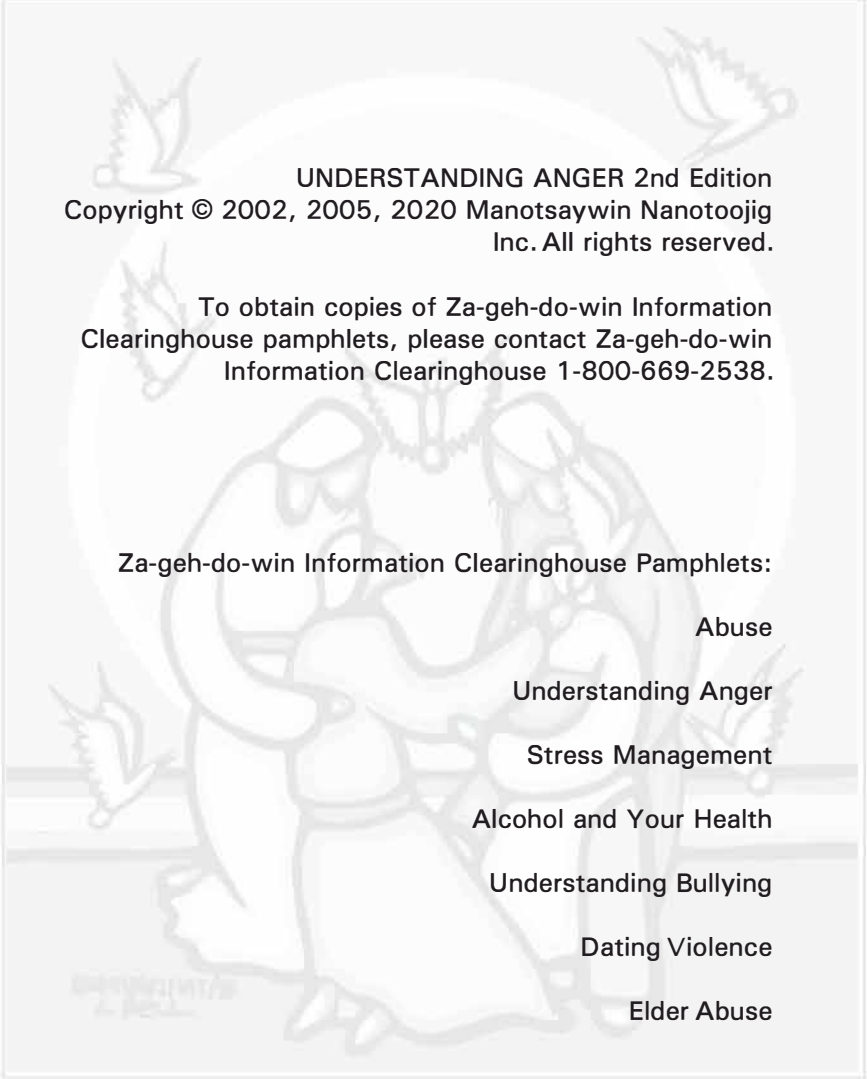


# UNDERSTANDING ANGER



*Za-geh-do-win*  
INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE



**UNDERSTANDING ANGER 2nd Edition**  
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# What Is Anger?

Anger is a normal feeling, an emotion one of hundreds that we experience, it can vary in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury or rage usually caused by internal or external situation feelings or thoughts which are usually beyond our control. As such, the only thing which may be within our control is the way we deal with anger.

Anger, much like other emotions that we experience creates changes in our bodies, our heart rate may increase, we may experience sweaty palms, and blood pressure and adrenaline levels may go up. Our actions and reactions to situations and people may be different then normal, we may say things which we would normally not say to anyone.

Unexpressed anger turns to frustration which turns to aggression. Aggression is the action part of anger. It is intended to harm someone. Anger may do more harm than any other emotion. It hurts at least two people, the aggressor and the victim of the aggression.

Anger can also be a positive thing if it is managed properly. Anger can motivate us to change a bad situation or change our circumstances.

## Anger Seen as a Motivator

Anger is not all bad, it can help us look at bad situations or help us grieve important issues.

Anger is natural and everyone experiences it. Anger can teach us to be patient. Anger tells us that something is wrong and needs to be fixed.

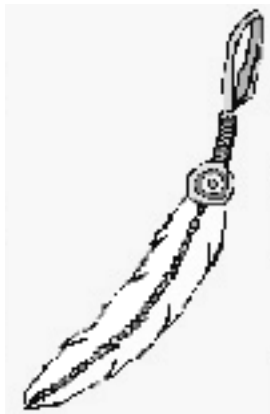
Anger can also help motivate people to solve a difficult issue in their lives or fix a difficult situation.

# Anger's Many Aspects

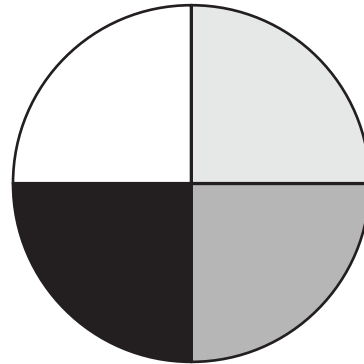
- **Passive Aggressive:** Presenting to be nice but doing things which upset another person. ie: being constantly late for appointments.
- **Sarcasm:** A cruelly humorous statement meant to hurt or injure the other person. Usually intended to damage someone's self respect.
- **Verbal Abuse:** Losing control of oneself to a point where you hurt another person or yourself by your words.
- **Blaming:** In order to justify our inappropriate behaviour or the way we are thinking or feeling, we sometimes accuse someone else of causing it. Of course, we are responsible for our own anger and no one can make you feel a certain way. We just feel that way.
- **Inappropriate Humour:** Sometimes when we do not feel completely safe to express our anger we use inappropriate humour to express it. Although done under the disguise of humour, our actions or words really hurt the person it is directed towards.
- **Revenge:** When we get angry with someone who has hurt us, we may sometimes wait for our chance to get back at that person.
- **Resentment:** Resentment is a re-feeling of an original hurt. Every time we are reminded of it, we get the same feeling of hurt or anger as when it originally happened. This feeling can fester for many years.
- **Silent Treatment:** When we are angry at someone we may give them the "silent treatment".
- **Depression:** This is when we are angry about something but the anger is internalized. We end up hurting ourselves instead of resolving the conflict.
- **Use of Medicators:** When we are angry, sometimes we medicate ourselves in order to make things feel better. Alcohol, drugs, food, sex, gambling and other obsessive behaviours are often the result of unresolved anger.
- **Rage:** This is the most explosive of all the types of behaviours. It can lead to physical violence, suicide or homicidal behaviour.

# How Angry Are You?

- Do you have a quick or hot temper?
- Do you suppress or hide your angry feelings?
- Does little things irritate you to a point where it is difficult to handle?
- Do you get angry at yourself or feel foolish or stupid when you make a mistake?
- Have you ever felt guilty or angry with yourself for something you said or done when angry?
- Have you ever used alcohol, drugs, sex or other addictions to make yourself feel better after a conflict?
- Do you act out your anger when under the influence of alcohol or other drugs?
- Have you ever thought about getting even for something someone has done?
- Have you ever felt like you hated someone for what they did to you?
- Have you ever lost control, did something you were ashamed of or blacked out when angry?



# What Happens To You When You Are Angry?



## Mentally

- Blurred judgement
- Denial
- Unable to concentrate / focus
- Feeling frustrated
- Jealousy
- Low self-esteem
- Irrational actions
- Wrong decisions are often made when angry

## Spiritually

- Hopelessness
- Feeling trapped or threatened
- Loneliness
- Depressed
- Fear
- Loss of self beliefs
- Despondency

## Physically

- Blood pressure rises
- Stress on body and mind
- Numbness
- Rapid breathing
- Muscle tension
- Sweaty palms
- Face turning red
- Abuse of alcohol and drugs
- Acts of violence

## Emotionally

- Mood swings
- Angry outbursts
- Feeling irritated
- Resentment
- Feeling hurt
- Rage
- Disappointment
- Furious

# Strategies For Coping With Anger

Of all the emotions that we experience anger can be one of the most damaging to our mind, body and spirit. It is important to deal with anger as quickly as possible without hurting yourself and others. Here are some suggested ways to deal with your anger.

- Relaxations - simple relaxation tools like deep breathing and relaxation imaging can do a lot to reduce the anger you may be feeling.
- Change the way you think and act when you are angry. Instead of cursing and swearing, try taking a walk until you can talk about what is making you angry in a constructive manner.
- Use any of the four medicines (tobacco, cedar, sage or sweetgrass) and a prayer to sooth the spirit. It will help you keep what is importnat into focus.
- Attend a ceremony like a sweat lodge to help with your anger. In the lodge, you can be completely honest about your feelings.
- Attend an assertiveness training class and learn how to comfront issues in a healthy manner.
- Solve the problem which is confronting you. Running away from it or suppressing it will only make it worse in the long run.
- Find someone you can trust to talk about what is making you angry. Talking can be extremely therapeutic when done with someone who understands the dynamics of anger or someone who simply is a good listener.



# Anger Facts

- Anger is a normal response to things.
- Everyone experiences anger at one-time or another.
- Unresolved anger can cause physical and mental health problems.
- Depression is often anger that has been suppressed.
- People use a variety of conscious and unconscious processes to deal with their anger.
- Some people do not express their anger because they are afraid to hurt themselves or others.
- Others may not even know where their anger originates.
- The best and most desirable way to express anger is to express it in an assertive manner.
- Expressing anger assertively does not mean we act aggressively. It means communicating your feelings in a positive manner.
- Anger can be turned around into a source of strength, and can help motivate us.
- Unexpressed anger can create other problems. It can lead to passive-aggressive behaviour, resentment, bitterness and rage.
- On the other hand, when you deal with anger in an assertive way, anger can be used to make changes in yourself or your environment.
- Learning healthy anger management techniques are important.
- Unresolved anger is a block to our emotional growth and mental growth.
- It is important to deal with the issues and circumstances that cause us to feel angry. Try finding ways of dealing with these issues and understanding why you are angry in a healthy manner.



# Where To Go For Help

- Your Doctor
- Your Community Mental Health Worker
- Community Health Nurse
- A Counselor
- An Understanding Friend
- Support Groups
- Crisis Lines
- Healing Circles
- Traditional Healers
- Elders
- Grandparents



**Assaulted Women's Help Line:  
Toll Free 1-866-863-0511**

**Kids Help Phone:  
Toll Free 1-800-668-6868**

**Police: 911 or 1-888-310-1122**

***If you feel unable to control your anger,  
then it would be wise to seek help.***

# Notes

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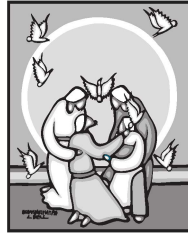
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