

Anger Worksheet

The Incident

What is your relationship with the person you are accused of arguing with? (Partner, relative, friend, colleague)

In your opinion, how do you think the person you fought with felt during the incident?

In hindsight, why do you think the other person acted in the way they did?

Apart from yourself, who did your behaviour affect?

How can you resolve things with the people who have been affected by your behaviour?

Would you want to resolve things with those people?

Have you ever thought back and wondered what you were thinking just before an incident occurred in which you got in trouble? Our thoughts affect how we feel, which affects how we will act. Even though our actions are what we get punished for, it is our thoughts that create the trouble in the first place.

Thinking Quiz

Next to each statement write SA for strongly agree, A for agree, D for disagree and SD for strongly disagree.

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | In the majority of situations I am in, the other person started it, and I couldn't help it |
| _____ | I could not have done anything differently to prevent the situation |
| _____ | I do not hurt other people's feelings |
| _____ | It is ridiculous for people to get upset if I say mean things about them |
| _____ | I am careful to think about how the other person must be feeling |
| _____ | I do not like "boring" things and most of the time will refuse to do them |
| _____ | I frequently forget to complete tasks I am set |
| _____ | If a person does not give me what I want, I will take it myself |
| _____ | People should trust me, but I usually do not trust them |
| _____ | Usually when I think something is going to happen, it does |
| _____ | If things do not happen as I expect, I get very angry |
| _____ | I ensure I have all the facts before making a decision |
| _____ | I make quick decisions, based on my feelings at the time |
| _____ | I often refuse to back down, even on little points |
| _____ | When I consider my future, I have thoughts of tremendous success, but I often do not think of the steps involved in achieving that success. |
| _____ | I hate being anything less than #1 |
| _____ | When people criticise me, I do not let it affect me, but will either ignore it or learn from it. |
| _____ | I am not afraid |
| _____ | Fear can be constructive |
| _____ | I can control people with my anger |
| _____ | I do not get mad, I get even |
| _____ | I sometimes use threats, intimidation, or sarcasm to deal with people. |
| _____ | I feel good when I overcome or have power over other people |

Now study the following chart: (Based on research by Stanton Samenow)

Good Thinking	Thinking Error
1. I am responsible for what I do and say.	1. Someone else causes me to act the way I do.
2. I accept that if I refuse to do something there may be consequences.	2. I say "I can't" when I do not want to do something.
3. I know that my behaviour can hurt others, including their feelings.	3. I do not hurt other people; they just claim that their feelings are hurt.
4. I do not want to hurt others because I do not like feeling hurt.	4. I do not care how other people feel or if I hurt them. Life is a game anyway.
5. Life is not all fun and games; sometimes you have to do boring or difficult tasks.	5. I hate having to do boring tasks, or hard work, so I avoid them.
6. Everyone should play by the rules and do the things they are obligated to do.	6. I hate rules and "must-dos" and refuse or ignore them.

7.	With other people, I try to be fair, to give and take so there is a balance, and I respect their property and their boundaries.	7.	I watch out for myself and always try to get my own way.
8.	I know that trust must be earned and takes time to grow.	8.	I do not trust other people and they do not trust me.
9.	Success comes from hard work, planning and learning from mistakes. I should not expect too much, too fast.	9.	When I think something will happen, it will.
10.	I look carefully at facts before I make a decision.	10.	I make decisions quickly based on how I feel at the moment.
11.	We all make mistakes and can learn from them.	11.	I am proud that I never make mistakes. My point of view is the right point of view.
12.	I think ahead step by step to work things out for my future.	12.	I do what I want and believe that the future will take care of itself.
13.	Success takes hard work and comes in stages, not all at once.	13.	I am good at things quickly without trying, and hate being less than #1.
14.	Criticism can help me to learn. I ignore putdowns without merit, and learn from putdowns that are helpful. I want friends to be honest with me.	14.	I get very upset if someone puts me down, or things do not go my way.
15.	I know and accept my fears and try to overcome them. Everyone has fears.	15.	Fear is a weakness, so I am never afraid.
16.	I know what triggers my anger, so now I choose when and how to express my anger so as not to hurt others. I see and accept other people's weaknesses so I am patient and tolerant of others.	16.	I get angry when I do not get my own way and sometimes use anger to get my way.
17.	I do not use power to control others. I earn power through good work and use it only to help people, never hurt them.	17.	I feel great when I have power and have control over other people to get my way and win. I love being "top dog".

After reading the chart above, which of the 'Thinking Errors' mentioned, do you think you possess? (List the number from the chart)

Copy the 'Good Thinking' points that you should work towards that is across from these numbers on the chart.

Your Thoughts During The Incident

What caused the start or build up to this incident?

In the incident, during which you got into trouble, what was the situation that you observed directly before you did something that got you into trouble?

What were you thinking?

How did you feel during the incident?

How did your thoughts make you feel?

What did you do?

What thoughts led you to choose that behaviour? Select two 'Thinking Errors' from the chart above.

Correct Thinking

There are several things that you could have thought about, which would have helped you to avoid what you did. Please answer these questions:

- i. Did you think of the consequences before you acted (remember if anything can go wrong, it will)?
Yes No

- ii. Did you think about how similar actions by yourself have hurt others or yourself in the past?
Yes No
- iii. Did you think about how it would make the other person feel?
Yes No
- iv. Did you think about how it would make other people that you care about feel?
Yes No
- v. Did you think about whether your action was right or wrong?
Yes No

OR instead, you could have thought things that made you want to do the wrong thing: Were you excited because you remembered similar things you had done in the past? Was it exciting?

You probably did what you did to get something that you value (e.g. attention, power, respect or excitement). What were you trying to get for yourself?

Did you gain the thing of value that you were trying to get?

During the time just before the incident, is there a different opinion you could have had, or a different way you could have thought about the other persons' actions? Give an example.

Which of these thoughts may have helped you to feel differently and not behave as you did? Tick all those that apply:

- I could have stopped and thought about how my actions might harm others and the effect my behaviour would have on myself and witnesses.
- I could have realised that I was expecting too much, so that I would be prepared to be disappointed
- I could have looked for the facts, and waited before judging instead of jumping to a conclusion.
- I could have tried to be open to other people's opinions
- I could have thought and planned ahead so I could avoid the situation
- I could have tried to learn from my mistakes
- I could have ignored put downs that had no merit, or learned from criticism that was merited
- I could have accepted my fear, and tried to overcome it, or used it to learn
- I could have been more realistic about the world, so I would not have been so angry when things were not going my way.
- I could have looked for power through doing 'good' things instead of by trying to control other people.
- I could have reminded myself that I am no better or worse than other people
- I could have looked for the genuine value in the other person
- I could have accepted the other person's weaknesses.
- Other: _____

What could you have done instead of what you did? (Tick all those which apply)

- Observed my anger rather than acting on it
- Admitted that I had made a mistake
- Treated others with respect
- Asked politely for what I wanted
- Followed the rules
- Thought about my actions before acting
- Tried harder
- Kept a positive attitude
- Other: _____

What were the good choices and what were the bad choices in how you acted?

- a. Good choices _____
- b. Bad choices _____

Anger

- a. **Instinct**
People get angry when someone or something interferes with what they are doing or want to do. Also people get angry when somebody is angry at them.

In this incident did you feel that somebody was interfering with what you wanted to do? If so, then what was it that you wanted to do?

Was the other person angry at you?

The opposites of anger are patience and tolerance. How could you have been more patient of the person?

After you have had an incident in which you have been very angry, you should ask yourself these three questions:

- a. What is it that I fear?
- b. Am I expecting something that is not realistic?
- c. Is this a control issue?

b. **Fear**

Most people do not realise that anger is produced by fear: fear that things will not turn out as you want them to, fear of a putdown, fear of someone not meeting your expectations. Weak people deny being afraid, but a strong person knows he has fears, knows what his fears are and tries to overcome them. Fear can be valuable and serves a purpose.

Are you willing to accept your fears?

What do you fear that makes you angry?

c. **Expectations**

When people expect things that are not likely to happen, they are likely to get angry when things do not turn out as they expected. If a person assumes things and does not examine the facts, then that person may expect things that are not likely to happen. Whenever we set our expectations too high, we are setting ourselves up for anger. Always look at the facts first.

Describe a time when you became angry because you expected something different than what happened.

How can you prepare yourself for disappointments?

d. **Control**

Many people use their anger to try to control others. But you can only control three things: your thoughts, what you move toward, and what you move away from.

In the incident for which you got into trouble, were you trying to control or change somebody else? Explain.

How could you have controlled or changed your own thoughts?

What should you have moved toward?

What should you have moved away from?

e. **Triggers**

There are several important things you can do to control how you act when you are angry.

The first is to know your own triggers. Our brains collect information on situations that have made us angry in the past. When similar situations arise, we are more likely to react with anger unless we are aware of those triggers and choose to control our actions.

Each of us has something that can cause us to get very angry. What is it with you?

What type of put-down gets you most angry?

The situation that made you the angriest in your life was when:

What type of situation is most likely to get you really angry in the future?

How are you preparing yourself for the next situation in which you get angry?

If other people push our triggers (as they will), it will make us angry very quickly. Anger happens so fast, and during the first few seconds of anger, a person has trouble thinking anything that does not support that anger. It is very important that you know what your triggers are and that you are prepared for situations where it is likely

they will be pushed, so you can plan ahead of time how you will respond, instead of making the decision once you are angry.

To help you understand your anger, answer these questions:

Where do I find myself getting angry most often?

What kind of things make me most angry? Tick all those that apply:

- When someone teases me
- When someone is angry with me
- When someone touches me
- When someone puts me down to my face
- Being ordered around
- When someone talks behind my back
- When someone tries to take something from me that I care about
- Other: _____

Is there any special trigger that makes me angry, but might not make others angry?

With whom do I get angry most often? Tick all those that apply:

- People in authority
- Other adults
- Children
- Family
- Other: _____

How do I deal with my anger?

In the incident for which you got into trouble, how much control did you feel you had over yourself?

How do you usually calm yourself?

How are you calming yourself right now?

Do any of these strategies work for you once you are angry? Tick all those that apply:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Positive thoughts | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time-out | <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music | <input type="checkbox"/> Accepting consequences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercising | <input type="checkbox"/> Assertive (not aggressive) behaviour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Counting to ten | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meditation or prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> Observing my anger |

f. **Avoid**

If possible, you can simply avoid these situations. This cannot always be done. If you are aware of a situation arising, leave the scene immediately if you can.

What are you going to try to avoid?

g. **Observe**

The second step is to recognise when you are getting angry, as soon as it starts. There are actually automatic changes to your body when we get angry. Remember a time when you were very angry. How did your body automatically react in the first few seconds of anger? Tick all those that apply:

- Facial expression changed
- Tone of voice changed
- Perspiration (sweating) increased
- Increased heart rate
- Increased breath rate
- Blood rushed to my hands (in fear, more blood flows to your legs)
- Muscles tensed
- Other: _____

How long did this last?

Once you are angry there is a period called 'refractory period' in which you are unable to think of anything that does not agree with your anger. The shorter this period is, the less likely you will act inappropriately. You can shorten this period by observing your anger. Imagine you are observing yourself rather than experiencing your anger, watch and study what it does to you.

Remember a time when you were very angry. If you were somebody else watching you, what would you have noticed about your face and body?

Once you are aware that you are angry and label it is anger, observe your anger, then you have a chance to choose what to do next. Relax your muscles, breathe slowly and deeply. Take a step back, while feeling anger, and question whether to go along with what you would normally do next, or choose not to respond physically. Stare back at your thoughts so they do not bring on a chain of other thoughts. Ask yourself – "Do I want to act on my anger or do I just want to observe it?"

Next time you are angry, what are you going to ask yourself?

h. **Power**

The truly powerful person is the person who has power over his own thinking. They accept the challenge of controlling their emotional behaviour. You can treat this like a game, which you win if you can control yourself.

You lose if you do not control yourself. If this situation occurs again, how can you handle it differently?

What will you commit to do differently next time?

I will do whatever it takes to:
