

# **National Relationships Repair Month**

## **How Can You Manage Anger in Your Relationship?**

This Report Is Part of Week Two of The  
"National Relationship Repair Month".

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# How Can You Manage Anger in Your Relationship?

### Table of Contents

<a href="#"><u>Why Do We Get Angry?</u></a> .....	3
<a href="#"><u>Is Anger A Normal Part Of a Love Relationship?</u></a> .....	5
<a href="#"><u>The Difference Between Fair and Unfair Fighting</u></a> .....	6
<a href="#"><u>Using Anger for Good</u></a> .....	7
<a href="#"><u>What is Your Anger Quotient?</u></a> .....	9
<a href="#"><u>How Does Your Anger Manifest?</u></a> .....	10
<a href="#"><u>Framing Your Anger</u></a> .....	11
<a href="#"><u>Conclusion</u></a> .....	12
<a href="#"><u>Also From Creative Conflict Resolutions</u></a> .....	13
<a href="#"><u>Now on Amazon Kindle</u></a> .....	14

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## Why Do We Get Angry?

It is a proven fact that persons who manage their anger well have better relationships, better health, and more occupational success than those who manage their anger poorly. They also get more of their needs met without antagonizing loved ones or colleagues. They have learned -when growing up- helpful strategies and techniques to manage anger, express anger in alternative ways, change hostile attitudes into more tolerant ones, and prevent aggressive acts, such as verbal abuse and violence.

Regardless our age and background the vast majority of us desire to be acknowledged and appreciated by loved ones, relatives and coworkers. This human need for recognition often goes unsolved: many of us have never received the recognition we craved while growing up. As a result, we are forced to create and escalate friction with others to be noticed.

**The more insecure we feel about our own power, the more we need the reflection of our good deeds in other's perceptions.**

This is one of the main roles of our love partner! When we fall in love, this is what we expect from each other — wholehearted acceptance and recognition — regardless of whether we ask for it openly or not.

With this expectation, it is particularly difficult to accept that the love of our life does not give us the recognition we need. We engage in conflict when we feel ignored. We lash out when we need to regain our sense of value, and when we are hurting from a previous humiliation.

We feel enraged by all this "lack," because we assumed that endless love would be given to us automatically when we married. And, when it doesn't happen by magic, we get angry!

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We also need to fight when we perceive ourselves positioned on the weak end of the power dynamics. In this case we lose our self esteem when feeling powerless, vis a vis others with more power than us, and feel that we will lose other people's respect very fast.

As we engage in conflict or fight we want to **win**. That way, we can feel more positive about ourselves and thus to prove our worth to our loved ones.

**So where does anger come in?**

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### Is Anger A Normal Part Of a Love Relationship?

Our drive for human needs satisfaction means that the more dependent we become on a partner, the more likely that partner will be regarded as an object of hostility (because of the need for this person's presence in our life) as well as affection.

**Given that anger thus exists in all relationships, the question is not whether to express it, but how best to manage it so it does not destroy the relationship.**

The long-term success of any relationship depends on how the two people manage anger, rejection, and frustrated expectations day after day.

Because a relationship is about intimacy and dependency, partners must reveal themselves, and fully appreciate the fact that they need one another.

Sometimes, when we express our need for our partner, we can't help but feel exposed and vulnerable.

### **What if our partner rejects us?**

Anger, and its consequence, fighting, is seen from this point of view as a pathetic way of salvaging the relationship and re-establishing a meaningful connection, by recovering the power to act.

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### The Difference Between Fair and Unfair Fighting

It is true that all people --even those in healthy relationships-- fight as much as people in unhealthy ones. The difference is that the healthier partners fight with implicit ground rules. They respect each other's positions and do their best to find a solution to their mutual conflict, because they are interested in **preserving, not attacking** the relationship. In this manner, anger is processed, clarified, and eventually put to rest. Anger is the mechanism for understanding there is a need not being met and a resulting conflict - **not a mechanism for beating the loser and justifying the winner.**

Trust grows deeper when both people understand and trust that their partner will not escalate the conflict (or throw punches below the belt) in order to "win." They know that together they will solve the difference. The point is not to act out of revenge but to cooperate and come to mutual understanding. Both stop at maneuvers which could destroy the relationship; and this is exactly the line that **destructive anger (unfair fighting)** crosses.

One must trust that a good relationship will survive anger by dealing with differences in an immediate and rational, and caring manner.

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## Using Anger for Good

Anger definitely has a stigma attached to it. After all, it is listed as one of the Seven Deadly Sins. However, pretending that anger does not exist, or that simply staying silent will make it go away, only breeds hostility and mistrust. It is a human emotion that will exist and naturally appear whether you deal with it or not.

Anger needs a way to be processed and accepted as part of a healthy interaction. Those couples who can't process anger constructively eventually end up destroying trust and become trapped in control, humiliation and revenge dynamics. The onslaught of the feelings after a violent episode such as grief, regret, loneliness, and guilt can be overwhelming.

Relationships where people don't know how to fight fair while respecting each other are weak and don't survive the process of escalation of anger into interpersonal violence.

### **What, then, is normal, useful anger?**

Most anger is useful and productive, and we need to identify when we need to use it.

### **First, let's go over the common assumptions about anger:**

1. All anger is unhealthy or destructive
2. If you don't let your anger out, it builds up and explodes out
3. Angry people yell and scream a lot because venting anger is the best way to deal with it.
4. Anger management means suppressing your emotion.

One of the biggest things you will have to learn as a couple is that the first one is **wrong**. Anger is not always unhealthy or destructive.

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Sometimes anger is definitely justified. For example, in cases of serious social injustice, if you have been betrayed by a friend, or if you have been physically attacked by someone -- these are all times where anger is appropriate and natural.

Anger is a powerful energy that stimulates adrenalin production and moves us to action. It also signals a strong self, who knows how to react against threats and challenges.

We are talking here about serious, justified and pondered anger at really unjust attacks on self-esteem, property, security, etc. We react in this way when our values are at stake and we feel the need to defend them.

On the other hand, the cursing, insulting fits that people stage over minor irritations are both **unhealthy and self-destructive**. Allowing unbridled anger to lash out at silly problems is inviting serious complications for your health, for no real reason. Research shows that among all the risk factors for heart disease, chronic anger is the most significant predictor -- more than smoking, obesity and high blood pressure.

The impact on the spouse is exactly the same, and the impact on your *relationship* can be seen in the same way. At the heart of your relationship, there is trust, respect and love. Unbridled anger creates crippling disease within that heart, more so than many other forms of negative emotion or action.

The lesson here is that temper tantrums and other **fits of anger** are rarely useful. They erode not only people's respect for you, but in fact, they erode your own self-respect.



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## What is Your Anger Quotient?

Please, go through this list and identify how many of the indicators are present in your own life and relationship now. If there are more than five positive answers, watch out; if there are 10 or more, you need to face your present mindset as the **main reason** for your non-functional marriage.

- Cussing or swearing a lot, using high drama descriptions
- Feeling frustrated a lot about simple, everyday things
- Constantly putting your spouse down
- Criticizing everything that your other half does
- A low EMPATHY to put oneself in the other person's feelings
- Chronically irritable or grumpy or resentful
- Seeing the dark side of things more often than the bright side
- Often making cynical or envious comments about spouse's projects
- Often thinking or saying, "That's horrible."
- Often thinking or saying, "Everything's ruined."
- Often thinking or saying, "That g\*\*d\*\* boss/machine/person."
- Often using "always" or "never" about yourself or her comments
- Often responding to hurts with anger instead of responding with hurt.
- Often demanding and expecting (instead of asking and waiting) to get something from someone- or get something done by someone

A person deeply angry will hurt those closest to him or her, and will go raging like an emotionally distressing hurricane through the lives of loved ones.

It is difficult to accept the impact of anger on those around you. The walls of denial prevent you from realizing how hurt the people near you are - this is especially true when we are forced to admit causing pain to our own spouse, whom we have pledged to protect and care for.

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## How Does Your Anger Manifest?

Using anger in a healthy, constructive way in your marriage requires becoming intimately aware of your own moods and emotions. In order to stop using destructive anger, you have to recognize it as it is occurring. This final exercise will help you practice the skills and self-awareness necessary to be master of your own anger. You can consider these questions by yourself, but it may be helpful to print this table for your spouse and yourself, and each fill out a copy.

### Separating Anger From Aggression

<p>How do I know when I feel angry?</p>	<p>My body reactions: My ideas spin around My feelings are:</p>
<p>When I am behaving aggressively against someone, what is it that I do?</p>	<p>Shut up and leave the room; Escalate aggression if the person doesn't react or answer me; End up breaking things; Yell and insult only.</p>
<p>Can people around me tell when I'm angry? How? (Notice that <b>not</b> being able to tell is just as bad sometimes - hiding your emotions when you should be expressing them is not healthy!)</p> <p>Do people around me notice me doing aggressive things? Which ones? Is there something they say I do that I don't remember doing?</p> <p>How many times do they tell me I did such a thing, and I don't remember?</p>	

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## Framing Your Anger

Just as we discussed framing your conflicts in the relationship, it is important to also discuss how to frame your anger in a healthy way in the relationship. Framing your anger means putting it in a context; you have to ask critical questions about the situation, your reactions and your intentions.

The simplest way to do this is by asking yourself **“Is this about me, or is this about you?”** before you speak when you’re angry, or when listening to your partner’s anger.

**In this way, you shift your mindset from “Let’s let my anger do whatever it wants” to “Yes, anger is a normal human emotion, but why am I feeling it now?”**

You can also, when angry, make the discussion take the form of “This is about me.” Instead of accusing or obsessing on what your partner is doing wrong, focus on how it is making you feel. “This is how I was affected by you.” Your partner may still feel upset that you feel that way or had that perception about their actions, but it shifts both your focuses from each other’s *personalities* to each other *actions*.

**This is a vital distinction that must be made during relationship conflict: don’t make the mistake of insinuating that your partner *is* a mistake because they *made* a mistake.**

Similarly, when you are listening to your spouse’s anger, listen within the framework of “This is about you.” The focus should be on honestly and respectfully allowing your spouse to feel what they feel and express it. Don’t assume that your partner is passing judgement on you simply because they have an issue with the way you’ve conducted yourself. When you assume they are judging your actual worth as a person, you enter the dangerous trap of battle-mode, where your anger sparks on to fend off an attack you’ve conjured in your mind.

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## Conclusion

### LET'S LOOK AT YOUR PRESENT ANGER LEVEL, WILL YOU?

Do you have a lot of pent up anger? Do people you know accuse you of being "too fast reacting against others"?	<b>YES</b>
Have you ever felt an uncontrollable urge to lash out in a fit of fury at somebody doing things in a stupid way?	<b>YES</b>
Are you a person who "sees red" when things don't go your way?	<b>YES</b>
Have you ever been told you need to go to anger management training by your exasperated co-workers or managers or friends?	<b>YES</b>
Are other people rejecting you in a practical way, or blocking and isolating you from themselves, making you progressively lonely, depressed and hopeless?	<b>YES</b>

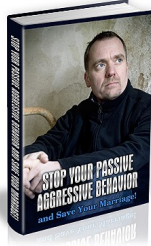
**IF YOU ANSWERED "YES" MORE THAN 3 TIMES...  
Then, You Are Feeling More And More Out Of Control, right?**

There are many more pressures in the world upon us now. How many sources of pressure can you identify? How can you deal with them without getting angry? Due to accelerating factors such as strong economic pressure and financial hardships, jobs becoming more scarce and in short a more competitive environment, we find ourselves feeling more and more unable to control our lives.

**If this is your case, we can present a tool to help you focus on getting back your self-control: ["THE TAO OF ANGER."](#)**

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## Also From Creative Conflict Resolutions



"Stop Your Passive Aggressive Behaviour": A Solution Just for Passive Aggressive Men!



"The Tao of Anger": How to manage anger in your relationships.



"Turn Conflicts Into Love": Handle conflict wisely and watch your love grow.



"Boosting your Self-Esteem": The Source Of Your Life Energy!



"Healing Emotional Abuse": How to heal after emotional abuse.



"Recovering from Passive Aggression": How to heal after a passive aggressive relationship.

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