
Breaking the Anger-Release Cycle

Two dangers can occur when working with anger. Expressing it brings only temporary relief and often hurts others. Repressing it, meanwhile, can cause illness, depression, and anxiety. Another different, more productive, way to work with anger is to concentrate on it, noticing how it affects your body and tracking any occurring shifts. Staring at a blank wall for 5 minutes can quicken the process, if you can stick with it. There is value in concentrating on the sensations of anger itself - not the cause of it.

Aggression and Self-Assertion

Anxiety is a signal that you are moving away from the known territory of numbness, depression, shame and hopelessness to something new and unknown. Anxiety is often a signal of unrecognized and disowned emotions coming to the surface, particularly self-assertion and anger. Underneath shame is a mind-body high arousal that initially expresses as anxiety, self-hatred and acting in. To heal anxiety, healthy assertion of self and needs must be expressed.

Anxiety is often a sign that you need to become progressively more aware of your anger and explore your assertiveness. Having foreclosed anger for so long, you may be afraid that you could become abusive.

Resolving Splitting

Anger becomes integrated on a psychological level by recognizing and owning it as one's own rather than splitting it off and turning it against the self or projecting it onto others. In the body, anger becomes integrated not by acting it out by beating pillows and screaming, but by identifying, containing, and tracking its energetic experience in the felt sense.

An unexpected side effect of resolving splitting is that as anger is owned and aggression integrated chronic fear begins to diminish. Disowned and disavowed assertion and anger are often a significant hidden source of chronic fear. In general, it is useful when in the presence of chronic anxiety to look for split-off anger. On the journey toward reconnection with your authentic self,

anxiety and anger are reclaimed and transformed into healthy self-assertion, strength, and the capacity for separation–individuation.

Integrating Anger

It is difficult to integrate and embody the strong energies of aggression and anger without a body-centered orientation. Anger, and the self-assertion inherent within it, are empowering bodily dynamics.

If you inquire into your relationship with anger, both your own and other people's, the first response might be: "What anger?" If you have experienced relational trauma you can be unaware of your own anger and afraid of other people's anger.

Separate the fears you may have about expressing your anger from the experience of anger itself. "Even though you have some fears about experiencing your anger at xx, let's take the time to notice what that anger feels like in your body. See if you can notice the energy of it."

Explore your anger triggers. Do you recognize your impulse to fight back? What are the bracing patterns in the body that hold back the movement toward action?

Driving anger, there is usually an unfinished communication to someone who has failed to respond appropriately such as a parent. Uncovering your implicit anger helps you understand what is needed to heal. It is important to distinguish anger from blame. Though blame often has elements of anger within it, it is primarily a mental state not a bodily state and ultimately offers no resolution.

Explore your fear of anger, your fear of other people's anger, and your fear of their own anger.

Acknowledging your anger has a relieving impact on your negative sense of self. Please remember you would never direct at anyone else the vicious criticism that you automatically direct toward yourself.