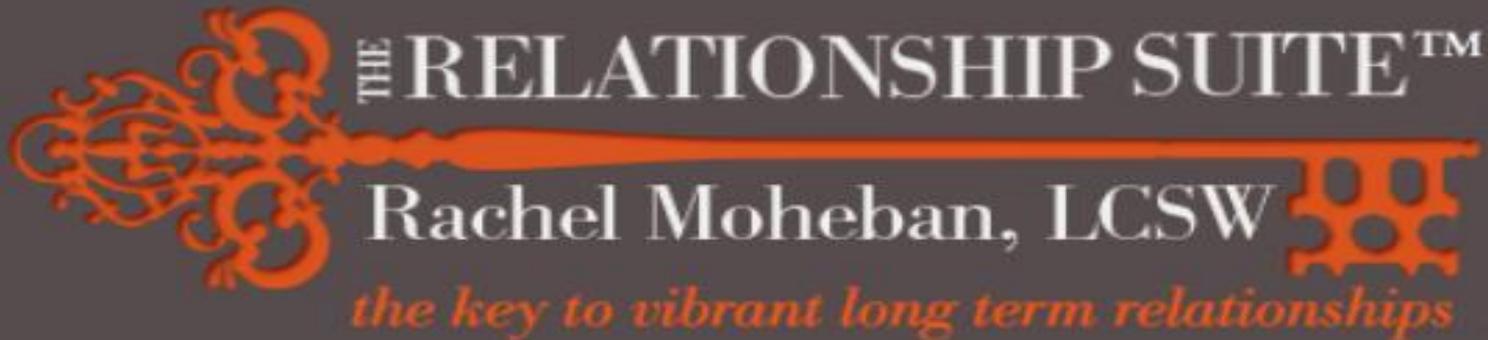


*Techniques for Managing
Anger and Communicating
with Influence*

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Anger



Objectives

1. Identify your style of anger expression and triggers.
2. Discover the source of your anger and learn cognitive techniques to establish boundaries to manage your anger effectively.
3. Harness universal communication strategies in every facet of your work/personal relationships.
4. Transform the way you confront existing communication problems.

Definition of Anger

Matthew McKay, and Peter Rogers define Anger as:

- A response you learned early in life to cope with pain.
- A way, however temporary, to overcome feelings of helplessness and lack of control.
- If expressed destructively, a habit that, up till now, you've lacked the tools to break.

An angry relationship is one in which anger defines the emotional tone of the partnership and is the couple's primary style of interaction.

“Five Faces Of Anger Expression”*

Passive-Aggression

- You tend to withhold from others when you are angry by failing to do what they want, being late or otherwise holding back. You minimize or deny your anger when others express frustration or question your actions.

Sarcasm

- You use sarcasm, biting wit, or “humorous” putdowns as a way of expressing your anger indirectly. Your facial expression or tone of voice may convey disgust or criticism, which you deny. When others find your comments or actions hurtful or complain about them, you may accuse them of being too sensitive or minimize their feedback.

Cold Anger

- When angry, you refuse to talk things out and may withdraw from others, with minimal or no contact for hours or days at a time. You may secretly enjoy punishing others by making them work to get you to respond to them, but you do not admit it.

Hostility

- You handle stress poorly, often act it out with a loud, forceful voice. You are not shy about expressing disgust and disapproval when people or situations do not meet your expectations. You may sigh, roll your eyes and, in general, make nasty comments that others often find stressful and intrusive.

Aggression

- Whether you intend to or not, you act in a manner that may intimidate or harm another person, either emotionally or physically. Yelling, name calling and putdowns may threaten or intimidate your spouse, friend, or coworker. Physical aggression - such as physically blocking, holding, pushing, hitting or restraining another person without their permission - is also a sign of this form of anger.

Maintain an Anger Journal

“What is triggering my anger?”

—Your anger trigger is unique.

Maintain an anger journal

—If you become more aware of your triggers, as well as the thoughts, emotions, and physical responses that you experience during episodes of anger, you can proactively gauge anger levels and unearth what is triggering your emotions before they reach unhealthy levels.

Common Anger Triggers

- Someone attacking your ***self-esteem*** through verbal or even physical abuse.
- Someone or something preventing you from ***reaching a desired goal***.
 - This triggers more anger if you feel you're entitled to that goal or if the goal is something you're strongly committed to.
- Someone violating your ***basic moral principles of fairness, equity, honesty and responsibility***.
 - The more strongly committed you are to these values, the angrier you become.
- A situation where you feel ***helpless*** or unable to correct something that has gone wrong.

List of Emotions

Guilt: A sense of doing something wrong.

Shame: A deep feeling of being unacceptable, flawed or contemptible.

Hurt: A feeling of being devalued or denigrated by others.

Loss: A feeling that something you needed or counted on is lost or missing.

Hunger/Frustrated Drive: An aching for something; a strong sense of incompleteness.

Helplessness: The feeling that there's nothing you can do about your pain; crucial elements of your life are beyond your control.

Anxiety/Fear: A dread of something that could happen; a sense of danger; a fear of certain things or situations.

Feeling Unworthy: A sense that you aren't good enough, that you are bad, wrong or without intrinsic value.

Emptiness: A sense of numbness or a hollowness that requires constant attention and activity.

The First Major Cognitive Technique

Stay Focused

- When you speak out in anger, you may lose sight of the issue or circumstance that initially provoked you.
- The more intense your anger, the more likely the emotion will distract you from the issue at hand.
- Keep your eye on the ball, and your conversation and emotions are less likely to get out of control.

The Second Major Cognitive Technique

Call a Timeout

- Don't be afraid to call a timeout when you're getting too angry.
- It's a way of preventing from damaging your relationship when you know your talk is likely or has already eroded into a counterproductive discussion.
- I suggest that you not only agree to this ground rule, but also agree on the specific signal that will mean a timeout or pause for the two of you.
- It's very important that when you decide to take a timeout and talk later, set the time to talk right then.
 - The person who calls the timeout is responsible for setting up a time to talk in the near future.

The Third Major Cognitive Technique

Defuse the Situation

- Come up with a label to identify the intensity of your anger.
 - Start by saying “I feel...” Don’t say, “I think...” What you’re going for here is your feelings, not your thoughts about how obnoxious the other person is.
- Identify the thing that triggered your anger.
- Ask yourself what it would take to help you return to a non-angry state.

Anger



Anger is a cunning thief. Whether it sneaks into a conversation or violently barges into an interaction, it will steal the happiness out of your relationship if you do not know how to express it in a healthy manner. When your anger gets too intense, stop whatever you're doing and walk away.

Communication



Relationship Problems

When relationship problems take root, too many couples *overcorrect* by sidestepping open dialogue and going into problem-solving mode.

Instead of engaging each other in an open dialogue about your concerns, you start a strategy session about how to fix each other.

Surprisingly, the majority of your problems (or arguments) that you experience do not demand problem solving.

Solutions

When talking about issues it's important to put all relevant facts and feelings on the table so you can lay the foundation for working together as a team.

Be clear about what you are upset about.

When you see the other person's reality and respect each other's point of view and see it as a way to enrich your own, you will enjoy binocular instead of monocular vision.

Pent-Up Frustrations

- If you feel someone is not hearing you or concerned about your feelings, frustration can fester inside of you.
 - These frustrations can come to the surface and drown out your real message.



The Speaker-Listener Technique

The Speaker-listener Technique is a communication technique created by Howard Markman, Scott Stanley, and Susan Blumberg.

- This technique offers you an alternative way of communicating when issues are hot or sensitive or likely to get in the way.
 - Any conversation in which you want to enhance clarity and safety can benefit from this technique.

Rules

Rules for Both

- ***The Speaker has the floor.***
 - Use a specific object to represent the “floor”
- ***Share the floor.***
 - You share the floor over the course of a conversation.
- ***No problem solving.***
 - Focus on having good discussions, not on trying to come to solutions.

Rules for the Speaker

- ***Speak for yourself.***
 - Try to use “I” statements and talk about your own point of view and feelings.
- ***Don’t go on and on.***
 - Keep what you say in manageable pieces.
- ***Stop and let the Listener paraphrase.***
 - If the paraphrase was not quite accurate, you should politely and gently restate what you meant to say in a way that helps your partner understand.

Rules for the Listener

- ***Paraphrase what you hear.***
 - Make sure you understand what was said.
- ***Don’t rebut.***
 - When you are the Listener, your job is to speak only in the service of understanding your partner.
 - Any words or gestures to show your opinion are not allowed, including making faces!

Conversation: a two person affair

Make your conversation a two-person affair.

- Your colleagues, friends or co-workers might have thoughts or opinions about the persons personality quirks.
 - Do not use others' subjective opinions in your conversation as supporting evidence.

Positive Warm-Ups

It is vital to communicate compliments, appreciation and other positive feelings

People must keep the proportion of positives to negatives 4:1 if they are to maintain positive feelings for each other.

Positive Warm-Up Examples

- One of the things I like best about you is...
- One of the things I admire about you is...
- I like you most when you...
- I like the way you look when you...
- I'd like to thank your mother and father for making you...
- One of the things I've learned from you is...
- One of your strengths that I've benefitted from is...
- One of the ways you compliment and balance me is...
- You make me happy when you...
- One of my fondest memories about us is...
- One of your most endearing qualities is...

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