

Control Your Anger Before it Controls You

All of us get angry. Some of us, however, let our angry feelings get out of control or express anger in negative, nonproductive ways. Learning how to manage and express anger appropriately can strengthen your relationships with others, improve job satisfaction and make you feel happier and more in control.

What to Do About It: Try These Tips the Next Time you Feel Angry

- **Recognize your feelings.** Be aware of subtle signs of anger in your mind and body. Are your fists clenched? Do your muscles feel tense? Have you made sarcastic comments?
- **Relax and calm down.** Take deep breaths. Count to 10 and let the tension escape from your body.
- **Remove yourself from the environment.** If the person or situation is causing you to feel extremely angry, or if you feel that you cannot talk about your emotions or express your anger positively, walk away.
- **Identify the source.** What exactly is making you angry? When you recognize the cause, approach it in a positive, productive way.
- **Think before taking action.** Carefully consider the consequences of your response. Will you regret saying what is on your mind? Is there a better way to express your anger than the first impulse that came to you?
- **Choose your battles carefully.** Are the time, place and audience right for you to express your anger positively? If not, restrain your anger and resolve to vent your feelings in an appropriate manner at a later time.
- **Tell the person why you are angry.** Express your anger calmly, remain in control of your feelings and be sure to respect the other person.
- **Divert your attention.** If there is nothing you can do to change the situation, think about something else. Focus on a pleasant thought, an upcoming vacation or a happy memory.
- **Find humor in the situation.** When appropriate, learn to laugh at life and conflicts with others. Break the tension and diffuse the situation with a smile, joke or funny (but not sarcastic) comment.
- **Be patient.** Try to be tolerant and empathetic of others. Attempt to understand their situations and behaviors.
- **Find a substitute outlet for anger.** Instead of acting on an aggressive urge, find a creative outlet for your energy. Start an exercise program. Take up a physically challenging new sport. Try a new hobby.
- **Get advice from others.** If you simply do not know how to deal with an angry feeling or situation, ask friends or family for suggestions on how they worked through similar situations.



If you feel like your anger is controlling you instead of you controlling your anger, talk to your Employee Assistance Program. With expert counseling and other supportive tools, we can help you learn the skills you need to manage your emotions, no matter what the situation.



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