



## **TIPS FOR DEALING WITH ANGER**

Research and experience show that when people with “anger problems” change their self-talk, their anger de-escalates and they regain control. When you feel yourself starting to get angry, take a TIME OUT and read these statements to yourself.

1. I do not need to prove myself in any situation. I can stay calm.
2. There is no need to doubt myself. What other people say doesn't matter. I am the only person who can make me angry or keep me calm.
3. I need to take time to relax and slow down. I need to take a time out.
4. I feel angry, that must mean I am hurt and scared. My anger is a signal that I need to remind myself of these important statements.
5. I don't need to feel threatened. I can relax and stay calm.
6. I don't have to be competent and strong all the time. It's okay to feel scared, unsure or confused. I can be powerful and ask for help at the same time.
7. It is impossible to control other people and situations. The only thing I can control is me and how I express my feelings.
8. It is okay to be uncertain or insecure sometimes. I do not need to be in control of everything and everybody.
9. If people criticize me, I can survive that, it will not kill me. I do not have to be perfect.
10. If people want to get angry, that is their choice. I do not need to respond to their anger or feel threatened.
11. When I get into an argument, I can stay with my plan and know what to do. I can take time out if I need to.
12. Most things people argue about are insignificant. My anger comes from old feelings being triggered. It's good to take time and find out why I'm angry.
13. It's nice to have other people's approval but even without it, I can still accept and like myself. I don't have to prove I'm right.
14. It's okay to make mistakes and it's important that I learn from them.
15. I cannot expect people to act the way I want them to or think they should.

## Six Anger Styles

**Stuffers** are conflict avoiders, people who deny or bury their anger; their motto is “peace at any price.” They often have lots of tension under the surface. The underlying problem is never addressed and therefore can’t be resolved. People who stuff their anger so much may become depressed, or they may become physically sick, with stomachaches, headache, or other psychical complaints. Teens who have parents who stuff their anger don’t have the opportunity to learn how to problem-solve.

**Withdrawers** are passive-aggressive means to express their anger. The term Passive-aggressive means expressing anger in a subtle indirect ways. Some husbands are passive-aggressive: they don’t talk to their wives for days when they are angry.

Some teens that are angry about a divorce show their anger by not doing what they are told. These are subtle, not obvious, ways to show anger. Sometimes the withdrawers hurt themselves the most by their with-drawing\_- they suffer the consequences of not having a closer relationship when they don’t communicate; they suffer the consequences of low grades. When parents are passive-aggressive, or withdraw their children often feel guilty and responsible, and they are always wondering what they’ve done wrong. People who withdraw also miss out on the power of using their anger to work for them. They don’t solve the underling problem.

**Blamers** express their anger by blaming their problems on other people, by name calling, by attacking, or by putting other people down. Teens often blame their problems on their peers, their siblings, their parents, or their teachers. Parents often blame their problems on their children, their spouse, their own parents, or their work situation. Teenagers in families where one or both parents are blamers may have low self-esteem because they begin to believe what they are told. They may feel guilty and responsible for he family problems. Or they may become blamers, too, and never take responsibility for their behavior.

**Trianglers** express their anger in devious and manipulative ways. Instead of expressing their anger directly, they pull someone else in, or they try to get someone else to be angry. For instance, a mother who is angry with her husband may tell her son what the husband, so the son will be angry with the husband too. Adolescents often use triangling. For example, Jenny might be angry because her best friend, Stephanie, said something to hurt her feelings. Rather than dealing with Stephanie directly, Jenny tells another friend, Maggie, something bad about Stephanie so the Maggie is mad at Stephanie too.

In Families where there are triangulars, a lot of tension may be below the surface. Kids may have the feeling that they or someone else has done something wrong, but they don’t know what.

**Exploders** use violence to express anger. This range from pushing, shoving, kicking, and slapping to hitting, to punching, choking, using a weapon, or even killing. These are all harmful behaviors. Teens who grow up in violent families are often scared that they or someone else is going to get hurt. They often intervene in order to rescue one parent, and sometimes the teens get hurt as well. Sometimes violent parents get angry at teens who try to rescue. If a teenage daughter is very close to a mother who is beaten, too, and may not be able to set limits when she starts dating. Children in violent families worry about divorce; they also worry that someone will be hurt fatally and that the violent parent will go to jail.

Violent Parents are often unpredictable in their violence. Their children never know what to expect. They are often hypervigilant, constantly scanning the mood of the violent parent, or of the family, to help them predict whether this is a safe time. Sometimes after violent fights with each other, the parents might get mad at the children, ignoring them, sending them to their room, or taking their anger out on them. Sometimes the parent directs the violence to the oldest son or daughter. The parent may beat the son or daughter, sometimes with the other parent watching. Teens in this position often wonder why their mother stands by and allows them to be beaten by their father. Teens in violent families often think their families are “different” and wish they could be like other families that they think are happy. Teens in these families also sometimes feel ashamed of their families, and ashamed of themselves, thinking something is the matter with them.

**Problem solvers** can admit that they are angry and then look at why they are angry. They put thinking between their feelings and their behavior. They see if they are angry about a problem they can solve; if so, they use their anger to give them power to change themselves. Problem solvers use their problem-solving skills in anger situations. If a problem solver has a problem they can’t solve, they express their anger in helpful ways so they can let it go.

Teens who grow up in families where the parents are problem solvers will learn how to problem-solve when they are angry. They learn the consequences of their behavior; they don’t feel put down; they feel safe; and they learn t use their anger to work for them.