am I feeling angry about?
- What are the possible consequences of acting out my anger?
- What are the possible consequences of confronting the person directly at this time?
- What do I want to achieve?

### **If direct confrontation, or expression of anger is appropriate:**

- First stop and take a deep breath.
- State your position calmly, using "I" statements (e.g. "I am feeling angry because...")
- Say what you want, again beginning with "I" (e.g. "I would like to talk to you about...")
- Stop and listen to the other person's reply
- Avoid getting involved in an argument.

### **If direct confrontation, or expression of anger is not appropriate you could;**

- Talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling
- Write about your feelings
- Draw or paint a "mad" picture
- Write a "mad" letter. DO NOT SEND IT!!!
- Some people like to hit a "mad" pillow or punching bag
- Try picturing in your mind yourself yelling, screaming, shouting, jumping up and down, saying, and doing all the things you'd like to do with your anger if you could get away with!
- Take a long walk, go for a run or have a session at the gym
- Go to a quiet place where you are alone and talk to yourself about how you are feeling.

### **Some anger don't's – do not:**

- Yell, scream, shout, or raise your voice at the other person or persons
- Use "you" statements (e.g. You always. You never. You make me . . .)
- Blame the other person
- Bring up issues from the past. (Stay focussed on the immediate issue)
- Use name-calling
- Confront when you're really angry, out of control, or haven't thought about what you want and what are the likely consequences of confrontation could be.

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## Some things to consider about anger when you're not feeling angry

- If you find yourself feeling angry much of the time, it may be that you've learned use anger in place of other emotions, such as fear, hurt, disappointment or rejection.
- Think about some times you've been angry recently. What were the reasons? Do you recognise any common themes? What other emotions could be mixed in with your angry feelings?
- How was anger expressed and responded to in your family when you were growing up?
- How rational are the things that make you angry? Which ones are realistic? Which ones aren't? What would your life be like without all the anger?
- Learn self help relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing, visualizing yourself acting in a more positive and appropriate way. Consider joining yoga or pilates classes.
- Get out of unproductive triangles. If you are angry about what someone did to someone else, you are involved in a triangle. The anger rightfully belongs to the wronged person. IT IS NOT YOUR PROBLEM!
- Be aware of "hooks" – these are words or phrases that can instantly trigger an intense reaction in Practice not responding with anger. Defuse their power over you! You CAN choose what you will feel and express anger about. Tell yourself, "This doesn't matter. I choose NOT to get angry about this. I choose not to let others control me in this way.
- Practice assertiveness skills. Know what you want and ask for it! Sometimes people feel angry because they secretly (possibly even without awareness) resent denying their own needs in favour of meeting the needs of others. No one can engage in self-sacrificing behaviours for long without a reactive explosion.

Remember that anger is a feeling and, as such, is neither right nor wrong - good nor bad. What you do with your anger is what matters. And you have complete control over your behaviours.