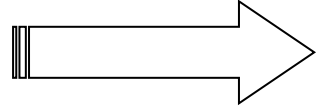


Challenge 6



Anger

Anger is a natural, healthy emotional response that is vital for all human beings to express in terms of personal survival. It carries its own sense of energy that can actually be used for good purposes.

Anger helps us to set personal boundaries, which is an important process that establishes guidelines for our relationships with others. When we define our boundaries as individuals, we decide what is acceptable in terms of physical interaction, communication, and general privacy. When we recognize that someone has overstepped our boundaries and invaded our space, anger is the natural reaction in our defense.

How important is it for teens to be able to express their anger and feelings in a safe environment? Why?

Anger, without control, can be destructive and dangerous. Since the range in this emotion can begin with a small irritation and end with violence, it's important to understand how to recognize and control this emotion.

People respond to various situations in different ways. Emotions are based on personalities, life experiences and personal interpretations. We naturally feel upset or angry when we are frustrated, especially when we sense that people are insensitive, uncaring, thoughtless, and often abusive.

What do you think are some of the other reasons or situations that anger teens in general?

Anger can also be counterproductive. Often times, people use anger to “get back at” or punish another person who has upset them. It can be overpowering and take away rational thought. Sometimes, it becomes an emotional state called rage, which is when someone loses complete control. It is often a response to extreme hurt or threat.

People experience a mental and emotional response in these situations and feel intense physical change as well. Heart rates, blood pressure and adrenaline spikes will often trigger what is called the “fight or flight response”. “Fight” meaning that when people anger us, we choose to attack them verbally or physically, whereas “flight” implies that we avoid the confrontation and create distance between us and the person or situation. In either case, the issues will remain unresolved until there is an opportunity for both sides to reach some type of understanding.

Give an example of a time when it would be smart to “take off” and not confront someone when their anger is out of control.

Initially, anger may feel completely justified and it may very well be. People can be extremely cruel, and our natural instinct is to respond in the same manner. However, once we show that we have lost control in the situation, we lose our power. By staying calm, ignoring the offender, or simply walking away, we are refusing to be a part of the conversation or even the moment.

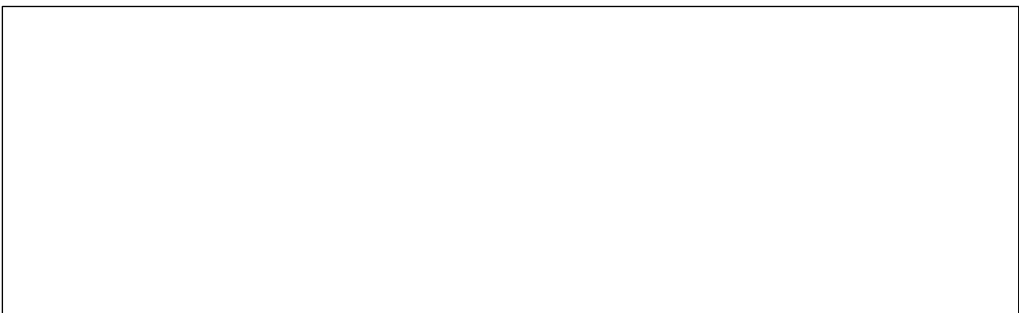
We could shout and rage in response, or worse, as the level of adrenaline increases inside both sides. This usually leads to an uncontrolled confrontation. Nothing is usually resolved when both parties are out of control. Usually, the situation escalates along with the original conflict.

How do some situations escalate to the point of rage?



No one has the right to take away our ability to feel angry, but we are all responsible to take control of our anger and learn to express it in a way that is productive and improves the quality of life.

What kinds of harm can't be fixed when someone has lost control because of anger?



Taking charge of our anger

There are various ways of approaching anger that are effective within different types of experiences.

It is important to be assertive with your anger, meaning that you are very clear that something is upsetting you, when and if that is possible. Being assertive does not mean that you are hurtful, in fact, it means just the opposite. It infers that you get your point across while being respectful of another as well as yourself.

Trying to suppress your anger is not healthy. If we don't discuss our feelings or try to resolve an issue, we usually "stuff" our emotions, letting our frustration build up for another day. Anger wears us down as it continues to make our lives miserable. Or maybe we tend to take our anger out on some poor person who just happens to say the wrong thing at the wrong time, and they become our victim. Suppressing our feelings can eventually cause us to become more stressed, depressed, anxious, or begin to lose self-esteem.

Dealing with anger is definitely a learning process.

How do little children often deal with anger?

How do adolescents often deal with anger? (ages 10-12)

How do teens often deal with anger?

How do the adults in general handle anger?

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“How I handle my own anger” is a good question that each of us should be asking ourselves. Have we evolved from the way a child would act or are we stuck in a tantrum mode and have never grown up? Most of us have been influenced by the adults who raised us. This could be a good or bad thing.

A Quick Check Might Help

After a confrontation, most of us question whether our anger is justified. We need to put space between ourselves and the offender to make sure that we are processing the situation correctly. If we aren’t certain that our anger is justified, we may want to ask ourselves:

Was I being too emotional or sensitive? Was the other person just kidding around and I was in a bad mood in the first place?

Was the person going through a bad time and needed to vent? Should I be more patient with what he/she is going through?

Was it both of our faults? Did I come across with an attitude that made the situation worse? What did I do to cause him/her to get angry?

We also need to remember that no one is perfect. We have all had conflicts when we have had to exercise great control, and carefully select our actions and words without getting ourselves into trouble. Sometimes, we do a great job and other times, we wish that we could replay that moment again.

Responding to anger may be based on a survival mode and how people in our lives are “heard”. If our parents/guardians rage and shout, then we will most likely follow their habits. If someone is allowed to physically strike another, then the victim sees that as a norm, and will often justify striking another person in similar situations.

Is it possible for teens to break the cycle of violence in their own lives? How would they begin?

A Review

1. When we feel that our anger is getting out of control, we will need to find some space.

Simply moving away from the situation or person, may be the best choice depending on the circumstances. Keep your body language in check and stay calm. You might say that you have some things that you need to think about and want a few moments to yourself.

2. Often people are tired or exhausted when they lose their temper.

Ok, you have had a rough day. Maybe it was full of confrontation. Or maybe you are still carrying the heartache from last week, or the grief from last year. Disappointments and devastation in life weigh heavily on people, and sometimes it takes awhile to sort through them. It's important to recognize what is causing us to "push back".

3. If certain phrases, individuals, or attitudes ruin your day, try to avoid them.

Whenever possible, stay around people who are positive. There are enough negatives that we can't avoid or control. Create the best environment when possible. You may choose to sit next to a different group at lunch, or take a different route home, or avoid students who are "trouble" in class. Work on making your life easier.

4. Try calming yourself down.

Take some big breaths. Count off to yourself from one to five or make that ten before you respond. Say "*Calm down*" to yourself internally. "*This isn't worth getting out of control.*"

Or change your internal language from, "*I hate this day,*" to "*Ok, this is a bummer, but I can live through this.*"

How about from "*I hate you*" to "*This isn't working.*" This is not about letting a person "off" but holding on to your own power and not turning it over to another.

5. The more that you acknowledge your anger, address it with the person or situation and maintain a sense of control, the easier it is to let it go.

Anger, without some restraint, overtakes one's whole being, and makes life miserable. We've all been there. It also affects the lives of those whom you care about. An angry family member can ruin the best day, the happiest experience, and the greatest achievement.

Be selective about what you allow to make you angry. Yes, we do have a choice. Make sure that it is important enough to respond to, and then do so with some thought behind it.

6. Work on tolerance and forgiveness.

No matter how unjust or unfair a situation is, our anger must be directed to productive and positive action. We can sit and complain, or we can create a plan for change. We can hate or we can try to understand our differences and begin to forgive. We can do nothing and allow the situation to continue and get worse, or we can believe in positive change and make a better choice.

What is one idea that every teen can do today to create a better world in terms of the anger and injustice that people experience?

Anger can lead to



Violence and Bullying

Violence causes more injury and death in children, teenagers, and young adults than infectious disease, cancer, or birth trauma. Nearly one in three young people between the ages of 14 and 20 are involved with violent dating behaviors. Teens, who were bullied as children, are seven times more likely to be part of an abusive relationship (AMA).

Bullies are all about control. They participate in forms of harassment, discrimination, prejudice, abuse, persecution, conflict, and violence. Because they threaten their victims, they often remain unidentified.

Most bullies have low self-confidence, are insecure, and actually have their own fear factor. As a result they continuously try to control others and victimize those who cannot defend themselves. They are manipulative and deceptive. Their world is about surrounding themselves with like-minded followers, who often choose to exploit others as well.

Bullying comes in various experiences, actions and relationships, including:

- criticizing
- ridiculing
- ignoring and rejecting
- threatening someone with force/weapons
- inflicting unwanted sexual behavior
- humiliating
- creating social media attacks
- intimidating

What else would you add to this list?

Do you feel that bullies need help as well? What would help them to find a reason and a way to change? Is it possible?

What types of behavior from bullies makes you the most angry?

Sometimes, we are the bullies. Do you think that it is possible for someone to be a bully and not even know it? Give an example.

Can we take a stand against bullying together?

Teens undoubtedly have the best ideas for supporting peers and to problem solve when there are conflicts. What suggestions, advice or direction would you offer in the following situations? These examples are typical of life experiences.

Your cousin is becoming more and more depressed. Some of the “mean girls” make fun of her and create videos on social to humiliate her. How can you support her?

One of your good friends is afraid of a bully in class. This person hangs out with his gang, steals your friend’s money, books, and threatens to beat him up if he says anything. Your friend needs help. Does he have any options?

Some “jocks” have chosen your brother as their next victim. It doesn’t matter what he does, they humiliate him, especially because sports are not his thing. They target him at lunch. He hates coming to school and frequently hides out in hallways, in the office or behind buildings. Is there anything you can do?

Avoid bullying and be safe

Check out the following:

- Be aware of what surrounds you within the place and time of day.
- Practice defensive moves if you need to get away from someone.
- Walk in groups when necessary.
- Believe in YOU. You have the right to personal freedom.
- Bring together those who are being harassed. Defend them when possible.
- Find a mentor, coach, teacher, relative, who can help you find the support that you need.
- Create a campaign on campus with resources to address bullying issues.
- Generate a student group to make posters, announcements and bring speakers to classes to create awareness.
- institute a lunch watch to make sure that teens take notice of who is eating alone, seems withdrawn, or looks afraid.

Write a poem, a song, or a message as a response to bullying.

Title: