

ANGER MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Some of the time and maybe much of the time, becoming angry has something to do with doubting yourself, being unsure, or feeling threatened by someone else. It's always important to *remember that you are a worthwhile person* and that you have many good qualities.
2. Sometimes you get angry because you take things personally when there is no need to do that. Even when someone is being directly offensive to you, you can control and contain your anger by staying task oriented – that is, the most important thing to focus on is *what must be done in the situation to get the outcome you want*. By taking insults personally, you get distracted from your task and get caught up in unnecessary combat. Recognise what the other person is doing as a provocation and stay task oriented.
3. Sometimes you get angry simply because it is the one thing you have always done in a certain kind of situation. As you learn alternative ways of reacting to provocations you will be less inclined to react with anger.
4. One of the most important things you can do to control your anger is to recognise the signs of arousal as soon as they occur. As you become more sharply attuned to the signs of tension inside you, you will achieve greater ability to short-circuit the anger process. Heightened anger makes you agitated and impulsive, *and impulsive and antagonistic acts get you into trouble*. As you learn to relax more easily, your ability to regulate anger will improve.
5. Your anger can serve to alert you that you are becoming upset and, if a positive outcome is to result, effective action is called for. *Use your anger to your advantage*.
6. Sometimes you get angry because things look like they are getting out of hand and you want to take charge. You will learn that, when you self-instruct and manage your anger, you *are* in control of the situation. *The best way to handle a situation can be to remain calm when most people would expect or even want you to lose your 'cool'. You can act decisively and sensibly despite provocation*.

As you learn to break down provocation experiences into stages, you will be better able to handle things. This is another way of putting you in control of a situation.

7. Sometimes you get annoyed, upset, and angry because you have spent more time being problem-conscious than you have being accomplishment-conscious. *You often forget or dismiss the good things that you do, but you don't let yourself get away with the mistakes and failings. You must remember to congratulate yourself when you have succeeded in managing your anger and allow yourself to feel good about it.*

Following are a series of anger-encouraging versus anger-reducing statements.

ANGER ENCOURAGING	ANGER-REDUCING
People <i>should not</i> do that to me, I wouldn't do that to them.	Rubbish. Not everyone lives by my rules, so why should I expect that they will? People will generally treat me as well as I treat them, but not always.
If I am nice to somebody, they <i>should</i> be appreciative.	It would be nice if people were always appreciative, but sometimes they won't be.
If I work hard for something, I <i>should</i> get it.	Nothing is owed to me. Where is it written that I will always be successful in everything?
If someone treats me unfairly, I am entitled to get angry.	All people have the right to get angry, but is it to my advantage to get angry? What will be the advantages and disadvantages of my being angry.

This attack on your thinking is not something that will instantaneously change your life. It will require regular and persistent effort, because many of us have ingrained tendencies to anger, but that does not mean you *have* to act in that way. You can choose not to; you have the freedom to think, dispute and act differently.