



Anger Management For Dummies Cheat Sheet

From **Anger Management For Dummies, 2nd Edition**



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For most people, anger creates physical sensations that tempt them to explode. But before you open your mouth, take a look at ten ways to cool down. Then see how to express yourself more effectively with assertiveness. Learn about anger's do's and don'ts, and you'll save yourself a lot of grief. Finally, check out some tips for managing work conflicts.

Anger Management: 10 Ways to Cool Down

When you find yourself getting angry, it's time to take immediate action. It takes only 90 seconds to defuse your anger because anger is a brief, transient emotion, especially if you take some of the following steps:

1. Close your mouth.

Your odds of saying something useful when you feel intense anger are *precisely* 1 out of 1.2685 billion!

2. Remind yourself that delaying any reaction will probably help.

Reflexively and instantaneously reacting in anger is what gets you in trouble. Take your time — by being thoughtful, deliberate, and in control of your actions.

3. Distract yourself.

Visualize a beach or a forest. Or think about plans you have for later in the day.

4. Breathe.

Take a deep breath. Actually, consider taking four or five very slow, deep breaths.

5. Analyze your anger.

Who are you angry at? Is this where you want to lose your cool? Why are you angry? Is the intensity of your anger consistent with the cause?

6. Ask yourself what your true goal is.

Will you really accomplish something useful with your anger? Will your spouse love you more if you yell? Will your kids really remember to do their chores if you yell louder? Are there more constructive ways to get what you want?

7. Stand on one foot.

a. Yes, this idea sounds pretty silly. But see if you can stay angry when you're distracted by balancing. You might be surprised. Switch to the other foot after 30 seconds.

8. Repeat a calming phrase in your mind over and over.

Say, "keep cool," "relax," "this too shall pass," or whatever you find useful.

9. Ask yourself how angry responses have been working for you.

You'll likely recall many past events when anger did more harm than good. That will probably happen again if you express unbridled anger.

10. Reward yourself for exercising self-control.

a. Mentally pat yourself on the back. Remind yourself that every time you control your anger, you have made an important step in your angermanagement plan.



Tips for Expressing Yourself Assertively Rather than Aggressively

Anger can be your ally in constructing a happier, healthier, and more productive life. To reconstruct your anger and turn it into *assertiveness*, you have to think a bit.

Assertiveness, as opposed to aggressiveness, is direct communication without rancor or sarcasm — and it's usually expressed firmly but gently. Here are some strategies:

- **Ask yourself what it is that you truly want to have happen.** Do you want to be heard, or do you want to crush the other person? Do you want change or revenge?
- **Use *I* statements to express what you're feeling.** It's even okay to say that you're angry, but why not soften it a bit and say something like, "I feel a little irritated with what just happened," or "I'm frustrated by what you said."
- **Clearly state what went wrong — don't beat around the bush.** For example, you could say, "I felt upset when you called me fat," or "I'm annoyed that you didn't pay that bill."
- **Say what you want to have happen in the future.** For example, you could say, "Let's figure out a plan for making sure the garbage gets taken out without us fighting," or "Do you mind taking over the grocery shopping list? I'm just not good at it."
- **Decide how you want to feel after you express your assertive communication.** Do you want to feel ashamed or embarrassed? Or do you want to feel like you have a better understanding of the person you were angry at? Do you truly want to solve a problem?
- **Focus your anger on the problem, not the person.** Try not to personalize your anger (by saying something like, "That idiot!"). Stick to the issue that triggered the emotion: "He doesn't return my emails and I have a deadline."
- **Keep a civil tone throughout.** Nobody likes to be shouted at, and, besides, the message gets lost when the volume goes up.
- **Be respectful.** No rolling of your eyes, anger-pointing, cussing, lecturing, or sighing.



Anger Do's and Don'ts

You can get what you want in life through appropriate behavior or attempt to do so with anger, aggression and obnoxious behavior. You'll get more cooperation and succeed more often with the former approach. Here's a list of a few anger do's and don'ts to help you see the difference.

Do be competitive. All successful people are competitive. The trick is to know *when* and *how*.

Don't be confrontational. You won't accomplish everything you want in life with a hostile, in-your-face attitude. People typically avoid confrontation, so they end up avoiding you.

Do be forceful in pursuing goals. Passion and drive fuel success. It's not enough to wish for success; you have to work hard to get there.

Don't be too intense. Don't overpower those around you. It's exhausting — for you and for them.

Do be persistent in getting what you want out of life. When you start something, stick with it. Don't allow anger to distract you from your objective or cause you to give up prematurely.

Don't be impatient. Give people a chance to work with you on solving a problem. Let time be your ally, not your enemy. Never be afraid to step away from a challenge to achieve a better perspective.

Do be direct in your communication. Let people know how you feel about things — big and little. Don't leave it up to them to figure out whether you're angry and why. And don't say you're none when you're not.

Don't be demanding. People cooperate and get less defensive if you ask them to do something instead of ordering them around.

Do be a determined person. That means having resolve and being unwavering in what you say and do. Determination is a trait people admire.

Don't be domineering. Don't beat others over the head with your opinions and ideas. Don't always think you have to have the last word. Stop interrupting and try being more of an *active listener*.



Manage Your Anger to Keep Your Cool at Work

One step toward truly managing your anger is to learn to keep your cool at work. If you're tired of being disgruntled, dissatisfied, and disheartened at work, here are some things you can do to remedy the problem:

- **Accept the reality of your situation.** Not everything in the workplace can be changed. Stop focusing on how things *should* be and instead deal with them as they are.
- **Stop personalizing the issue.** Just because you didn't get the raise you wanted or you're on the wrong end of some company policy, it doesn't mean that everyone is out to get you. Try to figure out how much of the issue you really own versus how much is due to outside forces.
- **Pull back.** Stop giving 120 percent at work. Set some healthy limits on the energy you expend on the job — save some for other things like family, friends, recreation, and perhaps a spiritual life. Balance will actually give you more energy at work.
- **Look at the glass as half full.** Instead of thinking so much about all the things you *don't* like about work, think about something positive instead — something you have control over, some part of life where you don't feel like a victim.
- **Find some benefit in what you do at work.** No job is all bad. What's the silver lining in the way you make a living? What is there about work that you're grateful for?
- **Get some exercise.** Regular, moderate exercise is a way of detoxifying your anger after work. That 30 minutes of exercise on the way home from the office can make all the difference in how your evening goes.
- **Be forgiving.** No job is perfect. It's important to forgive your employer for that! And forgive yourself for being employed in a situation that can be difficult and frustrating.



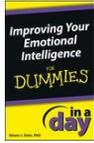
REMEMBER

If you really have a terrible, unchangeable job situation, realize you probably have options. Develop a résumé and job search plan. Consider extra school or training. Just knowing you have options helps you calm down.



Building Emotionally Healthy Social Relationships

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Having better interpersonal skills can provide you with many benefits. You can increase your circle of friends, become closer with the friends you have, meet new people more easily, and have more enjoyable relationships. Being in tune with others, both emotionally and interpersonally (through good social skills), can enhance your relationships and your life experiences. Read on to find out more about enhancing emotional intelligence in your social life.

Social skills and the importance of emotions

Emotional intelligence helps you become more satisfied not only in your intimate relationships, but with your social relationships, as well. Sometimes, you can more easily practice emotional intelligence skills with your friends than with your significant other. Friendships don't tend to be as intense as more intimate relationships.

People generally like to be around others who have good emotional intelligence. Think of the people that you consider friends. How many of them tend to be moody, unhappy, poor communicators, pessimistic, or uncaring? These kinds of people just don't seem to attract many others

Create a values chart, which details how much importance you place on your friends and social life.





Using your emotional skills in social relationships

The emotional skills that you develop can help you enhance many of your interpersonal relationships. For example, friends look for empathy in their relationships.

Your skill in developing and building better interpersonal relationships also helps deepen your friendships.



Finding the right balance of emotional and social skills

With some people, you want to have an emotional (intimate) relationship, but with others, you want to have a social (interpersonal) relationship. The closer you are with someone, the more emotional the attachment. With strangers, you're likely to have an interpersonal interaction.

Emotionally intelligent behavior involves knowing how to strike the right balance between social and emotional relationships. You can err in two ways:

- **You can be too aloof and not let people get close to you.** This situation sometimes happens in couples in which the male is more traditional or macho. This aloofness or traditional behavior is often seen among men in certain professional groups, including engineers, math professors, surgeons, anesthetists, geologists, actuaries, and coal miners. It also occurs in certain cultures, especially where there are large disparities between the genders.

- You can find extreme examples of this emotional detachment or poor social skills in people who have Asperger's syndrome. This disorder is partly defined by a person's aloofness to other people — rarely making eye contact, lacking humor, rarely expressing emotions, and having almost robotlike interactions.

- **You can get too emotional — letting it all hang out — with someone you've just met.** You might disclose your entire life history to perfect strangers. Trying to get too close to someone you hardly know sends out mixed messages. For many people, it acts as a sort of danger sign — putting you on their people-to-avoid list.

Knowing how much to disclose to whom is a skill. For many people, it comes naturally. Others have to figure it out by watching how other people behave. You can identify some of these cues by watching the media. Movies and TV shows present the good and the bad of initiating and maintaining relationships. Generally, the more likeable characters are the ones who can share the right amount with the right person. For many people, their life experiences help them figure out the rules of good relationships. For others, life seems to involve a pattern of initiating, then breaking off, relationships. Emotionally intelligent people can understand the rules of social relationships and apply those rules. Like most aspects of emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills have two parts:

- **Theoretical:** Knowing the rules and how they work. Being able to correctly predict how examples of human relationships will turn out. People with good theoretic knowledge of social relationships can look at samples of behaviors between two people and get a good idea on how that relationship is doing and whether it is likely to be a good or bad relationship.

- **Practical:** The ability to go out and successfully initiate, nurture, and maintain healthy relationships. The hands-on, day-to-day skill of communicating with and relating to people.

Some people may be good at the theoretical part of understanding relationships, but not so good at the practical side. Others may be good at both.

Although you probably didn't get training in these skills in school, they can help you go a long way in the real world.