WHAT CAUSES ANGER?
The causes vary from person to person and from situation to situation.

Anger affects your body.
When you get angry, your body creates energy.
Here’s what happens:
• Adrenaline and other chemicals enter your bloodstream.
• Your heart pumps faster.
• Your blood flows more quickly.
• Your muscles tense.

Everyone gets angry sometimes.
Handling anger well can help you:
• Overcome problems
• Reach your goals
• Stay healthy
• Feel better about yourself

But too much anger or uncontrolled anger can cause problems.
Examples:
• Problems in your relationships with family and friends
• Problems at work
• Legal and financial troubles
• Physical and mental health problems

Some common causes of anger include:

Stress
Stress related to work, family, health and money problems may make you feel anxious and irritable.

Frustration
You may get angry if you fail to reach a goal or feel as if things are out of your control.

Fear
Anger is a natural response to threats of violence, or to physical or verbal abuse.

Annoyance
You may react in anger to minor irritations and daily hassles.

Disappointment
Anger often results when expectations and desires aren’t met.

Resentment
You may feel angry when you’ve been hurt, rejected or offended.
POORLY HANDLED ANGER CAN CAUSE MANY PROBLEMS.

Some people try to pretend they aren’t angry. Other people feel as if their anger is out of control. They don’t believe they can handle it.

Depression
Anger that’s kept bottled up can affect your thoughts and feelings. You may begin to feel unhappy and lose interest in things you used to enjoy, such as hobbies, work, friends or sex.

Problems at work
If you blow up on the job, co-workers, supervisors and customers may develop a negative impression of you. Your career may suffer as a result.

Alcohol or other drug problems
You may use alcohol or other drugs to try to:

• Dull anger and other strong feelings
• Forget about the negative consequences of an angry outburst.

But using alcohol or other drugs won’t solve any problems. And it usually results in more anger and problems.

But ignoring anger or giving up control over it can lead to:

Physical health problems
These may include:

• Headaches
• Sleep problems
• Digestive problems
• High blood pressure
• Heart problems

Poor decision making
Anger can make it hard to think clearly. You may have trouble concentrating or may use poor judgment. This can lead to car crashes, injuries and other problems.

Problems with relationships
If you can’t control your anger, you may end up insulting, criticizing or threatening those close to you. They may respond with anger or resentment. Getting angry may also keep you from telling your loved ones how you really feel.

Low self-esteem
If you have trouble managing anger, you may feel bad about yourself. You may feel as if you have little control over what happens.
WHAT SETS YOU OFF?
Different things trigger a person’s anger. Some common triggers are listed below. Check the ones that trigger your anger. Use the blank spaces to fill in your own triggers.

I feel angry when I:
- □ Think I am treated unfairly
- □ Am embarrassed
- □ Feel ignored
- □ Don’t get credit for something I’ve done
- □ Have to follow orders
- □ Fail at something or don’t do something well
- □ Feel helpless or out of control
- □ Get jealous
- □ ______________________
- □ ______________________
- □ ______________________
- □ ______________________

I feel angry when faced with these events or situations:
- □ Traffic jams and encounters with other drivers
- □ Conflict at work
- □ Family arguments
- □ Child misbehavior or temper tantrums
- □ Waiting in line at the bank, store, etc.
- □ Financial problems
- □ Yelling or loud noises
- □ Mistakes or errors
- □ Wasted time
- □ Losing a game or a contest
- □ Name-calling or teasing
- □ Child abuse
- □ Prejudice toward anyone
- □ Mistreatment of animals
- □ ______________________
- □ ______________________
- □ ______________________
- □ ______________________

I feel angry when people:
- □ insult me
- □ criticize me or my work
- □ don’t listen to me disagree with me
- □ don’t work as hard as I do
- □ lie to me
- □ tell me what to do
- □ are rude or inconsiderate
- □ are late
- □ don’t act or feel the way I think they should
- □ ______________________
- □ ______________________
- □ ______________________

Once you’re aware of things that set you off, you can work to change the way you respond to them.
KEEP AN “ANGER JOURNAL.”

Use these 2 pages to start your journal. Over the next several days keep track of things that trigger your anger.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How I felt afterward</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I did in response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My anger rating 1= mild</td>
<td>2= moderate</td>
<td>3= severe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My anger warning signs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trigger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date and time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
BE AWARE OF HIDDEN ANGER.

*Sometimes what triggers your anger isn’t the only thing causing angry feelings.*

**What are your warning signs?**

Think about how you feel when you get angry. Check the warning signs you often have when you get angry. Write in signs that aren’t listed.

My warning signs are:

- □ Tense muscles
- □ Tight fists
- □ Clenched jaw
- □ Sweaty palms
- □ Racing heartbeat
- □ Fast breathing
- □ Trembling or feeling shaky
- □ Feeling warm or flushed
- □ Upset stomach
- □ Loud or mean voice
- □ ____________________________
- □ ____________________________
- □ ____________________________
- □ ____________________________
- □ ____________________________

**Talk with your health-care provider.**

Certain physical and mental health problems, such as Alzheimer’s disease or brain injury, may increase your anger. And handling anger poorly can lead to health problems. Talk to your health-care provider about your anger and how it affects you. Have regular checkups.

When you get angry, ask yourself:

**Are my level of anger and my reaction out of proportion to the trigger?**

Do you seem to overreact to minor annoyances? Perhaps there is something else on your mind that’s making you angry.

**Am I directing my anger at an innocent person?**

Are you really angry with the person who triggered your feelings? For example, suppose you have a disagreement with your boss. It bothers you all day, but you say nothing. Later, you let your anger out by blowing up at your partner or child.

**Am I taking something personally?**

Learning to deal well with anger means learning not to take problems or arguments personally.

**Is this how I usually respond in similar situations?**

You may respond with anger in certain situations because that’s what you’ve always done. You may have learned this behavior growing up. But you can change the way you react.

**Am I trying to take charge with my anger?**

Anger is a common reaction when a person feels as if he or she is losing control. But the best way to show control is to react calmly and manage your feelings.

**HOW ANGER CAN**

*The results of uncontrolled*
HELP YOU

Learning to recognize and express anger appropriately can make a big difference in your life.

Anger can help you:

Reach goals
Trying to reach a goal can be frustrating. Frustration can lead to anger, which in turn can motivate you to work harder.

Communicate with others
Talking about your anger can help keep it from building up. You may release tension and enjoy better communication with family, friends and co-workers.

Solve problems
Anger is a sign that something is wrong. It may serve as a warning for you to think about your feelings and attitudes.

Handle emergencies and protect yourself
Anger can cause an immediate burst of strength and energy. This allows you to react quickly if you’re in danger.

You can find ways to help anger work for you – not against you.

anger may include:

Verbal attacks or physical assaults
You may lose control and attack others physically or verbally. For example, you may:
- Throw or break things
- Yell, insult or threaten
- Slap, shove, kick or hit.

Abuse
Tension and frustration may build. Family members may become your target, even if your anger has little to do with them. The abuse may be:
- Physical
- Verbal
- Sexual

Other criminal behavior
Anger is often a driving force behind:
- Destruction of property
- Murder
- Other violent crimes
DEALING WITH SOMEONE ELSE’S ANGER

Here are some tips:

Keep your cool.
Don’t answer anger with anger. Remember that anger can lead people to say things they don’t really mean. Criticism, threats or name-calling won’t help resolve the situation.

Don’t take it personally.
Try to understand why the person is angry. His or her feelings may have little or nothing to do with you.

Listen to the person.
Sometime an angry person just needs to “blow off steam”. Let the person express his or her feelings. Don’t interrupt. Maintain eye contact to show you are listening.

Think of solutions together.
If you’re having a conflict with someone, try to find solutions that you can both agree on. Do this only when you are both calm.

Don’t take chances.
- If you’re worried about your safety, get help right away. Try to leave yourself an escape path.
- If the person has a weapon, seek safety at the first opportunity. Don’t confront or try to restrain him or her.

Meditation
This can help calm you and clear your mind of anger. Follow these steps:
1. Find a quite place. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Sit or lie down.
2. Close your eyes. Take slow, deep breaths.
3. Concentrate on a single word, object or calming thought.
4. Don’t worry if other thoughts or images enter your mind while you are doing this. Just relax and return to what you were focusing on.
5. Continue until you feel relaxed and refreshed.

Deep-breathing exercises
These can help keep anger from getting out of control. Follow these steps:
1. Sit comfortably or lie on your back.
2. Breathe in slowly and deeply for a count of 5.
3. Hold your breath for a count of 5.
4. Breathe out slowly for a count of 5, pushing out all the air.
5. Repeat several times until you feel calm and relaxed.
Sources of Help

You don’t have to face your problems alone. Let others know that you want help controlling your anger. They can provide valuable support and encouragement.

Consider contacting:

Your health-care provider
Your health-care provider can give you a physical exam and suggest relaxation techniques. He or she may also prescribe medications for related health conditions.

Mental health professionals and mental health centers
These provide a variety of services, including outpatient treatment and support groups.

Counselors, family therapists or social workers
They can help you learn ways to manage anger, control stress and solve problems.

Hotlines
Hotlines may provide emergency counseling to help you control angry feelings or behavior. Check your local phone book.

Employee assistance programs (EAPs)
These may offer referrals or counseling to help employees deal with issues like alcohol or other drug problems, job stress and relationship problems.

Religious leaders
They may offer advice and reassurance – or just listen when you need someone to talk to.

Asking for help is a sign of strength – not weakness.
DEVELOP AN ANGER MANAGEMENT PLAN.

Now that you’ve learned more about anger and how you respond to it, you can develop your own plan for managing your anger.

Follow these steps:

1. **Set positive goals and a time frame**
   Your goals should address both a specific behavior and your reaction. For example, over the next month, your goal could be to communicate your feelings using “I” statements whenever you get angry at work.

   You can set different goals for yourself. But don’t try to meet too many at one time. You’re less likely to reach them.

2. **Get support**
   Tell family, friends and co-workers about your goals. They can offer encouragement and advice. Seek out their help if you’re having trouble with your anger. Or consider seeing a mental health professional.

3. **Track your Progress**
   Consider keeping a daily log or journal. Make note of times when you avoid getting angry or handle anger well. Seeing improvement over time can keep you from feeling discouraged.

4. **Reward yourself!**
   Treat yourself when you reach a goal or get halfway there. For example, go to a movie or enjoy a special meal.
# MY ANGER MANAGEMENT PLAN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>My action plan</th>
<th>Target date</th>
<th>Reward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

People I can call on for help:

- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
- __________________________
TAKE STEPS TO GET BACK IN CONTROL

Start by taking a “timeout”:

Stop what you’re doing.
When you feel your anger warning signs developing and you start thinking angry thoughts, tell yourself to stop. This may help you calm down and think more clearly.

Try to relax. For example:
- Count to 10 or 100.
- Get a drink of water.
- Take a walk.
- Take several slow, deep breaths

Leave, if necessary.
If you are angry with another person, tell him or her that you need to take a timeout. Ask someone to watch a child or elderly or ill person for you, if necessary. Then go to a safe place to calm down. Avoid driving.

Return when you’re calm.
Once you’ve got your anger under control, go back and talk with the person or face the situation that triggered your anger.

Remember to calm down.
Think carefully before you speak. You’re less likely to say something you’ll be sorry for later.

Name the problem.
Calmly and clearly explain why you’re angry or what the problem is. Don’t yell, use insults or make threats. People will be less likely to consider your point.

Use “I” statements.
After you describe the problem, use “I” statements to tell the person how you feel. These statements focus on you and your needs, wants and feelings. They also help the listener avoid feeling blamed or criticized.

Identify solutions.
Say what you would like to change or see happen in the future. If you’re having a conflict with another person, try to find a solution together.

Get help if you need it.
Talk with a family member or friend if you’re having trouble expressing your anger constructively. Or consider seeing a counselor or other mental health professional. He or she can help you learn ways to express your feelings through role-playing and other methods.

Don’t hold a grudge. After a disagreement, be willing to forgive.
AVOID NEGATIVE REACTIONS, SUCH AS:

Not letting go
You may have trouble getting past your anger. You may remember painful events that occurred long ago. As time goes by, your anger may continue to grow. You may become obsessed with angry thoughts or hopes of revenge.

Keeping it bottled up
This usually makes you feel worse. Sooner or later, your feelings come out. And when they do, it may be in the form of an angry outburst. Holding angry feelings in may also contribute to health problems.

Blaming
Blaming others doesn’t solve problems. You need to learn to take responsibility for your own feelings and actions – both positive and negative.

Responding to anger with anger
This may seem like a natural reaction, but it often makes a situation worse.

It’s important to know that:

Alcohol or other drug use may increase anger.
Using alcohol or other drugs to dull anger doesn’t work. These substances may mask angry feelings – but only for a short time. And they often bring the opposite result. Alcohol and other drugs play a major role in many cases of violence.

You shouldn’t use alcohol or other drugs as an excuse for angry or violent behavior.
The truth is, there’s no excuse for losing control in this way.

Treatment programs are available.
Some treatment programs are designed to help people recover from an alcohol or drug problem – and learn to manage their anger.

Get help if you have a problem with alcohol or other drugs.
- Call the center for Substance Abuse Treatment’s National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357).
- Look in the phone book for numbers of local self-help groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

Remember – you can take steps to change how you react to anger.

Having a problem with alcohol or other drugs makes it harder to manage anger.
PRACTICE YOUR POSITIVE SELF-TALK

In the space below, write down several problems or situations that made you angry. Did you tell yourself a negative message? What positive message could you tell yourself if the problem or situation happens again?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Negative Message</th>
<th>Positive Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
PRACTICE YOUR “I” STATEMENTS

When you’re angry, it’s easy to blame someone or something for your problems. Getting comfortable using “I” statements can help you learn to take responsibility for your feelings. Fill in the statements below to practice talking in terms of yourself and your feelings.

I feel _______________________________
when _______________________________
for dinner _______________________________.

Next time, I would like _________________ to know if you’re _______________ going to be _______________
late. ____________________________________________

Please try to call ________________________.

I feel _______________________________
when _______________________________
_____________________________________.

I feel _______________________________
when _______________________________
_____________________________________.

I feel _______________________________
when _______________________________
_____________________________________.

I feel _______________________________
when _______________________________
_____________________________________.

I feel _______________________________
when _______________________________
_____________________________________.
Next time, I would like _________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
I feel _______________________________
when _______________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
Next time, I would like _________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

MORE WAYS TO HELP GET A HANDLE ON ANGER

*When things start heating up, try these methods to cool down:*

**Progressive muscle relaxation**
You tense and relax each muscle group, starting at your head and working your way down to your toes. *Here’s how:*

1. Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Sit in a comfortable chair or lie down.

2. Tense the muscles in your face for 5-10 seconds. Then relax them for about 20 seconds.

3. Tense the muscles in the back of your neck for 5-10 seconds. Then relax them for about 20 seconds. Notice the difference is how your muscles feel when relaxed.

4. Move down to your shoulder. Tense and relax the muscles the same way you did in step 3.

**Have a sense of humor.**
For many people, having a good sense of humor helps them avoid getting angry. Try to find the humor in minor troubles and annoyances.

**Do a hobby.**
For example, try gardening, learning a musical instrument or making crafts. A hobby can be a productive outlet for tension and energy, and it can serve as a welcome distraction from angry feelings.

**Write about your feelings.**
Consider recording your thoughts and feelings in a journal or diary, or write a letter (You don’t have to send it.). Writing can help you
5. Repeat the same steps with the other muscle groups in your body – in your hands, arms, chest, stomach, lower back, buttocks, thighs, calves and feet – one at a time.

Visualization
This technique uses your imagination to help you relax and reduce your anger.

1. Sit in a comfortable chair or lie down.
2. Imagine a pleasant, peaceful scene, such as a lush forest or sandy beach. Picture yourself in this setting.
3. Focus on the scene. Continue until you feel refreshed and relaxed.

**Get plenty of rest.**
Most people need about 6-9 hours of sleep each day. When you’re angry, you may have trouble falling asleep. In turn, this lack of sleep may leave you feeling more irritable. If you have trouble sleeping:

- Go to bed at the same time each night.
- Wake up at the same time each morning.
- Read or watch a good movie or TV show.

**Physical activity is a great outlet for angry feelings.**
*It lets you quickly and safely let out strong feelings. And regular activity can improve your overall health.*

**Choose moderate activities.**
Good choices include:

- Walking
- Swimming
- Tennis
- Dancing
- Yoga

*Just about any activity – even household chores – can be an effective outlet for your anger.*

**Avoid negative self-talk.**
This includes criticizing yourself and blaming yourself or others for your problems. Negative self-talk can add to your anger and make it harder to manage it effectively.

**Learn to use positive self-talk instead.**
Try to stop negative self-talk as soon as it gets into your head. Replace the negative thought with a positive one. *For example:*

- Instead of saying “I can’t handle this traffic. I’m going to explode,” you could say, “Relax. I can handle it. This happens to everyone sometimes. It won’t last long.”
Don’t overdo it.
Slowly increase the amount of activity you do. And be sure to warm up before you begin and cool down afterward.

What activities will you try to help manage your anger?
Write them here.

Instead of saying, “That jerk. She embarrassed me on purpose,” you could say, “It’s OK. She probably didn’t mean anything by it. Maybe she’s just having a bad day.”

How do you talk to yourself?
You may say things silently to yourself every day. This is called self-talk.

Learning to identify negative messages and changing them to positive ones can help reduce the amount of anger you feel.
CONCEPTS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict is a part of life – it can be a positive part of life, an instrument of growth; it can be good or bad depending on how we learn to deal with it. Every time we interact with someone there is a potential for conflict because people’s needs and expectations are almost always never the same. We can even feel conflicts within ourselves-and may displace these on to others unless we are careful. Small conflicts should be dealt with as soon as possible so they don’t grow. Try to unearth and bring out hidden conflicts. Disagree with ideas or behavior, not people.

Feelings are important – dealing with how we feel and being able to express feelings (both positive and negative) in a non-destructive way is very important in dealing with others. Talking about feelings (either to the person involved or to someone outside the situation), getting enough exercise, healthy food and sleep, enjoying what you do, all contribute to preventing unnecessary or destructive conflicts.

Make the conflict a problem to solve together. This puts both of you on the same side of the problem rather than on opposite sides. Remember, there can be a lot of solutions to any one problem and everyone can win.

HINTS FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICTS ON A ONE-TO-ONE BASIS:

TAKE TIME TO COOL OFF – issues can’t be dealt with until emotions are worked through. In both individual and group situations, the long-term relationship is generally more important than the conflict. Also, the process of conflict resolution is as important as the content. A resolution where one party is the winner and the other party is the loser is no resolution.

THINK ABOUT THE PERSON AS A PERSON – this helps to break down role stereotypes.

KNOW YOUR AIM – knowing what is important to you in the conflict and stating it clearly makes it more likely that your needs will be met and that the conflict will be resolved.
CONFLICT RESOLUTION CHECKLISTS

PROBLEM DEFINITIONS:

☐ MUTUAL OWNERSHIP: “WE HAVE A PROBLEM”
☐ BRIEF DESCRIPTION: “HERE IS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT I MEAN”
☐ PRESENT & FUTURE ORIENTED: “PERHAPS THE NEXT TIME WE…”
☐ ISSUE, NOT PERSONAL: “THE ISSUE SEEMS TO BE…”
☐ ISSUE AGREED UPON: “IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU AND I AGREE ON THE PROBLEM”

PROBLEM RESOLUTION:

☐ LISTEN (OBSERVE, ACKNOWLEDGE, DON’T INTERRUPT)
☐ CHECK OUT: “LET ME SEE IF I UNDERSTAND…”
☐ VALIDATE: “I CAN SEE HOW YOU MIGHT FEEL THAT WAY.”
☐ BRAINSTORM: “LET’S THINK OF ALL THE POSSIBLE OPTIONS.”
☐ POSITIVE PRESENTATION: “I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF…”
☐ COMPROMISE (ADOPT A TWO-WINNER APPROACH)
☐ AGREE: “SOUNDS LIKE WE HAVE AGREED TO TRY…”
☐ REPEAT: “LET ME MAKE SURE I UNDERSTAND WHAT WE HAVE AGREED…”
☐ CONGRATULATE: “WE DID A GOOD JOB. LET’S TAKE A BREAK.”

EXAMPLE:

PROBLEM
DEFINITION_____________________________________________________________

PROBLEM
RESOLUTION_____________________________________________________________
CONFLICT CONTAINMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Joint Effort/Mutual Satisfaction. Resolution of an issue will either positively or negatively affect the involved parties. The goal of problem solving should be to render a positive and productive outcome for both parties. Therefore, each partner should consider issues to be mutual and collaborate on a resolution that will be beneficial to both.

2. Problem Definition. The problem should be defined so that both parties have a clear understanding of the issue being addressed. Problem definition should be limited in scope.

3. Problem Resolution. Once problem resolution has been initiated, both parties must remain focused on the issue defined. No other issues should be introduced, nor should the issue under discussion be redefined.

4. Change First. Each partner should be willing to make changes in his/her behavior first without the expectation/insisting that he/she will change when his/her partner changes.

5. Listen and Validate. The feeling that one is being listened to and taken seriously may be more important than winning.
6. **Conclusion.** *Resolution should reflect a negotiated compromise. Success should be mutual.*

**Working With Difficult People**

Difficult people can sabotage any conflict resolution session. But often the trouble arises when we overreact to these people. Here are seven difficult types and some do’s and don’ts for working with them. Add your own notes on what works with these people.

**Aggressive types** want to force their viewpoint on you. They may blow off steam and attack verbally.
- Don’t attack back.
- Do ask them firmly to sit down and explain calmly what they have to say. Just listening without returning the anger seems to calm them.

**Know-it-alls** are “experts” who have no patience for other people’s input.
- Don’t be intimidated, or let them take over a meeting.
- Do listen to them and try to benefit from their knowledge.

**Victims** often complain and feel they are being treated unfairly.
- Don’t try to become their protector.
- Do ask them for suggestions to improve the situation. They need practice giving positive ideas.

**Sarcastic types** use words as weapons, often destroying harmony in a group and causing resentment. They can be poor team players.
- Don’t let them get away with this behavior. Let them know that sarcasm is unacceptable.
- Do compliment them when they say something positive or show team spirit.

**Nay-sayers** have nothing good to say about others’ ideas.
- Don’t try to reform them.
- Do invite them to suggest alternatives. Many times they will back off if asked to say something constructive.

**Yay-sayers** will go along with anything just to gain approval.
- Discourage them from making more commitments than they can handle.
- Do make sure they follow through on what they agree to do.

**Withdrawn** types seem to have nothing to contribute and are
difficult to draw out.

- Don’t nag them to open up.
- Do ask open-ended questions that require them to produce more than a yes or no answer. Be patient about waiting for their answer.

Disagreements and outright arguments are part of the territory of close relationships. Because nothing destroys a relationship faster than the hurtful things couples say to each other in a bitter argument, it’s crucial that couples learn to argue well.

Imagine you had used the following rules in your last argument. How would it have been different? Under each rule write how observing the rule might have affected the course of the argument:

**Be honest.**
If we had been more honest, our last argument...

**Admit your mistakes.**
If we had been more willing to admit to a mistake, our last argument...

**Refrain from blaming or shaming.**
If we had focused on our own feelings instead of blaming each other, our last argument...

**Assume your partner wants you to be happy.**

**Spend as much time listening as you do talking.**
If each of us had spent more time listening, our last argument...

**Put yourself in your partner’s shoes.**
If we had made a bigger effort to see each other’s point of view, our last argument...

**Take a “time out” if things get too intense.**
If we had taken a time out when things got too intense, our last argument...

**When the argument is over, do something**
If we had done this instead of assuming that we were just trying to make each other feel bad, our last argument... Frequent arguments are often a sign that couples need to take better care of themselves and each other. Get together and agree on a time every week to do something that you both enjoy.

DIRTY FIGHTING TECHNIQUES

*Indicate how frequently you use each of the following dirty fighting techniques during conflicts with your spouse:*

- **0 = never**
- **1 = rarely**
- **2 = sometimes**
- **3 = often**

☐ **Timing.** Pick the right time to begin an argument. As a general rule, look for the time your spouse least expects it or is least able to respond. For example, late at night, during a favorite television show, after several drinks or just before your spouse leaves for work.

☐ **Escalating.** Move quickly from the issue to a personality attack, to wondering whether it is worth the effort to stay together (issue – personality – relationship). Interpret your spouse’s shortcomings as evidence of bad faith and the impossibility of a happy relationship.

☐ **Multiplicity.** Try to list as many problems in as much detail as possible. Don’t stick to the original issue, but rather throw in all the problems you can think of. Don’t limit yourself to the present. If your partner can’t remember the offense, so much the better.

☐ **Who Me, But You...** Respond to any complaint your spouse may raise with one of your own. For example, “Me late? If it weren’t for the fact that you never wash any of the clothes...” If done properly, you can balance complaint against complaint forever.
End of the World. Exaggerate the importance of the issue with statements such as “If you really loved me, you would have never done it in the first place” or “This proves that you don’t care.” Never concede that an issue is not absolutely critical.

When conflicts arise, as they inevitably do, most people use one of the following five approaches to restoring harmony. Which approach do you feel most comfortable using?

Avoidance
It’s not that big a problem. Why rock the boat?

Accommodation
I’m willing to give up a lot to end this conflict.

Aggression
Every conflict has a winner and a loser. I intend to be the winner.

Compromise
I’ll give a little if you’ll give a little.

Problem Solving
If we discuss this openly, We can find a solution that benefits everyone.

Often we use different methods of conflict resolution for different people. Who are some of the people you might have conflicts with? How do you usually respond when conflicts arise with these people? What if you tried the problem solving approach with all of them? If you were confident of your problem solving skills, would you be willing to try it with more people?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conflicts occur...</th>
<th>I usually use this...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coworkers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
POSITIVE SELF-TALK

I am good.
~
I am confident.
~
I am competent.
~
I am worthy of success.
~
I am a gifted human being.
~
I am respected.
~
I am admired.
~
I am a kind and loving person.
~
I contribute to the world.
~
I can deal with conflict.
~
I can handle anger.
~
I can deal with stress.
~
I will be the best I can be.
~
I am committed to being healthy, happy.

REPEAT
REHEARSE
VISUALIZE
Pearls of Wisdom

1. Conflicts are solved when there is willingness to let go of being right, of being defensive, of being “in control.”

2. In order to get where you want to go, you first have to leave where you are. I am willing to be open to change today. To live in this world successfully, we need to become flexible, like the limbs of a tree, and learn to bend in the wind, all the while keeping a firm footing on the ground.

3. Today I am willing to dissolve all barriers between others and myself. The world would be more peaceful if we spent our energy taking down fences rather than putting them up. Every thought of blame, revenge, and justified anger creates a wall between others and ourselves.

4. Changing the thoughts in our minds can change our lives. Today I will do my best to remember that the solution to any conflict begins with changing the thoughts in my mind. If for any reason today we feel attacked, or victimized, we can remember that it is only our thoughts that ultimately hurt us. We can elect to change those thoughts at any given moment and choose to see things differently.

5. Forgiveness is giving up all hopes for a better past. We often keep alive our pain from the past and relive it as if it is still happening today. In reality, the incident will never change, only our perception of it will.

6. I am willing to forgive at least one person today that I am holding a grievance against. Our egos will do anything to keep us in conflict. We can choose to not listen to the voice of ego.

7. Justified anger never brings us peace of mind. I will remember that anger is part of our human condition and is nothing to feel guilty about. When I feel anger, I will do my best to honor it, to express it in healthy ways, and then to see no value into holding on to it.

8. Today I will look at my lifestyle and strive to change things in order that I may live a more harmonious life. Much of the stress we have is due to the fact that we have created very complex lifestyles for ourselves. Today is the day to simplify and take the complexities out of our lives.

9. Create an atmosphere where equality prevails, such as equality of personal worth, dignity, and respect.
10. Communication should be give and take, not give or take.

11. *I win, you win.*

12. Do things with people, not to them, or for them.

13. Perhaps one of the most important questions we can ask ourselves before talking is “are my words going to bring about joining or separation?” Many times our statements and questions to others are communications that attack and separate. Let us begin all of our conversations with the intention of experiencing joining with others.

14. The less defensive we are, the more we are able to help others discard their defenses.

15. *Invite criticism.*

16. We feel weak when we feel we have given our power away to others. Today, I will respect the power within me. When we feel fearful, we tend to give the control of our lives over to others to make decisions for us. The power of making decisions always is within us.

17. *Practice being wrong.*

18. The discrepancies between reality and our ideals will determine how satisfied we are with our lives and ourselves.

*God, grant me the serenity*
*To accept things I cannot change*
*Courage to change the things I can*
*And the wisdom to the difference*
**COMMUNICATING WITH “BODY LANGUAGE”**

Words are only part of communication. We also communicate in the way we sit or stand, use our hands or our facial expressions.

Take a look at the following body “messages.” What would you be trying to say if you used these movements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing This</th>
<th>Might Mean This</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clenched jaw</td>
<td>Anger, stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyebrows raised</td>
<td>Surprise, curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidgety movements</td>
<td>Nervousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clenched fists</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossed arms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed smile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furrowed brow</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands open, palms out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands quietly in lap</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head tilted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrowed eyes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursed lips</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoulder shrugging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slumping posture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wringing hands</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How does your “body language” reinforce what you are trying to communicate?

When you listen to a person, what clues can you
Personal Development

**ASSERTIVE VERSUS UNASSERTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR**

Many people are concerned that if they assert themselves others will think of their behavior as aggressive. But there is a difference between being assertive and aggressive. Assertive people state their opinions, while still being respectful of others. Aggressive people attack or ignore others’ opinions in favor of their own.

Passive people don’t state their opinions at all.

The chart below gives some examples of the differences between passive, aggressive, and assertive behavior.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Passive Person</th>
<th>The Aggressive Person</th>
<th>The Assertive Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is afraid to speak up</td>
<td>Interrupts and ‘talks over’ others</td>
<td>Speaks openly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks softly</td>
<td>Speaks loudly</td>
<td>Uses a conversational tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoids looking at people</td>
<td>Glares and stares at others</td>
<td>Makes good eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows little or no expression</td>
<td>Intimidates others with expressions</td>
<td>Shows expressions that match the message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slouches and withdraws</td>
<td>Stands rigidly, crosses arms, invades others’ personal space</td>
<td>Relaxes and adopts an open posture and expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolates self from groups</td>
<td>Controls groups</td>
<td>Participates in groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agrees with others, despite feelings</td>
<td>Only considers own feelings, and/or demands of others</td>
<td>Speaks to the point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values self less than others</td>
<td>Values self more than others</td>
<td>Values self equal to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurts self to avoid hurting others</td>
<td>Hurts others to avoid being hurt</td>
<td>Tries to hurt no one (including self)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not reach goals and may not know goals</td>
<td>Reaches goals but hurts others in the process</td>
<td>Usually reaches goals without alienating others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re okay, I’m not</td>
<td>I’m okay, you’re not</td>
<td>I’m okay, you’re okay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAKE A CHECK TO THE LEFT OF THOSE DECISION ISSUES THAT ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU. NEXT, CIRCLE THE ANSWER THAT DESCRIBES HOW DECISIONS ARE CURRENTLY MADE IN YOUR FAMILY (1, 2, OR 3). THEN, GO BACK AND DRAW AN X THROUGH THE ALTERNATIVE, REPRESENTING HOW YOU WOULD LIKE DECISIONS TO BE MADE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Issue</th>
<th>Husb &amp; Almsh</th>
<th>Equal Share</th>
<th>Wife Almsh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHETHER/WHEN TO HAVE CHILDREN &amp; HOW MANY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCATION/TYP OF RESIDENCE</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS, IF ANY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY’S FISCAL GOALS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL FINANCES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECREATION/LEISURE/FAMILY ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELATIVES &amp; VISITATION</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIALIZATION (WHEN &amp; WITH WHOM)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTIMATE RELATIONS (WHEN &amp; HOW)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GLOSSARY OF ASSERTIVE SKILLS

(Dr. Manuel Smith: When I say No I Feel Guilty)

1. **BROKEN RECORD** – Sticking to your point by using calm repetition. Helps us to avoid arguing and manipulation.

   Example: Returning something to a store.
   Assertive Response: “I want my money back.”

   Clinical Effect After Practice: Allows you to feel comfortable in ignoring manipulative verbal side traps, argumentative baiting, irrelevant logic, while sticking to your desired point.

2. **FOGGING** – Calmly acknowledging that there may be some truth in what the other person is saying; yet allowing you to be the judge of your own behavior. This skill helps us accept manipulative criticism without becoming defensive.

   Example: You really are dressed like a bum.
   Assertive Response: “I can see how you might feel that way, but I like to dress like this.”

   Clinical Effect After Practice: Allows you to receive criticism comfortably without becoming anxious or defensive, while giving no reward to those using manipulative criticism.

3. **FREE INFORMATION** – Recognizing information in a social situation to comment on to encourage the exchange of information.

   Example: Person #1 – My dog has just learned to sit.
   Person #2 – I really like dogs, tell me more about yours.

   Clinical Effect After Practice: Allows you to feel less shy in entering into conversation while at the same time prompting social partners to talk more.

4. **NEGATIVE ASSERTION** – Accepting your errors and faults without having to apologize for them. Helps us to handle criticism about our negative qualities.

   Example: You are always late
   Assertive Response: You are right; I am usually late.
Clinical Effect After Practice: Allows you to look more comfortably at negatives in your own behavior or personality without feeling defensive and anxious, or resorting to denial or real error, while at the same time reducing your critic anger or hostility.

5. **NEGATIVE INQUIRY** – Asking for criticism to either use it for information or exhaust it. Helps us feel more comfortable with negative feelings.

   **Example:** You don’t know how to clean the kitchen.
   **Assertive Response:** What is it that I do not do right?

   **Clinical Effect After Practice:** Allows you more comfortably to seek out criticism about yourself in close relationships while prompting the other person to express honest negative feelings and improve communication.

6. **SELF DISCLOSURE** – Initiating discussions about you. Helps us feel more comfortable by disclosing things about ourselves.

   **Example:** I like to be outdoors rather than inside.
   I really feel nervous because this is my first date.
   I’m afraid of the dark.

   **Clinical Effect After Practice:** Allows you comfortably to disclose aspects of yourself and your life that previously caused feelings of ignorance, anxiety, or guilt.

**WORKABLE COMPROMISE** – The ability to agree on a compromise in any situation where no one loses.

   **Example:** Person #1 – I’d like to watch Monday night football on the color T.V.
   Person #2 – I’d like to watch the movie.

   **Clinical Effect Practice:** I win/you win.
   In using your verbal assertive skills, it is practical, whenever you feel that your self-respect is not in question, to offer a workable compromise to the other person. You can always bargain for your material goals unless the compromise affects your personal feelings of self-respect. If the end goal involves a matter of your self-worth, however, there can be NO compromise.
Using Coercion and Threats
Making and/or carrying out threats to do something to hurt her: threatening to leave her, to commit suicide, to report her to welfare, making her drop charges, making her do illegal things.

Using Economic Abuse
Preventing her from getting or keeping a job, making her ask for money, giving her an allowance, taking her money, not letting her know about or have access to family income.

Using Male Privilege
Treating her like a servant, making all the big decisions, acting like the “master of the castle,” being the one to define men’s and women’s roles.

Using Children
Making her feel guilty about the children, using the children to relay messages, using visitation to harass her, threatening to take the children away.

Using Intimidation
Making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures, smashing things, destroying her property, abusing pets, displaying weapons.

Using Emotional Abuse
Putting her down, making her feel bad about herself, calling her names, making her think she’s crazy, playing mind games, humiliating her, making her feel guilty.

Using Isolation
Controlling what she does, who she sees and talks to, what she reads, where she goes, limiting her outside involvement, using jealousy to justify actions.

Minimizing, Denying and Blaming
Making light of the abuse and not taking her concerns about it seriously, saying the abuse didn’t happen, shifting responsibility for abusive behavior, saying she caused it.
NONVIOLENCE

NEGO TİA TİON AND FAIRNESS
Seeking mutually satisfying resolutions to conflict
* accepting change
* being willing to compromise.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
Making money decisions together • making sure both partners benefit from financial arrangements.

NON-THREATENING BEHAVIOR
Talking and acting so that she feels safe and comfortable expressing herself and doing things.

RESPECT
Listening to her non-judgmentally • being emotionally affirming and understanding
* valuing opinions.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
Mutually agreeing on a fair distribution of work • making family decisions together.

TRUST AND SUPPORT
Supporting her goals in life • respecting her right to her own feelings, friends, activities and opinions.

RESPONSIBLE PARENTING
Sharing parental responsibilities • being a positive non-violent role model for the children.

HONESTY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
Accepting responsibility for self • acknowledging past use of violence • admitting being wrong • communicating openly and truthfully.
Be careful of your thoughts, for they become your words.
Be careful of your words, for they become your actions.
Be careful of your actions, for they become your character.
Be careful of your character, for it becomes your Destiny.