- Emotions

How to channel your inner anger for good

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We have all been there. Stuck in traffic, dealing with a demanding boss or facing a frustrating situation. It is normal to feel anger bubbling up inside. But when anger starts to take control, impacting our relationships and well-being, it is time to explore some tools and techniques to manage this common emotion effectively.



Anger is a powerful emotion with the potential to be both destructive and constructive. While a surge of anger can motivate us to take action, unchecked anger can damage relationships, careers and even our health.

How does it affect people?

Anger can affect people in both physical and emotional ways. Here is a breakdown of how.

Physical effects

Anger triggers the body's 'fight or flight' response. This means your adrenal glands release stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol. This can lead to increased heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension and sweating.

Health problems - over time, chronic anger can take a toll on your health. Studies have shown a link between anger, high blood pressure, heart disease and even headaches. It also can cause digestion problems and sleep problems like insomnia.

Emotional effects

Impaired thinking - anger can cloud your judgement making it difficult to think clearly. This can lead to saying or doing things you regret later.

Strained relationships - constant anger can damage your relationships with friends, family and co-workers. This is because uncontrolled anger can lead to arguments, physical fights, physical abuse, assault and self harm. People tend to avoid those who get angry frequently.

Mental health issues - unmanaged anger can contribute to mental health problems like anxiety, guilt, stress and depression.

While anger is a normal emotion, it is important to learn how to express it in a healthy way. If you find yourself struggling with anger, there are strategies for harnessing the power of anger and transforming it into a force for good.

Managing anger issues

The first step in managing anger issues is recognising your triggers.

Identifying situations- start by paying attention to situations or people that typically trigger your anger. Is it rush hour traffic, work deadlines or arguments with your loved ones? You can keep a journal to track these triggers and the emotions they evoke.

Identifying physical signs- notice the physical sensations that accompany your anger. Does your heart race? Do you clench your fists or get a headache? Recognising these signs can help you identify anger in its early signs.
The second step is to develop calming techniques such as:
Deep breathing- inhale slowly through your nose for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4 and exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of 8. Repeat until you feel calmer.
Mindfulness- practice focusing on the present moment and acknowledging your emotions without judgement. Meditation apps or guided exercises can be helpful for beginners.
Progressive muscle relaxation- tense and relax different muscle groups in your body, starting with your toes and working your way up. This can help release physical tension associated with tension.
Step three is to take a time out. You can do this by:
Removing yourself- if you feel your anger escalating, excuse yourself from the situation. Take a walk, go to another room, or find a quiet space to cool down.
Engage in a calming activity- listen to calming music, read a book or spend time in nature. Engage in anything that helps you de-stress and clear your mind.
The fourth step is a very important step in maintaining relationships, which is to express yourself assertively.
Once calm, address the situation- when you calm down, try to communicate your feelings assertively. Express your needs and concerns without resorting to blame or accusations.
Use statements with 'I'phrasing your anger in terms of 'I' statements can be helpful. For example, 'I feel frustrated when...' instead of 'you always make me mad!'
When you learn to express your anger in a healthy way, you can better resolve conflict in your professional and personal relationships leading you to develop a deeper understanding of others and strengthen conflict resolution skills.
The next step is problem
solving. Here, you need to focus on solutions; once you have expressed your feelings, try to work towards a solution with the other person.
Brainstorm potential solutions and be open to compromise.
The final step is to seek professional help.
Consider therapy- a mental health professional can help determine if you have an underlying mental health condition that is causing your anger issues. They teach you additional coping mechanisms and help you identify underlying issues that might be contributing to your anger.
Don't wait until you're angry to practise calming techniques. You can integrate them into your daily routine for long term benefits. Remember, anger is a normal reaction, but it is important to manage it in a healthy way. By following these steps and seeking professional help if needed, you can learn to express your anger constructively and improve your overall well-being.
Also, make sure to remember that learning to manage anger takes time and practice. Be patient with yourself and celebrate your progress!