



Why Are We So Angry,

“Speak when you are angry, and you will make the best speech you’ll ever regret.” —Laurence J. Peter

What Is It Doing to Us, and What Can We Do About It?

Do you ever get angry? Have you ever noticed that sometimes you are much more likely to get angry than at other times? Are you becoming alarmed at the intensity of anger you are seeing everywhere around you today, maybe even your own?

Anger is perhaps one of the most complex and misunderstood emotions that we experience:

- At its best, anger is a signal telling us that things are not right, that we should pay attention to our needs, and that change may need to occur.
- At its worst, anger is a destructive force in our lives which disrupts relationships and hurts us and those around us.

Most experts agree on two points:

1. Feeling angry is an inevitable part of our life. People who say they never get angry either don’t recognize their feelings as anger or are hiding their anger.
2. Anger stems from feelings of fear, hurt, frustration, or sadness. In fact, anger is sometimes referred to as a cover-up for when we don’t know how to express what we are really feeling.

The typical sequence of events when anger occurs is as follows:

1. Anger is triggered by an event.
2. Anger thoughts are developed.
3. The next behaviors are based on the angry thoughts.
4. Anger is fed and increases. If not managed, feelings of anger intensify and become far more difficult to control with productive action.
5. Anger that is not managed triggers a long, drawn-out, painful, and destructive series of angry thoughts and actions.

You have up to 3 seconds between the time an episode occurs and your body begins to rev up to exert control. If you stay detached and don’t let the event engage your sense of personal worth (in other words, keep your ego out of it), you can handle the situation much more effectively.

The events that cause us to feel angry have no emotional value in themselves—it is how we interpret these events that cause us to respond in a certain way. Anger is a disorder of choice. You are the only one who can make yourself angry.

A single moment of uncontrolled anger, expressed destructively, can devastate a

number of lives. **Anger clouds judgment**, and harsh words spoken in anger cannot be taken back. Inappropriate anger harms our health and our relationships. No one acquires respect by losing his/her temper.

We can reduce the damaging power of anger by learning more effective ways to manage our own anger and the anger of others.

To learn more about anger, the effects of anger, and more effective ways of coping check out the following articles at <http://www.melbabenson.com/articles.php>:

“Why Are We So Angry?”

“What Is Anger Doing to Us?”

“Managing Our Own Anger”

“Coping With Angry People”

“Effective Leadership Can Reduce Organizational Anger”

Learning to use anger is not an easy task, but the alternative—letting anger use us—makes us prisoners of our own minds.

Anger is not the enemy, and we are not helpless in the face of it. Anger is only an energy that with practice we can harness for our good.

“If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow.”

— Unknown

“Be master of your petty annoyances and conserve your energies for the big, worthwhile things. It isn’t the mountain ahead that wears you out. It is the grain of sand in your shoe.”

— Robert Service

“Look upon the errors of others in sorrow, not in anger.”

— Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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