

22-Do You Let Anger Take Control?

In their book “The Anger Workbook”, Drs’ Minirth and Carter outline five ways to handle anger.

1 – Suppressing Anger – put on a good front and pretend to feel no tension! This leads to emotional dishonesty in your relationships. It leads to a feeling of personal defeat. It can indicate a mindset of moral superiority. It can indicate long-standing tendency toward rigidity. These people assume it is dangerous to expose any elements of their imperfect humanness that might reduce their lofty position above others.

2 – Open Aggression – a self-preserving stand for personal worth, needs and convictions at someone else’s expense! It includes explosiveness, rage, intimidation and blame. It can include bickering, criticism, griping and sarcasm. It arises from a focus that so strongly emphasizes personal needs there’s a powerful insensitivity to the needs of others! It leads to ongoing struggles with relatives and close associates. Your emotional energy is expended on non-essentials; deep insecurity causes increased efforts to be heard. Emotionally balanced people accept these imperfections and acknowledge their limits to force people into a mold. Personal insecurity takes the desire to respect me too far. It says “I cannot stand it when I am not affirmed!”

3 – Passive Aggression – determined not to succumb to the temptation, to be rageful, refused to explode loudly or get caught in games of verbal abuse. Like open aggression, a self preserving stand for personal worth, needs and convictions at someone else’s expense. It differs as it is accomplished in a quieter manner, causing less personal vulnerability. It communicates anger in a way that will cause future tensions. It needs to have control with the least amount of vulnerability. The person knows he or she is angry and assumes it is too risky to be open, so they frustrate others by subtle sabotage! A passive aggressive person is out to win! They are engaged in a battle of superiority. They realize that too much honesty about personal differences lessens the ability to maintain an upper hand. They believe sly forms of handling anger tend to keep them in the driver seat.

4 – Assertive Anger – preserving personal worth, needs and convictions are accomplished while considering the needs and feelings of others. This form of anger helps relationships to grow. It is a mark of personal maturity and stability. The goal is to communicate emotions in a constructive fashion. It allows you to keep a clean slate with others. There are two keys – issues are not trivial, be aware of your tone of voice.

Ephesians 4:15 – “speak the truth in love!” It requires self-discipline and respects the dignity of others. **James 1:19** – “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”.

5 – Dropping Anger – you accept your inability to completely control circumstances and you recognize your personal limits. It includes tolerance of differences as well as choosing to forgive. Ephesians 4:32 instructs us to choose kindness and forgiveness as a way of life. Choosing to drop anger is far different from suppressing it. Suppression represents phoniness while dropping anger represents a commitment to godliness.

As emotions become less mysterious and more familiar to you, they will stop controlling you! As you understand your nature, the autopilot can be replaced. It’s your choice! You can decide how to deal with anger.

As I have taken men through the Anger Workbook I have been amazed at the freedom they experience when they understand that their nature is not in control of them. They can choose to move away from suppressing anger, open aggression or passive aggression to a more constructive way to deal with anger. I’ll state this in an emotional intelligence way--- men learn to turn off their amygdala and use self-management to choose to drop anger or apply assertive anger. Either way men gain control over their old reaction that destroyed relationships and replace it with a reaction that reconciles and restores relationships. Want to know more about Anger Management and Emotional Intelligence? Visit the Appendix.

Verse:

Galatians 5:22 “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Personal Reflection:

Which of the five types of anger describes you? How can you begin to drop anger? Who can help you learn how assertive anger preserves relationships?

Group Discussion:

Share the insights you have gained about your anger.

What’s your reaction to the admonition to drop anger?

How about your reaction to employing assertive anger to strengthen relationships?