

## DEALING WITH ANGER

Here are some steps to take to help you deal with your anger in an assertive, constructive way:

1. Recognize your anger – Women tend to deny their anger because they don't believe they have a valid reason for it, and because they have been conditioned to believe that it is "unladylike" to get angry. They feel that anger is aggressive or unreasonable.
2. Feel the emotion of anger in your body – Anger is energy, and as such it can be a motivating force to empower those who feel helpless.
3. Feel any underlying emotions of hurt or fear – Emotions come in layers. Sometimes anger is covered up by fear and hurt; at other times, the opposite is true. When we allow ourselves to feel one emotion, it makes it possible for us to access our other emotions as well.
4. Acknowledge the thoughts that accompany your feelings – If at all possible, say these thoughts out loud. Don't judge your thoughts no matter how embarrassing or crazy they may seem. Realize that you don't have to act on your thoughts just because you have them, and that by allowing yourself to vent them you are making it possible to let go of them much more easily.
5. Identify the source of your anger – This may actually be harder than you think. While you may assume that you are angry at your current abuser, you may actually be angry at your original abuser. Watch for patterns and repetitive situations.

In addition, be aware that rescuing breeds anger. If we haven't set proper limits and boundaries and learned to say no, we may build up so much anger and resentment that we become angry at anyone who needs or requests anything from us. If someone is in need, we feel we have to help, but we feel resentful while doing it.

6. Take a look at why you are angry – It may feel more convenient to get angry over something small rather than facing the real cause of your anger. For example, while you may tell yourself you are angry at your friend for calling and waking you up in the morning, in actuality you are angry with her because when she calls she only talks about herself and never asks you how you are. Your real anger at her has been building up for some time, but since you haven't expressed it, it is coming out over something far less important.

7. Decide what action, if any, you need to take – You may need to tell the person you are angry with what he has done to anger you. A lot of our anger is triggered by unmet needs. You need to figure out what you need from that person and ask him for it. If he can't, or won't, give it to you, then you must figure out what you need to do next to take care of yourself.
  
8. Take responsibility for constructively releasing your anger – If you cannot talk to the person you are angry with (because he is not available or won't listen, or because you are too angry to talk), you may need to find another way to express your anger. Write the person a letter that you do not intend to mail. Get all your thoughts and feelings down on paper without censoring them. Put your head in a pillow and scream. Pound the bed with your fists. Physically releasing your anger is very beneficial, especially when you can't find the right words to express your feelings.