

# DEALING WITH ANGER

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# INTRODUCTION

Violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, depression, suicide, and so many other serious problems continue to increase in the adolescent population. Often, the underlying cause of these behaviors is a fundamental problem in understanding and coping with emotions. Anger, perhaps, is the most problematic of all emotions. On the one hand, it has the valuable function of calling our attention to problems that must be addressed. It motivates us to action and can help us to focus on important goals. On the other hand, it sometimes causes people to act without thinking, leading to ugly, hurtful behavior that can bring about destroyed relationships and broken homes.

Everyone feels anger in certain situations. It's a natural part of what it means to be human. Anger is one of our most primitive emotions. When we get angry, the body kicks in with its automatic "fight or flight" response. Our hearts are pumping, the adrenaline is flowing, and we are ready to take action. Unfortunately, we are physically primed to get out our anger at a time when we most need calm heads and well-chosen words instead!

As human emotions go, anger is one of the strongest. The decision to use angry feelings that stir within us has powerful consequences. While we can't control the fight or flight response that protects and defends us, we can control what we do about it—express it, deny it, or use it. Some people internalize their anger, hoarding it as if it were a precious commodity and tenaciously holding onto every perceived injustice. Others erupt like a volcano when the pressure of their anger becomes too great. But anger expressed spontaneously and without a filter often creates more anger. Letting it all out can be like throwing gasoline on a fire. Uncontrolled anger prevents us from getting what we want out of life. It alienates people and exhausts us because it consumes so much energy.

In contrast, a healthy way to handle anger is to acknowledge it and control its expression. Nothing is gained by letting it all out, just as nothing is gained by holding onto every past grievance. Both reactions are self-defeating and sometimes self-destructive. They increase the intensity of the anger and heighten the stress level. When you permit someone to make you so angry that you internalize your anger or explode, you become helpless. The other person is controlling your behavior, not you—someone else is pulling your strings. And if one particular attitude or behavior is self-defeating, it infects everything you do, think, and feel. It is far better to be in control of yourself and the situation.

It is important that middle school children learn to come to terms with their anger. When under control, anger can be useful and carries a minimum burden of stress. To turn anger into an asset, young people must learn to turn down the heat rather than letting the fire rage out of control. They have to decide what to allow themselves to get angry over rather than wasting energy on petty incidents. If middle school children start managing their anger well now, they will have less stressful lives and better relationships in the future. Furthermore, practicing good anger management techniques will form one of the most valuable habits young people can acquire to help them grow into well-adjusted adults.

The videotape *Dealing with Anger* gives middle school students the tools they need to recognize and deal with anger and frustration. The video explores a variety of situations that can trigger angry feelings. Each situation explores different reactions, both unhealthy and healthy. Viewers will see the

# INTRODUCTION

benefits of controlling their anger rather than letting anger control them. Along the way, the video hosts examine the consequences of misguided emotions and quick tempers. Young viewers will attain a better understanding of how patience and self-control can be powerful allies. In addition, a rich variety of print material is provided in this Teacher's Resource Book to reinforce the video and allow students to apply anger management techniques in their own lives.

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After viewing the videotape *Dealing with Anger* and participating in the class activities provided in this Teacher's Resource Book, your students will be able to:

- acknowledge that anger is a valuable emotion
- recognize the physical signs of anger
- gain an understanding of their feelings
- understand the importance of controlling their expression of anger
- take responsibility for their actions and reactions
- learn positive techniques to deal with their expression of anger
- identify common unhealthy responses to anger
- evaluate the sources of anger in their own lives
- determine how to respond to someone else's anger

# VIDEO SUMMARY

## *Dealing with Anger*

As the video opens, we are shown three slow motion scenes: A girl is sitting, eyes downcast, while her boyfriend is verbally berating her. A boy is doing a slow burn while his mother lectures him. Two kids are arguing face to face; one shoves the other. We hear: “Are you deaf or just stupid?” “When I tell you to be somewhere at a certain time, I expect you to be there!” “You got a problem?” “Come on, man, let’s go! You and me.”

Next, interview clips reveal what spurs different people to anger. The narrators then explain why we must learn how to deal with anger: Everyone feels anger, almost on a daily basis. Anger is there for a reason—it motivates us to action and sometimes helps us focus on important goals. Anger is one of the strongest emotions; it sometimes causes people to act without thinking and can lead to ugly, hurtful behavior.

Dr. Eva Feindler, psychologist and adolescent anger expert, appears on camera to point out how anger has gotten a bad rap and can be used to spark us to action.

A dramatization follows in which we see a girl named Erin sitting on her bed doing homework. The phone rings. It’s Erin’s friend, Kate. As the conversation progresses, Erin becomes more and more agitated. Kate puts Erin on the spot by suggesting that Erin asked a boy to the dance and the boy turned her down. Erin defends herself, saying that she didn’t ask him to the dance; rather, she says, she just asked him whom he was going with. Kate chuckles, “He *did* say no. I knew it!” Erin tries to beg off by saying she has a lot of homework. Kate probes, “You’re not mad, are you?” Erin denies it and says she’s just busy. After hanging up, Erin takes a homework sheet out of her book bag, wads it up angrily, and throws it away. Erin’s mother enters and asks if she has finished her homework. Erin says defensively, “I can’t help it if they give me too much work!” Her mom asks her not to raise her voice. Erin yells, “Just leave me alone! I’ve got a stomachache!” Her mother then grounds her. Erin puts a pillow over her head and screams.

The narrator appears and asks viewers to consider how Erin dealt with her anger and where her actions led. The video pauses.

When the tape resumes, Dr. Feindler talks about the different stages of anger.

The narrators return to the camera to comment on the dramatization. They claim that one big mistake Erin makes is that she fails to recognize her anger. A graphic appears with the phrase, “Recognize your anger.”

The scene between Erin, her friend, and her mother is replayed while the narrators provide commentary: Erin is angry with her friend, but by failing to recognize that and deal with it, she allows her anger to spill over. Her emotions affect her schoolwork, and she lashes out at her mother, who is not the real source of her anger. They caution, “The last thing you should do when dealing with anger is ignore it. It will just come out later in more explosive ways.”

## VIDEO SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

“If you stay aware,” one of the narrators continues, “you can recognize the signs in your body that tell you you are getting angry.”

A graphic shows the vocabulary of anger: irritation, annoyance, frustration, anger, rage, etc. The narrator recommends that since anger has many shades of intensity, you should try to recognize those feelings before they escalate into full-blown anger or rage.

Next, the narrators introduce the physical signs of anger: a hot feeling, faster breathing, a faster heartbeat, an upset stomach, shaky hands, and a lack of patience. They assert that recognizing these tell-tale signs is essential to managing anger. “If you ignore these signs, you really have no excuse when you behave poorly out of anger.”

In an interview montage, young people describe how anger feels: “If you pay attention to your body, you’ll know when you’re angry. And the sooner you know, the sooner you can do something about it.” “You might tell someone you’re not angry to avoid a fight, but sooner or later it will catch up with you. You’ll probably take it out on someone else. All that anger has to go somewhere.” “Some people ignore all the signs that tell them they’re angry. Maybe they feel bad about being mad.” “If you don’t admit you’re mad, stuff will build up until it explodes.”

In a second dramatization, PJ and his friend Mac are in the backyard getting ready to go skateboarding. When PJ grabs his board, he notices a wheel is broken and says angrily, “I’m gonna kill her!” PJ storms around the house where his little sister, Nicole, is playing with some friends. Mac advises, “Bud, don’t embarrass her in front of her friends.” But PJ ignores him and confronts Nicole, “You broke my board, didn’t you?” She admits, “Yeah. I was gonna tell...” He cuts her off: “What’s the matter with you?” She explains, “I wiped out. On a curb. I was trying ...” Again PJ interrupts, “Are you stupid? Why did you take it out?” He doesn’t let her answer as he continues his tirade: “You are so stupid, Nicole! You are dumb as dirt!” Nicole holds back tears as she says, “I’m gonna pay for it.” PJ replies, “That’s right you’re gonna pay for it! And don’t touch my stuff again. You’re too stupid to be trusted.” She apologizes, “Sorry.” PJ responds, “That’s right. Sorry and brain dead,” and storms off. Mac follows. Mac and Nicole’s friends look embarrassed.

The narrator comes on camera to state that even though PJ had every right to feel angry, he did not deal with his anger very well. The video pauses so viewers can discuss what they would do if they were in his shoes.

When the video resumes, Dr. Feindler describes how anger can cause you to bypass the brain and act impulsively.

The narrators reiterate that once you recognize who or what you’re angry at, you need to get a handle on how to express that anger.

Next, the dramatization is replayed. This time, when PJ begins to yell at Nicole, Mac says, “Just give it

## VIDEO SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

a minute. It's not right to just go off and blast her in front of everybody. Be cool for a minute." PJ takes a minute, then approaches his sister more civilly and asks to talk to her for a second. They walk toward the backyard. PJ says, smiling, "So how's your skateboarding lately, pretty solid?" The scene fades out.

The narrators emphasize that keeping control is the most challenging part of anger management. Even though it is difficult to do when you are hurt or treated unfairly, it is still your responsibility to keep some control.

A graphic displays techniques that can be used to deal with the expression of anger: count to ten; take deep breaths; walk away for a short time. The narrator stresses that these techniques allow your brain to take control of the situation and start thinking of the best solution.

Another graphic shows things you can do to relax yourself if you really feel angry and think you need a break from the situation: exercise, take a walk, listen to music, or watch a funny movie. The narrator says that when you do things to calm your body down, you can come back and deal with the source of your anger in the best way. "But remember, it is usually best to try to solve the problem. After you calm down, don't assume that your original problem is gone and forgotten. It could resurface."

In a series of interview clips, young people express their opinions: "It's never wrong to be mad...it's just how you deal with it that can be wrong or right." "If you channel it, you can use your anger in a positive way by getting stronger or learning to express yourself." "When I get mad, I shoot hoops in my backyard." "I write poems about my anger. That way, nobody gets hurt." "The more you learn to deal with anger, the more you can laugh about stuff instead of blowing up all the time." "You just have to take five before you react—calm down and use your brain before you jump all over somebody." "Anger doesn't make very good choices. If you let it choose for you, you could do things you really regret, things you can never take back."

Following is a dramatization that takes place in a classroom. Anton announces to other students that Toby couldn't do a single chin-up. "Even the girls were better than that," he laughs. Toby tries to ignore him as his face turns red. Anton continues to torment Toby: "Hey, what's wrong, Toby? You hard of hearing? Wait a minute. I think Toby's gonna cry." Toby looks at the teacher, then stands up. Anton says, "You gonna tattle on me, crybaby? Go ahead. Nobody listens to a crybaby." Toby explodes out of his seat and rushes Anton, who springs up to meet him. They grapple as the frame freezes.

The video pauses so viewers can discuss the following questions: "How much taunting is a person supposed to take? Is this boy justified in getting physical?"

Dr. Feindler again appears on camera to talk about how we need to make choices in how we deal with our anger.

## VIDEO SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

The narrators then list what Toby did wrong. First, he fails to recognize that his anger is building. Then when his anger rises, he doesn't take any steps to control his reaction and engage his brain. But most important, he winds up dealing with his anger in the worst possible way—with physical violence.

The dramatization is replayed. This time, when Anton makes cruel remarks, Toby takes a minute and cracks his knuckles, loosens his neck, and takes a deep breath. When Anton continues his taunts, Toby looks at him and says, "How would it be if I meet with you after school and you can tell me every little thing you don't like about me?" Anton responds, "Is that some kind of threat?" Toby replies, "Did I threaten you? I just want to give you a chance to run your mouth without boring everybody else in the class." Two girls next to Anton snicker. Embarrassed, Anton ignores Toby and starts working on his assignment.

The narrators present techniques for working through anger: 1) If you can, deal with a problem by talking it out. A reasonable chat can save a lot of pain. 2) Be honest about your feelings. You can't solve anything if you don't identify the problem. 3) Don't deny a problem or sweep it under the rug. The object is to deal with anger, not conceal it. 4) If it makes sense, seek help from an adult like a teacher, parent, or coach. Everyone needs help with problems sometimes, and when we are angry we are often also vulnerable. Telling the right person can help.

In the next segment, interviews with kids reveal their thoughts: "Yelling or getting violent has never solved a single problem. It just makes things twice as bad." "It can be scary to talk to someone when you're mad, but the more you do it, the better you get at it." "You have to stand up for yourself, but that doesn't mean you have a right to punch out everyone who makes you mad." "It's never as hard to work things out as you first think it will be." "It really helps sometimes to let out your feelings with exercise."

The narrators close with the thought, "Getting mad is no excuse for losing control. Sometimes, anger just happens. But how we deal with that anger is up to us. It's a choice."

# **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## ANGER

ACTIVITY

1

### Anger

*Sometimes anger  
Climbs in your heart  
Claws through your veins  
Storms through your limbs  
And clouds up your brain  
Sometimes anger's like  
A calculus question that's  
Too hard to explain  
Sometimes anger's all consuming  
But anger's never all the same  
Because  
some anger is hot  
some anger is wild  
and outrageous  
Some anger's so  
Cold that it's pain is  
contagious  
When anger's out of  
Control  
Then that's rage  
And it's dangerous  
Some anger is quiet  
But silent anger's  
Still bruising  
Sometimes anger's  
The fear that there's  
Something you're losing  
Some anger's  
a response  
to a blow from injustice  
And when that anger's  
Organized then that  
Indignation's constructive  
Some anger's  
So deep it provokes  
A hope for revenge  
But that wrath's a  
Run-on sentence  
That doesn't know*

continued...

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**ANGER (CONTINUED)**

ACTIVITY

**1**

*how to end  
and sometimes  
you're furious at a friend  
when you're really mad at some stranger  
so you lose your cool  
because you've  
misplaced your anger  
but some  
anger is normal  
some anger is fine  
it's ok to get angry  
just don't get crazy and stay  
angry all the time*

by Steven Coleman

**Instructions:** Write a brief essay, giving your reaction to this poem which was performed in the video. What is the message of the poem? Consider writing your own poem or collaborate with other students to write and/or perform a poem on anger.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT MAKES YOU MAD?

ACTIVITY  
2

**Part 1:** Read the list of common anger triggers or things that “make you mad” below. You may have experienced some of these before. Place a checkmark (✓) next to those which have consistently triggered your anger.

### Common Anger Triggers

- \_\_\_\_\_ being late for class
- \_\_\_\_\_ being late to a social event
- \_\_\_\_\_ being misunderstood
- \_\_\_\_\_ people canceling plans on you
- \_\_\_\_\_ friends not returning things you lent them
- \_\_\_\_\_ others not letting you take your turn
- \_\_\_\_\_ breaking something by mistake
- \_\_\_\_\_ trying to repair something without success
- \_\_\_\_\_ getting shoved while standing in line
- \_\_\_\_\_ seeing someone wearing a lost jacket of yours
- \_\_\_\_\_ being called names
- \_\_\_\_\_ doing a group project with a classmate who doesn't do his/her share of the work

**Part 2:** Next, add your own examples of anger triggers.

### Additional Anger Triggers

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

When you have finished your list, take a good look at what you have identified. Compare your list with those of your classmates. What are the top five anger triggers for your class? What are some ways you can prepare yourself to handle anger when those situations occur? See Fact Sheets 1 and 2 for some ideas.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## FEELING WITH ANGER—ANGER WITH FEELINGS

ACTIVITY  
**3**

### **Part 1:**

Humans are not limited to three emotions: mad, glad, and sad. With your group, brainstorm all the feelings that may accompany anger. List them below. Think about the feelings we experience before, during, and after we get angry. For help, ask your teacher for a copy of Fact Sheet 3, *List of Emotions and Feelings*.

- |    |       |     |       |
|----|-------|-----|-------|
| 1. | _____ | 6.  | _____ |
| 2. | _____ | 7.  | _____ |
| 3. | _____ | 8.  | _____ |
| 4. | _____ | 9.  | _____ |
| 5. | _____ | 10. | _____ |

### **Part 2:**

Now make a list of healthy ways that a person can “CHILL OUT.” Be prepared to compare your group’s list of healthy ways to handle anger with those of the rest of your classmates.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now, compare your suggestions against those listed in Fact Sheet 4, *Chill Out!*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## FORTUNE COOKIES

ACTIVITY  
**4**

The following messages are from Chinese fortune cookies. Choose two and write a paragraph about each, commenting on the wisdom of the messages. Do you agree or disagree with the statements? Can you apply them to your life?

1) Watch your temper. Short temper is a loss of face.

2) He who is slow to wrath is of great understanding.

3) Anger is as useless as the waves of the ocean without wind.

4) The greatest remedy for anger is delay.

5) Anger, like fog, often distorts the way.

6) Better not to see an insult than to avenge it.

Now, invent your own fortune cookie saying: \_\_\_\_\_

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Source: Tavris, Carol. *Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## WORD JUMBLE

ACTIVITY  
**5A**

Find the words in the letter jumble below. You will have to look up, down, diagonally, and backwards.

**anger**  
**annoy**  
**control**

**explode**  
**frustration**  
**irritate**

**rage**  
**scream**  
**temper**

A	I	C	Q	O	M	U	E	H	D	M	A
F	R	U	S	T	R	A	T	I	O	N	F
D	R	F	S	V	I	W	E	X	O	R	L
L	I	J	C	E	T	U	Y	R	K	I	E
O	T	U	I	K	A	Z	F	L	C	Y	P
B	A	V	E	O	S	N	H	A	U	S	L
H	T	M	B	Q	Y	W	G	N	P	C	O
D	E	R	N	O	D	G	X	E	G	A	R
E	K	V	N	T	J	T	A	Z	R	S	T
G	P	N	G	T	E	M	P	E	R	W	N
X	A	R	I	B	N	F	Q	I	U	J	O
E	Y	E	X	P	L	O	D	E	A	O	C

Now use each of the words in a sentence.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## “WORD JUMBLE” ANSWER KEY

ACTIVITY  
**5B**

Find the words in the letter jumble below. You will have to look up, down, diagonally, and backwards.

**anger**  
**annoy**  
**control**

**explode**  
**frustration**  
**irritate**

**rage**  
**scream**  
**temper**

A	I	C	Q	O	M	U	E	H	D	M	A
F	R	U	S	T	R	A	T	I	O	N	F
D	R	F	S	V	I	W	E	X	O	R	L
L	I	J	C	E	T	U	Y	R	K	I	E
O	T	U	I	K	A	Z	F	L	C	Y	P
B	A	V	E	O	S	N	H	A	U	S	L
H	T	M	B	Q	Y	W	G	N	P	C	O
D	E	R	N	O	D	G	X	E	G	A	R
E	K	V	N	T	J	T	A	Z	R	S	T
G	P	N	G	T	E	M	P	E	R	W	N
X	A	R	I	B	N	F	Q	I	U	J	O
E	Y	E	X	P	L	O	D	E	A	O	C

**ROLE PLAYS IN REFLECTIVE LISTENING**ACTIVITY  
**6**

For this activity, you will need a copy of Fact Sheet 5, *Reflective Listening*. When you use “reflective listening,” you listen for the problem and clarify it to the person who is angry with you. For example, “Let me understand. You’re mad at me because...”

**Instructions:** Choose one of the dialogue openers below and use reflective listening techniques to complete the scenario. Remember, the first person’s dialogue should be conveyed with anger. Act out your role play for your classmates.

- A. *I hate it when you talk like that. You sound like such a know-it-all. You drive me and everybody else crazy.*
- B. (Parent:) *You are an inconsiderate kid! You never think about anybody but yourself. I am tired of being ignored by you. I’ve asked you to clean your room three times this weekend, and it’s still not done! I’ve had it!*
- C. *I swear the next time you do that I am just going to slap you! You are always interrupting me.*
- D. *It must be nice to be you—so perfect at all times, never making a mistake. How can you stand hanging around with the rest of us inferior beings?*



Sometimes when you're angry, you just want to blurt out whatever is on your mind. But if you take a moment before you open your mouth, you can find other ways to express yourself. Instead of an angry response, you can choose to get your point across in a way that's easier for the other person to hear.

**Part 1:** In each of the cases below, you may feel the anger start to build. Choose the response you think would be best:

1. Your friend cheats off you on a test. What do you do?
  - a) Say, "Why don't you study for once? You're such a cheater."
  - b) Don't say anything, but start spreading rumors about your friend.
  - c) Explain, "I studied hard for this test, and it upset me that you were copying my answers. If you need help next time, I'll help you study beforehand."
2. Another student recklessly dashes around a corner, causing you to drop all your books. What do you do?
  - a) Snap, "Watch where you're going."
  - b) Say nothing but be mad inside.
  - c) Smile and say, "Whoops! I guess you didn't see me."

In both cases, did you choose c)? This response seems to be a good balance: You are not letting your anger stew, and at the same time you are not lashing out in anger, which might make you even angrier and cause the other person to join you in a battle of words. In the first situation, response c) deals with the problem directly without any name calling ("cheater"). In the second situation, choice c) doesn't make more of the situation than it is, probably just a careless mistake—this is a time when it's best just to shrug your shoulders and not waste any energy over letting yourself get upset.

**Part 2:** What would you do in the situations below? Write out an appropriate response on a separate sheet. Then role play the situations with a classmate.

3. You are expecting an important call about a camping trip this weekend. Your older sister is on the phone constantly and ignores the "call waiting" beep.
4. You loan your favorite CD to a friend, and s/he wrecks it.
5. You're playing soccer when another player kicks you in the shins, but the referee calls the foul on you.

Refer to Fact Sheet 1 for *Techniques for Dealing with Anger*.



**GUARDING AGAINST ANGER**ACTIVITY  
**10**

When we have low self-esteem or believe there are only a few things we do well, we are more susceptible to feeling bad. This includes feelings of anger. Some people have reported feeling frustrated and letting themselves get angry over small things. However, people who believe they are competent to do many things are less likely to let things bother them. The fuller our lives are, the more we can resist getting angry over the little things.

Now is your chance to think about all the things you have told yourself you would like to try to do, but never have. Sometimes we tell ourselves we can't afford it, we don't have the time, we wouldn't be any good at it anyway, etc. What have you secretly wanted to try? Perhaps you have always wanted to try out for a sports team, learn how to dance, bake something special, plant a garden, learn to swim...

**PART A:** Take some time now and make a list of all the things you have wanted to do but have never tried. For now, do not worry about the reasons you haven't tried. Just make a list.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**PART B:** Now, choose one of the items from your list and make a real commitment to try it. Name your goal. Then list the steps can you take to start making your dream a reality.

**GOAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

**STEPS YOU WILL TAKE TOWARD ACHIEVING YOUR GOAL:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**PHYSICAL RELAXATION**

When we are angry, we are physically tense. The body is ready for action. It is not possible to be relaxed and angry at the same time. These are incompatible responses. A great way to work through your anger is to try some relaxation techniques. As your heart rate slows and your muscles relax, you will find your anger subsiding.

**Instructions for Relaxation**

1. Find a quiet place.
2. You may choose to put on some peaceful music or a tape of nature sounds.
3. Sit or lie down in a position that allows all your limbs to move freely.
4. Close your eyes.
5. Now, systematically tense and release almost every muscle in your body. Allow at least ten seconds in a tensed position for each of the muscle groups and then release. Begin with your feet and work up to your head. Follow the guide below:
  - Toes
  - Ankles
  - Calves
  - Knees
  - Thighs
  - Buttocks
  - Stomach
  - Chest
  - Shoulders
  - Biceps
  - Wrists
  - Fingers: Tense together as fists
  - Neck: Tilt it forward, to the left, and to the right, but NOT back
  - Clamp down on your jaw
  - Scrunch up your face

**CREATE A UNIQUE PEACEFUL PLACE**

Create a peaceful scenario. Only you know what is most calming for you. A list of potential scenarios is provided for you. In each case, we have created a brief beginning to help get your ideas flowing. Choose one, and develop a soothing story line. You should become familiar with the scenario so that you can easily tell it to yourself whenever you need a moment to calm down.

**Sample Scenarios**

1. You arrive alone at the beach. You have chosen a day when there are few people around. You look out over the beach and see lots of sand and water but hardly any other people. The wind is blowing just enough to provide a cool breeze. You find the spot where you will set up and walk toward it. You have a great big blanket, or beach chair...
2. You are taking the ski lift up to the top of a mountain. It is a brisk, cool day but you do not feel cold. There are only a few skiers around. The snow is perfect. It is very quiet. The sky is bright blue and shines all the more against the white snow. You get off the lift and proceed to the trail entrance you like best. As you start down the trail, you feel great. Your body is moving in just the right rhythm...
3. You have found the perfect trail to hike. It is a crisp fall day and the woods are ablaze with color. The leaves are a vibrant red, orange, and yellow. You have a small backpack with a few things for your comfort. Your legs feel great. The hike is easy. You notice some small animals getting ready for the winter. You pass by a pond and pause to watch the fish. You are heading for the top of the trail, where you know there is a wonderful view...
4. You have designed the perfect room. You sit in the most comfortable soft leather chair. In front of you is the top-of-the-line technology in television, video, and stereo. You have a complex remote system at your fingertips and you simply need to push buttons to arrange the lights, TV, or music just the way you like it. You may decide to listen to some music and recline in your chair. You might have a snack brought in from your personal chef...

**Now it's your turn. Create your own unique peaceful place, or use a variation of one of those described above.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## LESSONS IN LIFE

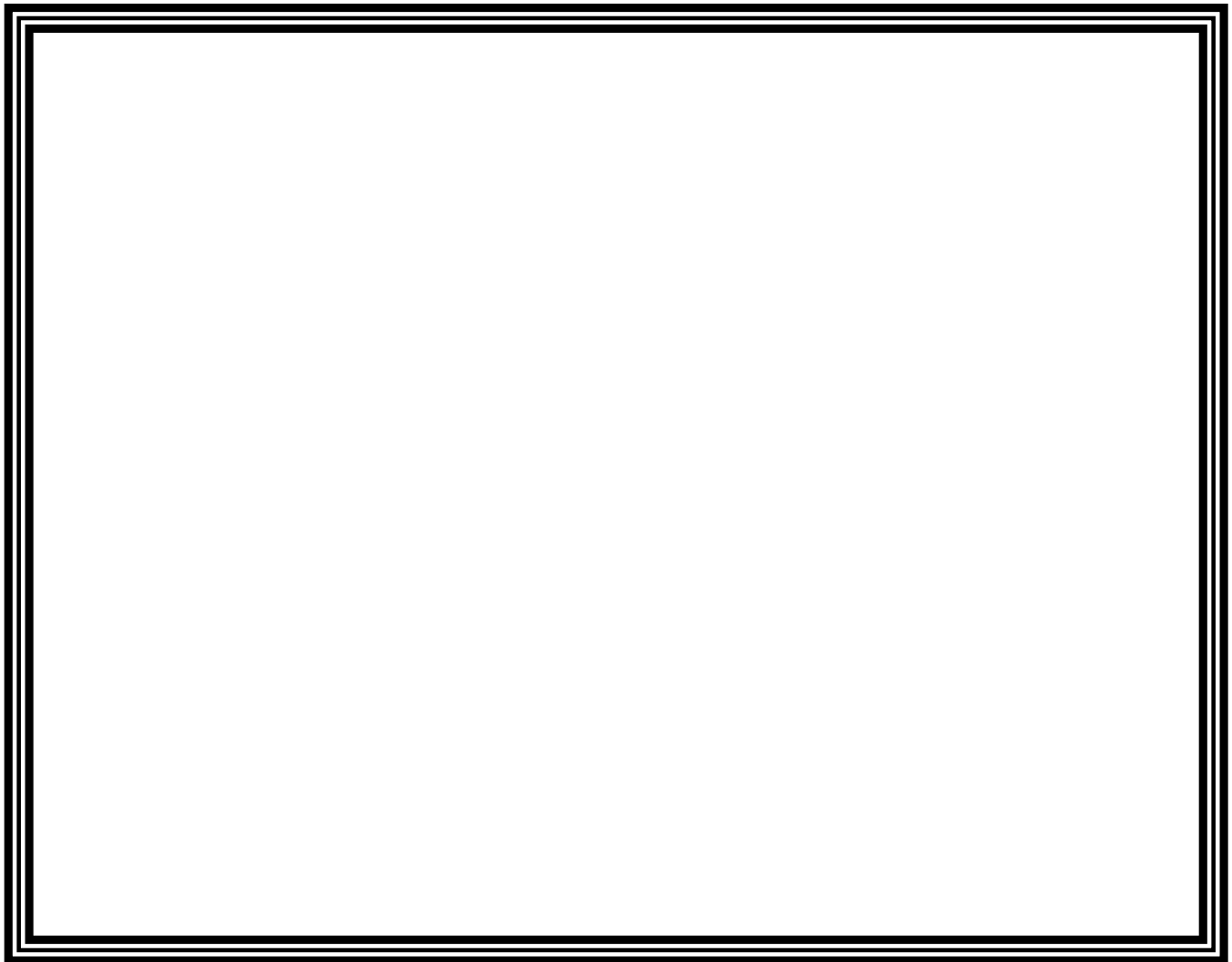
ACTIVITY  
**13**

Here are some examples taken from the Internet, entitled, "I've learned":

I've learned...

- ...that you can do something in an instant that will give you a heartache for life.
- ...that it's taking me a long time to become the person I want to be.
- ...that either you control your attitude or it controls you.
- ...that it takes years to build up trust and only seconds to destroy it.

Now you write something that you have learned in life. You can place your "lesson" below, or you can design a more decorative frame for it.



# **FACT SHEETS**

**We all get angry from time to time. Getting mad is no excuse for losing control. Sometimes anger just happens, but how we deal with that anger is up to us.**

1. Recognize your anger. Stay aware so you can tune into your body's signals that let you know you are getting angry: a hot feeling, faster breathing, a faster heartbeat, an upset stomach, shaky hands, and a lack of patience. If you recognize these signs, you can prepare yourself so you don't act poorly out of anger.
2. Admit that you feel angry. You have a right to your feelings.
3. Think the situation through calmly, and identify what's making you angry. You can't solve anything if you don't pinpoint the problem.
4. Ask yourself if the situation is worth getting angry over.
5. Get a handle on how you express your anger. It's your responsibility to keep some control, even if you are treated unfairly. For example:
  - a. Count to ten or walk away for a short time. These techniques allow your brain to take control of the situation and start thinking of the best solution.
  - b. If you feel really angry, take a break from the situation. To help you relax, try the following suggestions: exercise, take a walk, listen to music, or watch a funny movie. After you have calmed down, you can come back and deal with the situation in the best way.
6. If you can, deal with the problem by talking it out. Express your feelings in an honest and forthright way, and be prepared to respond to criticism calmly. A reasonable chat can save a lot of pain.
7. Give the other person a chance to explain. Show that you're interested in what the other person has to say by listening attentively, without showing signs of hostility.
8. Use the techniques for *Reflective Listening* described in **Fact Sheet 5**.
9. Don't deny a problem or sweep it under the rug. The object is to deal with anger, not conceal it.
10. Never use physical violence or yelling to express your anger. It just makes things twice as bad.
11. If it makes sense, seek help from an adult like a teacher, parent, or coach. Everyone needs help with problems sometimes, and when we are angry we are often also vulnerable. Telling the right person can help.

Arm yourself with the following self-talk statements. Use them as tools to defuse your anger.

**BE READY FOR THE “ANGER TRIGGERS”!**

“This is going to make me mad, but I can handle it without getting into trouble.”

“I realize I’m just tired and I don’t feel great, so I am not going to get upset.”

“I am capable of handling my emotions.”

“I don’t want to be so serious about everything—I can use my sense of humor.”

“I cannot control other people, but I can control my response to them.”

**WHEN YOUR BUTTON IS PUSHED:**

“Stop! I do not want to give this person or situation the power to make me do or say something that will get me into trouble.”

“I’m cool. I’m in control. In fact, I’m smiling!”

“Just because this person is a jerk doesn’t mean I have to be one.”

“I am not going to make more of this than I have to.”

“Will winning this argument make a difference in my life five years from now? Or even five days or five months from now?”

“Who cares if this person is calling me names? His/Her opinion doesn’t count.”

# LIST OF EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

FACT  
SHEET  
**3**

## How do you feel?

abandoned	evil	obsessed
agonized	excited	odd
afraid	exhausted	optimistic
angry	fearful	outraged
annoyed	frantic	overwhelmed
anxious	frustrated	pained
ashamed	frightened	panicked
awkward	fulfilled	pessimistic
betrayed	furious	pressured
bitter	guilty	proud
bold	happy	quarrelsome
bored	hateful	raging
brave	helpless	rebellious
burdened	hopeful	rejected
capable	hopeless	restless
challenged	horrified	sad
cheated	hurt	scared
childish	hysterical	secure
competitive	infuriated	shocked
condemned	intimidated	sneaky
confused	irritated	sorrowful
cruel	isolated	stunned
crushed	jealous	stupid
deceitful	jumpy	suffering
defeated	left out	tempted
depressed	lonely	tense
destructive	longing	threatened
different	loved	tired
disturbed	mean	trapped
dominated	miserable	troubled
doubtful	neglected	ugly
empty	nervous	uneasy
envious	obnoxious	worried

**Learn healthy ways to handle that anger!**

**GET RID OF THE ENERGY:**

RUN, WALK, PLAY BALL, CLEAN, SING—  
DO ANYTHING PHYSICAL!

**SCREAM:**

FIND A REMOTE LOCATION AND YELL AT THE TOP OF YOUR LUNGS,  
OR SCREAM INTO A PILLOW IF YOU CAN'T GET FAR ENOUGH AWAY.

**WRITE/JOURNAL/DRAW:**

EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS.  
TRY WRITING A LETTER TO THE PERSON YOU ARE ANGRY WITH,  
BUT DON'T MAIL IT.

**TALK TO SOMEONE YOU CAN TRUST:**

A FRIEND, FAMILY MEMBER, TEACHER, COUNSELOR, ETC.  
BE CALM AND TALK IN "I" MESSAGES.  
THIS HELPS YOU SORT OUT WHAT YOU ARE ANGRY ABOUT.

**TAKE A BREAK:**

GO SEE A MOVIE OR WATCH TELEVISION.  
GET YOUR MIND OFF WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU.

**ANALYZE THE SITUATION:**

STEP BACK AND ASK YOURSELF WHAT THE BASIS OF THE ANGER IS  
AND IF IT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE A FEW MONTHS FROM NOW.

**CONFRONT:**

AFTER YOU HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH YOUR ANGER,  
TALK TO THE PERSON YOU ARE ANGRY WITH—  
A GOOD RESPONSE WILL MAKE THE RELATIONSHIP STRONGER;  
A BAD RESPONSE WILL MAKE YOU RE-EVALUATE THE RELATIONSHIP.

**GIVE YOURSELF TIME AND SPACE:**

REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THE SITUATION  
IF YOU ARE TOO ANGRY TO BE RATIONAL.  
WALK AWAY AND COME BACK WHEN YOU CAN BE CALM.  
(SAME GOES IF SOMEONE IS INAPPROPRIATELY  
EXPRESSING ANGER TOWARD YOU.)

**LET IT GO AND MOVE ON!**

One of the things that makes most people angry is feeling misunderstood or not heard. Yet often when people are angry, they are so focused on their own thoughts and feelings that they do not hear what someone else is saying to them. “Reflective listening” is simple and yet often so hard to do. All it requires is listening to what is being said and reflecting the message back to the person who said it. Let’s look at an example where the person does not use reflective listening:

1. *Dave: What’s wrong with you?! I told you to pick me up at 8:00. Now we’re going to be late. Why don’t you ever show up on time? I can’t stand walking in late. You are such an idiot!*  
*Fred: Don’t call me an idiot! Get someone else to pick you up. I don’t need this garbage...*  
*Dave: YOU don’t need this garbage?! I’m the one who has to walk in late...*

In this case, Dave attacked, and Fred attacked right back. However, what might have happened if Fred had chosen NOT to respond to Dave’s abusive tone but instead to react to the situation? Let’s see what happens when Fred uses reflective listening:

2. *Dave: What’s wrong with you?! I told you to pick me up at 8:00. Now we’re going to be late. Why don’t you ever show up on time? I can’t stand walking in late. You are such an idiot!*  
*Fred: You’re mad at me because I’m late. You did say 8:00. I’m sorry I’m late.*  
*Dave: Okay (heaves a sigh as he lets some of the tension drain). I just really hate being late...*

Now the conversation can take a different direction. Fred takes responsibility for his lateness AND lets Dave know he hears him by clearly stating why Dave is mad at him. Fred should also mention the name-calling. He can do it at the moment by saying, “No need to call me an idiot,” or he can wait until a later time when Dave is calmer.

Keep it simple. When someone is angry with you, see if you can carefully listen for the actual problem. Then say, “**So, you’re angry at me for...**” You may not have done anything wrong. For example:

3. *Susan: Stop switching radio stations! I hate when you do that! It is so annoying. Just pick something and stick with it. You’re so difficult to please!*  
*Jane: So, you’re mad at me because I have been switching radio stations?*  
*Susan: Well yes, well no... I don’t know, it’s just...*

Obviously, something is bothering Susan. Jane may have nothing to do with it, or maybe Susan feels that Jane is hard to please. Whatever the problem, it is better that Jane did not respond in anger. That would have just led to more attacking and character assault.

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## INTERNET RESOURCES

### *Ticked Off Time Bomb?*

<http://more.abcnews.go.com/sections/business/workingwounded/ww990528.html>

### *Anger and Aggression*

<http://mentalhelp.net/psychhelp/chap7/>

<http://helping.apa.org/warningsigns/reasons/html>

### *Alternatives to Anger*

<http://www.family-counseling.com/habit.htm>

### *Anger Management*

<http://www.angermgmt.com>

### *Anger in Relationships*

<http://terra.oscs.montana.edu/wwwpb/home/anger.html>

### *Counseling Center at the University of Illinois*

<http://www.couns.uiuc.edu/brochure.htm>