

## Getting a handle on your anger!

Like all emotions, we have experienced anger. People across all ages, across all situations or cultures experience it. It is a complex emotion and receives maximum attention because not only it affects the person who is experiencing it, but also the people who are related to him. As a result it is often termed as a negative emotion. It is a feeling that can range from annoyance to rage. It is a feeling that when suppressed can continue to build up until it is released. Release can be in a healthy manner or in a harmful manner. People have different styles of expressing anger. It may be expressed as rage, verbal abuse, or striking out at others and things. It can be quick, like a viper's bite or it can be like a boom of a cannon, or it can be slow and seething. It can zoom from "0" to "10" in a split second, and spin out of control! Other people shove it down and let it smoulder like hot coals. Some people feel resentment and shame. Some people feel anger day in and day out. Anger can pierce deep into the heart. Anger may lead to problems when it happens too often, lasts a long time, gets out-of-control and is destructive. It hurts you and other people. The aftermath of fury or isolation can be a painful time.

Most of us, especially the adolescents and young adults are much more prone to anger than rest of the population. As students and growing adults; most of you are faced with daily life challenges that include making choices about family and professional lives, handling various stressors and add to it one's quest for identity. More often than not you might find yourself in a situation in which you experience extreme mental pressure and feel easily agitated. Some of these situations might see you "getting off the handle". On the other hand you could be silently sulking and further mentally tormenting yourself. After such incidents get over, most of us promise ourselves and to significant others, "I won't get angry now". However what we should actually promise is that "I would manage my anger effectively now onwards". How can we prevent ourselves from experiencing an emotion that is so human in nature!

Here some practical tips in which anger can be managed effectively are being presented. If practiced regularly and sincerely these methods or tips can go a long way in ensuring easy management. If you do not succeed in the first attempt, don't give up, keep trying in a systematic manner. Maintaining a diary or log of the methods you use is often helpful.

- Talking directly to the source of the anger without using blame or shame. You own your anger. No one else is responsible for how you feel. A good way to start the conversation is to say, "I feel angry when....." Sometimes, it isn't feasible to talk to the person about your feelings. They may not be in an emotionally good place to hear your truth. Some

people may use what you've shared to hurt you further or fuel more anger/upset. Be mindful of your emotional and physical safety in sharing your feelings.

- Talking about anger with a friend or counsellor is another healthy way to release anger.
- Engaging in a physical activity, such as walking, cycling, working out at the gym or sports helps to release anger and benefits your health. Relaxation or meditation help to ease and calm your mind.
- Writing in a journal is a good way to express feelings.

### **Harmful ways of releasing anger:**

- Yelling, screaming, belittling or hitting the people close to you not only hurts those around you but hurts you also. It can cause you to feel ashamed and regret the pain you've caused. You can feel out of control or feel like a monster and end up driving away the people who love you the most.
- Driving can be a deadly combination with unreleased anger causing road rage.
- Bullying and sarcasm
- Drinking and substance abuse

This is not a comprehensive list. You may have other harmful ways of releasing anger that aren't listed here.

### **How do you know when anger is becoming a problem?**

- When it interferes with relationships, work or school.
- When you hurt those around you.
- When you hurt yourself due to anger.
- When you have had involvement with the courts and law due to your anger.
- When you decide that anger is preventing you from having the life you want.

Anger is a human experience. It serves a purpose. Anger gets in the way of living life when it's too much, too often and severe in expression. It can be made a smaller part of life and used appropriately, so that living is filled with freedom, laughter and love!

**For Further information on this and other psychological concerns please contact the Student Counselor; South Asian University**

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