



A-N-G-E-R!

By Beula Postlewait, Global Representative

Anger can be a natural emotion. Everyone experiences it in various forms, on a spectrum from mild irritation to intense rage. Anger affects our attitudes and our physical bodies. People who seem to be perpetually angry tend to be irritable and critical. Most of us do not enjoy being around such people. Anger affects interpersonal relationships and often divides groups of people and families. Words spoken in anger can resonate with other people for a long time.

It does not take long for teachers to spot the kids who have anger issues. You see anger even in young children. When something upsets them, they lash out verbally or physically or in both ways. It is not always easy to define the trigger that sets off the rage. Children react to anger in diverse ways. The instinctive response is to be aggressive. When any person (of any age) feels threatened, the natural reaction is to attack what is causing the discomfort. Society tells us to control our anger and seek a solution for our discomfort. Age, reasoning ability, social stability, and physical ability have an affect on our reactions.

How to Deal with Anger Issues

The American Psychological Association* says there are three main ways to deal with anger:

1. Express your angry feelings in an assertive but not an aggressive way. This is a healthy way to overcome anger. If a person has a need, he or she needs to express that need in a positive way. You cannot get what you want by hurting others.
2. Suppress your angry feelings by thinking in a positive way. Convert the energy anger arouses to a constructive project or feelings. There is danger in suppressing, since suppressed feelings can sometimes cause physical problems like hypertension or depression. Suppressed feelings can also lead to passive-aggressive behavior.
3. Calm yourself internally by purposely taking steps to lower your heart rate, take a walk, and talk with someone about your feelings.

The sad thing is that you cannot control the person who made you angry. However, in such situations, you can learn to control your reaction to others. This is often difficult for children.

Some people just have less control of their anger. Others may outwardly seem to control it, but they become continually grumpy and irritable. Family background impacts how children react because they grow up watching how adults react in similar situations and often react in the same ways.

- Relaxation techniques can sometimes help reduce angry feelings. Thinking about a calm, happy place can relieve some tensions. Replace dramatic and exaggerated reactions by realizing there is rarely a situation that someone cannot fix or help.
- Better communication skills also help. When angry, people may jump to conclusions instead of taking time to totally understand the situation. Talking about the situation in a rational manner can resolve most issues.
- Try to find some humor in what is happening. Visualize something funny that the situation brings to your mind. Use the humor to help you relax.
- Take a break from your usual routine, and do something you like to do.

There have been numerous incidents in schools where students have used weapons to create a massacre. Anger is a major factor in each of these events. We need to help adults and children know how to manage angry feelings.

What does the Bible say about anger?

Proverbs 29:11, NIV: "Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end."

Ephesians 4:26, NIV: "In your anger, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry."

James 1:19-20, NIV: "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

Life can be rough, and people can say cruel things to us. There are plenty of opportunities to have negative feelings and negative reactions. Regardless of what happens, God is with us and can give us an inner peace that will help us overcome what other people say or do to us. Ask God to help you maintain a calm and mature attitude toward people, so you can be an example to others.

Reference: American Psychological Association, <https://www.apa.org/topics/anger/control>

Beula Postlewait lives in Leawood, Kansas. She is a former public school teacher and has a daughter who is a public-school librarian. She is a retired employee of Children's Ministries at the Global Ministry Center. You may contact Beula at bpostlewait@kc.rr.com.