

What happens when you get angry?

When you are angry, your body reacts just like it does to stress. Your heart beats faster to pump increased oxygen, adrenaline, and sugar into your bloodstream. Your breathing becomes more rapid, your blood pressure rises, and your muscles tense. Your body is energized for action. In looking for way to release tension you might yell or shout, slam things, pound your fist. However, if you do not find a way to release your tension you risk building up your anger to a level that is dangerous and difficult to control.

Cognitively, your thoughts about others may become irrational and you may generate negative self- statements. You may begin to believe that no one cares or ever thinks about you. Negative thoughts usually serve to increase your anger.

What causes you to get angry?

There are many types of circumstances that can cause a person to become angry. Perhaps the most common source of anger is frustration. Frustration occurs when you are blocked from doing what you want to do or from going where you want to go. It is a feeling of helplessness and loss of control. Another primary cause of anger is disappointment. You are disappointed when situations, events, or people, including yourself, do not meet the expectations you have for them.

Threat to our sense of security is also a major cause of anger. Situations that threaten your security like doing poorly on an exam, losing your wallet, or encountering a problem you're not prepared to deal with can leave you feeling vulnerable and angry.

The common thread that runs through all of these situations is another emotion, fear. These situations all result in the experience of fear. Anger is an emotion of fear. It is a defensive response to the feelings of helplessness and vulnerability that fear produces. While fear is a passive emotion with energy directed inward, anger is an aggressive emotion that allows you to direct energy outwards.

Sometimes there are more subtle causes of your anger. Some people get angry because they fear being powerless or being taken advantage of; so they believe that being aggressive is an effective way to get their way; many have not learned to deal with conflict assertively; some use anger to displace their feelings of guilt; and some people get angry because they overreact or misinterpret a situation.

We cognitively interpret most of our life experiences; how we interpret a situation influences how much anger we might experience. For example, if Joanne believes that James has not called because he frequently forgets, she probably will experience annoyance. However, if she interprets his behavior as not caring about her, her fear and anger may be magnified. If Kathy begins to believe that she will not get the class she needs, her anger will become intense.

Handling your anger

Everyone experiences anger. The ability to express negative feelings in a constructive and positive manner is essential to positive physical and mental health. Listed below are steps you can take to express and handle your anger effectively.

- Recognize your anger

Admit to yourself that you are angry. Know how you when you get angry. What are signs?

- Calm down

The old adage of "take a deep breath and count to ten" really works. Tell yourself that you can deal with the situation more effectively if you are calm. Decide not to act on the situation until you have calmed down.

- Use a sounding board

If there is a neutral person you can talk to about why you are angry, it may help you to determine if you are interpreting the situation accurately.

- Identify your fears

What fear has the source of your anger caused?· Reappraise the situation. Give yourself a chance to see if the situation that caused your anger is bad as you first thought.

- Don't avoid the issues:

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