SOME WAYS OF REPLACING ANGER*
Discussion Outline

UNCONTROLLED ANGER CAN BE ELIMINATED! WE CAN CHOOSE TO LEARN NEW FEELINGS AND MORE PRODUCTIVE BEHAVIORS

1. **DEFUSE** anger by doing something for the first 10 second—e.g.:
   a. taking a deep breath and blowing out slowly to the count of 10;
   b. naming how you feel and reminding yourself that it’s a signal to “cool it”; and
   c. labeling how the other person might be feeling. NOTE: The first 10 seconds are crucial to gaining control!

2. **POSTPONE** anger explosions. Start by postponing them 15 seconds, then 20 seconds, then 30 seconds, and so on. Keep extending your time before exploding. Postponing is learned control; with practice, this eliminates explosions.

3. **REMEMBER** that anger doesn’t have to be a “natural” response. Getting angry less often is healthier. Expressing anger appropriately (as irritation, disappointment, etc.) is better than storing it up.

4. **REMIND YOURSELF** that 50% of what you believe should be will be rejected by 50% of others 50% of the time. Once you expect others to disagree you’ll choose anger less often. So, get rid of the unrealistic expectations you have for others—your “shoulds” for them. When they go away, so will much of your anger.

STOP! at the moment of choosing anger! Remind yourself everyone has a right to be as they choose. Demanding that others be and respond as you want will simply prolong your anger.

5. **GET IN TOUCH** with your thoughts when provoked. Remind yourself that you do not have to think that way (i.e., this is awful, terrible, shouldn’t be, etc.). Awareness is a most important beginning.

6. **GET HELP** from someone you trust. Negotiate to have them send you a signal when they see your anger. When you get the signal, think about what you’re doing and switch gears to what you planned to do instead—then DO IT!

7. **WHEN YOU EXPLODE** or have a temper tantrum (or give someone the silent treatment, etc.) STOP! Speak up and tell someone about your SLIP—that your goal is to think and behave differently. Owning up to your “slips” keeps you in touch with yourself and demonstrates that you’re working on yourself and your anger issues.
8. **TALK** to the person who usually gets the “short end of your fuse.” Share with each other the most anger-provoking triggers and troublemakers. Plan a way of communicating irritation or frustration without destructive anger—for example, writing a note, taking a “cool off” walk together, or using planned scripts to stop yourselves from continuing to abuse each other and experiencing senseless anger.

9. **AVOID TRIGGERS! DISTRIBUTE YOURSELF.** For example, in traffic jams, instead of yelling, giving someone the finger, etc., use this time creatively—use relaxation strategies, daydream, listen to soothing music, relive exciting or pleasant experiences you’ve had, plan for other pleasant activities.

10. **LOVE YOURSELF!** When you do, you won’t burden yourself with self-destructive anger. Get a sense of humor—it’s impossible to be angry and laugh at the same time.

11. **USE SITUATIONS FOR PERSONAL GROWTH!** Instead of being an emotional slave to frustrating triggers and troublemakers, use these situations as a challenge to change, to grow!

12. **KEEP A DIARY** or journal. Record all angry behaviors you’ve chosen, and record your successes at anger control. The very act of recording will:
   a. persuade you to choose anger less often, and
   b. reinforce your successes. Try it!

Adapted from Dyer, w. (1977) Farewell to Anger, in Your Erroneous Zones. NY: Avon Books