









## Rage and Anger

Evidence that lack of self control is an issue:

-  Anger presents a very clear set of nonverbal markers, including facial expressions, grimace, eyebrows askew, mouth and lips pulled tight or teeth clenched and pulled lips, squinting eyes.
-  Body is rigid with tension in fingers, limbs, neck, legs and choppy motions, and breathing tends to be different, with sound attached, gulping, huffing
-  Voice is loud and has an uncontrolled feel to it with words exploding or snapping.
-  Cursing and use of expletives is very common; even normal words sound "ugly". Expect name calling, muttering, blaming, outrage, refusals, all part of losing control.
-  It is not uncommon for pushing, shoving, kicking, throwing things, though the time prior to letting off steam may include balled up look, with fists tight, head down, muscles tensed.
-  Sarcasm and cynicism are clear components of anger. We communicate our rage in name calling, put-downs, almost like spears and knives. That is the reason for saying "he looked daggers at me" or a piercing look. Verbal abuse is a common response, as rage spills over.



Remember back to a time you blew up. Were you simmering first, calm and it came out of nowhere, confused by the amount of energy and force? Did you blame yourself or others? What about the times when you were feeling cynical, sarcastic? You may or may not know yourself and your own anger, but you probably know the signs of your children or your best friend. You can see it coming and you can feel it coming. The same is true of students. We can tune into how they look and are acting and see it coming just like we can predict rain. Included with this discussion is a test on anger and hostility. Please take a few minutes to remind yourself about anger, check your own level of anger, and learn a few things to help yourself and students stay in control.



## Solutions

- Teach self soothing. . . breathing, rocking, imagery, pacing, exercise, etc.
- Use conflict resolution in the classroom, practice it as a group, and as frustrations arise, utilize it before anger or discontent get out of hand. Make it a common practice and support its use yourself.
- Give students time and support in learning self control, self monitoring and self management.
- The thermometer is a useful tool for student awareness of the many levels of anger.
- Demystify anger and take it into common talk and discussion.
- We have emotional responses to the events in life. Once we become aroused, one of three states may take over. They are  
     FEAR . . . . .flight  
     **ANGER** . . . . .fight  
     HELPLESSNESS . . . . .puddle

These are physiological responses and are triggered automatically -- that is what arousal means -- adrenaline starts pumping, the base of our brain prepares us to protect ourselves and our thinking shuts down except at the most basic survival level. Once this occurs, it takes a while for the mind and body to go back to normal, be able to think and make sense of what others are doing. We are emotionally fragile and ready to hurt others to protect ourselves from threat or hide ourselves. It takes at least 20 minutes for that arousal to dissolve. It is during this time that teachers need to help us calm ourselves rather than increasing our anxiety or panic.

## Fight / Flight: Hostility and Anger Questionnaire (From Anger Kills)

Directions: Fill this out as honestly as possible. You need not share the score with others.

1. A person drives by my yard with the car stereo blaring acid rock.
  - A. I wonder if the driver is ruining his hearing.
  - B. I can feel my blood pressure starting to rise.
2. The person who cuts my hair trims off more than I wanted.
  - A. I tell him or her what a lousy job he or she did.
  - B. I figure it'll grow back, and I resolve to give my instructions more forcefully next time.
3. I am in the express checkout line at the supermarket, where a sign reads: "No more than 10 items, please!"
  - A. I pick up a magazine to pass the time.
  - B. I glance ahead to see if anyone has more than ten items.
4. Many large cities have a visible number of homeless people.
  - A. I believe that the homeless are down and out because they lack ambition.
  - B. The homeless are victims of illness or some other misfortune.
5. There have been times when I was very angry with someone.
  - A. I was always able to stop short of hitting them.
  - B. I have, on occasion, hit or shoved them.
6. The newspaper contains a prominent news story about drug related crime.
  - A. I wish the government had better educational/drug programs, even for pushers.
  - B. I wish we could put every drug pusher away for good.
7. The prevalence of AIDS has reached alarming proportions.
  - A. This is largely the result of irresponsible behavior on the part of a small group of the population.
  - B. AIDS is a major tragedy.
8. I sometimes argue with a friend or relative.
  - A. I find profanity an effective tool.
  - B. I hardly ever use profanity.
9. I am stuck in a traffic jam.
  - A. I usually am not particularly upset.
  - B. I quickly start to feel irritated and annoyed.
10. There is a really important job to be done.
  - A. I prefer to do it myself.
  - B. I am apt to call on my friends or co-workers to help.
11. Sometimes I keep my angry feelings to myself.
  - A. Doing so can often prevent me from making a mountain out of a molehill.
  - B. Doing so is usually a bad idea.
12. Another driver butts ahead of me in traffic.
  - A. I usually flash my lights or honk my horn.
  - B. I stay farther back behind such a driver.
13. Someone treats me unfairly.
  - A. I usually forget it rather easily.
  - B. I am apt to keep thinking about it for hours.
14. The cars ahead of me on an unfamiliar road start to slow and stop as they approach a curve.
  - A. I assume that there is a construction site ahead.
  - B. I assume someone ahead had a fender bender.
15. Someone expresses an ignorant belief.
  - A. I try to correct him or her.
  - B. I am likely to let it pass.
16. I am caught in a slow moving bank or supermarket line.
  - A. I usually start to fume at people who dawdle ahead of me.
  - B. I seldom notice the wait.

17. Someone is being rude or annoying.
  - A. I am apt to avoid him or her in the future.
  - B. I might have to straight them out.
18. An election year rolls around.
  - A. I learn anew that politicians are not to be trusted.
  - B. I am caught up in the excitement of pulling for my candidate.
19. An elevator stops too long on a floor above where I am waiting.
  - A. I soon start to feel irritated and annoyed.
  - B. I start planning the rest of my day.
20. I am around someone I don't like.
  - A. I try to end the encounter as soon as possible.
  - B. I find it hard not to be rude to him or her.
21. I see a very overweight person working down the street.
  - A. I wonder why this person has such little self-control.
  - B. I think that he or she might have a hard time walking.
22. I am riding as a passenger in the front seat of a car.
  - A. I take the opportunity to enjoy the scenery.
  - B. I try to stay alert for obstacles ahead.
23. Someone criticizes something I have done.
  - A. I feel annoyed.
  - B. I try to decide whether the criticism is justified.
24. I am involved in an argument.
  - A. I concentrate hard so that I can get my point across.
  - B. I can feel my heart pounding and I breathe harder.
25. A friend or co-worker disagrees with me.
  - A. I try to explain my position clearly.
  - B. I am apt to get into an argument with him or her.
26. Someone is speaking very slowly during a conversation.
  - A. I am apt to finish his or her sentences.
  - B. I am apt to listen until s/he finishes.
27. If they were put on the horn system, most wouldn't sneak into a movie theater without paying.
  - A. That's because they are afraid of being caught.
  - B. It's because it would be wrong.
28. I have strong beliefs about rearing children.
  - A. I try to reward mine when they behave well.
  - B. I make sure they know what the rules are.
29. I hear news of another terrorist attack.
  - A. I feel like lashing out.
  - B. I wonder how people can be so cruel.
30. I am talking with my dearest friend.
  - A. I often find my thoughts racing ahead to what I plan to say next.
  - B. I find it easy to pay close attention to what he or she is saying.
31. There have been times in the past when I was really angry.
  - A. I have never thrown things or slammed a door.
  - B. At times I have thrown something or slammed a door.
32. Life is full of little annoyances.
  - A. They often seem to get under my skin.
  - B. They seem to roll off my back unnoticed.
33. I disapprove of something a friend has done.
  - A. I usually keep such disapproval to myself.
  - B. I usually let him or her know about it.

34. I am requesting a seat assignment for an airline flight.
  - A. I usually request a seat in a specific area of the plane.
  - B. I generally leave the choice to the agent.
35. I feel a certain way nearly every day of the week.
  - A. I feel grouchy some of the time.
  - B. I usually stay on an even keel.
36. Someone bumps into me at the store.
  - A. I pass it off as an accident.
  - B. I feel irritated at the person's clumsiness.
37. Someone around me is preparing a meal.
  - A. I keep an eye out to make sure nothing burns or cooks too long.
  - B. I either talk with them or find something else to do.
38. A friend calls at the last minute to say that s/he is too tired to go out tonight and I am stuck with expensive tickets.
  - A. I try to find someone else to go with me.
  - B. I tell my friend just how inconsiderate s/he is.
39. I recall something that angered me previously.
  - A. I feel angry all over again.
  - B. The memory doesn't bother me nearly as much as the actual event did.
40. I see people walking around in shopping malls.
  - A. Many of them are either shopping or exercising.
  - B. Many are wasting time.
41. Someone is hogging the conversation at a party.
  - A. I look for an opportunity to put him or her down.
  - B. I move to another group.
42. At times I have to work with incompetent people.
  - A. I concentrate on my part of the job.
  - B. Having to put up with them ticks me off.
43. My spouse, boyfriend or girlfriend is going to get me a birthday present.
  - A. I prefer to pick it out myself.
  - B. I prefer to be surprised.
44. I hold a poor opinion of someone.
  - A. I keep it to myself.
  - B. I let others know about it.
45. In most arguments I have, the roles are consistent.
  - A. I am the angrier one.
  - B. The other person is angrier than I am.
46. Slow-moving lines can often be found in banks and supermarkets.
  - A. They are an unavoidable part of modern life.
  - B. They are often due to someone's incompetence.

### Scoring the Test

**Cynicism:** a mistrusting attitude regarding the motives of people in general, leading one to be constantly on guard against the "misbehavior" of others.

3 (B)	4 (A)	7 (A)	10 (A)	14 (B)
18 (B)	21 (A)	22 (B)	27 (A)	30 (A)
34 (A)	37 (A)	40 (B)	43 (A)	46 (B)

**Anger:** the emotion so often engendered

1 (B)	6 (B)	9 (B)	13 (B)	16 (A)
19 (A)	23 (A)	23 (B)	29 (A)	32 (A)
35 (A)	36 (B)	39 (A)	42 (B)	45 (A)

**Aggression:** The behavior to which many hostile people are driven by unpleasant negative emotions of anger, irritation, frustration, rage.

2 (A)	5 (B)	8 (A)	11 (B)	12 (A)	
15 (A)	17 (B)	20 (B)	25 (B)	26 (A)	
28 (B)	31 (B)	33 (B)	38 (B)	41 (A)	44 (B)

**Key:** 0 - 3 = low Hostility \_\_\_\_\_  
 4 - 6 = borderline Anger \_\_\_\_\_  
 7 - + = consider making a personal change Aggression \_\_\_\_\_ Total\* \_\_\_\_\_  
 If any single area is higher than ten, consider making a change in lifestyle.

### Hostility and Cynicism

Interactions are at the core of life. Those who are unnerved by daily interplay can come to recognize and make personal choices about the effect of those interactions. Ask yourself these questions:

1. Do I have a lifestyle that focuses on anger, hostility, cynicism, aggression?
2. How can a person change that kind of focus or habit pattern?

3. Steps and resources to begin that change

Using the most recent event that created a sense of anger, review it in light of your world view. Does it change your perception of how you responded? Did you have any other

options?

Develop a plan for one of the anger deflections.

List an acceptable outlet for improving relationships

Describe a time when you utilized humor to change your perception. You may wish to share this with the group.

- What were common experiences in using humor as a mood changer?
- How could it be used more frequently?
- Is there a difference between finding humor and using sarcasm?

**Defense Mechanisms** also help us deal with feelings. This is a list of the most common.

Reaction Formation	Regression	Rationalization
Projection	Sublimation	Isolation of affect
Undoing	Intellectualization	Displacement
Repression	Suppression	Denial