

FEELING ANGER

Feelings seem to appear whether or not we want them. Positive feelings give energy to a relationship. Negative emotions such as anger, jealousy, resentment, hurt loneliness anxiety and depression sap the energy we need to build a satisfying marriage. However, by becoming aware of what we are feeling, we have an opportunity to choose whether or not to communicate a feeling to our partner. In a marriage it is common for each partner to act out or express most feelings, including negative and destructive feelings.

Anger is neither good nor bad. It is how people use their anger that makes it positive or negative. In its most basic form, anger is an emotional signal that tells the person something needs to be changed.

In marriage learning to deal with anger can be a major challenge. Many individuals believe they can protect the marriage by holding back their anger. This may well be the biggest mistake any individual could make. When anger is suppressed it eventually resurfaces in a more destructive form. Suppressed anger builds up until there is a destructive explosion, or creates a climate of constant complaining that may cause a gradual erosion of a marriage. The fact that suppressed anger can be destructive does not give couples licenses to express anger and hostility indiscriminately. The closer we are to someone the more skilled we must become in expressing anger constructively.

Many people seem to agree that the most satisfying lifestyle is one in which a composed calm prevails. Many couples desire to practice patience and understanding in their relations with one another. But when they least need it or expect it, something happens to mess things up. Before you know it, anger breaks loose in a destructive expression.

All of us, at one time or another, have let this emotion take control in our lives. We all know what uncontrolled anger can do. Just one angry moment can spoil hours, months, or even years of living with good control and intentions. Anger can cause gaps to form in any marriage. Uncontrolled anger has been instrumental in the breakup of marriages, families and friendships. It can cause guilt complexes and inferiority feelings. It is usually the basis of depression and anxiety.

Some people don't feel the need to keep anger under control. They enjoy being angry! The individuals recognize that with anger come certain benefits or rewards, such as power, intimidation, emotional distance, and the ability to manipulate. While most individuals may not see these traits as rewarding, some warped minds thrive on these fruits of anger.

Before we look at how to understand and control our anger, it may be helpful to look at some strategies an individual could use to mold themselves into a consistently angry person. By looking at this side of life, you may become motivated to choose a lifestyle of relative calm.

The following is a series of behaviors that could guarantee that a person becomes consistently angry.

1. Be picky and finicky. Taking pride in being a perfectionist. Some of the angriest people in the world are perfectionists. People who expect perfection from others or from themselves are guaranteed to find frustration. These individuals will angrily busy themselves in trying desperately to make the world perfect.
2. Don't listen to another person's point of view. In discussions, being concerned only with getting your own point across. Being a poor listener is a sign of a person consistently angry.
3. Speaking in a loud, booming voice when you have a point to make. We all know that speaking in a soft, carrying voice will help create an atmosphere of harmony. In discussions with your partner, if they don't agree with you right away, simply yell at them.
4. Overloading your schedules. People who are striving toward a life of anger will become workaholics and playaholics. People who load up their time with one responsibility after another will sooner or later become so angry that they will come to believe that they are not getting their fair share of life. Leisure time and relaxation with your partner will have a calming affect on your relationship.
5. Expect others to cater to your every whim. This individual will have high expectations of what others must do for them. For example, if you are a man, proclaim yourself king of the castle. Constantly reminding your partner of the things they are expected to do to make life easy for you. Women who cry a lot when someone makes a mistake or forgets to do the things they have asked. Whether by subtle manipulation or out right demands, they are always reminded others of their duties and obligations.
6. Never allowing yourself to laugh, be silly or have a good time. Angry people will think only of the dark side of life. They will constantly worry about the bill's that need to be paid.
7. Criticize and nagging your partner by looking for the worst in them and focusing on it. This can be carried out only by someone who is a dedicated pessimist.
8. Worship money and material possessions by making them more important than the marital relationship.

After careful consideration you may decide that this is not the life for you. You may conclude that there are more productive ways to live your life. Basically, it would be of great benefit if we could learn to maintain some control over this emotion, which could prevent disruption from prevailing in our married lives. This does absolutely not mean that a person should get to the point where anger is never felt or expressed. That is neither humanly possible nor desirable. This chapter seeks to explain the middle of the road approach to anger, an approach that is realistic and responsible.

The basic assumption is that anger is not all that. It is born of a sense of self preservation. In our imperfect world we are capable of abusing anger by taking it

beyond its intended purpose and using it for purely selfish gains. Some people will need to learn to use anger less frequently, others more powerfully.

There are two types of anger, assertive and aggressive. Assertive anger means to put forward one's belief and value in a confident, self-assured manner. When used correctly, assertiveness is a positive trait. By being assertive, you demonstrated a strong sense of commitment to what you believe is right.

Aggressive anger, on the other hand, goes too far. Like assertiveness, aggressive anger seeks to put forward your belief about what you believe to be right. However, aggressive anger is used in an abrasive, insensitive way.

The thing that sets aggressive anger apart from assertive anger is its destructiveness. Most of the anger expressed by the average person has destructive consequences. We sometimes get so wrapped up in trying to correct something we believed to be wrong that we get carried away. We fail to make the effort necessary to apply a solid, constructive communication in most situations.

Once each partner understands the dual nature of this emotion, they likely will be very careful in the way that they use it. It is frightening to imagine the impact this one emotion can have on our marriages.

Aggressive Anger

DESTRUCTIVE

- * Seeks to punish a person who does something wrong.
(Hit - Don't Talk - No sex)
- * Does not care about the other person's point of view.
(It's your way or No way)
- * Is condemning and judgmental.
(Stupid - Idiot - Doesn't know)
- * Is stubborn, immovable and demanding
- * Holds grudges
- * Has high expectations of everyone.
(Asks the impossible - Just because I can do it, you can too)
- * Does not notice one's own areas of weaknesses.
(I'm perfect - I'm right)

Assertive Anger

CONSTRUCTIVE

- * Seeks to help a person who does wrong.
- * Tries to be understanding
- * Recognizes we all have faults.
- * Is flexible and willing to seek alternatives.
- * Knows the value of forgiveness
- * Knows that everyone sometimes makes mistakes.
- * Recognizes that one can always improve.