



ANGER MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

By
William G. DeFoore, Ph.D.

Copyright © 2007 William Gray DeFoore

All rights reserved.

No part of this Ebook may be used or reproduced in any manner without written permission of the author, except for brief quotations used in reviews and critiques.

This book is a work of non-fiction. Any resemblance to actual events, settings or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

Produced in the United States of America

First edition 2007

Most recent update 2014

Table of Contents

	Page Number
Introduction	4-5
<u>Chapter One: Understanding Anger</u>	6-8
<u>Chapter Two: Anger Assessment Scale</u>	9-11
<u>Chapter Three: Quiet Anger Release</u>	12-14
<u>Chapter Four: Physical and Vocal Anger Release</u>	15-19
<u>Chapter Five: Emotional Healing Exercises</u>	20-22
<u>Chapter Six: Healthy Anger</u>	23-25
<u>Chapter Seven: Anger Communication Skills</u>	26-29
<u>Chapter Eight: Your Spiritual Power</u>	30-31
<u>Bibliography</u>	32
<u>Additional Resources</u>	33
<u>About the Author</u>	34

INTRODUCTION

Anger is a natural, healthy emotion. It is simply a feeling you have when you are threatened or opposed. There is nothing wrong with having that feeling. The question is: what do you do with it?

If you just stuff your anger, you can make yourself sick. If you blow up at others, you'll have problems in your relationships. In this program, we will look at ways for you to **understand, manage and express your anger** so that it is an asset to you and not a problem for you, your loved ones, or associates.

You may already know that you have a problem with anger. If you're not sure, here are some things to consider:

Indicators That You Have An Anger Problem

- When you get angry, you don't get over it. Sometimes it **lasts until you explode**, or it may go inside to fuel the fires of your rage.
- You may be one who holds a grudge. This is not doing you or anyone any good.
- Maybe you never get angry: you just don't have the emotion. There are times when you know you should be angry, but the emotion just doesn't seem to come. Your anger is watered down and you never fully release it. This will lead to other emotional problems and possibly illness as well.
- You may be someone who feels frustrated, disappointed or irritable much of the time, but you really never show your anger. **Anger may be an unacceptable emotion to you**, whereas frustration, disappointment or irritability are acceptable. This can interfere with or prevent any meaningful level of fulfillment or joy in life.

- Perhaps you are sarcastic or cynical about yourself, others or the world around you. You may tease others with velvet daggers in some of your jokes, only to be surprised when they don't want to be around you. **You don't openly express anger but it is leaking out all of the time.** This can lead to tremendous unhappiness for you and those who are close to you.
- You may be someone who feels depressed frequently, or for long periods of time. You don't express anger openly but tend to take it out on yourself without even realizing it. This can lead to suicidal thoughts and behavior or perhaps major illness.
- You may be someone who is angry all of the time. You may be verbally, emotionally or physically abusive to others in personal and professional relationships. This doesn't mean that you are a bad person but it certainly means you need to learn to manage your anger. If you have indeed been abusive, it is almost certain that you will need professional help to work through your problems with anger. The important thing is that you don't give up on yourself with thoughts like, **"That's just the way I am."** If you have the will to change, you can change.

Like many people, you may feel powerless in your own life – powerless to make the changes you choose to reach your goals. Though you may not use the word, you possibly feel like a victim much of the time. You may have many ways to explain why you can't live your dreams, all of which seem very reasonable to you. The point is that if you are denying your power by denying your emotions, you are getting in your own way. To **claim all of your emotions** as your allies, and to express them in healthy ways is to maximize your resources for your own expression of purpose in life.

I want you to consider something: **you have good reason to be angry.** How you express it may be unreasonable, but that doesn't mean you don't have good reasons for it.

Possible Reasons For Anger

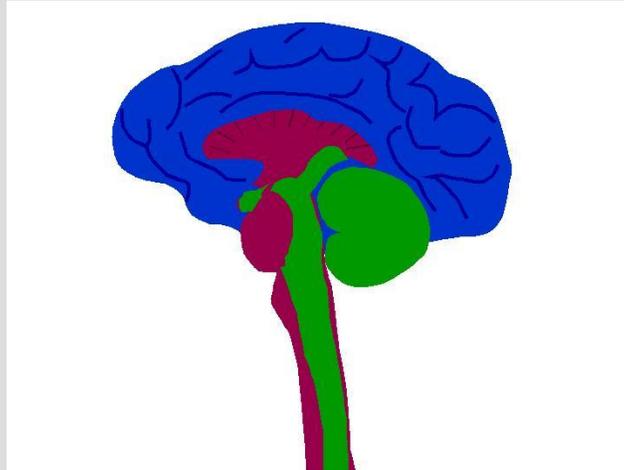
- We get angry because we've been hurt in some way, and we are **afraid of being hurt again.**
- We get angry because we don't get our way and maybe we are used to getting our way.
- We get angry because that's what our parents did. We may get angry because deep inside we remember being **abused, neglected, or**

abandoned in some way and we are afraid of it happening again.

- We may even be angry because of a loss we have experienced and we are not through **grieving** that loss.

These are all good reasons to be angry, yet they are not good reasons for harming yourself or anyone else. Anger doesn't have to hurt. In this program you will learn about healthy anger and how to express it in healthy ways.

Chapter One: Understanding Anger



Anger, Your Body and Your Brain

Your anger lives in your body. You've heard the phrase, "Talk it out" as a recommended way of resolving anger and other problems in relationships. This works, but only if the **physical and emotional components** of your anger are under control.

When you get angry, your body might get hot, your muscles tense, your heart pound, and your thoughts race. This is not a time for trying to talk to somebody about your feelings. They won't want to listen. **By itself, anger is not a good communicator.** As a pure, raw emotion, anger only wants to control the threat or threatening person.

Have you ever noticed how when people are really angry, they're not all that smart? Well, this is true for all of us. In extreme anger or extreme fear, we're just not as intelligent as we are when we are calm.

In his ground-breaking book, Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman explains how extreme emotion can actually shut down the higher functions of the brain: a process he calls **emotional high jacking**. This is where strong emotions interfere

with good decision-making. This is where good people end up hurting the ones they love or **doing things they later regret**.

When you find yourself feeling angry, it's time to take care of your own internal physical and emotional needs first, until you can relax enough to think clearly. If you don't take care of your emotional situation, you won't do a good job of **taking care of your loved ones** or the problem at hand. Only when you have relaxed and regained full access to your brain's capacity can you begin to communicate and problem solve effectively.

All of your emotions live in your body, and your mind is an interpreter trying to make sense of the powerful feelings pulsing within you from your head to your toes.

Your anger started out as your friend. It was originally a protective emotion designed to keep you safe. When your anger is healthy, it can make you stronger and more effective. When it is unhealthy, it can destroy your life and relationships. Fortunately, **the choice is yours**.

So how did your anger become a problem? Well, it was not your fault. You most likely had poor role models, because in most cases our parents weren't any better at dealing with their emotions than we are. This is true of even the best of parents, even those who show no emotion at all. Another way that anger becomes a problem is when it is punished. You may have been hit, shamed, yelled at or sent to your room when you showed anger as a child. If any of these things happened to you, it may have been difficult or even impossible for you to develop healthy anger.

A Healthy Response to a Child's Anger

To give you an example of [how a parent might respond to a child's anger](#) in a healthy way, consider the following:

You are 3 years old. You are in your high chair by the kitchen table, and there is a small plate of mashed peas in front of you. To show your distaste and to test this power that seems to be rising from within you, you scream one of your blood curdling screams and shove the plate and its contents onto the floor. The peas splatter onto the freshly painted white wall.

The emotionally healthy parent comes over and says, "Wow. You didn't want those peas, did you? Look what you did. Now the peas are all over the wall and the floor. You were really angry. Now I'm going to clean this up, and you still have to eat some peas. It's ok for you to be angry but it's not ok for you to throw

your food on the floor. I feel sad about this mess on the wall. Let's get this cleaned up."

The healthy parent says this in a friendly, surprised tone with **no anger or shaming of the child**. The child's emotions are being acknowledged and affirmed and the consequences for the child's behavior are clear in the parent's sadness over the mess and having to clean it up. The child also has to eat the peas.

This is not what happened when you got angry as a child, is it? As I mentioned, it is not your fault if you have anger problems, but it is **completely your responsibility** to deal with them now that you're an adult.

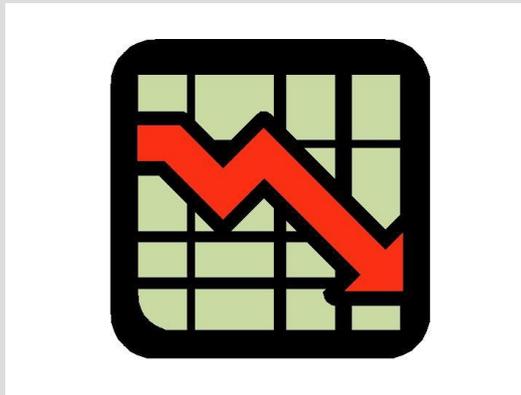
Let's do some things that will increase your response-ability (your ability to respond in healthy ways) to situations that trigger your anger. We will approach anger here from two different angles:

1. You will learn specific, practical and healthy ways to manage, release and express your anger in relationships, and
2. You will learn ways to address the underlying causes of your anger so that your behavior changes are lasting and permanent.

Let's start with the practical skills. These are some simple exercises you can use to release the physical tension associated with your anger. By learning and practicing these skills, you will be able to **lower your stress** and clarify your thinking before attempting to communicate.

First, you need to know where you are with your anger control at this time. You can use the following 0-10 anger scale to assess and monitor your anger level. When you develop an awareness of your anger level you will be better able to make choices before it escalates out of control. You may find that you can still make good decisions up to level 2 or 3, and after that the emotions start taking over and interfering with clear thinking.

Chapter Two: Anger Assessment Scale



Here's how the scale works:

Level 0: You're feeling totally calm and relaxed. You may feel happy and excited. You have no anger or irritation at all.

Level 1: You feel a very slight anxiety or irritability from time to time but it's not affecting your behavior. You can barely notice it when you try. Your mind is open and you are very aware of the big picture perspective.

Level 2: The irritation and anxiety is a little higher but still not enough to bother you or affect your behavior. You can still see the big picture. It is hard to relax with the agitation you are experiencing, however.

Level 3: You're starting to have negative responses to people, places and things around you. You're still keeping your anger inside, but you're just not settled. Your focus is starting to narrow slightly, but you can still think clearly and make good decisions.

Level 4: Now you're starting to think about yelling at that other driver, or calling that talk show host and giving them a piece of your mind, but you don't act on the feelings. Your tone with others might be just a little short, or you might try to

cover your feelings by being extra nice. Tunnel vision is starting to set in. **You have a hard time** not thinking about what you're mad about.

Level 5: Now you're definitely not having fun. You're mad at yourself, others, or the world in general. You're still in control of your behavior, but others can tell you're not feeling that great. You become grouchy and irritable with the people around you. You're moving into a single minded focus and your **decision making process** is impaired.

Level 6: You start thinking about getting away from some situation that is bothering you. You might **fantasize about escaping** somehow. You might also tell someone off at this point but you make an effort to be controlled, and even considerate. Your mental clarity has become erratic. You have lost sight of the big picture.

Level 7: You're starting to say things to yourself like, "This is driving me crazy. I can't stand this anymore. That person is driving me up the wall. If I could, I'd like to really let them have it." Your **thoughts are racing** and your muscle tension is becoming noticeable. Your vision is narrowing further.

Level 8: At this level, a plan of action starts to form. Now your anger is so high that you're ready to do something about it. You're so upset that you really have no choice. Your thinking is not clear, and your plan of action might include **revenge and retaliation**, or just a desire to hurt someone you perceive as a threat or a problem to you or someone you love. You have become almost completely irrational in your anger.

Level 9: Now you're acting on your anger. You're telling someone off and possibly trying to hurt them or put them in their place with your words. You also might be planning how to abandon, neglect, or reject them. At this level your thoughts are obsessed and totally focused on your pain, fear and anger whether you know it or not. **You are ruled by your emotions** at this level.

Level 10: At this point you have become **dangerous to yourself and others**. You are in the depths of fight or flight and your primitive, survival based brain has taken over. You have tunnel vision and single minded thought. All you can think about is **how to make the pain or stress stop**. It is a very helpless feeling. You are desperate and willing to take desperate action. Your fear and anger are now doing your thinking for you.

Rate yourself:

At my best I am--fill in the number(s)_____

At my worst I am--fill in the numbers(s)_____

Most of the time, I am--fill in the number(s)_____

If you have major anger issues you may escalate straight from 0 to 10 without any awareness or self control. If you have successfully suppressed your anger you may live constantly at a level 3, 4, or 5, never taking action or feeling any better. Many people are mildly irritated much of the time. Being emotionally healthy means living around a level 0 to 2 most of the time. In extreme circumstances a healthy person may escalate to a level 3 or even a 4, but will take positive, effective action to resolve the problem and return to a sense of well being.

See which of the following categories best describes you:

1. MILD ANGER ISSUES: Most of the time you are around a 2 or 3, but all too often you jump up to a 5 or 6--or even an 8 once in a while. A few times in your life you may have reached a 9 or 10, but you're determined never to go there again. [Reading](#) and [CD's](#) may be enough to help you reach your goals.

2. SERIOUS ANGER ISSUES: You have to struggle almost daily not to lose your temper. You can jump pretty fast to a level 8 or 9. You have reached a 10 a few times, but most of the time you can prevent that. You haven't hurt any one physically, but you are definitely hurting others with your words and actions. You may need [professional help](#) in addition to reading and listening to CD programs on anger management.

3. EXTREME ANGER ISSUES: Your anger has control of you most of the time. People around you are not safe emotionally or maybe physically, and many times you endanger yourself as well. You may escalate from a 3 or 4 (your normal level) to a 10 in a heartbeat. Your anger is running your life. You definitely need professional help, in addition to reading and listening to CD programs on anger management.

4. EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY: You live around a level 0-2 most of the time. In extreme circumstances you may escalate to a three or even a four, but you consistently take positive, effective action to resolve the problem and return to a sense of well-being.

Chapter Three: Quiet Anger Release



P rivate, Non-social Skills for Anger Management

Please be aware that any exercises that you try from this program are undertaken at your own risk. If you have any doubt whatsoever as to your emotional readiness or mental stability in practicing these skills, please consult a qualified professional before actually attempting the exercises.

The first thing to do when you're extremely angry is to **release the physical energy** of your emotion or blow off some steam. This can be done in several different ways, some of which you can do anywhere and others that need to be done in private.

Your anger management skills need to include some non-aggressive, socially friendly methods of anger release – for example, in traffic, in a public place, or in the presence of someone who would be hurt by your anger if you just let it out.

Here are some methods for managing, processing, or releasing your anger when some kind of physical or vocal expression wouldn't work well. Please understand that **these methods will not work for everyone**. There is a time and place for each of the different types of anger control, release, and expression.

1. Breathe into your anger and let the emotion expand outward into your body. Do this by imagining that the energy of your anger is getting bigger and bigger. Imagine your anger as a cloud, a fire, a fist, or whatever works best for you. Breathe deeply into your stomach and exhale slowly as you feel and imagine this image getting bigger and bigger until it expands

outside your body. See it and feel it coming out of the pores of your skin, off the tips of your fingers and outward from your body in every direction. Keep going with this process until the image of your anger gets so big that it disappears entirely.

2. Create an exaggerated image in your mind of someone or something giving full and complete expression to your anger. It is essential that this image not include violence toward people or animals. **The use of imagery is a form of rehearsal**, and can in some ways perpetuate behaviors similar to what is being imagined. Here are some examples of images that have worked well for others:

- Imagine a tornado ripping across an open field. Let the power of this force give expression to your emotion. **Feel your anger being released** by the movement and dynamic energy of the tornado, and watch it as it slowly subsides, harming no one.
- Picture a gigantic being thrashing about, grabbing thunder bolts from the sky and tossing them into huge black thunderheads. Let the thunderheads be your problems and the thunderbolts of lightning be your insights and healthy anger. Follow this process until you feel a release.
- Imagine that you are a martial arts master taking charge of a situation without harming anyone. Use your **focus, determination, and clarity of purpose** as your power. Work with this imagery until you see a powerful resolution to the problem.
- Become a magnificent dancer in your mind's eye: swirling, sweeping, swooping and flying about; twirling and spinning with tremendous energy and power. As you move, feel the power of your anger being released in your movements.

3. Send love and justice to the person or situation toward which you feel anger. Imagine that the power, clarity and justice of perfect love is shining like the brightest of all lights directly on and into the person or persons, requiring that they **face the truth and reality of their actions**. Watch sobriety and realization dawn across their face as the light of justice prevails. For example:

- In a road rage situation, see the driver that is endangering his own and others' lives being pulled over and getting a huge ticket or having his license revoked. Or picture this dangerous driver having

a near miss that serves as a wake up call. Watch his face as he realizes the **insanity of his actions**.

- Imagine deep truth and clarity dawning across the mind of the tyrants and abusers that have wrought terror and suffering on yours and others' lives. Watch what happens in their eyes as **perfect love is revealed** and justice is done.
 - Picture the friend, spouse, family member or associate "getting it." In your mind's eye, see them realizing their part of the problem and showing a willingness to take responsibility. Whether you believe this will happen or not, **this exercise will be good for you** and the relationship.
4. The first chance you have after your anger has come up, **write or journal** about your feelings. The main point to emphasize about this technique is to let the angry part of your mind have full and pure expression on the paper, holding nothing back. Don't censor or edit yourself here or you won't get a full release. Also, don't be reasonable or civilized in your writing. No one is supposed to see this but you, and you already know what's been in your head anyway. This uncensored writing allows a more complete purging of your anger, and gives you a chance to see the depths of your emotion clearly. It also **gives you a place to put your anger**: out on the page where you can look at it consciously and examine it with your logical and reasonable mind.

Chapter Four: Physical and Vocal Anger Release



Now let's talk about some methods of releasing your anger physically and vocally. The space and materials needed for these exercises are usually available in most homes.

Here are some things to consider in preparation:

- A mattress or large, overstuffed pillow is usually helpful. If you're using an exercise mat, you definitely need a pillow as most mats are just not soft enough.
- It is very important that you **not hurt yourself** while doing these exercises. After all, the point is to provide an experience of expressing anger in a way that doesn't hurt anyone, including you.
- These exercises need to be done in private, unless you're with a [trained professional](#) or in a therapy group with a professional present. Your family and friends usually won't understand, and you don't need to have anyone questioning you during this process.
- As much as possible you need to **feel emotionally and physically safe**. The best thing is to be alone in your home during these exercises unless

your spouse or roommate understands and supports the anger work.

- Some people do anger work alone in their car. Although this is better than taking it out on another person, it can be dangerous and I don't advise it. If you feel you are going to explode, however, it may be healthier to scream alone in your car than to suppress your anger and hurt yourself or stuff it until you explode at someone you love. I strongly recommend that if you do this, at least stop your car first.
- A piece of equipment useful in anger release work is a bataca bat, sometimes called an encounter bat. These are foam-padded bats that can be ordered through special supply houses that handle therapeutic equipment of this nature. Tennis rackets also work well for this exercise. The bat or racket is sometimes helpful to people with back problems that might have difficulty hitting a mat or pillow with their fists or arms.
- When using any of these items it is wise to wear gloves to **avoid causing abrasions**. If a body bag or sand filled canvas punching bag is used, it is important to use some type of gloves to avoid scraping the skin off of your knuckles. Using gloves may also be necessary if hitting a vinyl mat with your clenched fists.
- The upright bag, either suspended from the ceiling or leaned into a corner is sometimes helpful for those who would rather stand than kneel in the anger release process. If the bag is suspended from the ceiling, it needs to be somehow anchored to the floor. This is to prevent the delay in your release work as you wait for the bag to swing back in your direction. **To achieve a complete release**, you need to be able to have a full blown explosion, and this can't be accomplished if you have to wait and plan your blows to a swinging punching bag. *Also, keep in mind that these bags are called "body bags," because they are made to resemble a human body. This can be seen as a rehearsal for violence for some people, and should be avoided if there is any risk of that.*

Here are some particular exercises you might try:

The Power Position

I refer to this technique as The Power Position only because I have seen so many people claim their power over their lives and emotions while using this method. The Power Position first involves kneeling on the end of a bed, mattress or soft mat. Your knees should be on the mat or pillow, not on the floor. Many people are not accustomed to resting their weight on the knees and a cushion helps to relieve some of the pressure. This position is difficult or impossible for those

with back trouble and it is necessary to be aware of these types of problems before trying this technique.

If you have any health concerns regarding this exercise, please consult your doctor or health care professional.

After you kneel on the mat, raise your arms directly over your head, make fists with both hands, and come down on the pillow or mat **as hard as you can** as many times as you can until you feel a release. I recommend that you strike the actual blow with the entire lower arm from the elbow to the fist. This allows for a more powerful energy release than just using fists. You can also use the bats or rackets discussed above when using The Power Position.

If you grow tired, take a break and try again until you feel that **satisfying relief and release**. The Power Position can also involve standing over a bed or other soft structure about waist high and using an object to hit with. In some cases, however, you can safely use your fists or open hands when standing.

The Temper Tantrum Technique

This posture for anger release allows a full body rage release that seems to go deeper into the subconscious mind and the body. If you're having difficulty with the Power Position or if you have used the Power Position several times and still have not reached the bottom of your rage I strongly recommend this technique.

This method of rage and anger release involves lying on your back on a mattress or mat that is wide enough to allow at least 8-12 inches clearance on both sides of your body. This provides space for pounding with both hands without going off the mat. While releasing anger in this way your body will sometimes drift off to one side or the other, or up or down on the mat or mattress. If the mat does not allow enough room for this, you may go off the edge or ends of the mat, which will interrupt the flow of your emotional release. Simply **try to stay centered** so that this doesn't happen, or have someone assist you to keep you centered.

Begin by closing your eyes. Then raise your feet up on the mat so your legs are bent and your feet are flat on the surface of the mat. The next step is to begin pounding alternately with both hands and kicking with both feet. For most people this involves hitting with the right fist while kicking with the right foot, then hitting with the left fist while kicking with the left foot. **For a full release**, you need to do this as rapidly as possible until your emotions take over and you don't have to think about what you're doing at all.

Usually not much instruction is needed for this since the subconscious mind remembers everything, including how to throw a good temper tantrum. And

yes, **everyone feels silly and embarrassed at the very thought of doing this.** The question I ask is, how silly does it feel to yell at your family or friends? How silly is it to land in jail because you can't manage your anger? How silly will you feel when you have created an ulcer or heart trouble from repeated anger problems? Try pushing through your embarrassment and see if you can take out some of that anger on a pillow or a mattress instead of yourself or people you love.

Vocal Methods of Anger Release

I want to talk specifically about the vocal parts of anger work for a minute. Your voice has always been a primary means of expressing your emotions and your self. It is the suppression of emotion and the **suppression of self** that leads to the need for anger release work.

Many of us were told to shut up or be quiet as children and we need to overcome this message to our subconscious mind. In doing anger work we are not only beginning to reclaim our emotions, **we are beginning to reclaim ourselves.**

Deep vocal release of anger is best accomplished with the process beginning with a growling exercise that helps to relax the throat muscles. The desired roaring effect that provides the greatest emotional release and experience of power is then achieved by forcing greater volume of sound into the growl until it becomes a roar.

Many people prefer doing their roaring into a pillow so they are less inhibited. This can be a highly effective form of emotional release in many cases and could help to **relieve stress and prevent anger outbursts** toward others.

It is also a good idea to use words in vocal release at times. Words and phrases capture emotion and when verbalized during anger work, they can provide a powerful release of pent up emotion. Here are some **phrases that have worked well** for a lot of people, and which you might find helpful.

I'm angry! *You were wrong!*

It wasn't my fault! *Stop it!*

It can also be helpful to claim some **power and freedom** with statements like:

It's my life! *I'm free!*

I'm in charge! *I decide!*

Keep in mind that you may or may not be able to do these exercises on your own. You may choose to work with a [qualified counselor](#) to get a full release of the underlying emotion.

You know the exercise is working if you start to cry or if you just feel a sense of relief. If you feel afraid or if your anger increases, then you may need to keep trying or you may need some help to get through your internal barriers. A good anger release usually leads to feeling much better. Keep in mind, however, that you haven't solved any problems here. You have just blown off some steam in a healthy way. **The underlying issues still need to be addressed and resolved.**

Chapter Five: Emotional Healing Exercises



Innner Child Healing Imagery

Here's an exercise that will actually help you to be healed emotionally in this process:

Following your anger work, but only if you're feeling powerful, imagine yourself as the adult you are today going back in time to a memory from your past. Choose a memory that helps you **connect with your anger** over being hurt, violated, neglected or abandoned in some way. Enter that house, room or situation as the adult you are now and observe what is going on. Find the image of yourself as a child and notice the feelings that the child is having.

If there is an abuser or perpetrator present, removing them from the scene is your first priority. Use the [healthy power of your anger](#) as you approach the abuser. You are not going to attack or even touch this person. You simply hold up your open hand in front of their face and say, "Stop. No more." Then simply move the perpetrator away from the child, out of the scene entirely until they disappear.

Then go to the child, approaching gently. If the child seems afraid of you, wait at a safe distance until they are comfortable enough for you to come closer. Keep approaching carefully until you can hold the child in your arms, saying, "I'm here. I've got you. I won't leave you. It wasn't your fault. There's nothing wrong with you. You are my precious child and I love you exactly as you are." Add your own words and phrases, **telling the child exactly what they needed to hear** at that time.

If the violation was sexual in nature, you might want to say, "Your body is good. Your body is clean and pure. You did not cause this to happen. Your sexuality is good. There is nothing wrong with your body or your sexuality."

Then take the child to a safe place; perhaps a healing place where you can cleanse, bathe, or simply care for them as they heal. Wherever you take the child from that point be sure you end the process by **bringing the child into your own heart and mind**. That is their true home where they belong. You are this child and you are the strong, protective adult with healthy anger.

You're actually re-parenting yourself in this exercise with the [inner child](#), and creating a new and healing emotional experience as a resource of comfort in your continuing emotional experience.

If you have trouble with this exercise, there may be more healing work that you need to do first. If the abuser is a parent and you have not claimed your power in that relationship, you may not be able to stand up to them or remove them from the situation. If you have a significant amount of shame, you may actually blame the inner child for what happened, and the [healing and nurturing of the child](#) will be difficult or even impossible for you. In either of these cases you will need to [get some counseling](#) or do some other types of therapeutic work before completing the process of rescuing and integrating the wounded child of your past.

You can also apply this technique to older versions of yourself or even your adult self when dealing with adult trauma.

Affirmations For Your Inner Child

Here are some affirmations you can repeat to yourself to facilitate your emotional healing. It is helpful to repeat these at least once a day, until you actually believe them and feel the truth of the statements in your body and emotions.

-I was born innocent and open

- As an infant, my eyes ears and mind were wide open
- The child I once was is alive within me, right now
- I am still an open, innocent child, deep within myself
- Within my innocent, open self, I feel a natural and spontaneous love for the world
- I was born with the ability to love
- Deep within me, what I want most is to love and to be loved
- It is completely natural for me to need and experience love
- The child that I am deep inside is good
- My inner child is totally innocent
- In my innocence, I am free
- I release the need to limit myself in any way
- As a child, here inside, I am soft, warm and emotional
- As an adult, it is my job to protect and care for the child within me
- My relationship with my inner child is my relationship with myself
- My inner child is completely dependent on me
- I have no need to hurt or limit myself in any way
- I am a loving, nurturing parent to my inner child
- I accept myself just as I am
- I love the innocent, open, loving child that I am inside
- I have no need to limit my love for myself
- My inner child is an endless resource of spontaneous, creative thoughts and feelings
- By loving and caring for my inner child, I am adding to my creativity and spontaneity
- At the heart of the person I want to be is a happy, well-loved child

Chapter Six: Healthy Anger



Understanding and Developing Healthy Anger

Now let's focus in on healthy anger. Healthy anger does not look, sound, or even feel like anger as we have come to know it. Most of what you know and believe about anger may be unhealthy knowledge and experience.

Healthy anger fuels effective action. Healthy anger does not necessarily show up as any kind of aggression at all. *It is simply and clearly focused action for the purpose of protection.*

Each of us is born with a warrior spirit. This is part of our human nature. Because we have not been educated in the use of our anger, the warrior spirit in the world has run amok. That's why we see all of the anger, aggression and violence problems in our world. We also know what happens when the warrior spirit is never allowed to develop. That's when we find passivity, depression and victimhood. When it is **undeveloped and uneducated**, the warrior spirit causes problems, for you and the world around you.

When anger becomes healthy, through the kinds of processes you are learning about here, the warrior spirit becomes a kind of spiritual warrior. This is what happens when your anger is aligned with your values, **your intelligence, your integrity and your love**. The spiritual warrior is a powerful presence and does not need aggression to create protection and safety. The spiritual warrior has the

allies of wisdom and love, and thus has no need for violence. Your healthy anger is a lightning bolt that parts the darkness of your fear and confusion, clearing the clouds away from your inner light of goodness.

Thoughts on Healthy Anger and the Spiritual Warrior

Here are some thoughts to consider about healthy anger and the spiritual warrior.

- The spiritual warrior does not hesitate, and takes precise, direct action.
- The spiritual warrior is vigilant and aware, not afraid.
- [Healthy anger](#) is calm and relaxed, highly focused and clear.
- The spiritual warrior works through your body and your mind and does not bring harm to anyone.
- The spiritual warrior creates respect and cooperation and has a sobering effect on others.
- Healthy anger keeps you safe in dangerous situations.
- The spiritual warrior can work through your unconscious mind when you have no conscious awareness of what to do.
- The spiritual warrior acts in the best interest of everyone.
- The spiritual warrior is not wild and explosive or out of control. It is not violent, controlled by fear, mindless or senseless.
- The spiritual warrior surpasses physical strength or limitation.
- The spiritual warrior is not dependent on weapons for its power.
- Healthy, current anger involves no blame or accusing.
- When expressed in appropriate ways, anger is nothing more than focused and directed emotional energy.
- When focused and directed, emotional energy gives emphasis, strength and clarity to expression.
- Healthy anger does not attack or hurt anyone.
- Healthy anger is an expression of love.
- Healthy anger goes hand-in-hand with [forgiveness](#).
- As an expression of love, healthy anger gives strength to personal boundaries.
- Without the empowerment of healthy anger, boundaries are too soft and in some cases, nonexistent.
- When expressed appropriately, anger gives us the security we need to risk the [vulnerability of true intimacy](#).

Here are some affirmations for healthy anger:

- My healthy anger is one of my greatest assets.

- When my anger is healthy, it helps me to do what needs to be done.
- I can access and utilize the powerful energy of my anger to reach my goals and follow through on my commitments.
- My healthy anger is good for my health.
- [Healing my anger](#) is one of the best things I can do for my body and my mind.

The healthier my anger is the more freedom I have to [express my love and tenderness](#).

Chapter Seven: Communication Skills for Expressing Anger



Now it is time for us to pay some attention to communication skills and how to express anger in healthy ways to others.

The most important part of good communication is **learning to be a good listener**.

Beyond listening, you must also learn to put yourself in the other person's shoes, demonstrating empathy for their feelings. A common handicap that many angry people share is a lack of empathy.

Here are the skills that will help you communicate effectively:

1. **Practice reflective listening.** Starting with the phrase, "What I hear you saying is," repeat what you have heard the other person say. This is a very powerful and effective method for creating a connection and assuring the other person that you're listening.
2. **Express empathy.** When you have made it clear that you have heard the other person, then go on to say, "Putting myself in your shoes, I can see how you would feel that way," or, "When I look at it from your viewpoint, I can understand your feelings." This can greatly calm an emotional situation.
3. **Having heard and expressed empathy** for the other person's perspective, you can share your own perspective and feelings.

- a. Start by making a **positive statement** about why you want to talk to them. Say something like, "I want to talk to you about this because our relationship is very important to me," or, "because I love you very much," if it's an intimate relationship. This positive introduction sets the stage for a healthy exchange.
- b. Take **responsibility** for your feelings and view-points with statements like, "From my perspective it seems that when these things happen (then mention the details), I start to feel angry and frustrated.
- c. Then I react by (then tell them what you do: withdrawing, yelling, whatever) and I do this in order to hide my feelings."
- d. Then go on to say, "**The fear behind this reaction** is (then tell them what your fears are in the situation you're describing)." This is extremely important. If you have anger, rest assured you have fear. They go together. If you can't admit, or don't know what your fear is, you're not ready to start communicating yet. Acknowledging your fear will often help make the whole situation feel safer and give your partner some valuable information about you.
- e. If you have the awareness, tell your partner how these feelings relate to **your past experience**. This lets them know what kind of baggage or history you bring to the table, and again, gives you the opportunity to claim some responsibility.
- f. Then tell the person **what you need from them**, or what you would like to see change. State your intentions or desires for a positive, loving relationship at this point and if you feel it, express your faith in a positive outcome. When couples identify their [expectations going into a relationship](#), they are more likely to be happy together.
- g. **Ask your partner to reflect what you have said** so you know they have heard you. Then ask them to respond to your request if you made one.

On the following page is the full exercise broken down into components for you. Please feel free to copy and use this however you choose.

Respectful Conflict Resolution Process

The Speaker

1. Connection: I want to talk to you in this way because...*(I love you, our relationship is important to me, etc.)*
2. Perception : When I perceive you as. . .*(angry, ignoring me, criticizing me, etc.)*
or When you...*(are late, leave your clothes out, etc.)*
3. Feeling response: I feel . . .*(angry, hurt, frustrated, etc.)*
4. Behavior: So I respond by . . .*(arguing, yelling, withdrawing, not talking to you, etc.)*
5. Underlying Fear: My fear when these things happen is . . .*(of being rejected, abandoned, shamed, violated, etc.)*
6. History of feelings: The way this relates to my childhood emotional experience is . . .
(describe related emotional experiences from your earliest memories before this relationship)
7. Request: What I really want from you is . . .
(state the specific behavior you would like from your partner)

The Listener

1. Reflection: To the best of your ability, repeat the exact words of your partner with respect and concern. *("What I hear you saying is . . ." "If I'm hearing you correctly...")*
2. Empathy and validation: Accept the validity of your partner's feelings regardless of whether you agree with them. *("When I put myself in your shoes, I can see why you would feel that way.")*
4. Support: Express appreciation for your partner's openness. *("I appreciate you telling me how you feel." "Thanks for being open with me.")*
5. Response to request: Be honest about what you actually think you can do, set timelines, etc. *("In response to your request, I think I can..." "What I would like to do in response to your request is...")*

The key non-verbal components of healthy communication are respect, kindness and open-mindedness. If you cannot provide these elements, or if your partner cannot provide these elements, you may not have much success with this or any communication exercise. **Respect, kindness and open-mindedness** are as essential to good communication as gas and oil are to a motor vehicle.

While there is much more to learn regarding healthy communication of emotions, practicing and **mastering these skills** will do wonders for your abilities to resolve and avoid conflict in your relationships.

Chapter Eight: Your Spiritual Power



The Spiritual Power Within You

It is the spiritual warrior in you that has the courage and integrity to complete this type of communication process. We are looking here at the possibility that **there is a power within and available to you** that is beyond anything you have ever imagined. Healthy anger aligned with wisdom and love gives you access to this power.

Think of those stories from your life when you have been protected by some force within you or someone else that you do not fully understand. Recognize that the **protective power is both you and not you**. We have to see our own spiritual greatness and then let it go in order to allow the truest and deepest source of power to work through us.

Following is an excerpt from my book on the spirituality of anger entitled, [Anger Among Angels: Shedding Light On The Darkness Of The Human Soul](#):

Healthy anger is not...

- Wild and explosive
- Necessarily violent
- Exclusively for the protection of the “good guys”
- Controlled by fear

- Mindless or senseless
- Dependent on weapons for its power.

Healthy anger...

- Does not hesitate
- Takes precise, direct action
- Is not afraid of violence
- Is calm and relaxed
- Is highly focused and clear
- Works through body (action) and mind (imagery)
- Does not necessarily bring harm to anyone
- Creates respect and cooperation
- Has a sobering effect
- Keeps us safe in dangerous situations
- Can work through our unconscious mind, when we have no conscious awareness of what to do
- Acts in the best interest of all.

As a human being, you are far more powerful than you have ever known. When you learn about your power and [use it in positive ways](#), you become a part of the forces of good, and [good things will come to you](#). Your healthy anger is a part of your natural goodness, and will help you to accomplish all of your goals.

I wish you all the best on your journey to healthy anger, a productive life and fulfilling, [loving relationships](#).

Bibliography

Davies, W. (2001). Overcoming Anger and Hostility. New York University Press.

DeFoore, W. (2004). Anger: Deal With It, Heal With It, Stop It From Killing You. Revised Edition. Health Communications.

DeFoore, W. (2000). Anger Among Angels: Shedding Light on the Darkness of the Human Soul. Health Communications.

DeFoore, W. (2007). Serai: Bringing The Children Home. Wingspan Press.

Harbin, T. (2000). Beyond Anger: A Guide for Men. Marlowe & Co.

Karen, R. (2003). The Forgiving Self: The Road from Resentment to Connection. Anchor.

Lee, J. (1995). Facing the Fire: Experiencing and Expressing Anger Appropriately. Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishers.

Potter-Efron, R. (1994). Angry All The Time: An Emergency Guide to Anger Control. New Harbinger Publications.

Rogers, P. & McKay, M. (2000). The Anger Control Workbook. New Harbinger Publications.

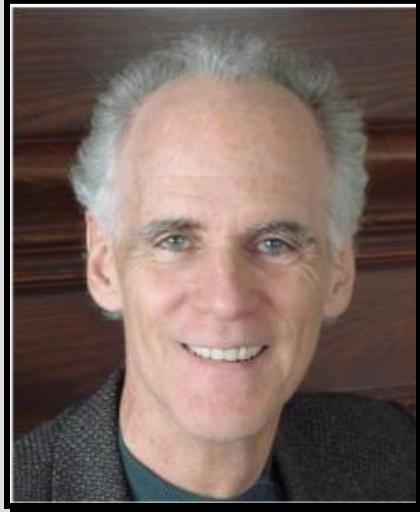
Semmelroth, C. & Smith, D. (2000). The Anger Habit. Writer's Showcase Press.

Simon, S. & Simon, S. (1991). Forgiveness: How to Make Peace with your Past and Get On with your Life. Warner Books.

Williams, R. & Williams, V. (1998). Anger Kills: Seventeen Strategies for Controlling the Hostility That Can Harm Your Health. Harper Mass Market Paperbacks.

Additional Resources:

- [Watch a free video of Dr. DeFoore speaking on anger management](#)
- [Get more free helpful information on anger management](#)
- [Learn how to overcome anger and rage addiction](#)
- [Discover three types of Anger Management Programs](#)
- [Learn how anger affects your health and well being](#)
- [Help your children and teens with their anger](#)
- [Learn how to heal and nurture your inner child](#)
- [Learn to meditate and become emotionally healthy](#)
- [Develop your optimism and become a Goodfinder](#)
- [Order audio CDs or Downloads of programs dealing with anger, forgiveness and depression](#)
- [Learn about Dr. DeFoore's books](#)
- [Schedule a phone session with Dr. DeFoore](#)



About The Author

[William Gray DeFoore, Ph.D.](#) is a counselor, coach, consultant and speaker with 34 years of experience in his field. He is on the faculty of the Cooper Wellness Program at the Cooper Aerobics Center in Dallas, and a commentator for Lime Radio. The focus of his work is in the areas of Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Wellness and the healing power of faith and optimism. He is author of two books entitled, [Anger: Deal With It, Heal With It, Stop It From Killing You](#) and [Anger Among Angels: Shedding Light on the Darkness of the Human Soul](#), and is co-editor of two business anthologies entitled, *Rediscovering The Soul In Business* and *The New Bottom Line*. In his speaking, teaching and consulting career, Bill has brought his message of encouragement and inspiration to populations as diverse as Native Americans, federal inmates and Fortune 500 businesses. Many of his presentations are available in [audio CD](#) form, which are featured along with his [books](#) and [services](#) at www.AngerManagementResource.com. Bill lives with his wife Cindy, their two cats and two horses in Aubrey, Texas.