

# FREEDOM FROM ANGER

## The Problem

Every person has a “**Pattern of Toxic Behavior**” that can significantly damage the important and intimate relationships in his or her life. Anger is one of our 10 basic, God-given emotions. This emotion can be **CONSTRUCTIVE or DESTRUCTIVE** — depending on our response. We should give Jesus a “**NANO SECOND**” (just one billionth of a second!) to help us learn to use all of our emotions according to God’s design for our lives, and to change our pattern of relating to others and our responsibilities appropriately.

We learned how to express anger inappropriately from others. We did not realize that when we lashed out in anger, we were ignoring our fear, pain, or another deeper hurt, hang-up, or habit. Many of us did not even realize we were struggling with anger because we did not express it, but rather, we stuffed it down and kept silent.

When most of us think of an “angry” person, we think of someone who destroys themselves and their relationships through uncontrollable outbursts of rage. This is only one part of anger, as anger has many faces. Suppressed or “stuffed” anger is equally damaging and destructive. **All anger, if allowed to, will continue to destructively influence our behaviors and attitudes, and will eventually erupt from deep within the heart.**

As our lives and relationships progressed we may have become addicted to the physical symptoms of anger. Some of us may have felt a momentary euphoria as we released the anger. Some of us justified our anger. We did not recognize we were actually hurting our loved ones and ourselves. In the heat of the moment, releasing our anger was all that mattered.

Many of us feel intense shame and guilt over the actions that we have committed during our unhealthy expressions of anger. We vowed never to act that way again, only to find ourselves back in the same situations, unable to change it under our own power.

Complete the following questionnaire. It may reveal more about your anger than you realize. It may help you decide if your anger is reaching a destructive level in your life. (\*Adapted from *The Anger Workbook*, written by Dr. Les Carter and Dr. Frank Minirth.)

Check the statements that apply to you:

- I become impatient easily when things do not go according to my plans.
- I have critical thoughts toward others who don’t agree with my opinions.
- When I am displeased with someone I may shut down any communication with them or withdraw entirely.
- I am annoyed easily when friends and family do not appear sensitive to my needs.
- I feel frustrated when I see someone else having an “easier” time than me.
- Whenever I am responsible for planning an important event, I am preoccupied with how I must manage it.
- When talking about a controversial topic, the tone of my voice is likely to become louder and more assertive.
- I can accept a person who admits his or her mistakes, but I am irritated easily at those who refuse to admit their weaknesses.
- I do not easily forget when someone “does me wrong.”
- When someone confronts me with a misinformed opinion, I am thinking of my comeback even while they’re still speaking.
- I find myself becoming aggressive even while playing a game for fun.
- I struggle emotionally with the things in life that “aren’t fair.”
- Although I realize it may not be right, I sometimes blame others for my problems.
- More often than not, I use sarcasm as a way of expressing humor.
- I may act kindly toward others on the outside, yet feel bitter and frustrated on the inside.

## The Solution

**TAKE RESPONSIBILITY:** Recognizing and accepting responsibility for toxic patterns of behavior is the first step toward true freedom from anger. Walking through the recovery process with Jesus Christ as our Higher Power allows us to admit our powerlessness to control our anger. He will help us overcome our destructive habits.

**EVALUATE THE ANGER:** There are two kinds of anger: healthy adaptive anger and unhealthy needless anger. Healthy anger is based on being protective of myself or others. Unhealthy needless anger is based on my resentment, which leads to wanting revenge. It is healthy and necessary to feel anger and to talk about anger. I should recognize anger as my own emotion and avoid hurting the objects of my anger — keeping my anger as a feeling not an action. Looking at anger as a feeling may also reveal a larger hurt, hang-up, or habit that is hiding behind the anger. It is what I do with my feelings that will allow me to fall into sin. I need to check the motives for my behavior. Rudeness under the disguise of being honest is still rudeness.

**DAILY QUIET TIME WITH GOD:** Anger causes me to live in conflict and not in peace. I will try to remember that God is in charge of my life and He loves me unconditionally. I will commit to having a daily quiet time with God. During this quiet time with God it would be helpful to identify some helpful Scriptures and write them somewhere to read throughout during the day. Some suggestions include the Serenity Prayer, Ephesians 4:31-32, and James 1:19-20.