

Transforming Anger

Anger is a strong emotion and it can be intense and powerful. While anger itself is normal, the challenge for children and adults is in learning how to manage angry feelings effectively.

Suppressing anger and venting anger are common but ineffective styles of resolving angry feelings. Suppression of anger, while sometimes necessary in the short term, is not considered to be a healthy alternative in the long term. Learning to express feelings in healthy and constructive ways is essential for physical, mental, and emotional health as well as for satisfying relationships.

You do not have to let anger control your life or the lives of those around you. One of the first steps in controlling anger is to become aware of what triggers your anger. Examine the situations that evoke angry feelings. When does your anger flare up and why? Notice what you are thinking about the situation and become aware of the feelings that underlie your feelings of anger. Reflect upon the roots of your anger and look to the heart of the problem. Unhealed emotional pain from the past can be the source of anger. It is common for feelings such as hurt, disappointment, fear, jealousy, guilt, helplessness, and frustration to exist beneath anger. Self awareness is a critical ingredient in effectively handling anger.

It is possible to develop a new response to anger. Become curious about the sources of your anger. Pause and cool down before reacting to a situation. Take time to let your thinking guide your feelings. Slow down your breathing and practice deep breathing. Spend time alone or talk to someone you trust about your feelings. Exercise, listen to music, write in a journal, relax, meditate and/or pray. Find safe ways to release pent up emotions.

The energy of anger can also be used constructively. If anger is harnessed wisely, it can provide the motivation to take action, communicate honestly, overcome obstacles, and achieve goals.

Learning to effectively manage angry feelings is an essential skill for all human beings. Moving from anger to understanding and then to peace is a goal worth achieving.



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