

a n i n s t a n t h e l p b o o k f o r t e e n s

the anger workbook for teens

SECOND EDITION

activities to help
you deal with
anger & frustration

*** identify** your
anger triggers

*** stay calm** in
the **moment**

*** express**
your **feelings** in
healthy ways

RAYCHELLE CASSADA LOHMANN, PhD

FOREWORD BY JULIA V. TAYLOR, PhD



“A super teen-friendly and highly effective guide for teens that is packed with quick-and-easy activities for teens to calm down and problem-solve when anger and other overwhelming emotions come their way. I highly recommend this essential book to teens, parents of teens, and school systems.”

—**Jeffrey Bernstein, PhD**, child, teen, and family psychologist;
and author of *10 Days to a Less Defiant Child*, *Mindfulness for Teen Worry*,
and the *Letting Go of Anger Card Deck*

“Schools teach advanced calculus and physics, yet mostly pass over teaching the skills essential for emotionally healthy living. Alas, snide, angry retorts can wreck relationships with friends and colleagues. Explosive anger outbursts can undo loving couple and family relationships.

“To build a firm emotional intelligence foundation for launching into adulthood—maybe even entering high school—filling out the fun exercises in *The Anger Workbook for Teens* should become a required rite of passage. An engaging read, with interactive exercises that ensure real learning.”

—**Susan Heitler, PhD**, clinical psychologist, blogger on www.psychologytoday.com, and author of the self-help book *Prescriptions Without Pills*

“This workbook is a true gift for teens who are frustrated and want to express their feelings in healthier, more positive ways. Lohmann’s exercises increase self-awareness and build confidence to communicate better and handle anger constructively.”

—**Marilyn Price-Mitchell, PhD**, developmental psychologist and author of *Tomorrow’s Change Makers*

“Anger may be our most misunderstood feeling. Anger is ‘too muchness’—too much stress, too many stimuli, too-intense feelings. Raychelle Lohmann has written a wonderful book on anger. She does a terrific job of showing how anger is an important, legitimate feeling and signal. But she does more. Her accessible, user-friendly workbook allows readers to consider the behaviors and actions related to anger, and to enhance their self-reflective capacities and interpersonal skills. This book is a treasure.”

—**Paul C. Holinger, MD, MPH**, professor in the department of psychiatry at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, IL; and faculty and former dean at Chicago Psychoanalytic Institute

"The Anger Workbook for Teens is a great resource that uses developmentally appropriate interventions teens can follow, and practical yet sensible tools to promote impactful change. I highly recommend this workbook for teens looking for a way to manage their anger and communicate more effectively. This workbook is an essential resource for counselors, parents, and teachers."

—**Natalie F. Spencer, PhD, LPC, NCC**, assistant professor at
North Carolina A&T State University, and author of
Mindful Practices for Helping Troubled Teens

"Healthy relational connection is what brings joy and satisfaction to living. Very often we allow being 'emotionally upset' to rob us of the opportunity to recover relational connection. Anger is a human emotion that if left unchecked, unaddressed, and unprocessed can bring relational hardship and very little relational satisfaction. The Anger Workbook for Teens provides an effective tool to deal with anger and frustration. It's extremely practical and leads to developing new habits and capacity to process the very human emotion of anger. Let Raychelle Lohmann guide you to identify triggers, stay calm in the moment, and express your feelings."

—**John Steigerwald**, pastor, and executive director of the
North Carolina Boys Academy

"This second edition of The Anger Workbook for Teens offers creative, interactive, and practical activities for all teens to work through their vast range of emotions. Each activity invites the reader to reflect on their experiences and who they are as they navigate this critical developmental stage of life. The workbook provides a supportive outlet for teenagers, and even highlights realistic and 'doable' coping strategies and skills for teenagers to incorporate into their daily life. I would highly recommend any teenager, parent, counselor, administrator, and anyone who cares about teenagers to consider reviewing the book and working through the activities."

—**Angie Smith, PhD, LPC-S, LPC, NCC**, associate teaching professor and
coordinator of college counseling programs at North Carolina State University,
and coauthor of *Developing Online Learning in the Helping Professions*

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foreword

If you have picked up this workbook, chances are you want help managing your anger. Or, maybe someone who cares about you thought this workbook would be helpful. Regardless, you are worth it. It is tough being a teen, and I am guessing you have a lot to be angry about. Situational anger—the kind that comes up when something rotten happens, then fades—is normal. In fact, it is often a healthy, necessary, and appropriate reaction. However, when anger holds you back, frightens you and/or others, and causes you to lose control, it is important to pause and figure out what’s going on, and why. You deserve that.

The Anger Workbook for Teens is a phenomenal tool that will help you dig deep in order to learn both *why* you get so angry, and *what to do* about it. Learning the root cause of anger is essential to disarming it. If you take your time working through this book, and are honest with yourself, you will gain so much insight. For example, you will learn what provokes your anger, what calms you down, what coping skills work best for you, and how to lessen the intensity of your reactions.

As a school counselor, I have used this workbook with countless teens. I clearly remember one student who was constantly sent out of class for intense anger outbursts. I turned to this workbook, and together we worked through many of the activities related to his specific situation. While doing so, he realized that his father also exploded in situations he had no control over. He also realized that in school, his main trigger was when he felt embarrassed, or perceived others as being dismissive of his feelings. This workbook taught him numerous coping skills to use in a variety of situations. Learning about his triggers was the catalyst in helping him learn healthier ways to cope and react, while still feeling his very normal feelings.

Anger does not have to hold you back. It is a gift to learn how to regain control over your emotions, particularly at a young age. I hope you are able to learn everything you can from the wisdom in this workbook. You are so worth it.

Julia V. Taylor, PhD

introduction

Dear Reader,

Do you frequently find yourself in trouble because you let your anger get the best of you? Do you overreact to situations and later regret how you behaved? Does your anger cause problems with the people you care about? Are you tired of letting anger control you? If you answered yes to any of these questions, *The Anger Workbook for Teens* (second edition) is for you. This new edition adds the latest research and skills in the field of counseling to help you successfully deal with anger and frustration.

First and foremost, it's important to understand that anger is a natural human emotion, but people handle it differently. Some hold in their anger and let it fester, some lash out with hurtful words, some resort to fighting, and some just explode. No matter how you handle the emotion, you're reading this book because you or someone who cares about you believes that you have a problem with anger.

If you struggle with anger, you are not alone. Millions of other teens, just like you, fall victim to the destructive side of anger. It takes over their behavior, it tears apart their relationships, and it leaves them feeling out of control of their lives. They can regain control and so can you.

The activities in this workbook will help you notice things that make you angry, teach you how to handle frustrating situations, and help you learn ways to interact differently with your anger, all while being able to stay calm in the moment and express your feelings in healthy ways.

Change is a process, and it's going to take time and patience to set some of the skills you learn into motion. In fact, there may be times that you get angry just working through an activity in this book and that's perfectly normal. For the first time, you're putting anger under a microscope and dissecting each little detail. As a result, you will become more aware of your behaviors and recognize specific areas of your life that need work.

If you make a commitment to work through this book, your anger should subside. This book is presented sequentially—that is, it teaches you skills that you can build upon to help you manage your anger. That's why it's important to work through all the activities. By the time that you complete the activities, you should feel empowered by

the changes you have made. Change isn't easy, but with the right skills and mind-set, you can make it happen. So, let's get started!

Wishing you success,

Raychelle Cassada Lohmann

P.S. There are a host of materials available for download at the website for this book:
<http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>. (See the very back of this book for more details.)

Part 1

Identifying and Understanding Anger

1 what is anger?

for you to know

Anger is a normal emotion that most people have experienced, but how they express it varies. To answer the question “What is anger?” you must personally examine how anger differs from other emotions that you experience and identify how it makes you feel and act.

Anger is distinctly different from other emotions, such as joy, sadness, or fear. If you were asked to describe your anger, you might use one of the following words:

- aggravation
- aggression
- agitation
- annoyance
- disgust
- envy
- frustration
- fury
- grouchiness
- grumpiness
- hatred
- hostility
- infuriation
- irritation
- mad
- outrage
- rage

Answering the question “What is anger?” begins with using words to identify how you feel when you’re angry and then examining how those feelings vary in strength. Understanding anger also requires you to explore how your behaviors change based on the intensity or strength of your anger. For example, someone who is hostile is angrier than someone who is frustrated. Most people never stop to think about using words to describe their anger and how those words change based on the strength of what they are feeling. If they did, they would probably see a relationship between their level of anger and the intensity of what they are feeling.

for you to do

Answer the prompts while silently asking yourself *What is anger?* and *What makes anger different from the other emotions that I experience?*

Provide a personal definition of anger.

Jot down at least ten words to describe your anger. Circle at least five words that represent your strong or most intense levels of anger.

On the lines below, write down the five words that you circled. Describe how you feel when you experience each of the words. On the next line, rank the words with 1 = high intensity to 5 = low intensity. Last, write how often these feelings occur in your life, such as *often*, *sometimes*, or *rarely*.

Word: _____

Description: _____

Intensity Level: _____

Occurrence: _____

activity 1 * what is anger?

Word: _____

Description: _____

Intensity Level: _____

Occurrence: _____

Word: _____

Description: _____

Intensity Level: _____

Occurrence: _____

Word: _____

Description: _____

Intensity Level: _____

Occurrence: _____

Word: _____

Description: _____

Intensity Level: _____

Occurrence: _____

Word: _____

Description: _____

Intensity Level: _____

Occurrence: _____

...and more to do!

We use words to describe how we feel. Different emotions are tied to different words. As you did in the For You to Do section, create a word list with other emotions, such as joy, sadness, and fear, and then explain how that emotion differs from anger.

Joy _____

Sadness _____

Fear _____

2 anger myth busters

for you to know

There are a lot of myths surrounding anger. Myths about anger can do more harm than good because they reinforce stereotypes. That's why it's important to bust the myths and learn the truth behind anger.

Anger is one of the most mysterious emotions of all time. Throughout history, people have tried to make sense of this emotion. From sacred scrolls to Greek mythology, anger has been tied to unhappy gods, and even demonic possessions. Unfortunately, myths about anger can be dangerous because they can become an excuse for poor behavior and make people believe they can't change.

for you to do

Fact or myth? Bust the anger myths by taking the following quiz. Mark all the facts with an *F* and myths with an *M*.

- _____ 1. Anger is best dealt with by venting or voicing what you're angry over.
- _____ 2. Anger is unhealthy and can lead to health problems.
- _____ 3. Anger is inherited, so change can never happen.
- _____ 4. Anger is always helpful.
- _____ 5. Anger is an emotion that can create positive change.
- _____ 6. Anger is only caused by people.
- _____ 7. Anger is always released outwardly, because it's impossible to hold it in.
- _____ 8. Anger is uncontrollable.
- _____ 9. Anger is an emotion that can be all-consuming and controlling.
- _____ 10. Anger is different from aggression.

Answers are at the end of the activity.

...and more to do!

In ca. 44 CE, the Roman philosopher Lucius Seneca published *De Ira* (“Of Anger”), one of the first essays on how to control anger. In his essay, Seneca suggests strategies to calm anger, such as listening to soothing music, watching what you say and how you behave when you’re angry, and being aware of things that trigger anger. Other great philosophers, such as Aristotle, Plato, and Plutarch, also contributed to what we know about anger. Indeed, history has played a role in our understanding of anger, and it has also contributed to many of the myths surrounding the emotion today. For example, historically, it was often believed that angry gods punished people by inflicting devastation on the land, such as a famine or earthquake. Today, many people still believe that if they fall upon hard times, they are being punished by a supreme power.

Do a historical Internet search on anger. Choose a philosopher, such as Seneca, Aristotle or Plato, and describe their interpretation of anger. In the spaces below, jot down some interesting facts and myths you find on your historical quest and explain how the past has shaped our current understanding of anger.

answers

- M 1. Venting anger won't change the situation. Rather it keeps it fresh by playing what happened over and over in your mind. Repeatedly playing things over in your mind is called *rumination*.
- F 2. Frequent and intense anger can lead to increased stress levels, headaches, stomach problems, high blood pressure, and even heart problems.
- M 3. How you respond to anger is a personal decision, so you can't blame others for your behaviors.
- M 4. Anger is not always helpful. It has a destructive side that can lead to big trouble.
- F 5. Anger has brought forth some of the most influential changes in history, such as the civil rights movement and women's right to vote.
- M 6. People don't always trigger anger. Situations can also prompt anger, like when your device battery dies in the middle of your favorite show, or your car won't start when you're already running late.
- M 7. Anger does not have to always be expressed outwardly. In fact, holding anger in can be just as unhealthy as unleashing it.
- M 8. Anger can be managed through skills and techniques that teach you how to cope with your feelings.
- F 9. Anger can consume your life and result in relationship, school, and work problems.
- F 10. Anger is an emotion that causes distressing thoughts and feelings. Aggression, on the other hand, is destructive and harmful behavior. Although anger and aggression can occur together, not everyone who is angry is aggressive and vice versa.

3 your anger profile

for you to know

Most people don't put a lot of thought into their anger; they just react. While each person's experience with anger is different, it's important to recognize that anger can drive and control behavior. Assessing your anger will help you identify the areas that you need to work on to keep it in check.

Brandon was having a really bad day. Mr. Williams, Brandon's science teacher, noticed that he seemed angry about something. Oh no, thought Mr. Williams, Brandon is in one of his moods. He's so smart and talented, but his anger is really hurting him. He's going to get into trouble if he doesn't turn it around.

After class, Mr. Williams called Brandon over and said, "You take everything so seriously, Brandon. Your anger is beginning to get in the way of your schoolwork, and I'm really worried about you. You've been suspended three times this year, and you're constantly in the principal's office. I'd like to help you, if you're open to it."

Brandon thought about what Mr. Williams said, and he knew that he was right. So, he nodded his head and said, "Yeah, okay..."

"Great," Mr. Williams said. "We'll begin by taking a good hard look at your anger to see the impact it's having on your life. Next, we can create a plan to address how you react when you're angry so you stay out of trouble."

for you to do

This activity will help you examine your problem with anger and see how it's affecting your life. Once you can look at it, you can find where you want to make changes.

Read each statement and check either yes or no.

People have often commented on my anger.	☐ Yes	☐ No
My anger gets me into trouble.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I have occasionally become so angry that later I could not remember what I did.	☐ Yes	☐ No
Other members of my family have anger problems.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I have hit or harmed someone else when I was angry.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I often feel that I am the victim.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I often feel that no one understands me.	☐ Yes	☐ No

For each of these statements, circle the number that best describes you.

I have trouble controlling my anger.

1 2 3 4 5
 strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

On average, I get really angry...

1 2 3 4 5
 once a month every two weeks once a week every few days every day

activity 3 * your anger profile

When I get angry, I am most likely to...

1	2	3	4	5
run away from the situation	cry	scream	hit something	destroy something

The more frequently you checked yes and the higher you rated yourself on these scales, the more anger is driving your life. By committing to do the activities in this book, you will learn skills that will help you get a handle on your anger.

...and more to do!

Has your anger ever hurt you or someone else emotionally or physically? Tell how.

Do you ever blame others for your anger? Tell how (for example, by making accusations or denying your part in something that happened).

When you're angry, do you frequently say or do things that you later regret? Describe a time when this happened.

What do you do to calm down when you're angry?

If you had a magic wand and could change how you react to anger, explain what that would that look like.

4

keeping an anger log

for you to know

It is important to become aware of situations that make you angry, to notice what you do when you get angry, and to recognize the consequences of your anger. An anger log is a tool to help you do all that.

Brianna had been anxiously waiting for Alyssa to come to her house Saturday for a sleepover. They had big plans, and Brianna was counting down the minutes. Saturday morning, Alyssa texted Brianna and told her she wasn't coming over because she forgot she was doing something with Olivia, another friend.

Seriously? Brianna thought. This wasn't the first time Alyssa had stood her up. She started thinking of all the other times and became angrier and angrier. Before she thought it through, Brianna grabbed her phone and threw it on the floor, cracking the screen. Oh, no! Not again... Brianna sighed in dread as her parents raced in the room to see what happened. This wasn't the first time Brianna's anger had gotten the best of her. Her anger was getting expensive, because she had a tendency to destroy things when she was angry.

Later that afternoon, Brianna's mom sat her down for a chat. "Brianna, you seem to have a lot of conflict with Alyssa, and the results are never good. Your anger is taking a toll on you and my wallet. You need to start paying attention to when you get angry and how you react to it. It might help you look for patterns in your behavior and learn different ways to behave before you destroy something irreplaceable."

Keeping a log can help you look for patterns in your anger. This sample entry shows you how Brianna might have recorded what happened with Alyssa.

Anger Log	
Date and Time:	October 3, 10 a.m.
What Happened:	Alyssa texted last minute and canceled plans.
What I Was Thinking:	She always makes excuses. I'm sick of being her friend.
What I Was Feeling:	Furious, disappointed, and hurt.
What I Did:	Threw phone.
What My Consequences Were:	Trouble at home. Cracked phone screen and can't get another one until I pay for it myself.
How I Handled It:	Regret damaging my phone. I just kept thinking about Alyssa ditching me again until I exploded. Now, it's going to take a lot of babysitting and chores to pay to fix my phone.
What I Could Have Done Differently:	Told Alyssa that I was hurt that she stood me up again and then texted another friend to come over and hang out.

for you to do

For as long as you are working on the activities in this book, keep an anger log. It will help you identify patterns in your anger. You can photocopy the one below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own log on an electronic device. Fill one out whenever you have an anger episode.

Please note: There are many other materials available for download at the website for this book: <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>. (See the very back of this book for more details.)

activity 4 * keeping an anger log

Anger Log	
Date and Time:	
What Happened:	
What I Was Thinking:	
What I Was Feeling:	
What I Did:	
What My Consequences Were:	
How I Handled It:	
What I Could Have Done Differently:	

...and more to do!

Once you've made a few entries in your log, see if you notice any patterns emerge.

Is there a specific time of the day when you get most angry (such as in the evening when you're tired, in the morning when you first wake up, or during a specific class period)?

Do you seem to get angry in certain situations or when certain people are around?

What specific areas of anger do you need to personally address?

After a few weeks, review your log. Have you seen an improvement in the way you handle your anger? If so, tell what has changed.

5

understanding family patterns

for you to know

You've probably spent a lot of time around your family, especially when you were little, so naturally you've picked up some of your habits and behaviors from them. Exploring how members of your family handle their anger can help you understand your own response to the emotion.

Gabrielle's dad had given her a list of chores to do before she could hang out with her friends. The more she thought about all the things she had to do, the more upset she got. "This isn't fair!" she mumbled. "Why doesn't he do it himself instead of lying around watching football all weekend?!"

Her father heard her and yelled, "If I hear one more smart word out of your mouth, you won't go anywhere! Do I make myself clear?"

"Perfectly!" said Gabrielle, rolling her eyes. She stomped off to her room where she picked up her clothes from the floor and tossed them into the laundry room. Then she kicked the door on her way out. Next, she started to unload the dishwasher. She threw the silverware into the drawer and banged pots around noisily as she put them away.

Her father marched into the kitchen and slammed his hand on the counter. Raising his voice, he shouted, "Listen here, I have told you I won't tolerate any more of your sassy disrespect!"

Hearing the ruckus, Gabrielle's mother walked into the room. "What on earth is going on? All I hear is screaming and slamming. You both are like two peas in a pod. Gabrielle, you get that temper from your dad's side. They all throw temper tantrums when they don't get their way. Both of you need to get away from each other before you end up in a fight. Gabrielle, you know the rules—no privileges unless you do your chores. If you're not done in an hour, then you can't spend time with your friends."

Sighing, Gabrielle glared at her father, and he glared back. Yep, both were stubborn and hard-headed, but one had more authority than the other.

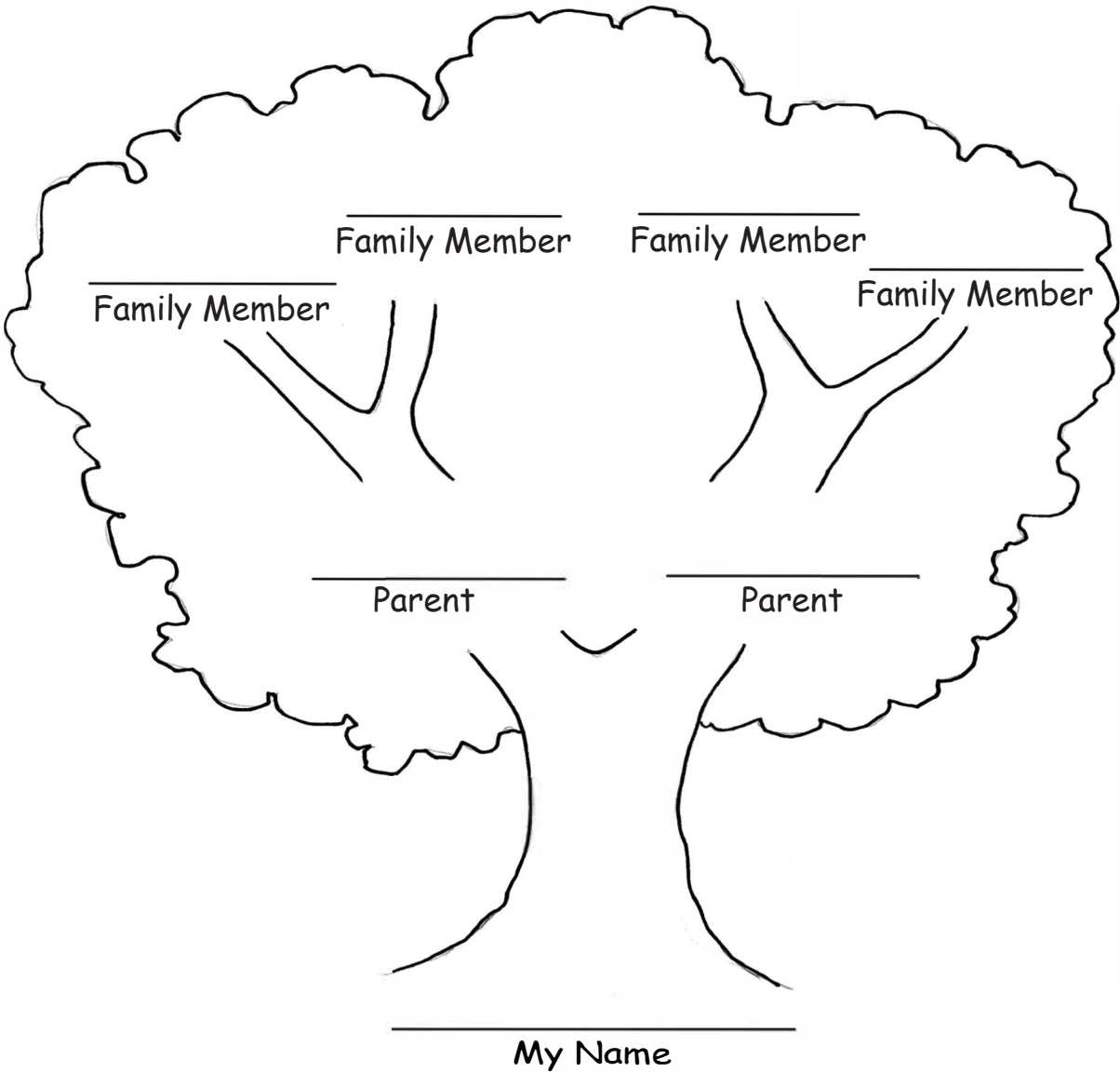
for you to do

At the bottom of the tree on the next page, write your name. Then add the names of your family members. In the space provided, indicate how they handle anger. For example, do they

- blow up,
- escape the situation,
- yell and scream,
- throw things,
- hit objects or people,
- bottle up their anger,
- say mean things, and/or
- talk about their feelings?

On or near the tree, add the names of other family members—aunts, uncles, cousins, or siblings, for example—whom you have been told you resemble.

As the saying goes, “Apples don’t fall far from the tree.” Circle the name of the person you are most like in your response to anger. In the space provided, indicate how your parents and grandparents handle anger.



...and more to do!

Did you notice a pattern in how your relatives handle anger? If so, explain.

What was one thing that stood out about how your family members deal with their anger?

Choose one family member who manages anger well. Tell what you can do to try to be more like that person.

6 your body's response to anger

for you to know

Problematic anger can take a toll on your body. Anger causes a lot of stress, which can lead to health problems such as high blood pressure, headaches, and stomachaches, among others. Did you know that your body gives off signs to let you know that you're getting angry? Learning to recognize and respond to these signs can help you stay mentally and physically fit.

Look at some of the physical ways anger manifests itself. Some of your body's anger warning signs may include:

- crying
- feeling flushed and hot
- grinding teeth
- rolling your eyes or squinting
- feeling dizzy
- breathing heavily
- feeling your heart beat fast
- blushing or face turning red

- getting a stomachache
- sweating
- feeling muscles tighten
- shaking or trembling
- getting a headache

Knowing your physical response to anger can help you become aware of when you need to cool your jets and calm down. These tips can help when you reach that point.

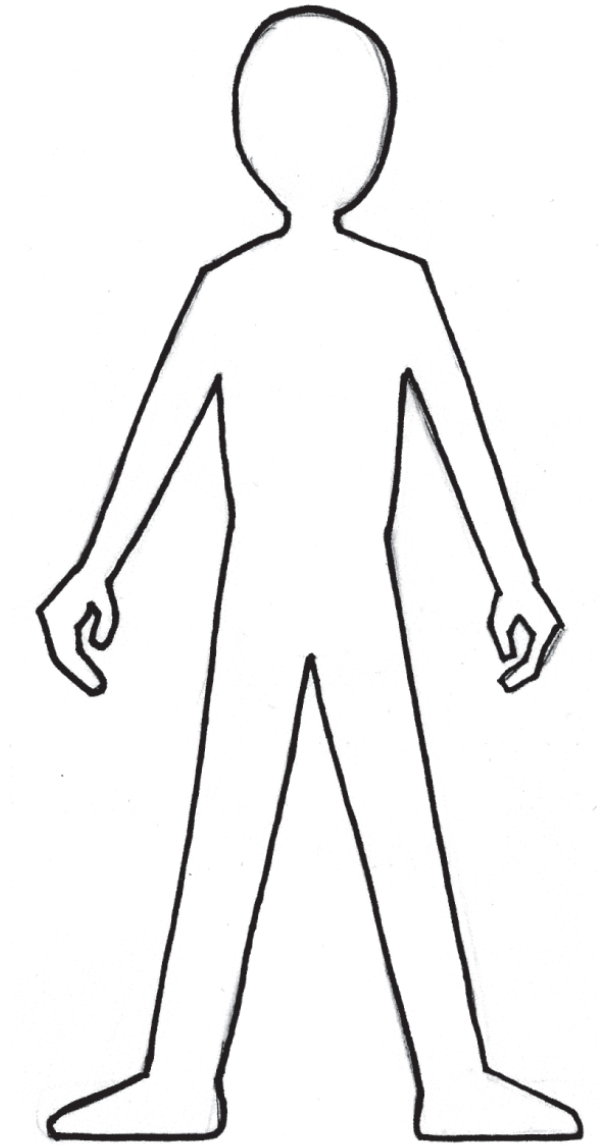
- Take slow, deep, and relaxing breaths and concentrate on exhaling slowly.
- Zone into your environment by listening to a ticking clock, a dripping faucet, or a bird chirping outside your window. You can also focus on studying each detail in a painting, watching the sunlight flicker on the floor through a window, or examining all the details on the cover of a book.
- Go for a walk and get some fresh air, or find a quiet space away from people.

If you can't get away from the frustrating situation, there are other ways you can relax, such as:

- talking yourself down from anger by telling yourself everything will be okay and it's not worth getting so upset;
- pretending that you are at a relaxing place (perhaps your bedroom, the beach, or your grandmother's house). As you bring this place to mind, focus on letting the anger drain from your body like water draining from a bathtub;
- sticking in your earbuds and focusing on each word of your favorite song.

for you to do

In the body silhouette below, draw in all the parts of your body that are affected when you feel anger. For example, if you cry when you get angry, you might draw eyes with tears or if your muscles get tight, you might draw flexed biceps.



...and more to do!

Describe how your body responds to anger.

List the parts of your body that are most affected by anger.

In addition to the earlier suggestions, list some other things you can do to calm down when you feel your body responding to anger.

7 gauging anger

for you to know

Anger creates a lot of pressure, and when that pressure builds, it can lead to catastrophic results, such as an eruption or explosion. On equipment like a bicycle tire pump, the level of pressure is usually measured by a device called a pressure gauge. Did you know that you too have a pressure gauge inside you and it can help keep you from blowing up?

Have you ever used a pressure gauge to help you monitor pumping up a bike tire or basketball? If so, you know that when the gauge indicates you're getting to the desired level, you'd better stop pumping or your tire or ball will explode. Well, the same is true for anger: when you get angry, the pressure inside you starts to build and build, and unless you find a way to release it, you may explode.

If you are quick to anger, you may not be listening to your body's warning signals. Ignoring these signs can lead to catastrophic eruptions. Learning to read your internal pressure gauge, that is, learning to detect when your anger escalates, can help you remain cool in the heat of anger.

for you to do

Here is an example of an anger pressure gauge. Review each reading and then think of how you would label your own readings.

Your Anger Gauge

1—Minimum Reading: Relaxed

This is how you feel: *This is the perfect reading: I feel calm, cool, and collected.*

This is how you act: *When I am relaxed and calm, I listen to my favorite music and hang out with my friends.*

2—Annoyed

This is how you feel when you begin the process of becoming angry: *I feel irritated, but not mad.*

This is how you act: *I avoid annoying people. I don't want to see, hear, or be around them. For example, my little brother can really be annoying, but just because I'm annoyed with him, it doesn't mean that I am furious.*

3—Average Reading: Frustrated

This is your midlevel of anger, when you're not overly angry, but you're upset: *I feel irritated and agitated. I'm beginning to get angry and think unpleasant thoughts.*

This is how you act: *I complain a lot about the situation to others. When I am frustrated, I curse, I insult the person I am mad at, or I call that person names.*

4—Ticked

This is how you feel when you go beyond being moderately angry: *I feel mad and extremely agitated, but still in control. I'm almost at the boiling point of my anger.*

This is how you act: *I have a bad habit of getting in people's faces and calling them out. I want them to know that they've messed with the wrong person.*

5—Maximum Reading: Enraged

This is how you feel when you have reached the highest amount of anger possible: *I feel too hot and out of control. I'm unreasonable and overly focused on retaliation and retribution. I want payback.*

This is how you act: *I don't care about anyone or anything. I can't see straight because I am blinded by my anger. I usually am out of control and do things that I later regret.*

activity 7 * gauging anger

Using the example as a guide, write down labels for your own five readings, with reading 1 being minimum pressure, like when you are completely relaxed, and reading 5 being maximum pressure, like when you are about to blow your top.

Next, list the feelings and behaviors that occur at each level. You can photocopy the Your Anger Gauge form below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device.

Your Anger Gauge

1—Minimum Reading: Relaxed

This is how you feel: _____

This is how you act: _____

2—Annoyed

This is how you feel when you begin the process of becoming angry:

This is how you act: _____

3—Average Reading: Frustrated

This is your midlevel of anger, when you're not overly angry, but you're upset:

This is how you act: _____

4—Ticked

This is how you feel when you go beyond being moderately angry:

This is how you act: _____

5—Maximum Reading: Enraged

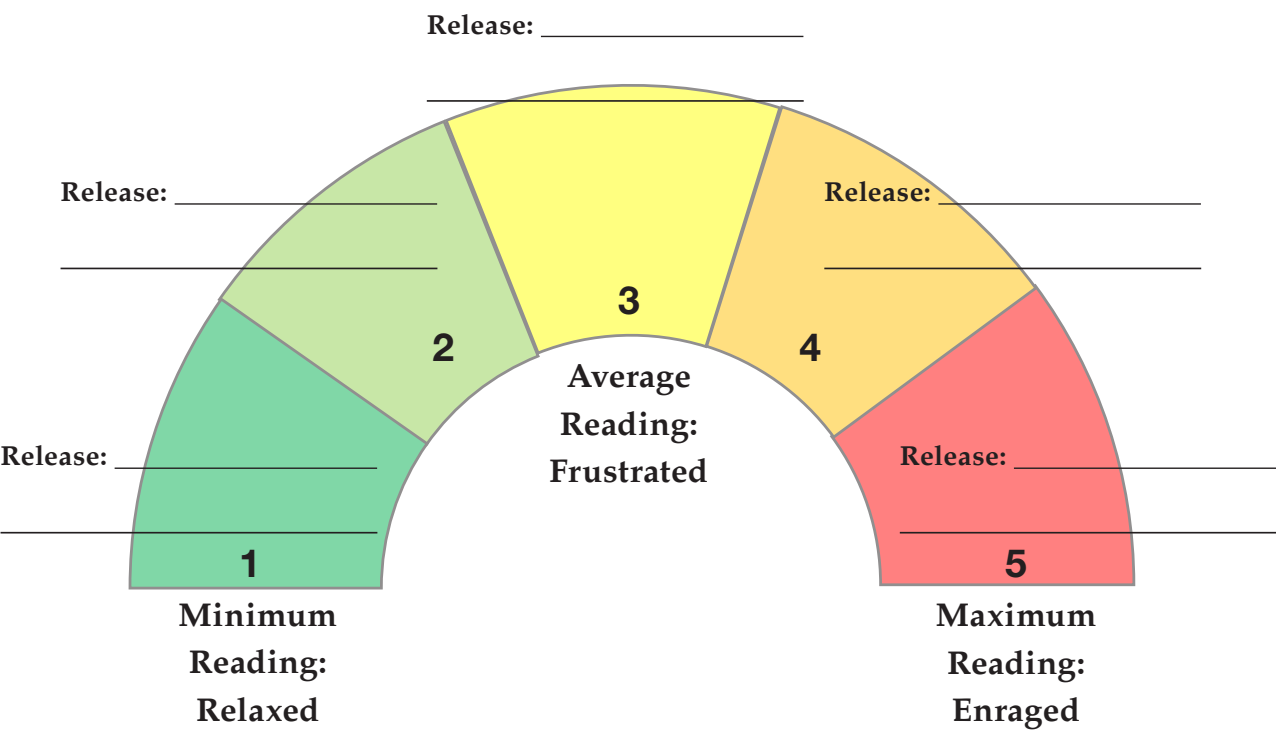
This is how you feel when you have reached the highest amount of anger possible:

This is how you act: _____

...and more to do!

Now that you’ve identified your internal pressure readings, take it up a notch. On the pressure gauge below, list the five readings (five words) that you identified. Reading 1 is your most relaxed reading, where you are most in control. For readings 2 through 5, list how you can release the pressure in healthy ways. For example, could you

- listen to songs on your favorite playlist,
- get away from the people making you angry,
- shut off your device and take a break from the situation,
- get a breath of fresh air,
- go to the gym and pump some iron?



identifying your anger triggers

8

for you to know

We all have triggers that activate our anger response. Some people call these triggers “button pushers” or “pet peeves.” No matter what you call them, when these infuriating annoyances occur, it’s important that you can identify and recognize them because they can set off an anger episode.

Tabitha went up to Leigha in the hall and accused her of taking her notebook from her locker. Leigha hadn’t even gone to Tabitha’s locker! She tried to explain, but Tabitha interrupted and said, “Noah told us he saw you in my locker this morning, and now my math worksheets are missing. I have an open-note quiz in math today and need my papers. Now, give them back.”

Leigha’s fists clenched, and she raised her voice. “Tabitha, for the last time, I don’t have your papers!” But Tabitha would not back down. She got right in Leigha’s face cursing and calling her a liar. That did it! There were two things Leigha couldn’t stand—(1) being accused of something she didn’t do, and (2) being called a liar! With two younger siblings, Leigha was continuously being accused of things at home, but she wouldn’t put up with it at school! She felt every muscle in her body tighten and she started shoving and screaming in Tabitha’s face “I don’t have your freakin’ notes and I AM NOT A LIAR!”

Just like Leigha, you probably have things that trigger your anger, such as someone:

- sharing your secrets
- telling you what to do
- accusing you of saying or doing something you didn’t do

activity 8 * identifying your anger triggers

- interrupting when you're talking
- taking something of yours without asking
- writing and/or posting false things about you
- copying everything you do
- driving slowly when you're in a hurry to get somewhere

for you to do

Use the Trigger Identification and Deactivation form below both to track what triggers your anger and also what deactivates it. In the column headed Triggers, write down five things that activate your anger triggers. In the next column, Trigger Deactivation, write down one thing you can do to deactivate or disconnect from each triggering event. For example, if you easily blow up when you are blamed for something you didn't do, then perhaps you could try removing yourself from the situation and clearing your head by going outside for some fresh air. Continuing to put yourself in a triggering situation will only create more stress, and your anger will escalate. In the last column, rate the trigger from 1 to 5. A rating of 1 means it doesn't happen often, 3 means you experience it some of the time, and 5 means it happens most of the time. You can photocopy the Trigger Identification and Deactivation form below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device.

Trigger Identification and Deactivation		
Triggers	Trigger Deactivation	Rating

Explain how knowing your anger triggers can help you deactivate an anger episode before it occurs.

...and more to do!

Make a few copies or take a screen shot of your filled-out form. Keep the copy readily accessible so you can refer to it when you feel a trigger is being activated. Now that you are aware of your anger triggers, you can take the necessary steps to deactivate them.

Part 2

Anger Dynamics

9

fight, flight, or freeze

for you to know

Each time you sense danger, your body jumps into protection mode. Adrenaline, a chemical that gives you a quick rush of energy, is released into your bloodstream. As a result, your pupils dilate, your heart rate accelerates, your blood pressure rises, and your breathing speeds up. You become alert and highly sensitive to your surroundings. These reactions are a part of the fight, flight, or freeze response and they have one goal—to protect you.

Mia got a message notifying her that she had been tagged in a post. To her surprise, when she opened the site there was something embarrassing that she had done.

At first, Mia was mortified and she thought, Who saw this? What am I going to do? Who posted this? After the initial wave of shock and anxiety wore off, Mia became intensely focused on finding the person responsible and making them pay for embarrassing her!

In the moment, Mia was faced with three possible reactions to the shock of seeing the post: fight, flight, or freeze. She cycled through all three but ended up wanting to find the responsible person (fight mode). Although this response can be a protective one, it can also lead to negative outcomes. It's important to recognize when anger activates the fight response so you can think through the situation and come up with the best solution.

for you to do

Read the fight, flight, or freeze scenario below. Next, mark Mason's options as *P* for positive or *N* for negative.

Mason had prepared all week for his in-class presentation. When he got up to speak, he noticed his classmates were looking at him whispering and snickering. He tried to ignore them by concentrating on his notes, but his mind went blank. When the teacher prompted him to start, he broke into a cold sweat and looked at his classmates. All he could think was What are they saying? Is my fly down, or is my hair messed up? Mason was so absorbed with the negative thoughts that he forgot everything that he had prepared.

In this tough situation, what is Mason going to do?

Options:

- _____ Freeze and look like a deer in the headlights.
- _____ Take a deep breath to refocus and pretend he's practicing the presentation like he did at home.
- _____ Ask to speak with the teacher in private.
- _____ Run out of the room and never go back.
- _____ Say something like "It's not easy being up here; you'll see when it's your turn."
- _____ Yell at the class for being jerks.
- _____ Make a joke to take off the edge.

As you can see, some options are better than others and have fewer negative outcomes.

Using the example above as a guide, read each situation below and come up with some positive options.

activity 9 * fight, flight, or freeze

Bianca was confident she had the lead in the school play. Today the cast list would be posted, and she'd see her name at the top. At lunch, Bianca joined the crowd of students at the bulletin board. She read the list, and saw Ava was posted as the lead and she was only in the chorus! Bianca turned to leave as Ava walked up smiling, and several of the students congratulated her on her big role.

What are Bianca’s options?

Molly was constantly borrowing Hannah’s phone for math class. One day after class, Hannah asked Molly to return it. “Uh, I don’t have it. I let Ian borrow it to use the calculator.” Hannah couldn’t believe her ears. Molly had no right to lend someone her phone! Hannah was worried that Ian may invade her privacy by looking through her private information. She needed to find Ian and get her phone ASAP. As Hannah approached Ian, she noticed he was with a group of guys who were laughing and scrolling through her texts!

What are Hannah’s options?

...and more to do!

Write a scenario when you were faced with the choice of fight, flight, or freeze.

What were your options?

What did you do?

What do you wish you would have done differently?

10 emotions and feelings

for you to know

A lot of people think emotions and feelings are the same thing, but they aren't. Emotions are how your body reacts to an event or situation, and feelings are how you interpret the emotion you are experiencing. Knowing the difference between the two can help you pinpoint how your emotions are affecting your feelings and vice versa.

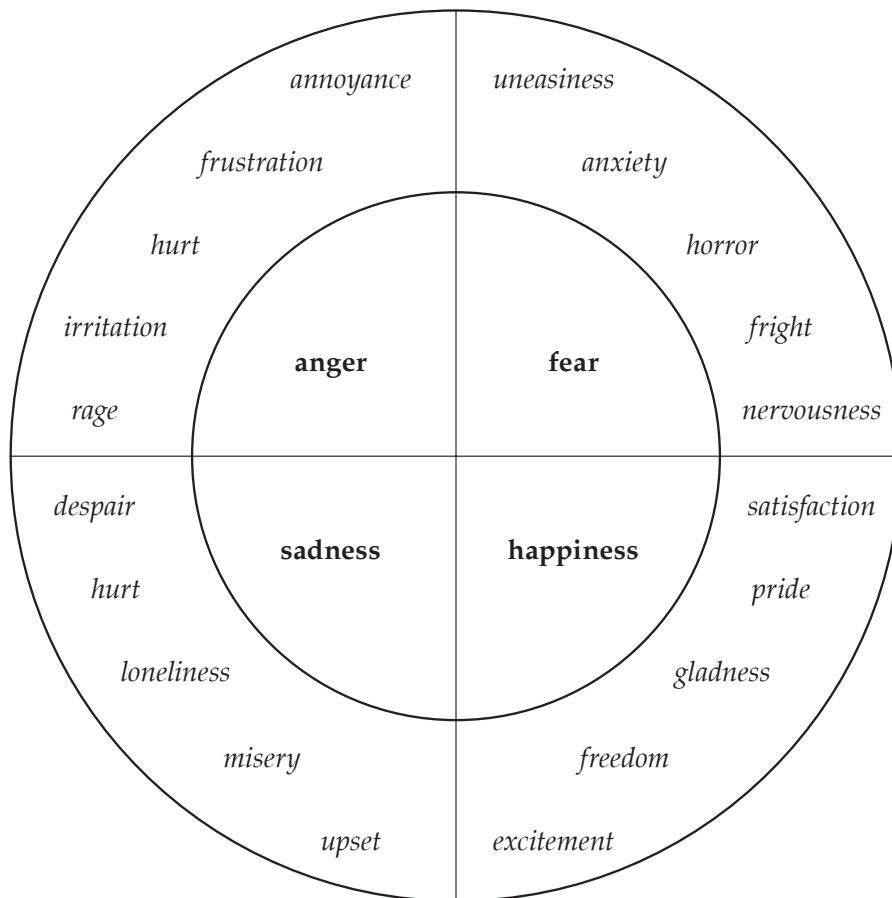
Brady hates when his teachers assign too much work. It's like they decide to gang up on the students by slamming them all at once. Brady prides himself on his schoolwork. He works hard to maintain an A/B average, but with being on the basketball team along with his other obligations, his grades are beginning to slip. Lately, Brady has found that he has a short fuse when it comes to schoolwork.

He blames his teachers for his high level of stress and low grades. If only they'd stop assigning work! If something doesn't change quickly, Brady is going to blow his top. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being maximum), Brady is at 4.9.

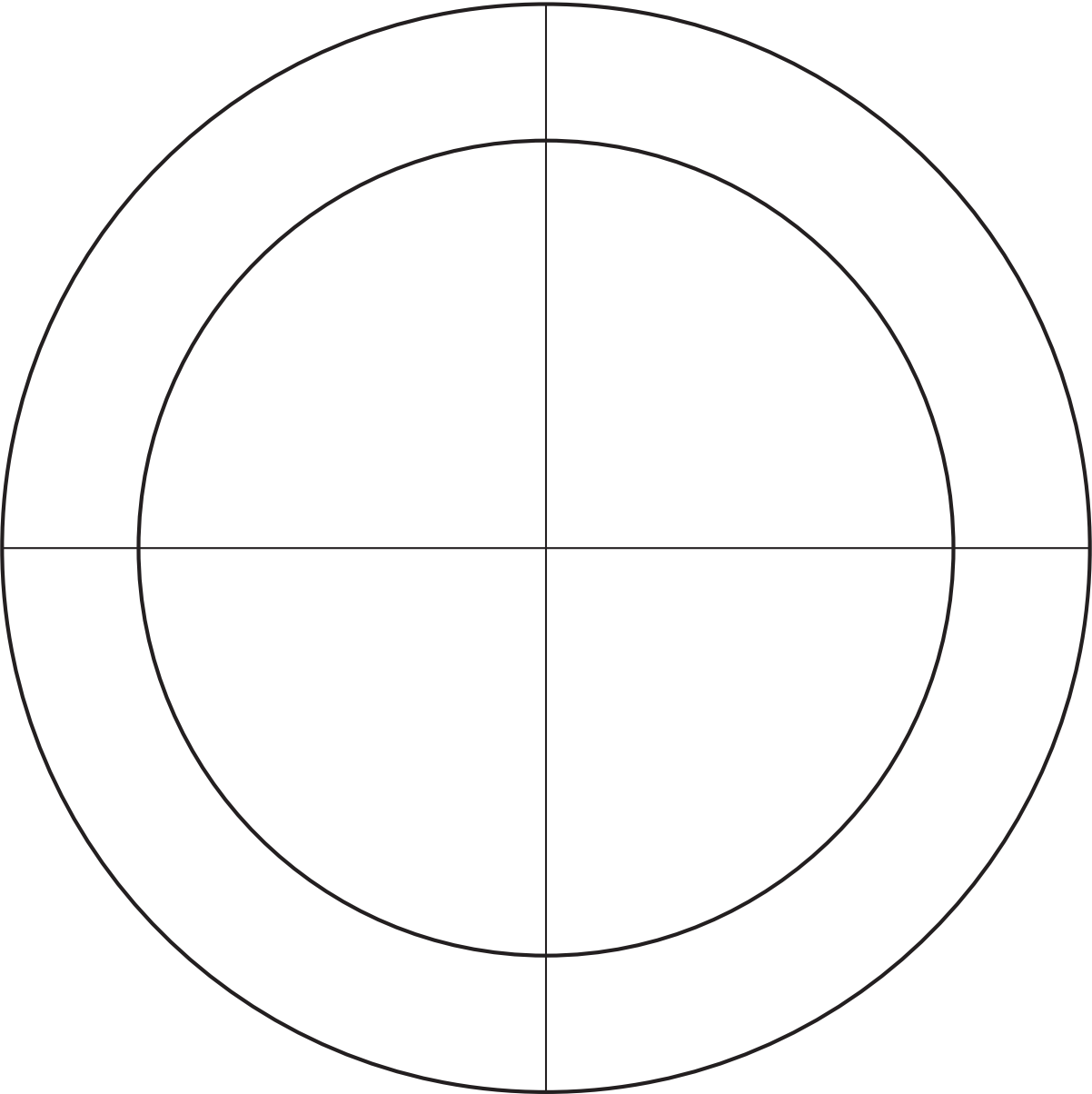
What Brady fails to see is he has options available that could help him with his situation. For example, he could ask for some extra time on an assignment, or he could talk to his teachers about the problems caused by having due dates on the same day. The other option is to do nothing and let his anger continue to fester and grow. Brady's *anger* is the emotion he is experiencing, and the feelings associated with his anger are *disappointment, fear, stress, being overwhelmed, anxiety, and worry*.

for you to do

Learn how to link your emotions with your feelings by using the Ring of Emotions and Feelings below. In the inner ring, four primary emotions are identified—anger, fear, sadness, and happiness. In the outer ring are feelings that are often associated with that emotion. For each emotion listed, describe a time that you remember last experiencing the emotion and, in your description, identify the feelings that you experienced alongside the emotion. If there are feelings that you often attach to an emotion that are not in the ring, write them in. You can photocopy the Ring of Emotions and Feelings form below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device.



Ring of Emotions and Feelings: Sample



Ring of Emotions and Feelings

For the next week, pay special attention to your emotions and the feelings that are attached to them. Revisit this activity at the end of the week and jot down any patterns that you noticed from your observations. For example, you may notice that you frequently get angry (emotion) when you get stressed and overwhelmed (feelings). Next, look for patterns in what's making you get stressed and overwhelmed. For example, if you're constantly racing the clock and running late to events, you may feel a lot of stress, which leads to your feeling overwhelmed. As a result, you may get really angry. Recognizing this pattern is good because now you know that you need to work on being on time.

Write down any patterns that you've noticed from your observations:

...and more to do!

Scaling is a great tool to help you gauge the intensity of your feelings. Here is how you can use scaling to monitor your feelings: When you have an emotional reaction to a situation, first identify your emotion, then determine how you feel. Based on this information, rate your feeling on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the minimum and 5 being the maximum. The goal is to identify troublesome feelings before they reach a level 5.

activity 10 * emotions and feelings

Practice scaling by thinking of an intense emotion that you experienced today; it doesn't have to be anger-related. In Brady's example, he recognized that if he didn't do something immediately, he'd blow his top. He had already let his anger skyrocket to a 4.9 on the 5.0 scale. The feelings attached to his anger (emotion) were *stress* of not having enough time to get everything done, *fear* of failing, and *disappointment* that he wasn't performing his best. Rather than letting his feelings fester into anger, he could have recognized them earlier, like at level 2 when he was feeling low amounts of stress and fear, and acted on them by talking to a coach or teacher so his anger wouldn't have climbed so high up the scale.

1. List the emotion.

2. Identify a feeling that you attached to the emotion.

3. On a scale of 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum), what number would you assign your feeling?

4. If this was a troublesome feeling, list something that you could have done to help you feel better and decrease the strength of your rating.

master of disguise 11

for you to know

Anger is a master of disguise, because it masks emotions such as shame, fear, and sadness. When things make us feel uncomfortable, it's easier to be angry than to show our vulnerable side and admit that we are hurt or afraid. Allowing anger to mask how we feel isn't fixing the problem, rather it's temporarily covering it up and potentially making it worse.

Jake could tell something was wrong at home. His parents had been arguing constantly. His dad often left and sometimes didn't even come back for the night. His mom cried a lot and didn't talk as much as she used to. He'd even overheard his dad talk about moving out.

Jake felt anxious about the future, and it hurt that his parents didn't trust him enough to tell him what was happening. He also felt guilty because he wondered if he was the cause of their arguments. He knew he hadn't been making the best choices lately.

Finally, one Saturday at breakfast, his parents told him that they were talking to lawyers and getting a divorce. Jake's heart started pounding fast, because he was afraid of how this would change his life. Pounding his fist on the table, he jumped out of his chair and shouted, "You are ruining my life! How could you do this to me?" He went to his room and slammed the door.

After a few minutes, his mom came to his room and knocked on the door. "Jake, let's talk. You know it's normal to feel hurt and scared. I'm kind of feeling those things too, but allowing anger to cover up how you're feeling won't help the situation. In fact, it'll cause you to avoid your true feelings and only make matters worse. Let's sit down and talk about this rather than yell, okay?"

for you to do

What’s your anger masking? This list represents some feelings that anger may have masked in your life. Circle any feeling that applies to you and use the blank lines to add any others.

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| anxiety | jealousy |
| depression | loneliness |
| fear | shame |
| frustration | stress |
| greed | _____ |
| hurt | _____ |

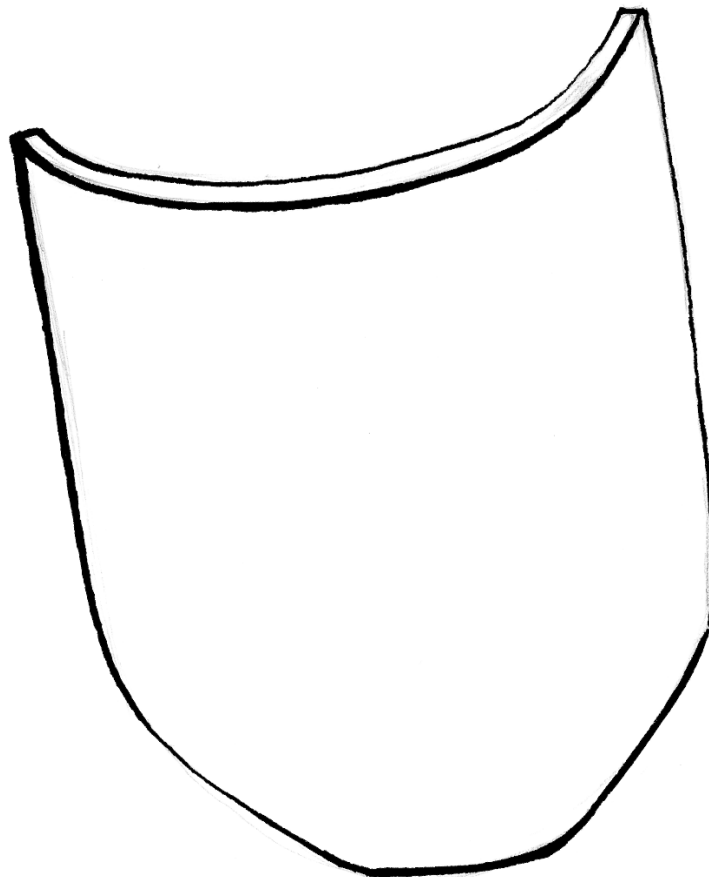
Tell about a specific time when you masked your feelings with anger.

How would expressing your actual feelings have helped?

...and more to do!

Imagine entering a masquerade ball where all the attendees wore a mask of anger, only behind each mask was a story of hurt, guilt, shame, fear, and/or anxiety. If we could go to the root of each person's anger, we would hear a unique story, but too often anger robs people of their story and steals all the attention. If you were an attendee at this ball, what would your anger be hiding? What would your story be?

Using the words you identified above, find pictures, sayings, or phrases online or in magazines that represent what lies beneath your anger. Cut or print out these representations and paste them into the mask below. The mask represents anger and the collage represents your unveiling of what lies beneath the anger.



12 observing thoughts

for you to know

Thoughts are nothing more than a creation produced by your brain. They have no emotion, and they can't cause or solve problems without your permission. Thoughts only become a reality when they are brought into existence by behaviors.

You can learn to become an active observer of your thoughts by separating who you are from what you are thinking. Imagine yourself lying in a field watching colorful balloons float above you—each balloon represents one of your thoughts. You are the watcher of your thoughts (or balloons).

Each of your thoughts is unique: some are meaningless, some are important, and some are destructive and painful. But the truth remains the same: they are all just thoughts, and they can't hurt or harm you unless you act on them. For example, if you're really mad and have the thought that you want to hit the person you are angry with, it's not a big deal—it's just a thought. Now, if you take that thought and sucker punch the person, then you've got a problem. Your ticket to freedom is understanding that you are *not* your thoughts and your thoughts are *not* you.

for you to do

Using the balloon metaphor, practice watching your thoughts.

1. First, find a quiet place and get into a comfortable position.

Imagine lying in a grassy field. As you look at the sky above you, you see lots of balloons, each trailing a colorful ribbon, floating over you. Each balloon represents one of your thoughts.

2. Now pay close attention to all the balloons floating by, and then reach up and grab one of the balloons by its ribbon. Again, these balloons are the thoughts you are currently experiencing, so focus intently on only one thought.
3. Pay special attention to *who* is having this thought, *who* is holding the balloon.
4. Notice how this thought is completely powerless, because it is not attached to but is separate from you, the watcher. The balloon is not a part of you, even though you are holding it.
5. Next, let the balloon or thought go. Let it drift away with the other balloons or thoughts.
6. Repeat these steps and choose another thought.
7. Finish by taking a deep, relaxing breath and exhale slowly.

...and more to do!

Separating your thoughts from who you are may not feel natural at first. But over time and with practice, you'll begin to do it automatically. Set aside ten minutes each day and notice your thoughts. If one thought is screaming for attention, stop and pay attention to it, recognize it but don't hold on to it. Remind yourself that it's only a thought. Let it have its moment. Do not let your thoughts become who you *are*—keep them separate like the balloon. When you allow unwanted thoughts to rule your life, you'll be miserable and may make poor choices. On the other hand, if the thought is healthy and important, then think of a way to act on it. You'd much rather act on healthy thoughts than painful ones.

thought distortions 13

for you to know

Anger loves to feed on distorted or exaggerated thoughts. You can beat anger at its own game by knowing when you are having distorted thoughts and calling them by name when you see them surface.

There are numerous types of thought distortions, but here are some of the most common.

Blaming: Shifting all the responsibility for the situation onto others while neglecting any role that you may have played in the incident. Blaming can leave you feeling powerless to change because you push all the responsibility off your plate and onto someone else's.

"It's all your fault this happened" or "If you hadn't done that, none of this would have happened!"

Magnifying: Assuming the worst-case scenario and blowing things out of proportion. Magnifying creates helplessness, because you assume that you are doomed to experience the worst of everything, so why try?

"You've ruined everything" or "This is terrible, I'll never live this down!"

Labeling: Using names to describe people, based on how you feel about them. Labeling fuels anger because you tell yourself the person is unworthy and wrong so you can convince yourself that you're justified and right.

"You're stupid!" or "You're such a worthless piece of crap!"

activity 13 * thought distortions

Jumping to Conclusions: Believing that others are purposefully trying to do something harmful to you. Jumping to conclusions can leave you thinking others are deliberately out to get you.

“She’s purposely trying to get me into trouble!” or “He planned to humiliate me in public!”

Overgeneralizing: Using definitive words that lead to drawing a conclusion based on only one aspect of the situation. Words frequently used in overgeneralization include: “always,” “every,” “everybody,” “nobody,” or “never.” Overgeneralizing can leave you feeling like others are working against you, that you aren’t good enough, or that you are going to fail.

“Everybody’s going to think that I am a wimp!” or “She always talks about me behind my back!”

for you to do

Read the passage below and underline each thought distortion that you find. Above your underlined text, name the type of distortion you identified, like blaming.

Answers are at the end of the activity.

My teacher is unfair and hates me because he’s always giving me the lowest grades in class! So, it’s useless to try to make a good grade. He’s going to fail me anyway! He’s such an idiot. I know he’s out to get me. He’s ruining my GPA and now I’ll never get into a good college. That fool has ruined my future!

Explain how these thought distortions can fuel this student's anger?

Help this student troubleshoot some ways to appropriately work through the situation by writing down some possible solutions.

...and more to do!

Like the example, write a brief passage containing some thoughts that you recently had about an unfair situation. Go back through your passage and underline and name any thought distortions that you had.

Explain how your thought distortions fueled your anger.

activity 13 * thought distortions

Looking back, what were some positive steps that you could have taken to work through your distorted thoughts? Write your solutions in the space below.

answers

My teacher is unfair and hates me (magnifying) because he's always (overgeneralizing) giving me the lowest grades in class! So, it's useless to try to make a good grade. He's going to fail me (blaming) anyway! He's such an idiot (labeling). I know he's out to get me (jumping to conclusions/magnifying). He's ruining my GPA (blaming) and now I'll never (overgeneralization) get into a good college (jumping to conclusions). That fool (labeling) has ruined my future (magnifying)!

the abc model of anger 14

for you to know

Being aware of how your angry thoughts can influence your behavior may help you choose better ways to deal with frustrating situations. Understanding your angry reactions can be as easy as ABC.

The ABC model can help you break down your anger response into small steps. Here is how the model works:

A = Activating event (the situation that angers you)

You were working on your final paper and took a brief break. While you were away from your laptop, your brother got online and started playing a game that you often let him play on your computer. In the process of opening the game, he accidentally closed the document that you had been working on. Unfortunately, you hadn't saved your work in a while.

B = Beliefs about the event

Beliefs can be rational and irrational. Rational beliefs are thought out and logical interpretations of the event; for example, "I lost my work because I didn't save it in the computer." Unlike rational beliefs, irrational beliefs aren't logical or sound. They are usually based on an emotional reaction and involve thought distortions, such as *It was all his fault!* or *Now, I am going to fail.*

C = Consequences

You find your brother, push him down, and start screaming at the top of your lungs about how he's made you fail your project!

The next step is to look at your beliefs about the activating event and decide whether they are rational or not. If they are not, follow these two steps:

1. Ask yourself what an outsider would ask about this situation. These questions can help dispute your beliefs that the action was done on purpose. Consider questions like these: *"Did your brother do it intentionally or was it an accident?" "Why didn't you save your work?" "Why didn't you mention to your brother that you were working on something really important and not to mess with your laptop?"*
2. Ask yourself what you could do to avoid similar situations in the future. In this situation, this might include *taking precautions by setting up an autosave function or using a cloud program that autosaves; telling others when you're working on something important; putting personal items away; making a new rule that no one uses your personal property without first asking permission.*

for you to do

Put the ABC model into action. Think of a recent situation that made you angry. Like the example above, use the model to work through what happened. You can photocopy the ABC Model of Anger form on the next page (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device.

ABC Model of Anger

A. What was the activating event (the situation that made you angry)?

B. What were your irrational beliefs about the event?

C. What were the consequences of those beliefs?

How can you dispute your beliefs?

What steps can you take to avoid similar situations in the future?

...and more to do!

Getting a handle on your anger can be as easy as learning your ABCs. The next time you catch yourself getting angry about something, use the ABC model to help you work through the situation. The model will help you see things from another perspective and work through any irrational beliefs. You can create a visual reminder of this model by taking a screen shot of the entire For You to Do section or making a copy of the steps on a separate piece of paper. Use your visual reminder each time you are faced with a situation that you need to logically think through.

stages of anger 15

for you to know

Anger builds in stages. By understanding the progression of your anger, you can learn to quickly identify when you are becoming frustrated and head it off before anger takes control.

The story below illustrates the stages of anger. As you read the scenario, think about the stages you go through when you're angry.

Stage 1. Your anger gets triggered.

Alex was getting ready for his big soccer game. He looked at the clock; it was 5:15. He was supposed to be at the field in fifteen minutes, and no one was home to drive him. Where are my parents? He tried calling, but no one answered. Every minute, Alex became more and more agitated.

What is Alex's trigger? If you guessed "being late," you're right!

Stage 2. You tell yourself irrational and distorted information to justify your anger.

While Alex was anxiously waiting for his parents to arrive, he kept thinking, By the time I get there, the game's going to be over and I'll be kicked off the team!

Anger distorts reality. Notice how Alex believed his thoughts, which led to his blaming, magnifying, and making the situation worse than it really was.

Stage 3. You react based on your angry thoughts and feelings.

At 5:40, his dad pulled into the driveway and honked the horn. Alex rushed out of his house. His heart was racing, and he was seething mad. He jerked open the car door and he threw his gear into the back. He hopped into the passenger’s seat and slammed the door shut. “LET’S GO, NOW! If I get kicked off the team, it’s all your fault!”

Alex let his stress feed his anger. What he failed to consider was possible reasons that his father was late, like car trouble or bad traffic due to an accident. When you’re angry, it’s easy to become blindsided by your emotions and fail to consider other options.

for you to do

Once Alex’s anger was triggered, it followed a series of stages and progressed into a full-blown anger episode. In the space below, write a new ending for his story. Think about how he could have interacted differently with his triggers and explain how he could have worked through his irrational and distorted thoughts. Explain how he will act when he gets to the field if he’s angry in comparison to if he arrives calm and level-headed.

...and more to do!

Think of a time when you were mad. Describe each stage of your anger progression.

Stage 1. Something triggers your anger. (What things set your anger into motion?)

Stage 2. Your thinking gets distorted. (What things did you tell yourself to justify your anger? For example, was it all someone else's fault, or did you jump to an erroneous conclusion before getting all the facts?)

Stage 3. You react to your distorted thoughts and feelings. (How did your distorted thoughts feed into how you behaved?)

activity 15 * stages of anger

It is often said that “hindsight is 20/20.” This saying means if you could go back in time, you’d do things differently based on what you now know. Looking back at your situation, explain what you would do differently based on what you know now about your anger progression.

weighing the options 16

for you to know

Some of life's decisions are easier to make than others, but anger-fueled decisions can lead to poor outcomes. It's difficult to think straight when you're in an emotional state. That's why it's important to carefully weigh the options when you're angry so you don't end up doing something you later regret.

You will make many decisions in life. Some will be small, such as what to wear on a date or which movie to see. Some will be big and potentially life changing, such as getting into a car with an intoxicated friend, sneaking out to a party behind your parents' backs, or getting into a fight at school with someone you don't like.

Anger can cloud your judgment, making it much harder to make good decisions. Learning to think through the pros and cons of your decisions by weighing your options will help you make the best choice with the least consequences.

for you to do

Several of Evan’s friends told him that Cody wanted to fight him after school. Cody had been popping off at the mouth about Evan since the beginning of the school year, and after two months of putting up with Cody, Evan had had enough. This last time was the breaking point. Evan was so angry that all he wanted to do was to shut Cody up for good, but despite all of his anger toward Cody, he wasn’t sure fighting was the answer.

Before Evan did anything he’d later regret, he decided to stop and think about the pros and cons of his options. His list included these things:

- It will feel good to shut Cody up once and for all.
- I would be expelled from school.
- Cody will stop running his mouth about me.
- It may affect how my teachers think about me.
- I may get charged with aggravated assault by the police and have to go to court.
- Someone could get badly hurt.
- My parents will be disappointed in me.
- It will teach others not to mess with me.

Can you think of any more pros or cons other than those listed?

Help Evan weigh his options—to fight or not—by deciding whether each item above is a pro or a con. Then write it in the correct column.

Pros of Fighting	Cons of Fighting

After looking at the pros and cons, describe what decision you think Evan should make and explain why this is the best option.

...and more to do!

Think of a decision you are currently facing (it doesn't have to involve anger). Practice weighing the options by writing out the pros and cons of each possible choice. You can photocopy the Weighing the Options form below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device.

activity 16 * weighing the options

Weighing the Options	
Decision:	
Pros	Cons

Each time you have a decision to make, think through the pros and cons by weighing your options.

Part 3

Communication Skills

17 same thing, different view

for you to know

There is usually more than one way to look at any situation, but when you're in the heat of anger, it can be hard to see other points of view, although they do exist. As a result, it's not uncommon for two people in the same situation to come out with two entirely different ideas about what happened.

Here is the situation from Mallory's perspective:

Mallory and Casey were at the movies. Mallory saw their friend Sarah sitting beside Blake, the person Casey really liked. The two were whispering and gazing into each other's eyes. Mallory couldn't believe what she was seeing. Were Sarah and Blake together? she wondered. How could Sarah do that to Casey, especially with her birthday just around the corner? Friend betrayal—what a great birthday gift!

Here is the situation from Casey's perspective:

Casey noticed Sarah and Blake whispering to each other. Casey really liked Blake, so she was watching them closely. What are those two up to? she thought. They seem to be planning something. I wonder if it has to do with my birthday. Casey couldn't wait to see what they had conjured up for her birthday surprise!

Mallory and Casey both saw the same thing, but their interpretations of what was happening were entirely different. How you interpret or perceive something is called *perception*. For example, Casey trusted both Blake and Sarah, so she didn't assume they were doing anything wrong. Mallory, on the other hand, assumed the worst. Have you ever been in a situation where you interpreted the same thing differently from someone else?

for you to do

In conflict, your perception can become biased and lead to you only seeing one aspect of the situation, even though other sides exist. One way to see things from different perspectives is to look at them from another person's viewpoint. This will help you see that there are often multiple perceptions or ways of looking at the same situation. If you have a difficult time seeing different perspectives, you can explain the situation to someone and then get their point of view on the matter.

When you're angry, it's difficult to take different perspectives into account. Think of a recent situation in which you were upset. Under Your Perception below, write down how you perceived the situation. Next, write down how an outsider could see the same situation differently under Another's Perception. An example has been provided for you.

Your Perception:

My friend didn't call me. She must be mad.

Another's Perception:

She is so busy that her friend will understand if she gives her a call later.

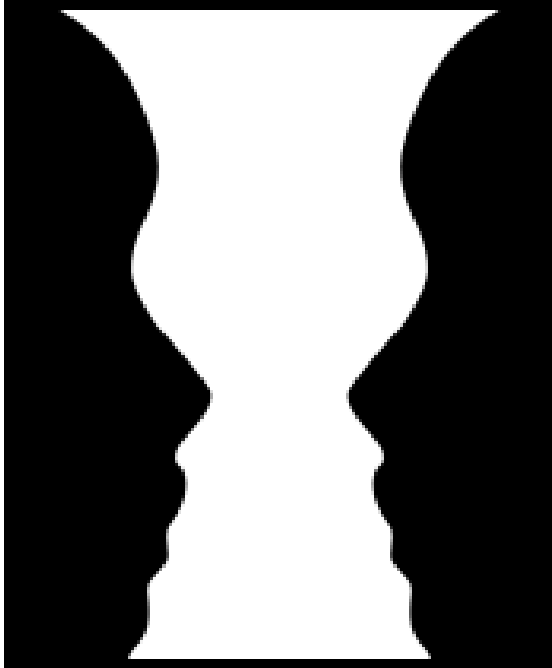
Explain how different perceptions or viewpoints regarding the same situation can escalate to anger.

activity 17 * same thing, different view

Explain how understanding different perceptions can help deescalate anger.

...and more to do!

Look at the pictures below. See if you can find a friend or family member to do these activities with you. Having someone else's input will help you see that different people can look at the same thing but have different takes on it.



In the picture on the left, do you see a vase or the profiles of two people? On the right, do you see a young woman or an old woman? If you can see both, notice which one you see first. Show these pictures to a friend. Do you both see them the same way? If not, who is wrong and who is right? If you want to continue learning more about perception, do an Internet search on optical illusions. A popular one is the blue and black or gold and white dress illusion. Check it out and see what you think.

Just as with these images, in life there are situations that don't have a right or wrong answer. It all depends on how you perceive the situation.

18 more than words

for you to know

Words are not the only way people communicate with each other. In fact, nonverbal communication, also known as “body language,” is used more often than verbal communication. Nonverbal communication is how we express ourselves through gestures, facial expressions, posture, and our tone of voice. Communication occurs with more than words.

The idea that you can communicate without speaking might seem strange, but you do it all time through nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication sends messages to others about what you’re thinking and feeling, and you don’t even have to open your mouth to convey the message.

Look at some of the ways people use their bodies to express frustration and anger:

- rolling their eyes
- plugging their ears
- crossing their arms
- glaring
- flipping someone off
- sighing
- clenching their fists
- biting their lips
- gritting their teeth

- tapping their feet impatiently
- pointing their finger

Not all body language is unfriendly. Here are some examples of friendly nonverbal messages:

- waving hello
- smiling
- hugging
- blowing a kiss
- winking at someone
- patting someone on the back
- clapping
- giving someone a thumbs-up
- nodding in agreement

for you to do

For an entire day, notice how people use their bodies to communicate. In the Body Language Communication form below, write down any gestures, facial expressions, or body signals that you observe. Also pay close attention to the situation it occurs in, and what message you think the person is sending. You can photocopy the Body Language Communication form below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device.

Body Language Communication		
Body Language	Situation	Message Being Sent

...and more to do!

Body language can sometimes lead to miscommunication. For example, you might think that a boy who is making faces and rolling his eyes at you is making fun of you. But what if his contact lens is giving him trouble? Or you might think that a girl who is rubbing her hands together is cold, or perhaps worried, but it's possible that she just put on hand lotion. It's easy to interpret things incorrectly and make false assumptions, so if you're in doubt, just ask.

Have you ever misunderstood another person's body language? Tell what happened.

Has anybody else ever misunderstood your body language? Tell what happened.

19 good listening

for you to know

There is a difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is letting words pass you by without thinking about their messages. Listening is concentrating and consciously paying attention to the meaning behind what is being said.

Communication is an important part of working through anger, and being a good listener is an important part of communication. Listening helps you form a connection with the person you're upset with so that you can see things from their perspective. It may be hard to listen when you're angry, but it's not impossible—it just takes a lot of skill and practice.

Good listeners share these characteristics:

- They pay attention to the person who is speaking.
- They maintain eye contact.
- They show interest by nodding or by smiling at appropriate times.
- They make sure that they understand what has been said by repeating it in their own words. For example, a good listener might say, "Do you mean that...?" or "So, you're saying...."
- They let others finish their thoughts without interrupting.
- They ask questions of the speaker to help better understand what was said.

for you to do

Write about a time when you showed good listening skills, like when a friend needed help through a difficult time.

List the things that you did to show that person you were really listening to what they were saying. For example, did you maintain eye contact or paraphrase (repeat back what was said in your own words) what was being said?

Now think of a time when someone was being a good listener to you.

Describe how you could tell that the other person was listening.

activity 19 * good listening

Explain how it felt when someone was paying attention and acting like what you said mattered to them.

How can being a good listener help you when you're angry?

...and more to do!

Becoming a good listener takes practice. A great way to exercise your listening skills is by talking with a close friend. The next time your friend is sharing something with you, focus on listening and not just hearing what is being said. After your conversation, reflect on how well you were listening.

What grade would you give yourself for listening to your friend's situation?

Describe some things that you did to show that you were listening.

Describe some things that you could do to be a better listener.

20 words matter

for you to know

What you say and how you say it matters. Often when you are mad, you may raise your voice and accuse others of wrongdoing. Your word choice can make all the difference in how others respond. Your words can encourage people to listen to what you are saying or turn them off and shut down what you are saying. There's no way around it, your words really do matter.

Anger can lead to accusatory language that focuses on placing blame on others. When people feel attacked, they often stop listening and begin thinking about a comeback. Accusatory words—such as “should,” “always,” “must,” “ought to,” and “never”—can lead to arguments and conflict. But just like there are accusatory words, there are also words that can deescalate anger and lead to effective communication. These words are known as nonaccusatory words.

Here are a couple of examples:

1. *You're angry with a friend who usually eats lunch with you, but lately has moved to an entirely different table, leaving you to eat alone.*

Accusatory message: *You always ignore me!*

Nonaccusatory message: *I feel sad and scared when you don't sit with me at lunch because I feel that you don't like me anymore.*

2. *You have been trying to confide in your friend about a problem at home, but she keeps texting while you're talking.*

Accusatory message: *You never listen to me!*

Nonaccusatory message: *I feel hurt when you text and I am trying to share something that's really bothering me. I feel like my problems aren't important.*

for you to do

Now it's your turn to try these messages. For each situation, write down how you would respond using accusatory messages. Next, change that response to a nonaccusatory response.

The person sitting behind you in class is using a pencil as a drumstick while you're trying to do your work.

Accusatory message: You _____.

Nonaccusatory message: I feel _____

when you _____ because

Your friend totally humiliates you in front of the class by telling everyone who you have a crush on.

Accusatory message: You _____.

Nonaccusatory message: I feel _____

when you _____ because

Your group is supposed to present their project in class today. You find out that you are the only one who did any of the work.

Accusatory message: You _____.

Nonaccusatory message: I feel _____

when you _____ because _____

Your mother comes home from work. You've been cleaning the house but haven't gotten to your room yet. She accuses you of not doing anything.

Accusatory message: You _____.

Nonaccusatory message: I feel _____

when you _____ because _____

...and more to do

For one week, keep a tally of all the times that you use accusatory messages. Notice whether they include the words “you,” “should,” “always,” “must,” “ought to,” or “never.” How often do you use accusatory messages? On the table below, give an example of an accusatory message that you used during the day. Next, in the following columns, place a check mark for each accusatory word that you used in your message. You can photocopy the Accusatory Messages form below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device.

	Accusatory Messages	You	Should	Always	Must	Ought	Never
Monday							
Tuesday							
Wednesday							
Thursday							
Friday							
Saturday							
Sunday							
Total							

Review the accusatory messages. What patterns do you notice in your choice of words? For example, is there a word that you used more than others?

Explain the importance of carefully choosing your words when you're mad.

filtering responses 21

for you to know

When we are angry, it's easy to say what we think rather than think about what we say. Too often we let our unfiltered thoughts escape our mouths. Learning how to filter our responses can help us avoid saying or doing something that we may later regret.

Carly couldn't stand that Allie was constantly belittling her in front of other friends. Rather than talking in private to Allie about how she was feeling, she tried to ignore it, but one day Allie went too far. For months, Carly had been bottling up her anger, and in that one moment, she went on a tongue-lashing tirade in which she started threatening, shouting vulgar names, and insulting how Allie looked. Because Allie and Carly were friends, she knew just where to throw the jabs to evoke the most pain. Everyone stood in shocked silence as Carly berated Allie. For once, Allie was speechless. When Carly finished, she felt relieved, but then she saw her friends glaring at her and the tears streaming down Allie's face. Oh no, what have I done? I should have put a filter on it, she thought.

There are several types of filters that help purify things, such as a water filter that takes the impurities out of the water we drink and a coffee filter that traps the grounds, allowing the beverage to drip through. Filters serve a purpose—to remove unwanted material. Just like the filters we use in everyday life, our mind also has a built-in filter, but when we're angry, we may forget to use it.

Anger causes a lot of unkind thoughts. It may tell us that someone is stupid, ugly, or even worthless. Although these thoughts stem from anger, they aren't helpful when spoken aloud and can be extremely hurtful. Too often those who spew their anger wish they could change how they responded, but once the words are out, there's no taking them back.

activity 21 * filtering responses

Here are five ways to help filter responses:

- 1. *Don't respond in the heat of the moment.*
- 2. *Clear your mind and get away from the situation.*
- 3. *Slow down and weigh your options by making a list of pros and cons.*
- 4. *Practice what to say before saying it.*
- 5. *Don't bottle things up; address troublesome situations early.*

for you to do

Practice filtering thoughts by working through Carly's situation. Review the scenario again, and describe any feelings that Carly may be experiencing.

What unfiltered words may have come out in the "tongue-lashing tirade"? For example, what are some things you might have said in this situation?

What are the consequences of Carly's behavior?

Think of ways to filter this situation. Using the five ways to help filter responses, write out a new ending to Carly's story. Unfortunately, in real life, there's no going back, so it's good to learn from mistakes so history doesn't repeat itself.

...and more to do!

Tell about a time when you did not filter your anger response.

activity 21 * filtering responses

Describe the consequences of your unfiltered response. For example, did you lose a friend?

If you could go back and filter your response, what would you do or say differently?

social media and anger 22

for you to know

Nothing can create more trouble than posting something online when you're angry. When you post things online, you allow others into your business and open the door for drama. That's why it's important to know whether to post or not to post.

It's easier to say things online than in person. This is because the screen creates a sense of invincibility that hides important social cues which allow us to read another person's reactions. When we communicate with others in person, they give off cues that help us interpret how they're responding to the information, but when we communicate with a keypad, we don't see their expressions or hear the tone of their voice. If we did, we might realize that our online behavior is being hurtful.

Think about it...

- When we communicate verbally on a phone, we are cued in to how the person's voice sounds, and we can detect their emotions.
- When we communicate face-to-face, we can watch nonverbal behavior and hear their words.
- When we communicate online, we have no way of knowing how our words are affecting the receiver.
- When we post things online, it's easy for others to jump into our business and stir up even more drama.

activity 22 * social media and anger

Knowing how and when to respond on social media is important. Before you fire off a response, ask yourself these five Ws—who, what, when, where, why.

1. Who will see my post? Are you okay with your family, teachers, coaches, employers, and college representative seeing your post?
2. What am I hoping to accomplish? Are you trying to work through the situation or get revenge?
3. When do I need to post this message? Is there an immediate need to post the message, or can it wait?
4. Where am I on the anger gauge? On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = relaxed and not angry, and 5 = enraged, where is my anger? If it's above 3, then step away from the keypad and don't post anything.
5. Why am I posting this message? Is it to get back at someone, embarrass them, or to show them I'm right and they're wrong?

for you to do

Thomas was over it. At school and on social media, Liam was spreading lies that he had been cheating on his girlfriend, Mariah. Despite Thomas telling Mariah that it was untrue, other people were beginning to get into his business and post lies making the situation worse. Later at home, Thomas saw that Liam posted another lie and then he got a message from Mariah, saying, "We're done!" Thomas felt out of control and his blood began to boil. He placed his fingers on the keypad and started viciously typing a

response to Liam—he was going to regret screwing up his relationship with Mariah! Thomas opened his pictures on his phone and scrolled to the one of Liam doing something at a party that he would never want out in public! He selected the picture and started to upload it...

Put yourself in Thomas's situation and work through the five Ws:

1. Who will see the post? List the people, other than Liam, that could see the post and explain the damage that could cause.
2. What is the intent behind the sending the message?
3. When does Thomas need to post the message? How urgent is it that he fire off an immediate response? What actions should he take?
4. Where do you think Thomas is on the anger gauge?
5. Why do you think Thomas is posting this message?

...and more to do!

Think of an unkind thing that you've posted or seen posted online. Write it in the digital comment box on the next page (aka Five Ws for Social Media) and work the post through the five Ws. You can photocopy the Five Ws for Social Media form below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device.

Five Ws for Social Media



Me
Today

Post: _____

Five Ws

Who: _____

What: _____

When: _____

Where: _____

Why: _____

To help you remember to think before you post, make a copy or take a screen shot of the five Ws. The next time that you are ready to fire off an impulsive response, use the five Ws to help guide you to making the best choice.

criticism and compliments 23

for you to know

Being complimented makes most people feel good on the inside. On the other hand, being criticized makes people feel horrible and attacked. Unfortunately, when we are angry, we tend to focus on criticizing people and miss out on their good qualities.

Amanda was in a very playful mood in gym class. She started to sing. Jenna, who was having a really bad day, quickly had enough of Amanda's singing and called out, "Girl, you're off pitch and can't sing! Do us all a favor and shut up!"

How do you think Amanda felt after that verbal assault? Perhaps she was embarrassed, hurt, and maybe a little angry. It's easy to use words to tear people down. But have you ever tried using words to build them up? You'll get a completely different reaction. Don't you feel good when someone pays you a compliment like "You look nice today" or "You're an awesome guitar player"? You can do the same for others!

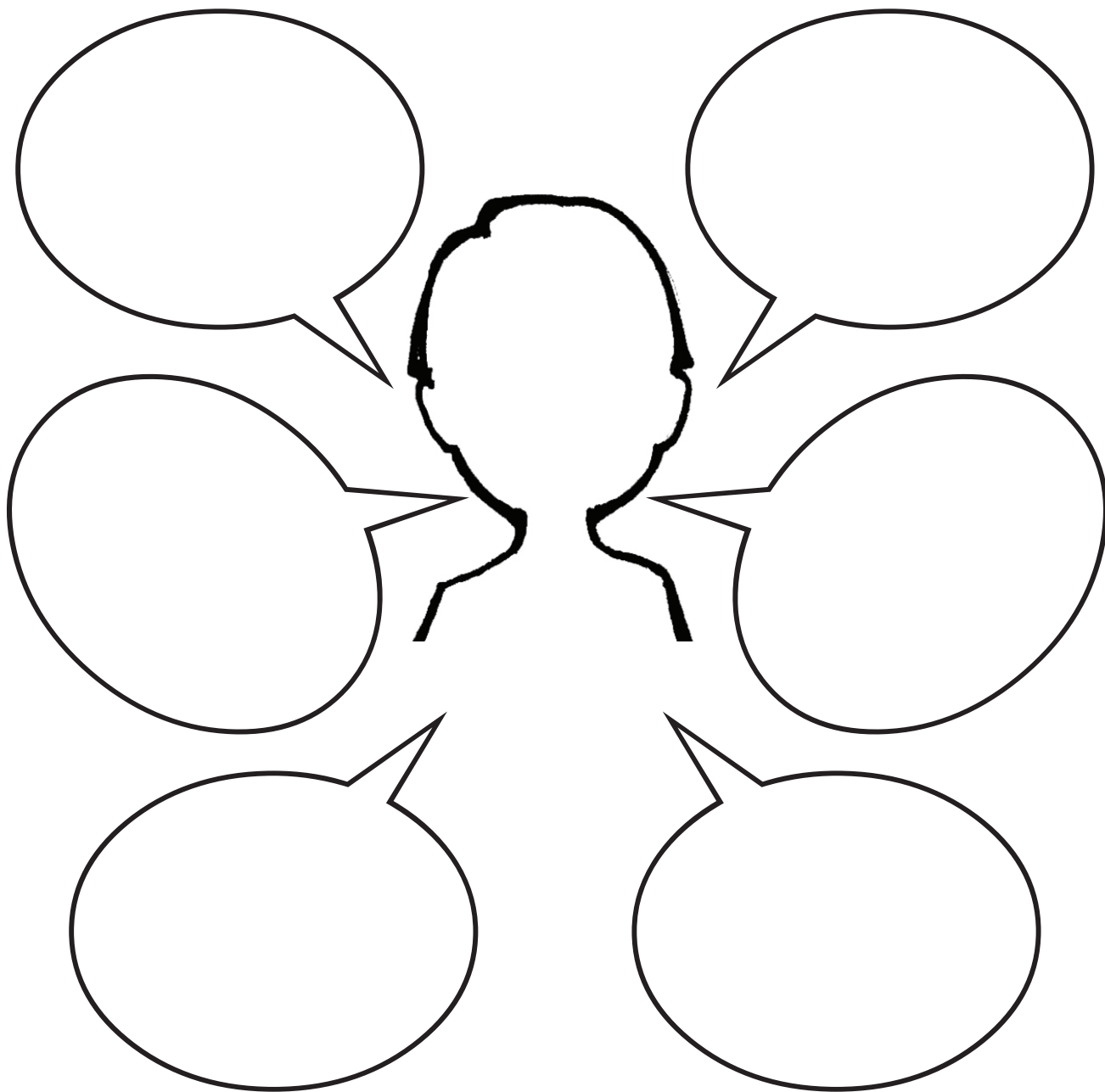
for you to do

Put a check next to each sentence you can use to compliment someone. Put an X next to those sentences that would tear someone down.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ Your help was important. | _____ You're so lazy. |
| _____ You need to get into shape. | _____ Your voice is annoying. |
| _____ You are stupid. | _____ You are hopeless. |
| _____ You are an awesome artist. | _____ You are a great friend. |
| _____ You never do anything right. | _____ You are a great listener. |
| _____ You did a great job! | _____ You are very athletic. |
| _____ You aced the test. | _____ You never listen. |
| _____ You screw up all the time. | _____ You are so trustworthy. |
| _____ You are really nice. | _____ You are a geek. |
| _____ You are a great help. | |

...and more to do!

Sometimes when you don't feel good about yourself, it's hard to accept a compliment. For example, if someone tells you you're smart but you think you're stupid, you may not believe them. Think of positive things people have told you that you didn't believe. Write their statements in the speech balloons below. Have you ever received multiple compliments about the same things but not believed any of them? If so, what was the compliment? How can you let go and accept the compliment that you've been given?



24 being assertive

for you to know

In anger, drawing a line between aggressiveness, passiveness, and assertiveness can get tricky. All are ways to communicate, but assertiveness is the best way to express how you feel.

Here is a breakdown of the different communication types:

Passive: You don't speak up for yourself and go against what you want to do to please others. As a result, people may take advantage of you and don't take you seriously.

Aggressive: You communicate your thoughts and feelings without any concern about how others feel. You often use force to express yourself.

Assertive: You express your needs and thoughts calmly, clearly, confidently, and honestly. You articulately take a stand and speak up for your rights, while still respecting the rights of others.

Here is an example of how each communication style plays out in real life.

You are approached by a student in class who is wanting to copy your homework. You spent hours on the assignment and don't want to run the risk of getting caught.

Passive: "Well, I guess, but I hope we don't get caught."

Aggressive: "Are you stupid? Do you know how long I spent on this assignment? Get a life and do your own homework!"

Assertive: "Sorry, but I am not going to let you copy my work. First, it's not fair to me because I put in a lot of time working on this assignment. Second, it's not worth getting caught cheating."

for you to do

Read each statement below. Write how you would handle it with a passive, aggressive, and assertive response.

You lend a friend one of your favorite shirts, and she returns it with a stain.

Passive: _____

Aggressive: _____

Assertive: _____

Your friend keeps messaging you late at night. You're tired and just want to get some sleep.

Passive: _____

Aggressive: _____

Assertive: _____

activity 24 ✱ being assertive

You let your friend borrow some money, but he never pays you back.

Passive: _____

Aggressive: _____

Assertive: _____

Your brother is playing his guitar really loud, and you can't focus on your homework.

Passive: _____

Aggressive: _____

Assertive: _____

You're at the movies and some people behind you are talking the whole time.

Passive: _____

Aggressive: _____

Assertive: _____

You've been waiting for over an hour for your friend to meet you at the mall.

Passive: _____

Aggressive: _____

Assertive: _____

...and more to do!

Are you more passive, aggressive, or assertive? Answer these questions and find out which areas need more work.

Do you volunteer your ideas even if they are different from others' ideas?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do you ask questions when you don't understand something?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do you say no without feeling guilty when you don't want to do something?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do you speak up when others try to take advantage of you?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Do you face difficult situations rather than avoiding them?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Can you take criticism without getting angry?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Are you able to express your feelings and be receptive to others' feelings?	☐ Yes	☐ No

If you answered no to at least three of these questions, you might want to revisit the activities in the Communication Skills section to help you better voice your feelings rather than acting on them or bottling them up.

Remember, you have the right to express how you feel about things. You have the right to say no. You have the right to speak the truth. You have the right to disagree. You have the right to be you! The more you practice being assertive, the easier it will become.

Part 4

Handling Anger

25 keeping perspective

for you to know

We all overreact to situations at times, but when it happens frequently, it can lead to big problems. Keeping perspective means recognizing when you're making a mountain out of a molehill by making things worse than they are. When you put things into perspective, you look at the big picture and learn to take those things in stride.

Madison was having one of the worst days of her life. She had totally forgotten that her term paper was due, not to mention that she slept through her alarm and was late to school. Is this day ever going to end? she asked herself. The last bell rang finally and it was time to go home. Madison hastily grabbed her phone and backpack and rushed out the door. She was halfway down the hall when she realized her backpack was a lot lighter than usual. Looking inside, she noticed her books were missing! Frantically, she raced back to the classroom to see if she left something behind. On her way, she noticed her friends Hailey and Chloe standing next to the water fountain, looking mischievous. "What's wrong?" Hailey smirked, showing Madison one of her books.

"I am not in the mood for this!" Madison screamed, grabbing her book and slamming it hard on the floor as she bent down to put it in her bag. The sound echoed loudly throughout the hall and people quietly gathered around to watch the brewing drama. Hailey looked at Madison shaking her head. "What's your deal? Here are your books. We were just playing with you. It's funny how yesterday, you hid my gym clothes and I didn't blow that out of proportion. I guess you can dish it out, but you can't take it!" Both Hailey and Chloe walked off, leaving Madison speechless as everyone watched.

Ever had a moment like Madison's? Odds are you have. It usually happens when you're having a bad day and any little thing can push you over the edge. Here's the good news: by keeping perspective, you can manage your behavior without making everything into a big deal. For example, here are some strategies Madison could have used to keep things in perspective:

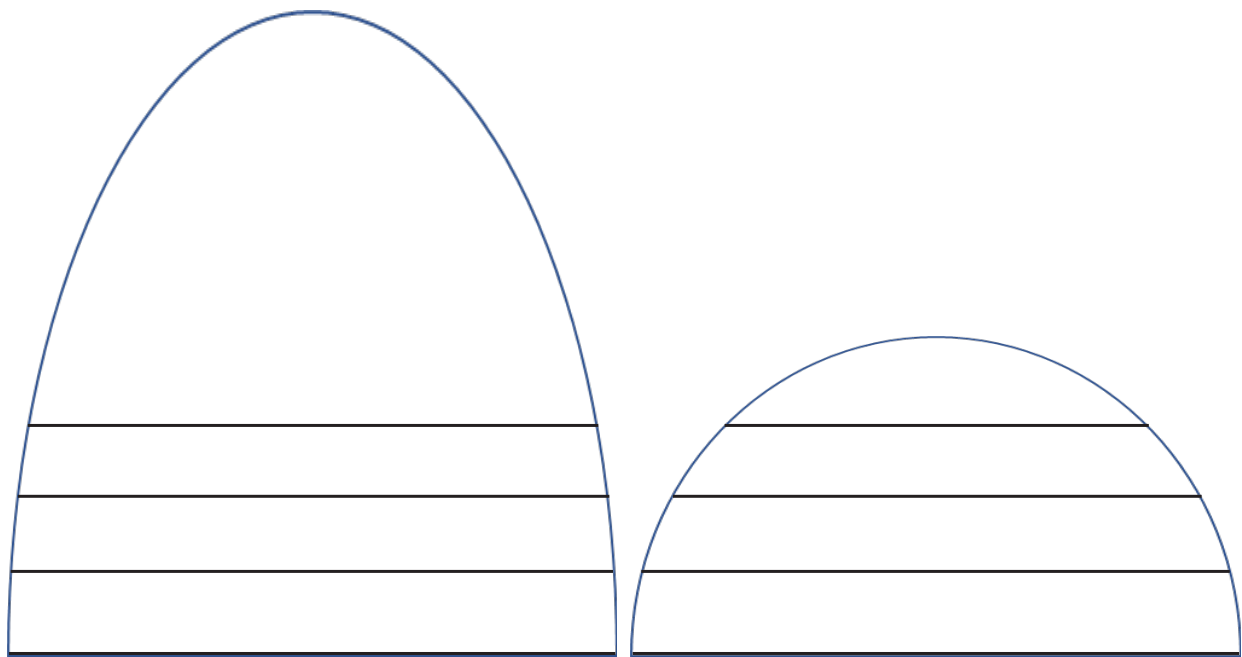
Being aware of her mood. Madison knew she was in a foul mood as she was already having a bad day. Once she knew her friends had her things, she could have quietly taken them back and not made a scene.

Looking at the situation from another perspective. Madison could have considered looking at the situation from the perspective of Hailey and Chloe. By doing so, she may have realized they were jokingly paying her back for her mischievous behavior in gym class and they didn't mean any harm.

Speaking her feelings. Rather than making a spectacle of herself, Madison could have simply shared her bad day with her friends so they understood that it wasn't the right day to pull a prank. Perhaps they would have offered to help get her things back together so she could get home quickly.

Laughing it off. Since her friends were joking around, Madison could have played back and said something like, "Okay, that was funny, guess I deserved it, but now I have to hurry and get home. Can you help me get everything back in my backpack?"

for you to do



Mountain

Inside the mountain, briefly describe a time when you made a big deal out of a small problem.

Molehill

Inside the molehill, list some strategies you could have used to keep things in perspective.

...and more to do!

How can being aware of your thoughts and feelings keep you from overreacting and making a mountain out of a molehill?

If you repeatedly overreact to situations, how do you think it will affect your relationships with others?

What are some consequences you have faced because of overreacting? (For example, have you lost friends or been suspended from school?)

Explain how keeping things in perspective can help you manage your anger.

26 getting the facts

for you to know

Assumptions are believing something is true, but not having any proof to back it up. Basing an assumption on a piece of information is a slippery slope that can get you into deep trouble. It's important that you get the facts straight before you react.

Emma really liked Skyler, a new kid at school. When she told her friend Angel how she felt about Skyler, Angel insisted on playing matchmaker. "No! Don't say a word. I mean it, Angel!" Emma pleaded. After some persuading, Angel finally gave in and promised Emma she'd keep her little secret between the two of them.

That day at lunch, Emma hurried to the cafeteria in hopes of running into Skyler. As she scanned the cafeteria, she spotted Angel and Skyler sitting with one another and engrossed in an intense conversation. Oh no! I can't believe she'd do this to me. Emma made her way to the table thinking of all the things Angel had told Skyler. With each step she took, she felt her anger rising and her mind racing with what she was going to say to Angel. Finally, she reached the table and confronted her once-trusted, backstabbing best friend.

If Emma only knew, Angel had never betrayed her trust.

In this example, Emma reacted because she believed that Angel had broken her trust by telling Skyler how she felt; she reacted based on these thoughts without having any facts to back them up. It's easy to make false assumptions and accept them as truths. Have you ever assumed you knew what was going on in a situation when in reality you didn't have a clue? When you catch yourself making assumptions, try this:

Don't personalize the situation by making everything about you. Each time you catch yourself thinking you know what someone else is thinking, saying, or doing, make sure that you have the facts before you react.

Don't assume the worst. Think of how you may be misreading the situation. Try to look at the situation from another's perspective rather than focusing on what you "think" you know.

Don't jump to conclusions. What you think is happening may not be what's really happening. Seek out the facts, because if you don't, you may draw the wrong conclusions.

Ask before assuming. Don't make assumptions when you can go to the source and get the facts. Don't believe what others tell you either, as they may be trying to cause more trouble or drama. If you want to get the facts, you just have to ask.

for you to do

Help Emma correct her response by getting the facts straight. Using the suggestions given earlier, rewrite Emma's story so she doesn't risk losing a good friend.

...and more to do!

Have you ever made false assumptions about a situation? Tell what happened.

Identify some of the feelings that you felt when found out you were wrong. For example, did you feel ashamed or embarrassed?

How would the outcome have changed if you had gotten all the facts before you reacted?

coping with conflict 27

for you to know

Some people have a knack for coping with conflict and others only intensify it. There are certain styles that people use when they are working through conflict and some get better results than others.

Here are some common styles people use in conflict.

The Competitor: It's your way or the highway. You're bound and determined to win, no matter the cost. You blame and accuse others of being wrong. You're always right. You're going to get the final word in, if it's the last thing you do!

The Doormat: You let others take advantage of you. You have a difficult time saying no, so you become a doormat for others to walk on. You hate it when people take advantage of you, but you won't say or do anything because you want everyone to like you.

The Bolter: When times get tough, you bolt! You avoid conflict at all costs, no matter how angry you are. You tell yourself that there's nothing you can do about it. You rarely find a solution for your problems. You just bottle them up. Needless to say, you have a lot of unfinished business.

The Unifier: When you have a conflict with someone, you stay focused on what happened rather than launching personal attacks. Your goal is to bring everyone to some common platform and resolve the conflict. If you can't work out a solution, then you seek to peacefully agree to disagree and move on.

Which conflict style do you think gets the best results? If you guessed the Unifier, you're right! Unifiers try to get all the facts, look at things from different perspectives, and weigh their options before jumping to conclusions.

for you to do

Read these examples and decide which conflict style is being used. Write your answer in the space provided.

The answers are at the end of the activity.

Math had always been difficult for Katy. No matter how hard she worked, she just couldn't get the material, but her dad just didn't understand. He was forever griping about her grades. "There is no excuse for those grades, Katy. I am sick and tired of getting calls from your math teacher. I expect you to do better. I won't accept anything below an A, understand?" Katy wished she could be honest with him about how hard math was for her, but she was afraid that he'd get angrier. "Yes, sir. I'll work harder." As soon as she could, Katy dashed to her room and shut the door. Angry tears streamed down her face. Why doesn't he get that I am doing the best that I can?

Matt's best friend, Aidan, really hurt him this time. Matt had told Aidan for months how he really liked Peyton. How could Aidan go behind his back and ask Peyton out? Matt felt angry, but he was worried that if he said something to Aidan, he'd lose his best friend. Maybe it wasn't worth saying anything. Peyton and Aidan would probably make a better couple anyway.

Sydney caught her mom reading her diary. How could she? Sydney took a deep breath and said, "Mom, why are you reading my diary? Don't you trust me? If you want to know something, just ask." Together, Sydney and her mom talked about privacy and trust. By the end of the conversation, Sydney's mom agreed to respect her space. In return, Sydney agreed to share more about what was going on in her life with her mom.

Grace and Riley were in a heated argument over their weekend plans. Riley wanted to ask the new girl at school to join them, but Grace didn't like the girl and didn't want her around. Riley thought Grace was being a stuck-up brat, so she decided to hang out with the new girl—without Grace. The new girl posted some pictures of their outing, and it got back to Grace. Grace was ticked and blew up Riley's phone with mean texts. Grace gave Riley an ultimatum: she could either be friends with her or the new girl!

Think about how you usually react to conflict. Put a 1 next to the style you are most likely to use and continue ranking the other styles from 2 to 4.

_____ The Competitor

_____ The Doormat

_____ The Bolter

_____ The Unifier

If you use a different approach to conflict, describe it here.

Ask several people who know you well which conflict style they think that you use most often. Write down their responses here.

...and more to do!

Next, choose the conflict style that you use most often when you're angry. Write about a time that you used that style and then rewrite it using the Unifier style.

Conflict style: _____

Scenario: _____

Rewrite using Unifier style: _____

answers

1. The Bolter
2. The Doormat
3. The Unifier
4. The Competitor

handling anger 28 constructively

for you to know

You can use your anger to improve or ruin your life. Are you going to let anger ruin your life by destroying your relationships, health, and reputation, or are you going to use your anger in healthy, positive, and productive ways to improve your life? Anger doesn't have to be destructive; it can be constructive. The decision is yours.

Juan had really done it this time. He was engrossed in his video game and had almost made it to the highest level, when his five-year-old brother ran through the room flying his toy plane and tripped over the power cable, pulling it from the wall. Juan's mouth dropped open as he watched the screen go black and the gaming console power off. That did it! Juan picked up his video controller and hurled it at his brother, hitting him on the leg. His brother started to cry loudly. Juan heard his mother's footsteps coming toward the room and thought, He deserved it for ruining my game!

Once his mom made sure his brother was okay, she took away Juan's gaming privileges. "Juan, it's one thing to be mad and another to act on it. You could have really hurt your little brother." Juan looked over at his brother and noticed a red welt on his leg. He felt horrible and thought, If only I would've shut the door, then this wouldn't have happened. I should've left the room and cooled down instead of lashing out in anger. I could've hurt him badly, all because of a stupid game. It's just not worth it.

Juan had already started thinking of ways he could have constructively handled the situation, only in his situation it was too late, and the damage had been done. Unlike Juan, you don't have to wait until you do something destructive to reflect on how you should handle the situation.

for you to do

Read each destructive anger scenario and answer the questions that follow.

Ashley needed to pull up her science grade. As she was taking notes in biology class, Dylan kept throwing little pieces of paper at her. What a pain, she thought. If he does it once more, that's it! As their teacher went on to describe the process of photosynthesis, Dylan pelted Ashley with another piece of paper. Ashley turned around in her chair, got in Dylan's face, and started to yell. She was sent to the principal's office for classroom disruption.

Write out the possible consequences of Ashley's destructive behavior.

How could Ashley have used her anger constructively to avoid the confrontation in class?

Hunter had gotten his license six months earlier, and he already had two traffic violations. As he started to change lanes, another driver pulled right in front of him and Hunter almost rear-ended the car. I've got to get by this jerk! he thought. He hit the accelerator, pulled around, and built up to 60 mph—in a 45 mph zone. Before Hunter could slow down, police lights were flashing behind him.

What are some consequences of Hunter's destructive anger?

What could Hunter have done to handle the situation constructively?

...and more to do!

Tell about a time when you handled your anger destructively.

What were some of the consequences of your destructive anger?

Knowing what you know now, how could you have handled the situation in a more constructive manner?

taking responsibility for 29 your actions

for you to know

When something goes wrong, it's much easier to blame others than to admit that you played a role in causing the problem. But blaming others doesn't resolve conflict; it just makes it worse. Before laying the blame on others, ask yourself, *What role do I have in this?* Once you learn to take responsibility for your actions, you'll be less likely to push all the blame onto someone else.

Lucas knew that it was against the rules to have his cell phone at school, but he just couldn't resist sporting the latest model of his phone. He was sitting in English class when Eric asked to see the phone. Lucas reached into his pocket and passed it back. As Eric was checking it out, their teacher walked up and took the phone. The teacher told Lucas that his parents would have to come to school to pick it up. He also gave Lucas after-school detention for violating the rules. Lucas was ticked at Eric. If Eric hadn't asked for the phone, none of this would have ever happened!

Ever been in a situation like this? It's clear that it wasn't *all* Eric's fault that Lucas's phone was confiscated or that he got detention, but when you're angry, it's easy to blame someone else for what happened. If only Lucas could step back and see how his behavior contributed to the outcome of the situation, then maybe he'd assume some of the responsibility.

*Abbey hated babysitting her little sister, Kayla. Kayla was constantly getting into everything, and Abbey never could get anything done with her around. On this particular day, Abbey was supposed to be watching Kayla while their parents were out. While Abbey was on the phone with her friend, Kayla got hold of their mother's red lipstick and played Picasso all over the living-room walls. When their parents got home, they were very angry with Abbey. Because of her irresponsibility, they placed her on restriction for a month. Abbey thought, *This isn't fair! I didn't do it!**

activity 29 ✱ taking responsibility for your actions

Have you ever thought you were treated unfairly? If only Abbey could see the big picture, she might realize the role her actions played in the outcome. And rather than feeling she’s always being blamed for things her sister does, she’d see that maybe her negligent babysitting contributed to her punishment.

for you to do

Help Lucas and Abbey step back and look at their contributions to the situations.

What role did Lucas play in creating the problem?

How could he have taken responsibility for his own actions?

What role did Abbey play in creating the problem?

How could she have taken responsibility for her own actions?

...and more to do!

As in the examples above, has someone ever pushed their responsibility on you and accused you of something that you didn't do? Tell what happened.

activity 29 ✱ taking responsibility for your actions

Briefly describe a time when you shifted your responsibility to someone else and blamed them for something that you played a role in.

Why do you think it's easier to blame others than to accept responsibility?

distancing yourself from anger 30

for you to know

There's a secret little tool that you can use to remove yourself from your anger, and it's called *distancing*. Distancing is separating yourself from the problem by putting space between you and the upsetting situation. Some refer to distancing as taking an "outside-looking-in" approach to problem solving.

Have you ever seen a picture of the earth from outer space? From the outside looking down, the world seems so small and manageable. From that view, you get to see the oceans and continents all in a glance. But living on earth, the world seems expansive and large, and it could take you hours or days to travel from one continent to another. Sometimes life's conflicts and problems can seem overwhelming, but you can make them manageable by distancing yourself from your problem. Distancing is the ability to pull yourself away from the situation and view it from the outside-looking-in approach rather than the inside-looking-out approach.

for you to do

You can take your problems to a whole other galaxy by practicing distancing. Begin by thinking of a recent time when you were angry or upset about something—perhaps someone did you wrong, or you felt that you were treated unfairly. Capture that memory and describe it briefly.

Now imagine pulling yourself away from the troublesome situation, like looking down at the earth while you're being gently pulled into outer space. When you look at the situation from this perspective, you see the earth differently. When you're here on earth, you see only what's in front of you, but you may be missing the bigger picture of what the planet really looks like. Did you know that you can look at your life events through a similar lens? Try it: think back to the situation that you chose and imagine being pulled away from it and seeing it from other perspectives. For example:

- Pretend it's someone else's situation. What advice would you give this person about the situation?
- Take your emotions out of the situation and become a neutral observer. Would you see things differently if you weren't emotionally attached?
- Begin with the end in mind. How do you want this situation to turn out? Is there a way to accomplish this task without getting angry?

Describe some steps that you can take to put space between you and the situation.

Describe how seeing things from a distance can help you cope with tough situations.

...and more to do!

Snow globes serve as a great visual reminder of seeing things from the outside-looking-in perspective. Inside the globe, there are a variety of scenes, like a winter wonderland. In the landscape of such a scene, you may see the details of a village or figure skaters on an icy pond. It's like you're looking into another world and seeing it with new eyes. The snow globe is a great way to think of pulling yourself outside of your problems and exploring the situation from a different angle. Create a snow globe and let it serve as a reminder to put some distance between you and your problems.

materials

- Jar or bottle—any clear glass jar with a lid will do, like a jelly jar or a durable water bottle. You will want to make sure the lid doesn't leak.
- Glitter—choose your favorite color.
- Figurines or any other item you'd like to have in your globe. If it is a figurine, you'll want to attach it with super-strong glue to the inside of the jar lid. Just don't use any metal items because they will rust.
- Super-strong glue (optional). You'll need this if you want to secure an item to the inside of the lid.
- Glycerin. (You'll need to be sure it's glycerin because it helps the glitter float when you shake your globe.) You can find this product at drugstores or commercial big-box stores.

directions

Fill the jar almost to the top with water; add some glitter and a few drops of glycerin (be careful and don't add too much or the glitter won't float). If you want to put a figurine in your globe, then attach it with super-strong glue inside the lid and let it dry. Once the figurine is secure, screw the lid on the container and gently shake. Let your globe serve as a reminder that sometimes putting some distance between you and the situation helps you see things more clearly.

using anger for positive results 31

for you to know

Even though anger frequently gets a bad reputation, it can be a very useful emotion. Expressing your anger is one way to stand up for your rights and the rights of others. For example, if Martin Luther King Jr. had not used his anger as a platform for change, the civil rights movement may not have happened.

Nathan walked into the bathroom and saw Marc picking on a younger boy. Marc was notorious for bullying others. At first, Nathan thought he'd ignore what was happening, but then Marc shoved the boy onto the floor. Nathan couldn't take it any longer. "Leave him alone!" he shouted. Nathan moved past Marc and extended his hand to help the boy up. "Mind your own business," Marc responded. Nathan clenched his teeth and said, "This is my business." When Marc realized Nathan wasn't going to back down, he decided to leave but not before elbowing Nathan and mumbling, "This isn't over." Nathan felt his blood boil, and he wanted nothing more than to go after Marc, but he wasn't going to stoop to his level. No, he'd have to beat him at his own game.

The next day, Nathan made an appointment with the principal to discuss the school's bullying problem. He talked about how infuriated he was that this was occurring, but nothing was being done to stop it. Nathan suggested starting a student-led school-wide initiative to get students to take a stand against bullying. The principal loved the idea and asked Nathan if he'd take the lead in organizing the initiative. "Nathan, I am proud that you're using your anger constructively and, in the process, making our school safer. I wish more students would use their anger as a motivating force for positive change!"

Next time you find yourself getting angry, take your anger and turn it to good. Here are some ways you can begin:

activity 31 * using anger for positive results

- Explore what it is about the situation that has you all worked up. For example, has someone done you wrong, or, as in the example, are others being treated unfairly?
- Come up with what you want to change about the situation. For example, do you want to change a rule or policy, or do you want to bring awareness to an issue?
- Think of constructive ways to turn your anger to good. For example, could you organize a peaceful protest or start a club bringing awareness to the issue?

for you to do

Think of a time when you turned your anger into something positive, perhaps by standing up for someone in a difficult situation or protesting injustice.

Describe the situation.

What about the situation had you so worked up?

How did you use your anger in a constructive manner?

...and more to do!

When people use their anger to stand up for their rights and the rights of others, their anger can become a motivating force that can produce positive results. History is full of people who constructively channeled their anger and changed the world. Here are just a few:

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. provided leadership in the civil rights movement.
- Rosa Parks fought for equality and is often referred to as the “mother of the freedom movement.”
- Nelson Mandela fought against apartheid.
- Candy Lightner founded Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD).
- Donna Norris was instrumental in getting the AMBER Alert enacted.
- Malala Yousafzai is an activist for female education and, at seventeen, became the youngest Nobel Prize laureate.

activity 31 ✱ using anger for positive results

Research one of these individuals or select another person or organization that channeled their feelings of injustice constructively and explain how their anger sparked positive change.

Part 5

Coping Mechanisms

32 what matters most

for you to know

Values are the things that give your life meaning and purpose. Staying true to them will help you feel happier and more satisfied with your life. Happiness is being true to who you are and living a life that is in harmony with what you believe and value—now, that's what matters most.

Values give your life meaning and direction, and they help you decide how you want to interact and behave in the world. In a sense, they are like your internal compass guiding you to who you want to be. Values are different from goals because goals can be accomplished, but values are principles, characteristics, and activities that give life purpose. Living a life according to what you value is a journey, and each moment that you are true to who you are is a meaningful moment.

Here are some examples of popular values:

Acceptance—being receptive and open to yourself and others

Courage—being willing to take risks and try out new experiences

Flexibility—being able to go with the flow and not let things bother you easily

Independence—being self-reliant and not being overly dependent on others

Kindness—being nice and considerate

Patience—being tolerant and accepting

Power—being a leader and feeling in charge of situations

Truthfulness—being honest and sincere

for you to do

What are your values, and who do you strive to be? In the space below, trace your hand. In each finger, write one of your values. In the palm of your hand, write the word "ANGER." Anger and values don't go hand in hand. Below the word "ANGER," write how your anger is *moving you away* from living a life in harmony with your values.

...and more to do!

In the space below, trace your hand again. Like above, write your values in each finger. This time write the word "PEACE" in the palm of your hand. Below the word "PEACE," write ways that you can *move closer* to what you value. In other words, write down what you need to do to live your life according to what matters most.

relaxation techniques 33

for you to know

Knowing how to relax is an important part of managing anger. Anger creates tension and stress, which can be mentally and physically draining. Practicing relaxation techniques can help you restore energy and unwind during life's most stressful times.

Managing anger becomes easier when you are relaxed. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, and centering yourself are great ways to calm a racing mind. Here are a few examples of all three techniques.

Deep breathing. You are just one breath away from relaxing. When you're stressed, you automatically begin to take quick shallow breaths that stop in your chest and don't make it all the way to your abdomen. Deep breathing, also known as "belly breathing," is taking a full breath that causes your abdomen to fill with air. Give it a try by taking a slow, deep breath that travels all the way to your abdomen. You should feel your stomach begin to rise. Once you have filled your abdomen with the air, slowly start to exhale, blowing all the air out of your abdomen. Intentionally practice deep breathing several times a day.

Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR). You can use this easy-to-do technique to drain the anger right out of your body. Find a quiet location and get into a comfortable position. Starting at your toes and slowly working all the way up to the top of your head, tense your entire body, including your arms and hands. Hold that tension for a minute. Take a slow, steady, deep breath. Now, slowly exhale, letting your muscles relax, beginning with your head and extending all the way to your toes. End with another slow and steady deep breath. Repeat this process as needed to relax. By the time you complete this technique, you should feel as limber as a rag doll. You can use this technique any time you feel yourself becoming frustrated.

Centering yourself. Centering yourself means increasing your alertness and calming yourself by paying attention to what’s happening around you right now in this moment. To try this centering exercise, get a soda and pour it into a clear glass container. Focus on the bubbles floating to the top of the glass. Some bubbles move slowly, some move quickly, and some just float. Block out the noise of life, and focus only on the bubbles. Pay attention to how each bubble varies in size, how the fizz sounds in the glass, and how quickly or slowly the bubbles move to the top of the glass. Centering yourself in the moment is a great way to take a mental time-out from whatever is bothering you. It also helps calm an anger storm. So, before you let your anger get the best of you, take a moment and ground yourself in the here and now.

for you to do

Try each of relaxation techniques. Afterward, compare and contrast how you felt prior to and after doing the activity.

Deep breathing:

Before: _____

After: _____

Progressive muscle relaxation:

Before: _____

After: _____

Centering yourself:

Before: _____

After: _____

...and more to do!

On each of the four cards below, identify a relaxation technique that you can use the next time you're worked up. There are hundreds of thousands of ways to relax, so use different techniques from ones given above. That way, you'll have a lot to choose

activity 33 ✱ relaxation techniques

from should you need to calm down and chill out. On each card, list the name of the technique and then provide a description of how to do it. If you want to learn more ways to relax, search the Internet for phrases such as “relaxation techniques,” “mindfulness,” and “meditation,” or you can download a relaxation/mindfulness app on your device to help you learn more of these skills.

Relaxation Technique #1	Relaxation Technique #2
Relaxation Technique #3	Relaxation Technique #4

mindful escape 34

for you to know

Having a special place to escape to when you are troubled can help you relax and clear your thoughts. Even if you can't actually visit this place in real life, just allowing your mind to wander there can give you a sense of calmness.

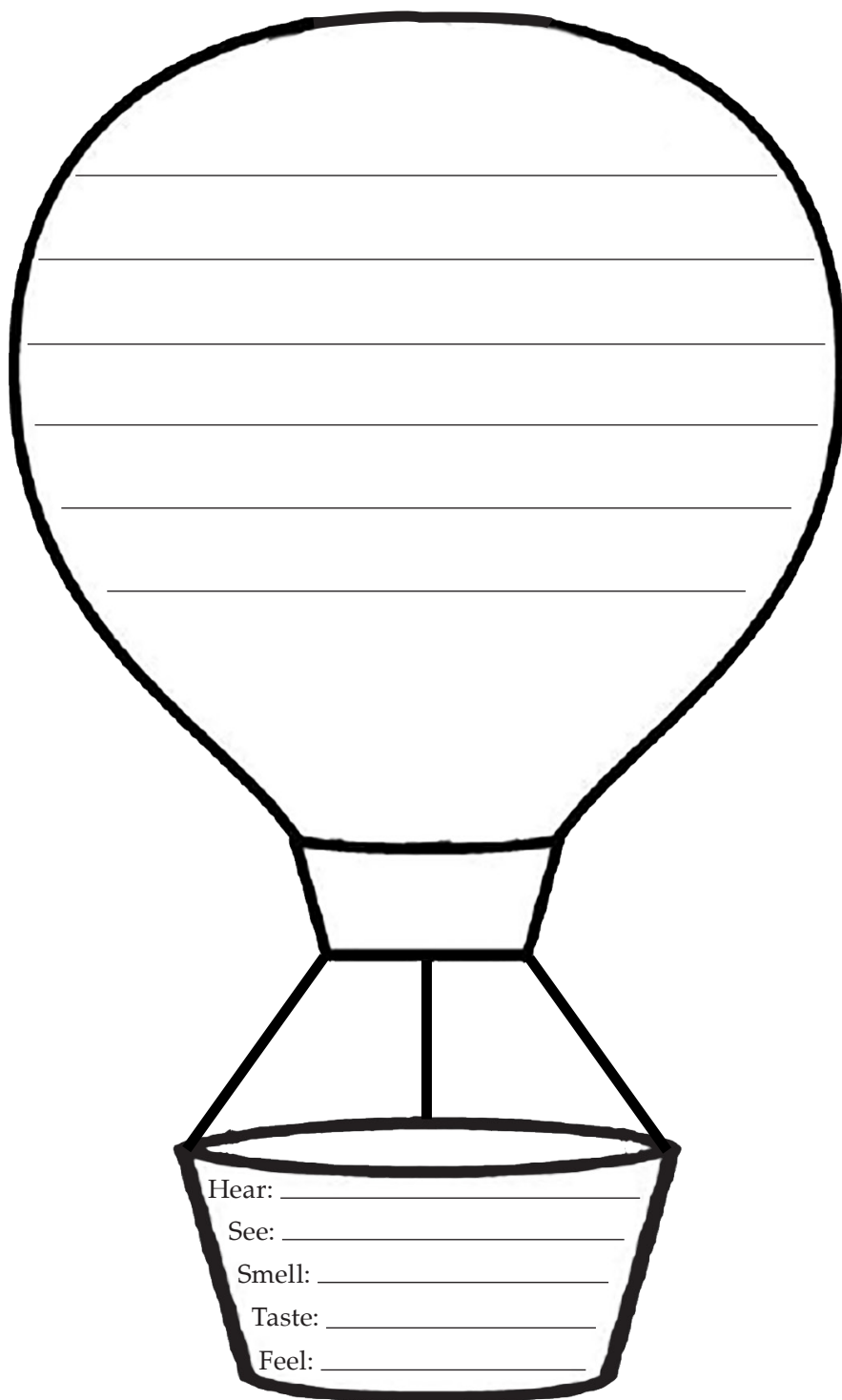
Mental imagery is often referred to as “seeing with the mind’s eye.” It’s the ability to visualize places and create an imaginary experience of being there. Using imagery in upsetting situations can give you a break from your problems and allow you to clear your mind so you can regain focus. It’s easy to get trapped in angry thoughts when you’re mad, but if you can take a break and escape, you may find that you can redirect those thoughts into something more positive and productive. One way to do that is by using mental imagery to take a mindful escape. A mindful escape is nothing more than thinking about a special place and letting your mind wander there. This special place should be somewhere that brings you peace and calmness. So, whether you escape to your bedroom or visit Peru’s Machu Picchu, your escape can give you a much-needed vacation from your problems.

for you to do

1. Imagine you're in a hot air balloon and it's taking you away to your special place. In the top of the balloon on the next page, write a description of where your balloon is taking you.
2. Upon arrival at your special place, tap into each of your senses by paying close attention to your surroundings. In the balloon's basket, write your answers to these questions:
 - * What you would hear, like ocean waves crashing onto the shore?
 - * What would you see, like palm trees swaying in the air?
 - * What scents would you smell, like wildflowers in a meadow?
 - * Are there any things that you would taste, like a snowflake melting on your tongue?
 - * Are there any particular things that you would touch, like an icicle hanging from a tree branch?

...and more to do!

Create a picture of your mental escape. Get creative and sketch your spot, create a collage with pictures, or find pictures online. Take a screen shot of your creation and save it as a screen saver or keep it in a special place that you can look at often. And if you ever need to get away from your problems, remind yourself to take a mindful escape!



35 releasing anger symbolically

for you to know

Symbols are abstract psychological expressions that apply deep meaning to our lives. They can help bring us comfort in a time of need or help us understand life by applying meaning through the use of speech, images, or tangible items. Symbols can be cultural and passed down from generation to generation, or they can be created in the moment to help us cope with or let go of unwanted thoughts or behaviors.

Throughout the course of time, symbols have been used to help people make sense of their emotional experiences. For example, parents in the Ojibwa Nation would hang dream catchers above their children's beds to capture bad dreams before they occurred. In case you don't know, a dream catcher is a small hoop that has a web in the center made out of string or horsehair. The hoop is decorated with beads and feathers. The dream catcher was thought to trap bad dreams in the web that formed its center; good dreams would be allowed to flow down its feathers to the sleeping child. Then, in the morning, the sun's rays would burn the bad dreams away and destroy them forever.

Another example of symbolic imagery is Hong Kong's Lam Tsuen's wishing trees. In the past, villagers wrote their wishes on small paper scrolls and then tied them onto branches or threw them high into the tree. The higher the wish got stuck, the better chance it had of coming true, but if it fell out, they were sheer out of luck. (Today, to protect the trees, the tradition continues as people tie pieces of paper bearing their wishes to nearby wooden racks or imitation trees.)

Wishing trees or dream catchers don't literally grant wishes or take away problems, but they are great symbols to show that you don't have to hold on to your troubles and that you can choose to free yourself from them symbolically.

You can get creative and come up with ways to symbolically release your own anger. Here are a couple of examples:

- Write a letter to someone you are angry at. Tell that person what you really think and then tear the paper to shreds. For each tear, imagine letting a piece of your anger go.
- Pound out your anger on the pavement or trail by going outside for a jog or walk. Each time your foot hits the ground, focus on letting a part of your anger go until you feel your anger has subsided. Once you feel more relaxed, turn around and look back at the ground you covered on your journey. Imagine leaving all that anger behind you as you make your way back home.

for you to do

This is an indoor activity that will help you practice using symbolism to release your angry feelings. To do this activity, you'll need a balloon, small strips of paper, and something to write with. First, on each strip of paper, write down an angry thought that you haven't let go of. Next, tightly roll up each paper strip and place it inside the balloon. Then, slowly blow air into the balloon and, as you do, focus on each thought you placed in the balloon. After you have blown the balloon to capacity, pinch the top of it closed and imagine it being full of your anger. Slowly take two deep belly breaths, and let your anger (the balloon) go. As the balloon sails across the room, let all those pent-up angry thoughts go.

How did you feel physically after releasing your anger?

activity 35 ✱ releasing anger symbolically

How did you feel emotionally?

...and more to do!

Describe another creative way that you can symbolically release pent-up emotions.

Now, you give it a try. After you've tried it, write how you felt after you did it.

anger outlets 36

for you to know

When you are angry, it's important to have go-to activities that help you calm down and release some of that negative energy. These go-to activities are called "outlets" because they allow you to channel your anger appropriately by working it out.

Ethan's younger brother, Ryan, was a pain in the neck. If Ethan was watching television, Ryan wanted to change the channel. If Ethan was talking on the phone, Ryan would interrupt. If Ethan was in his room, Ryan would sneak in and bug him. Ethan often wished Ryan would just leave him alone!

One evening at dinner, Ethan was just about to take the last roll from the basket when Ryan reached across and grabbed it, while flashing a mischievous smile at Ethan. That was it! Ethan took his glass of water and threw it in his brother's face. Upset with Ethan's behavior, his mother sent him to his room. "It's always my fault and he never gets into trouble for anything because he's the "baby!" Ethan yelled as he left the table.

After some time had passed, Ethan's mother went to Ethan's room. "Ethan, I know that Ryan can be a royal pain, but how you handle your anger is unacceptable. You have got to learn better ways to release all that steam rather than taking it out on others. Let's brainstorm some ways that you can get away from Ryan and work out your frustration at the same time." Together, Ethan and his mom came up with a list of anger outlets:

- *Get away from Ryan by taking the dog for a walk.*
- *Lock myself in my room and listen to music.*
- *See if a friend wants to go for a bike ride or come over and hang out.*

- *Go and punch the heavy bag in the garage.*
- *Play my guitar.*
- *Go and work on the model airplane.*

The next time Ethan found himself getting angry with Ryan, he simply pulled out his list of anger outlets and found one that fit his mood. He found that getting away from the situation was better than the torture of staying in it. Plus, by the time he got back, his brother had forgotten about aggravating him and the house was much more peaceful.

for you to do

You may have different outlets at different places—what you would do at home may be different than what you would do at school. Think about and identify some outlets in each location listed below.

When you’re at home?

When you're at school?

When you're in public places?

...and more to do!

Create a real or virtual collage using old magazines and newspapers or online pictures. Either cut out pictures that remind you of your anger outlets and then paste them on a piece of paper or cardboard, or copy and paste them in a document. For example, if swimming is your outlet, then you might add a picture of someone swimming or of a pool. Keep your anger outlet collage in an accessible place, like in your phone gallery, in a frame on your dresser, or on your wall. The next time you need an anger outlet, look at your list and find one of the outlets that best fits your mood and go do it.

37 anger and exercise

for you to know

Exercise is a great way to decompress and reduce stress. Anger is a high-intensity emotion that produces a lot of energy. One of the best ways to get rid of that energy is to establish a healthy exercise regimen.

Exercising regularly may help you cope with strong emotions, like anger. Exercise helps keep you physically fit by strengthening your body and mentally fit by helping you work out your frustrations and think through situations more clearly. Unfortunately, many people don't get enough exercise—a general rule of thumb is to get 60 minutes of activity every day. By doing so, you may reap the following benefits:

- manage your weight
- boost your energy level
- feel more emotionally balanced
- get a better night's rest
- release pent-up emotions
- improve your mood
- increase your self-esteem

With benefits such as these, what do you have to lose? When it comes to exercise, you don't have to do anything extravagant; it can be something simple. The key is to just get moving!

for you to do

Scan the list of exercises and circle the ones that you can easily fit into your schedule. If you don't see one that you like, then write it in the space provided. Try to mark several activities, as it is good to have a variety to choose from.

aerobics	longboarding	tennis
basketball	martial arts	volleyball
circuit training	parkour	walking
CrossFit	rock climbing	weight lifting
cycling	roller hockey	wrestling
dancing	rollerblading	yoga
dirt biking	rowing	_____
football	rugby	_____
Frisbee	running	_____
gymnastics	skateboarding	_____
hiking	soccer	_____
kickboxing	swimming	_____

...and more to do!

For the next week, plan to exercise at least 60 minutes a day. Some days are busier than others, so it's okay if you need to break the time into two 30-minute blocks on those days. The main thing is that you fit some movement into your life. Write out your plan and work hard to stick to it. You can photocopy the My Workout Plan form below (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own form on an electronic device. Pay close attention to how a little activity each day can really make a difference in how you feel.

My Workout Plan			
Day	Time Worked Out	What I Did	How I Felt Afterward
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

expressing anger creatively 38

for you to know

Artistically expressing anger can help you process your anger. When you express yourself through art, you're able to creatively unlock a deep part of yourself to create a masterpiece.

Expressing emotions like anger through artistic expression is not a new concept. Artists express anger all the time in their art, which includes music, poetry, drawings, and paintings, to name a few. Anger's energy can create passion, and passion is a powerful and compelling feeling that seeks to be expressed. Art can be a wonderful and creative way to release your inner self. There are many forms of art, such as:

- composing music
- cooking
- creating a video
- drawing
- painting
- photography
- pottery
- songwriting
- woodworking
- writing
- other: _____
- other: _____
- other: _____

for you to do

What is your form of artistic expression? Take the quiz below to unlock your creative genius! Read and answer each question. By doing so, you may find that you have multiple artistic talents.

If you could be any type of artist, what would you be? For example, would you be a painter, dancer, actor/actress, pastry chef, musician, or writer?

Do you like expressing yourself through music? If so, what have you recently composed, written, played, or sung?

Do you like to build or craft things with your hands? If so, what was your most recent creation?

Do you enjoy whipping up a meal or dessert in the kitchen? If so, what was your latest entrée or dessert?

Do you like dancing? If so, what's your favorite style of dancing?

Do you like acting? If so, what character did you most recently play, or what character have you always wanted to play?

Do you like writing? If so, what was the title of your most recent piece?

Do you enjoy creating movies or video productions? If so, what was your latest blockbuster?

Do you enjoy taking pictures of people, places, or things? If so, what was one of your all-time favorite pictures?

activity 38 * expressing anger creatively

Was your artistic talent missed in these questions? If so, describe your talent.

Looking at the talents that you marked, how often do you do them?

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Four to six times a month
- ☐ Two to three times a month
- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Less than once a month

Would you like to spend more time doing these activities? If so, what’s keeping you from doing them more often?

Describe how you can use the activities you marked to help you cope with anger.

...and more to do!

Identify two artistic and creative ways that you can express your emotions. Make a list of the supplies that you would need to complete the activity. Check off any items that you already have in your home. For the remaining items, use this list as a reminder to get them the next time you go to the store. Keep these items together in a handy place so the next time that you need to release your anger, you can do it creatively through art!

Name of Activity: _____

Supply List: _____

activity 38 ✱ expressing anger creatively

Name of Activity: _____

Supply List: _____

laughing with anger 39

for you to know

If you want to defuse an emotionally charged situation, add a little humor to the mix. Humor is a great way to defuse anger. Not only can it cool a flaring temper, but a quick wit and good laugh is also good for your health!

There is nothing like a good laugh! Laughing can reduce stress and boost levels of endorphins, hormones that make you feel good. Think about it: when was the last time you were angry and laughing at the same time? Laughter and anger are like oil and water—they don't mix. When you're happy, it's hard to be angry. That's because these emotions are on polar opposite ends of the spectrum.

You can use humor to your advantage by taking a tense situation and mixing a little laughter with it. A situation that makes you angry is likely to have a different outcome if you try to put a humorous spin on it. If you think back to some of your most angry moments, you may find some of the things you said or did were humorous. Rather than waiting to find these moments after the fact, what if you could look for humor during the situation? Well, you can—if you intentionally look for it. So next time you get angry, stop and ask yourself, *Where's the humor in this situation?*

for you to do

Chase’s dad had reminded him twice to take out the garbage. Chase knew he had to do it, but he was in the middle of a video game and didn’t want to be interrupted. At his dad’s third reminder, Chase threw down the controller and stormed into the kitchen. Huffing and puffing along the way, he jerked the garbage bag out with so much force that it burst open and trash flew across the kitchen floor. To make the situation worse, Chase slipped on the remains of that evening’s dinner! When his father came into the kitchen to see what all the commotion was about, he found Chase lying on the floor surrounded by trash.

Write an ending that shows what might have happened if Chase and his father continued on a path of anger.

Next, write an ending that shows what might happen if Chase and his father followed a path toward humor and laughter.

...and more to do!

Think of a time when you reacted to a situation with anger. Describe the situation and what you did.

Imagine that you had been able to find humor and laughter in this situation, and rewrite your experience showing how the outcome may have been different.

40 freestyle writing

for you to know

Expressing your feelings is an important step toward coping with them, and freestyle writing is a great way to unleash your inner self. In freestyle writing, the focus is on being free to write what you want and not paying attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, or neatness.

Do you want to know a little secret to working through life problems? Write about them. When you write, the creative side of your brain (the right side) begins to connect with the rational and analytic side (the left side). Imagine putting together a puzzle: the left side of your brain helps you come up with a plan to organize and begin fitting the pieces together, and the right side helps you visualize the colors and how they form the big picture. You need both sides of your brain to work with each other to put the puzzle together, and the same is true about life.

Writing is one way to sort through your thoughts and feelings and come up with a strategy to solve your problems. If you've never tried freestyle writing, a great way to start is by writing a letter to yourself. As silly as it may sound, writing a letter to yourself lets you creatively see the situation from a different perspective. And remember, no one is grading your work, so let loose and go freestyle!

for you to do

Write a letter to yourself. Include things that you are unhappy about, disappointed with, or want to change. Talk about why anger has been a problem for you and why you want to handle it differently.

When you have finished your letter, photocopy it and place the copy in an envelope. Put it somewhere safe and plan to open it in six months. You may be surprised at the changes that you've made!

	Dear Me,
○	
○	
○	
	Love,

...and more to do!

A pen and paper are great coping tools! When you write, the right side of your brain begins to craft your feelings and emotions into words, and the left side begins to scan all the information to see if it can help you connect the dots. Together, they are a powerful intellectual duo that work together to conquer your problems. Set aside some time each day to write about your thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Some people like to jot their thoughts down in a private notebook, like a journal, and some like to keep them electronically on a device. Wherever you decide to keep your writings, be sure that they are in a secure place that no one else can access. Your written expressions are not meant for others to read, unless of course you want them to, but that should be your choice.

Part 6

Closure

41 see how far you have come

for you to know

Odds are when you first started this workbook, you were having a difficult time handling your anger. By completing these activities, you have probably learned several ways to manage your angry more effectively.

At this point, it is likely that you have seen a change in your behavior that others have noticed as well. What you have learned from doing the activities in this workbook will not prevent you from ever experiencing anger again, but hopefully you are better equipped to manage your feelings and emotions. When you put a lot of work into improving yourself, it's important to take time to acknowledge the steps you've taken and see how far you have come!

for you to do

For each of these statements, circle the answer that best describes you.

Since working through the activities, I have improved my response to anger.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree

I believe that I have a better understanding of what makes me angry.

1 2 3 4 5
strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree

On average, I get really angry...

1 2 3 4 5
every day very few days once a week every two weeks once a month

Read each statement and check either yes or no.

People have noticed a difference in how I handle frustrating situations.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I have learned different ways to cope when I feel frustrated.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I have involved others in helping me when I get angry.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I know I can change how I handle situations that make me angry.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I feel more confident in my ability to manage anger.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I often feel that I am the victim.	☐ Yes	☐ No
I often feel that no one understands me.	☐ Yes	☐ No

The higher you rated yourself on the scales, and the more frequently you checked yes, the more improvement you've shown with your anger management. But the real question is this: have *you* noticed a difference?

...and more to do!

Look back at Activity 3 and compare your answers.

What areas have you improved in?

What areas do you think you need to work more on?

anger certificate 42

Congratulations. You did it! You have accomplished a lot by completing the activities in this workbook. Hopefully, by now you have learned:

- how your anger affects you
- how your anger gets triggered
- how family may play a role in your response to anger
- how your body responds to anger
- how anger can be a helpful emotion, if used appropriately
- how to defuse your anger before it gets the best of you
- how to look beyond your view of the conflict to understand different sides
- how to express your anger effectively
- how you can identify problem areas in your life and change them

To celebrate all that you've accomplished, fill in the Anger Certificate. You can photocopy the certificate on the next page (before you fill it in), download it at <http://www.newharbinger.com/42457>, or create your own certificate on an electronic device. Post it in a spot where you will see it often and use it as a reminder that change is possible!



Certificate of Completion

This certificate is proudly presented to

Your Name

for completing the activities in
The Anger Workbook for Teens

Dated this _____ day of _____, _____

Congratulations on all of your hard work!

*For every minute you are angry,
you lose sixty seconds of happiness.*

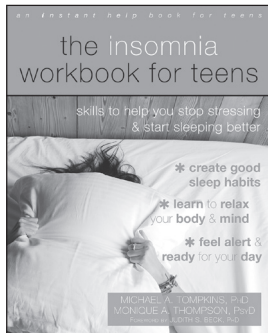
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Raychelle Cassada Lohmann, PhD, LPC, is a national board-certified and licensed counselor. Raychelle has worked as a clinician and a school counselor at middle and high school levels, and has helped hundreds of teens deal with feelings of frustration and anger. She has participated in and conducted extensive research on anger and aggression, and specializes in individual and group counseling for anger management. She is author of *The Anger Workbook for Teens*, and coauthor of *The Bullying Workbook for Teens* and *The Sexual Trauma Workbook for Teen Girls*. She also writes the *Psychology Today* blog *Teen Angst*, and is a regular parenting contributor for *U.S. News & World Report*.

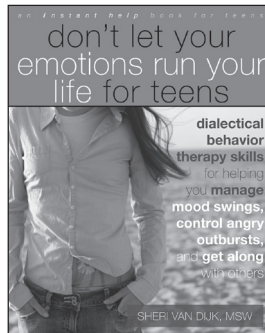
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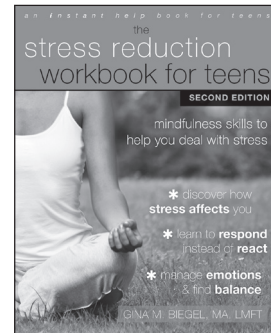
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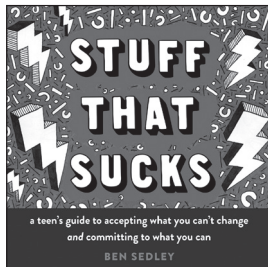
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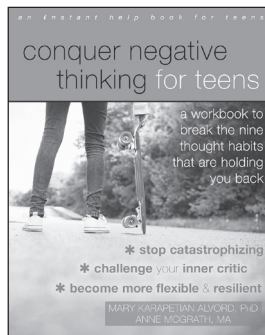
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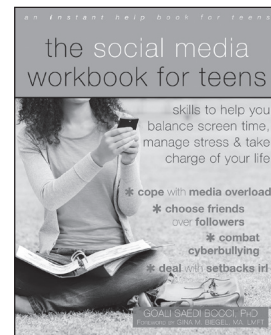
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learn healthy ways to deal with anger

Does your anger get the best of you?

Do you find yourself feeling embarrassed when you lose your cool with friends, parents, or teachers? Does your temper cause you to get into trouble at home or school? If so, you aren't alone. Lots

of teens struggle with difficult emotions like anger. But if you find yourself feeling *angry all the time*, or begin taking your frustrations out on the people you love the most, it's time to make a change.

**Fully
revised
& updated
based on
reader
feedback**

This fully revised and updated edition of *The Anger Workbook for Teens* includes brand-new skills and activities to help you deal with troublesome emotions without losing control. You'll find out what's triggering your anger, learn to be more aware of your thoughts and how you react to them, and discover skills and techniques for managing difficult feelings in the moment. Most importantly, you'll learn healthy strategies for dealing with anger that will help you thrive in every area of life!

“A true gift for teens who are frustrated and want to express their feelings in healthier, more positive ways.”

—MARILYN PRICE-MITCHELL, PhD, developmental psychologist and author of *Tomorrow's Change Makers*

RAYCHELLE CASSADA LOHMANN, PhD, LPC, is a board-certified and licensed professional counselor. She is coauthor of *The Bullying Workbook for Teens* and *The Sexual Trauma Workbook for Teen Girls*.



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