

Ten Things To Know About Anger

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1. *The events of this world don't make you angry.* Your “hot thoughts” create your aggression and or anger. Genuinely negative events do occur. It is not the event itself that determines your emotional response, but the meaning you attach to it – which makes you responsible for how you feel about a given situation. The idea that you are responsible for your emotions (aggression/anger) is ultimately to your advantage because it gives you the opportunity to achieve control and make a free choice about how you want to feel. If it weren't for this, you would be helpless to control your emotions; they would be irreversibly bound up with every external event of this world, most of which are ultimately out of your control.

2. *Most of the time your aggression or anger will not help you.* It will immobilize you, and you will become frozen in your hostility to no productive end. You will likely feel better if you place your emphasis on actively searching for creative solutions. What can you do to correct or mitigate the difficulty or at least reduce the likelihood that you'll re-experience the same situation in the future? This positive and hopeful attitude will help eliminate the helplessness and frustration you feel when you can't deal with a situation effectively. If no solution is possible because the provocation is beyond your control, you will make yourself miserable with your resentment. So, why not get rid of it? It's difficult, if not impossible, to feel anger and joy simultaneously. If you think your angry feelings are important, then think about one of the happiest moments of your life. Now ask yourself, 'How many minutes of peace and jubilation would I be willing to trade for feelings of frustration and irritation instead?'

3. *The thoughts that generate repeated anger or aggression are typically distorted in some way. Correcting these distortions will reduce your anger.* Distortions about a particular issue can not coexist with truth. We choose what to believe whether it is true or a distorted belief - so believe objective truth and reject distorted thinking. To do this one must set aside their biases and be ruthlessly honest with themselves – something most angry people find difficult.

4. *Often your anger is caused by your belief that someone is acting unfairly toward you or some event that affects you, is unjust.* The intensity of the anger will increase in proportion to the severity of the perceived maliciousness; more so if the act was intentional. Few things are fair and just. We've all been targets of unfairness. You choose how to react or respond to the injustice. You alone have the control over your own mind and emotions. Nobody can choose your response for you. Likewise, you alone are responsible for how you act and feel.

5. You are not the only person on earth with a brain. If you ***learn to see the world through the eyes of others***, you will often be surprised to realize their actions are not unfair from their point of view. The other people may have legitimate reasons for what they do, say, or think. Many times, the perceived unfairness in these situations turns out to be an illusion that exists only in your mind! Much of your resentment and frustration will vanish when you let go of the unrealistic notion that your concept of truth, justice, and fairness should be accepted by everyone. To insist that your views or opinions are always right and everyone else is wrong or 'misguided' is distorted thinking. To believe that everyone is unfair to you is also distorted, simple because it isn't true.

6. *Other people do not deserve your punishment or abuse.* Therefore, your unwarranted aggression or anger-like behavior is unlikely to help you achieve any positive goals in your interactions with them. Your aggression will often cause further deterioration of relationships and polarization from those wanting or willing to help you. You may need or want their help but have a way of biting the hand that reaches out to you. You may feel rejected when people pull away from you, yet your aggression serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Even if you temporarily get what you want, any short-term gains from such hostile manipulation will often be more than counterbalanced by a long-term resentment and retaliation from the people you are attempting to

coerce. No one likes to be controlled, manipulated, or taken for a fool. Aggression is counter productive.

7. A great deal of anger involves your defense against loss of ego or self-esteem when people criticize or disagree with you or fail to behave as you want them to. Such anger is always inappropriate. The reason is simple: only your own negative distorted thoughts can cause you to lose self-esteem. Nobody can take it away from you unless you give it up. When you blame others for how you feel, think, or behave, you are shirking your own responsibility for yourself. You alone are responsible for you.

8. Frustration results from unmet expectations. Much of our frustration comes from unrealized or unfulfilled expectations – many of which are unrealistic. You have the right to influence your reality to bring it more in line with your expectations, but this is not always practical, especially when these expectations represent ideals that don't correspond to everyone else's concept of reasonableness. The simplest solution would be to change your expectations. For example, some unrealistic expectations that lead to frustration include:

- If I want something (love, happiness, a job, or promotion, etc.), I should get it.
- If I work hard at something, I should be guaranteed success.
- Other people should try to measure up to my standards and unquestionably accept my concept of "fairness."
- I should be able to solve all my problems on my own, quickly and easily.
- If I'm a good person, other people will love and appreciate me.
- People should think, reason, believe, feel, and act the way I do.
- If I'm nice to someone, they should reciprocate.

9. It is childish to insist you have the right to be angry. Of course, you do! Anger is legally and biblically permitted. Here is the crucial question: ***Is it to your long term advantage to be aggressive or angry?*** Will you or the world around you really benefit from your aggression or anger? Doubtful. To think otherwise is distorted thinking. The world does not benefit by your unreasonable aggressiveness or anger.

10. You rarely need your anger to be human. It is not true that you will be an unfeeling robot without it. In fact, when you rid yourself of that condemning sour irritability, you will feel greater zest, joy, peace, and productivity. You will experience liberation and a sense of freedom.

Summary: Anger is usually not about being right or wrong. It's ***about not being willing to give up one's position or perceived right.*** In most instances of conflict and anger there isn't any moral right or wrong, only differences of opinions. Giving up our insistence does not mean you are admitting to wrongdoing or mistakes; it is deciding to spend your energy productively creating a non defensive atmosphere which promotes moving from the 'why' and blame to 'how' and problem solving.

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