



ANGER MANAGEMENT

Anger sometimes strikes like lightning. It affects our minds, our bodies, and our behavior. Because anger involves such complex feelings it becomes one of the most misunderstood of all emotions. Not all anger is violent or out of control. When someone treats you unkindly, unfairly or tries to take advantage of you, it can trigger rage or simply a feeling of irritation.

Not all expressions of anger are the same. How we express anger is a result of our thought process and response to what makes us angry. It is not the event itself, but how we evaluate the event or what someone else has said or done that is at the center of anger. The key to managing anger is recognizing that what made us angry is not as important as understanding how and why we respond in the way we do.

Anger, like love, has potential for both positive and negative impacts. We all know people who have allowed their anger to destroy relationships, affection and trust. We've seen them become bitter and vengeful and spend their lives in hatred, refusing to forgive some wrong that made them angry.

Anger can be positive. Some people use it to probe for truth and inner growth, to challenge and change injustices. Anger, like love, is not an emotion that we should just let happen; it is our human gift to choose and control.

There is a common belief that if you don't express your anger, the resulting stress will harm you: give you an ulcer, cause a heart attack, grow a tumor. Sometimes suppressed hostility can aggravate stress and illness. But stress itself does not cause anything. It is how you perceive the situation that causes the stress, and what you do about it that matters. Blowing your top rarely resolves, or changes, the situation in a positive way. It often complicates it.

Most of us get angry about things that are not worth getting angry about. The real worth is finding a solution for the anger and then getting on with our lives. There are times, however, when anger is appropriate. People who never feel anger, even when it is in their best interest to do so, win no prizes for courage or self-esteem.

MANAGE YOUR ANGER

- Are your thoughts realistic for the situation?
- Will it help to verbalize your feelings?
- Are you feeling hurt about something that is beyond your control?
- What do you want to happen as a result of expressing your anger?

Managing your anger means taking responsibility for your actions and refusing to remain stuck in blame, fury, or silent resentment. It is knowing when to become angry ("this is wrong and I must say so") and when to make peace – when to take action and when to remain silent. Managing anger does not mean never feeling angry or never expressing anger. It means reserving anger for issues of great importance to you, and learning to express it in a way that will help you achieve the result you want.

For more information on controlling anger, contact the OAAP 503-226-1057.

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