

ANGER

AAAAARRRRGGGGHHH! RAGE!!! It's something we all dislike, but also something we all have to deal with regularly. Sometimes it's our own anger, other times it's the fall-out from someone else's anger; either way it's helpful to understand what anger is and why it happens, so that we are better equipped to beat it next time it comes knocking on our doors of life... So let's talk about it!

I'll start at the obvious starting point, by asking "What is anger?"

Anger is an emotion – a strong one! And because it's so strong, it can seem like a very complicated issue... but actually it's not. The events that cause us to feel angry are the complicated parts, the anger itself isn't. And that's good news, because it means we don't have to suffer its effects for long!

We get angry for all sorts of different reasons, big and small. It's normal. We're all human and we all experience it. It can be loads of little things building up until we burst, or it might be one huge pain in the neck that just makes us snap – either way there is always a moment where you can pause for a second and recognise that you're about to react and get angry. This is the point where you start to feel heated and wound up, you start to feel like you want to shout at someone, maybe even punch someone or something. It's at this point that you can take a deep breath, count to five, take control and make a choice about what you're going to do with this anger. Let's call it "owning the moment". It's a moment that can change things. It's a moment that can define a person, and in the heat of the situation it can also be really difficult... but it's a moment that is yours; it's just about what you choose to do with it.

How easy is it to just get angry, say whatever happens to fly out of your mouth, and then try to sweep up the mess afterwards? Easier than keeping calm? If we're honest, most of the time the answer would be yes, and that's understandable – but what does it achieve? Where does it get you?

Now, that's all fine and dandy, but what about when other people are angry and they're taking it out on you? Well, when you think about it, the exact same technique applies. They are obviously frustrated with something, and they've not managed to own their moment. That's ok, we're only human and we don't always get it right... but you're annoyed because it just seems so unfair that someone's taking their anger out on you... so you're left with your own moment to take control of. You can either react to their anger, or you can keep calm and try to calm them down too. It's not easy, in fact sometimes it feels almost impossible, but you can do it.

Now, I could write for hours about the things that make me angry and why they make me angry, and I'm sure you could too, but that's not the issue... we're talking about the anger itself, which is just an emotional response to those triggers. That's all it is, and you don't have to let it control you... you can control it. So capture your moment, make a choice to be the bigger person, and beat your anger! There are loads of things you can do when you've recognised that you're getting angry. Here are a few to get you thinking about it – what could you do to help you calm down?

Count to ten

Go for a run (or any type of exercise)

Talk to someone about it – don't bottle it up!

Write it all down and just throw it away

Think of a happy memory

If you're struggling with anger, or you've got a question or comment about what you've read, send us an email at yc@carersresource.org.uk and we'll try our best to help you.