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UPDATE

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YOU AND YOUR ANGER

By Don Merz
EAP/Counseling Center Staff



*You want me to do what? By when?
What do you mean I can't?
Why doesn't that jerk in front of me speed up? I'm going to be late.
Doesn't he realize I'm doing the best I can?
Why didn't she remind me it was her birthday?
Do we always have to fight over who cleans up after the cat?
Why doesn't my daughter listen when I tell her to clean her room?
You got a tattoo where?
I'm going to shoot my computer.*

Anger Defined:
*a feeling of displeasure or
discomfort resulting from injury,
mistreatment, opposition, and usually
showing itself in a desire to fight
back at the supposed cause of this
feeling. (Webster's New World Dictionary).*

Most of us experience countless similar situations on a daily basis. They are inescapable "facts of life" and they have the potential for triggering an angry response – from mild annoyance to furious rage. Over time chronic hostility may develop into a daily pattern of behaving. Thus, it is likely that how we deal or don't deal with our anger can impact how we feel about ourselves and how we relate to others. What follows is an attempt to better understand anger and offer ways to improve our mastery over it.

What we know from research about anger:

- 1) Difficulty dealing with anger is at least a contributing, if not primary, factor in cardiovascular disease, obesity, low self-esteem, migraine headache, poor interpersonal relationships, and spouse and child abuse.
- 2) Hostility unresolved in both men and women predict more severe coronary arteriosclerosis and higher death rates. Hostility can magnify the impact of blood cholesterol, thereby making a high cholesterol level even worse for a hostile person.
- 3) For people who exhibit type A behavior – those who are tense, driven, competitive, and hostile – only hostility is the key predictor of coronary disease.

Is all anger bad?

Definitely not. Feeling angry can serve a number of useful purposes, depending on how we deal with it. 1) Anger is an energizer or motivator. It gives us vigor, mobilizes the body's resources for self-defense and provides us with stamina to overcome obstacles and achieve goals. 2) Anger gives us information about people and situations; it serves as a cue

ANGER, continued.....

to tell us that something unjust, frustrating, threatening, or annoying is going on. It can be a signal that tells us it is time to do something about our discomfort.

Anger becomes negative when it overrides our good judgment and causes us to say or do things without regard for consequences to ourselves or others. In general, it is a problem when it:

- is too frequent
- is too intense
- lasts too long
- leads to aggression
- disrupts work or relationships
- contributes to health problems

The effect of chronic anger is the same as flooring the accelerator of your car at the same time you are slamming on the brakes.

Do's and Don'ts To Keep In Mind When You Are Feeling Angry:

- 1) Do speak up when an issue is important to you.
- 2) Don't strike while the iron is hot. Do take time out to think about the issue and to clarify your position.
- 3) Don't use "below the belt" tactics – blaming, interpreting, analyzing, preaching, or ridiculing.
- 4) Don't make vague statements or requests, people can't read your mind.
- 5) Do try to avoid speaking through a third party, at least initially.
- 6) Do take responsibility for your own part in creating or maintaining the situation that evokes your anger.
- 7) Do listen – if someone is angry with you, listen to what they are saying.
- 8) Do apologize – say you're sorry, at least for your part in the conflict.
- 9) Do choose to forgive yourself when you slip into old patterns; learn from your experience and get back on track.

If, in spite of your best efforts, you find yourself unable to improve your mastery over anger, you may wish to consider counseling. In some cases, anger is a sign of an underlying condition that may need to be resolved. The Employee Assistance Program staff are a good resource to find out more about your anger.

Specific strategies that are proven to work:

- 1) Study yourself. Become an expert on your own anger: determine what triggers your anger; are you angry a lot of the time?; how does it affect you – emotionally, physically, socially – and the quality of your life?; is it time for a change?
- 2) Experiment with alternative ways of reacting. One source of possible ideas is find a role model – a person who handles disappointment or frustration more constructively – and practice doing the same.
- 3) Cool down. Taking a few deep breaths, going for a walk, closing your eyes briefly – giving yourself the opportunity to relax in the face of anger can free you up better determine what else, if necessary, might help to cope better.
- 4) Change how you think. Look at your thoughts, attitudes, and expectations that contribute to your anger. Is your boss deliberately and unfairly targeting you with a lot of extra work or might it be a "crunch period" and he/she knows you can be counted on to do a good job? Viewing people or situations more realistically and less personally can prevent you from being angry in the first place.
- 5) Address the situation directly. Identify what is really distressing to you and express your reactions in a non-defensive straightforward way to the person involved.
- 6) Learn from your experience. As you test out new ways of preventing or dealing with your anger, determine what works by asking yourself, "Am I reacting differently now? Am I less angry than I used to be? Do I feel better about myself? Are people noticing and commenting on how much more enjoyable it is to be around me?" If the answers are "yes", then keep it up. If the answers are "no", then keep experimenting. What have you got to lose?

For general information and some basic steps to prepare in a reasonable way check out the following websites:

<http://y2k.state.wi.us> .

Wisconsin update and suggestions on how to prepare.
1-800-422-7128

<http://currents.net/newstoday/99/09/20/news1.html>

For more information on a day to day basis.

<http://www.y2k.gov/> President's Council on the Year 2000 Conversion.

This site contains information on the Year 2000 (Y2K) computer problem including the Federal government's efforts to prepare its computer systems, links to information on Y2K compliance for critical sectors of the economy, and other Y2K resources.

Information on Y2K?

Your best course of action is to:

- Be informed.
- Be prepared within reasonable measures but do not stockpile, food, fuel or money.
- Refrain from panic or creating panic in others
- Assume that any glitches that arise will be minimal, and contingency plans easily implemented.

For more information on preparations for your household see: The Facts About the Year 2000 for Wisconsin Families published in "The Safe Side: Know Risk". Fall/Winter, 1999). Managing Editor: Peggy Solberg: (608-267-2731.)

SUGGESTIONS FOR COPING WITH SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER (SAD)

What is the difference between SAD and the “winter blues?” The winter blues can usually be helped with increased physical activity and increased amounts of light in the living and work environment. SAD sufferers may need more intensive treatment, specifically anti-depressant therapy and phototherapy.

- Discuss symptoms with your physician or a mental health counselor.
- Anti-depressants can be helpful in treating some people with SAD.
- Educate yourself, family and close friends regarding SAD to gain their understanding and support.
- Get as much light as possible and avoid dark environments during daylight hours in winter.
- Allow natural light to shine through open doors and windows when temperatures are moderate.
- Try trimming bushes that are in front of windows, painting walls with lighter colors, installing brighter light bulbs, removing heavy drapes, check into skylights.
- Exercise daily, preferably outdoors, to take advantage of natural light. If you must exercise indoors, do it preferably in bright, natural sunlight or in brightly lit environments.
- Try sitting in front of sunlight from a south-facing window for short, but frequent periods during the day.
- Take “sunlight” breaks as much as you can.
- Rearrange work spaces at home and work to be near a window, or set up bright lights in your work area.
- Whenever you can, ask to sit near a window in restaurants, classrooms, cars, etc.
- Stay on a regular sleep/wake cycle.
- People with SAD who get up every morning and go to sleep at the same time report being more alert and less fatigued than when they vary their schedules.
- Be aware of cold outside temperatures and dress to conserve energy and warmth. Many people affected by SAD report sensitivity to extreme cold temperature.
- Consider going outside without sunglasses during the late fall and winter months.
- Arrange outings and social occasions for day times and early evenings in winter.
- Avoid staying up late which disrupts the sleep schedule and biological clock.
- Conserve energy by managing time wisely and avoiding or minimizing stress. Keep your life simple!
- Try putting lights on a timer in bedroom or use a dawn simulator; set the timer switch to 1/2 hour before awakening. Some people with SAD report that this light technique has an anti-depressant effect and helps them awaken more easily.
- Record your biological rhythms during the fall and winter. Keep a daily log noting weather concerns and you corresponding energy level, mood, appetite/weight, sleep times and activities.
- When possible, postpone making major life changes until spring or summer.
- If you are able, arrange a winter vacation to a warm, sunny climate!



For more information and support, for listings of light-box manufacturers, and counselors and medical professionals in your area who treat SAD with phototherapy, contact: National Organization for Seasonal Affective Disorder (NOSAD), P.O. Box 40133, Washington, D.C. 20016.

(Source: University Of Minnesota Duluth's Student Counseling Service)

UPCOMING

Brown Bag Seminars

Wednesday, January 12th

Women, Relation and Finding a Work Identity

Susan E. Barbour, Ed.D.

Co-sponsored with Wisconsin Women in Higher Education Leadership

Reeve Union 221

Women's intuitive response to relationship is often quite different than for men. Their sense of well being is connected to the well being of others. When it comes to competing, getting ahead, or using power as is often part of work situations, women worry that they are being injurious and selfish. This talk credits women's relational abilities, highlights some of the conflicts related to work identity and ways to reconsider those conflicts.

Wednesday, February 23rd

Music Instruction in the Kindergarten Classroom:

Effects on Spatial Intelligence

Fran Rauscher, Ph.D

Reeve Union 221

News reports are appearing almost weekly on the benefits of music to children's intelligence, but what does the science really suggest? Can music instruction improve children's intelligence? Dr. Frances Rauscher will present her three-year study on the effects of piano keyboard lessons on kindergarten children's spatial abilities, and will discuss what her data may imply for educators and parents.

Thursday, March 23rd

Meditation: Instant Tranquility

Paula Hayford

Reeve Union 221

Meditation has become a valuable tool for finding a peaceful oasis of relaxation and stress relief in a demanding fast paced world. It is simply the process of cultivating the ability to focus on the present, without getting distracted by the past or the future. Learn the benefits and methods of meditation.

Wednesday, April 20th

Through the Eyes of a Loved One with Memory Impairment

Joscelyn Deanovich

Reeve Union 221

If you have a loved one who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or some other form of dementia, this informational seminar will be beneficial to you. It will focus on understanding the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and how to communicate effectively with older adults with memory impairment.

Wednesday, May 10th

Neck and Shoulder Tension

Shirley Perzentka, CMT, Massage Therapist

Reeve Union 221

This seminar is a relaxing experiential hour. We will start with a few minutes of gentle movement, I will demonstrate a few quick and simple techniques to massage neck and shoulder areas, then you will practice on each other. Dress casually. Demonstrations done seated in a chair.

Would you like help and support to Stop Smoking in the new Millenium?

EAP is offering an E-mail Educational Program to assist your efforts. Learn the techniques for developing a successful quitting plan to use when you are ready to stop smoking. You will get a brief message about every other day for two months. We will focus on the positive effects of quitting, not on beating you down or making you feel guilty. E-mail Abhold@uwosh.edu or call Joe Abhold for more information: 424-1078.

Spring In to Health Wellness Fair

The "Spring into Health" Wellness Fair is scheduled for Wednesday, March 8, 2000 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The location of the fair is Reeve Memorial Union Lounge and Trading Post. Students and all employees are encouraged to participate. Mark your calendar and watch your campus mail for further details. The event is sponsored by the UW Oshkosh Wellness Committee.

Notice:

For those who attended the September Brown Bag "Caring for your Aging Parents" The following support groups are available at the Senior Center in Oshkosh:

Alzheimer (Sept-May)	2nd Thurs.	6:30PM
Cancer	3rd Thurs.	5:30PM
Diabetic (Nov/Dec -3rd Thurs./4th Thurs.		2:00PM
Parkinson (no Dec. mtg)	3rd Tues.	2:00PM
Scleroderma	2nd Mon	1:30PM
Tops	Tues.	5:30PM
Tops (Private)	Wed.	9:00AM
VIP (Visually impaired)	1st Tues.	10:30AM
WPS (widowed Persons)	2nd Mon.	6:30PM

EAP Update Staff:

For further information contact
Employee Assistance Program
at 920-424-1078

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