



### Ephesians 4:26

EVERYONE SHOULD  
BE QUICK TO  
LISTEN, SLOW TO  
SPEAK, AND SLOW  
TO ANGER

Refrain from anger  
and give up your  
rage; do not be  
agitated-it can only  
bring harm.

### Psalms 37:8

### Proverbs 15:1

A gentle answer  
turns away anger,  
but a harsh word  
stirs up wrath.

# GROWING IN HIM COUNSELING

## Control your Anger, Find your Calm?

**Friends, do not  
avenge yourselves;  
instead leave room  
for God's wrath,  
because it is  
written,  
Vengeance belongs  
to me; I will repay,  
says the Lord.**

**-Romans 12:19**

The first step to controlling your anger is to know what is happening inside your body. We will physically respond to a situation internally before we respond externally. This often feels as though it is occurring simultaneously, but when you pay attention to your body, you can actually slow down the process and begin to gain control.

**Step 1: Recognize your Physiological Symptoms** associated with your anger. What happens inside your body when you are upset. Will your hands get sweaty, does your heart race, do your muscles tense, are you dizzy or have trouble breathing? List out the physical symptoms and then order them chronologically.

**Step 2: Call a Time Out.** Decide you need to take a break and let those around you know that is what you need.

**Step 3: Take a Time Out.** Leave the situation. (Do NOT drive-driving angry is just as dangerous as driving under the influence). Take an hour to calm down and assess the situation. The first 30 minutes is used to breathe, go for a walk and relax. The next 30 min is used to come up with 3 possible solutions to the problem. 1-your solution, 2-the other person's solution, 3-a compromise between the two.

**Step 4: Check Back In.** Reconnect with the person you were angry with and discuss the solutions you came up with in a calm, respectful way.

## Why am I so Angry?

Understanding your anger is helpful in learning to control it. Anger is a secondary emotion which means it is covering up other, often more intense, emotions. These emotions can include fear, insecurity, disappointment or uncertainty. Often, it feels safer to become angry instead of feeling these more vulnerable emotions. If you grew up around anger or have learned to use it to keep people at a distance, allowing yourself to feel these other emotions may be more difficult. To get started, you need to be aware of how you feel various emotions. Journaling is a great way of discerning and describing emotions. You can look up an "emotion wheel" on the internet and write one emotion daily. While journaling, describe what the emotion means, when you might feel this way and how you typically respond when you do. This offers insight into how you feel and why. As you learn more about different emotions, you can begin to understand other emotions involved when you are overly upset.

It is helpful to discern what is really going on when you get angry. Looking at the situation and what brought on the anger can help in determining how to respond differently and eventually decrease the anger overall. Once you have calmed down, reflect back on events leading up to the outburst and think about other emotions that might be involved. Try to process through the root of the anger rather than the result of it. If you continue to struggle with overwhelming anger, and/or determine the root cause is much deeper than you can process alone, seek professional help.

## Alternatives to Anger

When you get angry, many things happen physiologically inside your body. You are flooded with 13 different chemicals, including cortisol and adrenaline. It is important to do something physical to alleviate these chemicals, but it also needs to be healthy! Use some of the coping skills listed below to help you maintain composure and begin to relax BEFORE you respond to other people or your situation.

1. **Breathe:** Take slow, deep breaths. Breathe from your gut, not your chest. Count to 4 as you breathe in, hold your breath for 7 seconds and then breathe out for 8 seconds. (4-7-8) At least 5 minutes!
2. **Exercise:** this can be nearly anything that increases your heart rate and gets you moving. 15-20 minutes of exercise is best.
3. **Journal:** Write out what you are feeling inside your body, why you are angry and what other emotions might be at play.
4. **Talk to a Friend:** Discussing the issue with a trusted, neutral friend can help you gain a new perspective and process through the events that have occurred.
5. **Sing or Dance:** This can fall under exercise; however, it is also fun and a good distraction. Use fast, upbeat music to begin with and then slow down the beat to allow your body to calm down.
6. **Paint/Draw:** Using your creative side can help to release emotions while processing through the reasons for your reactions.
7. **Distract Yourself:** Do something different from what you were doing before you became angry. Change tasks, activities or behaviors which gives you time to process the cause of the anger.
8. **Walk Away:** Removing yourself from the situation is sometimes the best and only way to calm down. Safely leave the room, the building, or the situation you are in to give yourself time to respond differently.

**If your anger has caused lasting distress,  
seek professional help.**

Therapy can help you work through the anger symptoms as well as process the actual event and look at possible root causes. You can learn to heal and move forward which can help you to enjoy the life God has given you! There are several modalities to work through anger including EMDR, Cognitive Behavioral, as well as talk therapy.

Find a therapist who is trained in anger and understands how the brain is impacted by life events.

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**CONTACT TANYA  
MCCREA, LCSW, CCTP**

**GROWINGINHIM.ORG**

**720-507-5761**

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