

ANGER MANAGEMENT

The Grim Costs of Anger

You don't have to look very far to see the grim costs of anger – the news is full of it every day and it affects our lives from one to one interactions, to groups, governments and nations. On a personal level anger:

- Destroys personal relationships
- Disrupts work relationships
- Makes difficult situations worse
- Sparks aggression
- Leads to ill health
- And personal distress

The mind/body philosophy is 'change your mind, change your life'. Rather than blaming outside influences to look at how we are perceiving the situation and then look at it another way. Change is often a challenge – it requires an open mind, a lot of practice and constant effort, but in the end it is the way to start leading the life that you truly desire.

Myths about dealing with Anger

- Actively expressing your anger reduces it (it does not – grim costs of anger above)
- Taking time out (first you are not addressing the issue that has to be solved, second – avoiding your feelings stops you from discovering how to manage them better). Building in a pause is, however, very helpful.
- Anger pushes you to get what you want
- Insight into your past decreases your anger (this is not necessarily helpful. Learning and practicing new ways of thinking and behaving are more likely to help)
- Outside events make you angry (if outside events made us angry, we would all respond in the same way to similar happenings)

To successfully reduce your anger and more sanely face life's difficulties give up the idea that unfair situations, difficult people and great frustrations automatically make you furious. Yes, they help, but you still largely create what you feel. To accept responsibility is a crucial first step in dealing effectively with your anger

The cognitive model (see my web page on cognitive therapy) can be used to observe and control your own thoughts and your belief system (address the 'musts', 'oughts', and 'shoulds')

This will empower yourself to reduce your destructive anger and address healthy negative feelings (eg disappointment, regret, and frustration) as opposed to being the victim of unhealthy negative feelings (eg depression, rage, panic, self-pity, and low frustration tolerance)

More ways to think yourself out of anger

- Accept that all people are fallible human beings, including yourself
- Practice USA (Unconditional Self Acceptance) (accept yourself and your feelings. Tell yourself – if you feel angry or succumb to anger – that you are merely a person who acted stupidly, not a stupid person)
- Undertake assertiveness training. When you assert yourself, you merely seek what you want and avoid what you don't want. When you act aggressively, however, you also add anger to your feeling and acts. Assertion is positive, aggression is negative.
- Practice daily relaxation eg self-hypnosis or meditation
- Practice calming, diaphragm breathing throughout the day
- Keep your body in balance and harmony by drinking sufficient water, eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise
- Read about and mix with people who keep cool in the face of adversities
- Find constructive activities or a constructive cause to be involved in
- Develop a sense of humour – laugh as much as you can

References:

How to Control Your Anger Before it Controls You A Ellis and R C Tafrate
Habit Busting Pete Cohen