

How Big a Part Does Anger Play in Your Life?

Most of us would find it difficult to answer questions about how big a problem anger is for us or exactly how it affects us, because we are not often asked to be systematic in observing ourselves or our most personal relationships. We often get into daily routines, and our behavior becomes kind of automatic because we've acted and reacted in these ways for so long. But it's important at this juncture to know how severely anger is affecting your life so you know what course of action to take.

Check off any of the following descriptions that apply to your experiences over the last 6 months. Try to answer honestly based on your own memories and what others have said to you about your anger.

- You handled an aggravating situation poorly. (score 1)
- You feel/felt embarrassed or guilty about the way you handled your anger. (score 2)
- Another person has told you that your way of expressing anger was a problem. (score 2)
- An important relationship at home, at work, or among friends or family has been strained by your expression of anger. (score 3)
- Someone you care about has urged you to get help for managing your anger. (score 3)
- You have gotten into serious trouble because of the way you expressed your anger. Examples might include a reprimand at work, a legal problem or arrest for "road rage" or assault, being hurt or hurting another, a separation or divorce. (score 4)

Scoring: Now add up the scores of the items you checked off.

- **If you scored 3 or more**, you likely have a problem with anger that should be addressed but may be able to get what you need from self-help such as this workbook.
- **A score of 6 or more** indicates you may have a serious problem with the way you express your anger. Don't put this book down. If finishing the workbook doesn't seem to lessen the impact of anger on your life, you might consult a therapist or counselor.
- **If you checked off the last item**, you should consider seeking the help of a mental health professional who specializes in treating anger issues.

How Do You Express Your Anger?

Next, consider the following 10 challenging situations. As you read each of them, think how you might react if this or a similar situation occurred in your own life now or in the recent past (within the last 30 days). Because you may express your anger in various ways, perhaps depending on how you feel at a given time, be sure to check off as many of the possible reactions as apply to you for each item. For each situation described, check one or

more of the reactions you could see yourself having to this or a similar situation. If none of the specific descriptions applies, check “Other.”

1. Your partner does something you’ve repeatedly said you dislike. Your reactions might include:
 - Withdrawing from your partner, just wanting to be alone and not discuss it. [C]
 - Thinking of something to say that will make your partner squirm or feel uncomfortable. [B]
 - Acting very forceful in getting your point across. It’s important that your partner hear how upset you are whether he/she wants to hear it or not. [E]
 - Feeling very intense and irritable, which could lead you to do things like talk louder, slam a door, or drive faster. [D]
 - Thinking to yourself, “Just wait until he wants something from me.” [A]
 - Other. It’s unlikely I would react in any of these ways.

2. While you are on your way to work in the morning with some friends, another driver suddenly pulls in front of you, forcing you to slam on your brakes. The reactions you might have include:
 - Feeling so intense and angry it’s hard to shake it off as you begin your day at work. [D]
 - Trying to pull next to the other driver to tell him off or make a rude gesture. [E]
 - Trying to pull ahead of the other driver, then slowing down, holding him up as payback. [A]
 - Trying to think of put-downs or cutting remarks that describe his lousy driving skills. [B]
 - Getting so upset you stop talking with others in the car with you, holding in your anger. [C]
 - Other. It’s unlikely I would react in any of these ways.

3. A close friend keeps you waiting at a restaurant for 30 minutes. When she arrives unapologetic, acting as if nothing happened, your reactions might include:
 - Immediately accusing her of acting inconsiderately, raising your voice to let her know just how irritated you are with this rude behavior. [E]
 - Feeling so upset that you eat fast, get impatient with the waiter, and in general feel tense and grumpy during the entire meal. Hard to shake it off. [D]
 - Minimally responding to your friend’s comments. Making her do most of the talking because you just can’t act like everything is fine—it isn’t. [A]

- Telling her you cannot remain any longer and leaving her sitting there. Now maybe she will realize just how rude she was. [C]
 - Making a biting remark like “I’m really glad you value our friendship so much that it’s at the top of your priorities.” [B]
 - Other. It’s unlikely I would react in any of these ways.
4. You are waiting in a long line in a convenience store. The checkout clerk is “gabbing” with a coworker and not paying attention to his job. Your reactions might include:
- Muttering under your breath and to other customers something like “This person is clearly incompetent” and/or “The store should never have hired him.” [D]
 - Getting so upset you end up leaving your items in the store and walking out and/or deciding never to do business there again. [C]
 - When you finally get to the counter, acting like you are praising the clerk with a remark like “Keep up the good work. You have a real future here.” [B]
 - Deciding to tell the clerk just how angry you are and how incompetent and inconsiderate the store is for hiring him with a remark like “If you can’t do this job properly, you should care enough about the customers to quit.” [E]
 - Slowly placing your items on the counter with the computer codes turned away so the clerk has to work harder to scan them. [A]
 - Other. It’s unlikely I would react in any of these ways.
5. You are furious with your spouse/partner for making plans for you both to go out with friends without asking you. As she is telling a story to these friends at the restaurant, you might react by:
- Walking away on some pretext (e.g., going to the restroom) as soon as she begins telling the story. You are not going to sit there and be an audience. [C]
 - Making a wry remark to your friends that kind of puts down the story with humor, like “What an interesting story. Are you plumbing the depths of *Reader’s Digest* again, dear?” [B]
 - Avoiding eye contact with your spouse/partner, not reacting in any way to her story, and quickly changing the topic. [A]
 - Putting down what she says by forcefully questioning her facts or criticizing. You are angry and she needs to know it. [E]
 - Feeling impatient for her to finish the story. After a brief time interrupting her to ask someone else a question. [D]
 - Other. It’s unlikely I would react in any of these ways.
6. You feel hurt and angry because your partner seems to be neglecting you or is not affectionate enough and won’t talk about it. You might react by:

- Deciding that the next time he wants something from you, your response will be “Forget it.” You will show him how it feels. [A]
 - Giving him a dose of his own medicine by withdrawing from conversation and going to bed early. [C]
 - Making a remark with an edge, like “It’s really great that you’re so loving—I can always count on you to be there for me.” [B]
 - Letting your anger out by forcefully telling him that he is cold and acting like a [fill in an uncomplimentary name]. You are not standing for this. [E]
 - Feeling so upset and tense about his letting you down that you find yourself irritated with others (e.g., your children, a friend, your fellow drivers). [D]
 - Other. It’s unlikely I would react in any of these ways.
7. You have just been told that your supervisor is giving another employee a perk or position you think you should have been given and never even discussed it with you. Ways you might handle this include:
- Going to your supervisor and letting her have it. You are not going to take this unfair mistreatment, and she is going to know it. [E]
 - Running thoughts through your mind about just quitting and getting out of there. If they don’t appreciate you, why stick around? [C]
 - Deciding you will be too busy to help your supervisor out by staying late or taking on additional work. [A]
 - The next time you see your supervisor, making a remark like “I really appreciate the fair way you treat your employees. It’s great working for you.” [B]
 - Noticing more muscle tension and inner tightness and more impatience with others and things (e.g., slow elevators, busy signals). [D]
 - Other. It’s unlikely I would react in any of these ways.
8. You are ready to leave for an important occasion, and your partner is already 20 minutes late after you have specifically told him how important this is to you. Your reactions might include:
- Finding yourself increasingly tense, pacing and/or muttering under your breath, “I can’t believe how long this is taking.” It is hard to relax and accept this lateness. [D]
 - When he is finally ready to leave, telling him off by saying something like “I can’t believe anyone could be so rude [or hopeless or just plain irresponsible].” [E]
 - Making a remark like “I can see you really listened to my feelings about getting there on time. You are a wizard of efficiency and organization.” [B]
 - Not speaking as you usher him to the car. You avoid him for the rest of the day. [C]

- Even though the other did something special or well, refusing to compliment him/her for the rest of the day. Why should you? [A]
 - Other. It's unlikely I would react in any of these ways.
9. After you put in a lot of effort on a community project, the committee chairperson acknowledges everyone but you at an awards banquet. You feel angry at the slight, and your reactions might include:
- Refusing to speak or responding minimally to the chairperson later in the evening when she tries to talk with you. [C]
 - When the chairperson acknowledges the omission, not acknowledging her statement and changing the topic. You will not let her off the hook that easily. [A]
 - Finding yourself telling an embarrassing story about the chairperson to other committee members and kind of enjoying seeing her discomfort when others laugh. [B]
 - Telling him/her off for being so inconsiderate of your feelings and noticing that she is kind of intimidated by your intense voice. This feels good given what she put you through. [E]
 - Being so upset that on your way home you find yourself driving faster and being more likely to yell at other drivers' behavior. Feeling tense and noticing that you are easily irritated for the rest of the evening. [D]
 - Other. It's unlikely I would react in any of these ways.
10. Your neighbor fails to return something he borrowed from you even though you've mentioned it numerous times. You see this neighbor using your item in the yard and might handle your irritation by:
- Ignoring him when he tries to start up a friendly conversation. How can you talk to so inconsiderate a person? [C]
 - Deciding to park your minivan in front of the neighbor's house when you know it infuriates him. [A]
 - Telling your neighbor you really appreciate living next door to someone who is so considerate. [B]
 - Deciding to do yard work later and going inside because just looking at your neighbor causes you stress. You find it difficult to quickly "let go" of your tension. [D]
 - Forcefully demanding your item back, telling him to forget about borrowing anything in the future and to stay away from you. Why be around someone with no morals? [E]
 - Other. It's unlikely I would react in any of these ways.

Scoring: How you express your anger is indicated by your score on each of five scales. Each scale represents one of the modes of anger expression described in Chapter 3, a face of anger that is unhelpful and likely to lead to further problems for you or others who interact with you.

To obtain your scores, add up how many A, B, C, D, and E items you checked. Then fill in your totals below.

Scale A: Passive Aggression _____. You tend to withhold from others when you are angry by failing to do what they want, being late, or otherwise holding back. You minimize or deny that you are angry when others express frustration or question your actions.

Scale B: Sarcasm _____. You use sarcasm, biting wit, or “humorous” put-downs as a way of expressing your anger indirectly. Your facial expression and tone of voice may convey disgust or criticism, which you deny. When others find your comments or actions hurtful or complain, you may accuse them of being too sensitive or minimize their feedback.

Scale C: Cold Anger _____. When angry you refuse to talk things out and may withdraw from others, with minimal or no contact for hours or days at a time. You may secretly enjoy punishing others by making them work hard to get you to respond but would not admit it.

Scale D: Hostility _____. You don’t handle stress well, often feeling very intense and acting it out with a loud, forceful voice and disgust and disapproval when others or situations do not meet your expectations. You may sigh, roll your eyes, and in general make nasty comments that others often find stressful and intrusive. You hate to wait and suffer “fools” poorly.

Scale E: Aggression _____. You act in a manner that may intimidate or harm another person, either emotionally or physically, whether you intend to or not. Yelling, name-calling, and put-downs may threaten or intimidate your partner, friend, or coworker. While not directly assessed by this questionnaire, physical aggression includes physically blocking, holding, pushing, hitting, or restraining another person without express permission to touch. This face of anger is the most serious and requires professional help, especially when levels of verbal and/or physical abuse are harming others.

On which scale did you have your highest score? _____. This mode of anger expression should be a focus for your anger management efforts in the chapters ahead.

Are you surprised at scoring highest on this scale?

Yes No

Did you have a relatively high score on multiple scales? If so, which ones? _____

To reflect on this mix of behaviors you reveal to others, think about the last few times you got angry and regretted how things turned out. Which of the faces of anger seemed to cause you the biggest problem? _____

That's the one to target for change first as you set priorities.

RELATIONSHIP ANGER PROFILE (RAP)

Write in the name of the angry person for whom you are describing your feelings and actions: _____.

Think about the last few times this person got angry and how you felt in response.

Which of the four core feelings do you experience when this person acts in an angry way toward you, whether he/she withholds what you want or withdraws in cold anger or acts sarcastic, intense, hostile, or loud/aggressive? Once you've circled Y (yes) for **one or more** emotions—**anxious/tense, irritated/angry, responsible/guilty, or afraid/fearful**—answer the questions that follow the ones for which you circled Y.

I feel ANXIOUS (e.g., apprehensive, worried) when this person gets mad: **Y N**. If YES, then carefully consider and answer yes or no (circle Y or N) to the following questions:

1. When I think this person might get angry, I carefully consider exactly what I am about to say before expressing it. **Y N [a]**
2. I often find myself avoiding saying how I really feel so the other person won't get mad at me. **Y N [a]**
3. There are certain topics I avoid if this person seems upset. **Y N [a]**
4. Sometimes I try to change the topic or keep things from upsetting this individual (e.g., keep our children away, reduce noise, make sure everything is perfect) to avoid this person's anger. **Y N [b]**
5. I have given in and changed my own plans or avoided going places with this person when I was concerned about an escalation of anger. **Y N [b]**
6. I find I will avoid certain people or couples this person dislikes to avoid any possibility of anger becoming an issue. **Y N [b]**

I feel GUILTY (e.g., responsible, sorry, apologetic) when this person gets mad: **Y N**. If YES, then carefully consider and answer yes or no (circle Y or N) to the following questions:

1. At times I find myself trying to make excuses for this person's anger—to somehow justify it to myself or others. **Y N [g]**
2. This person can't help how angry he/she gets—it's just a personality trait that can't be changed, so I must live with it and adjust to it. **Y N [g]**
3. When this person gets mad, it must be my fault also. It takes two to start any argument or conflict. **Y N [g]**
4. Giving in to this person is the easiest way to get the anger to stop or avoid it in the first place. Life is too short to make a big deal out of things, so I just do it his/her way to avoid the hassle of it all. **Y N [h]**
5. I try to make up for conflicts with this person by doing something nice to make him/her forget about it. **Y N [h]**
6. I know this person will get his/her way eventually, so I just don't fight it anymore. It's easier just to give in and get over my feelings. **Y N [h]**

(cont.)

RELATIONSHIP ANGER PROFILE (cont.)

I feel ANGRY (e.g., irritated, annoyed, enraged) when this person gets mad: **Y N**. If YES, then carefully consider and answer yes or no (circle Y or N) to the following questions:

1. I spend a lot of time defending myself around this person. Y N [c]
2. I cannot let something this person says go if it's wrong or unfair—I feel I have to defend or justify my position. Y N [c]
3. I find that I am very alert to this person's negative comments about me and react to them immediately. Y N [c]
4. When I get mad, I sometimes do just the opposite of what this person wants, just to let him/her know that I matter too. Y N [d]
5. I find myself withholding what he/she wants as a kind of payback. Y N [d]
6. I get so mad that I sometimes stop talking or withdraw physically (e.g., leave the house, go to another room) and refuse to have anything to do with this person for hours or even days at a time. Y N [d]
7. When this person criticizes me, I get so annoyed I often criticize something he/she said or did in return. Y N [e]
8. I get very impatient and act angry myself when I am treated unfairly by this person. Y N [e]
9. Sometimes I raise my voice in response to what this person says. Y N [e]
10. At times I have been known to yell back at this person. Y N [f]
11. When pushed to the wall, I have gotten physical with this person by (one or more) blocking, pushing, holding, using my hands in anger, or throwing. Y N [f]
12. Sometimes I have said things to this person when I'm angry that I would never want repeated to others I care about—it would embarrass me. Y N [f]

I feel AFRAID (e.g., fearful, terrorized) when this person gets mad: **Y N**. If YES, then carefully consider and answer yes or no (circle Y or N) to the following questions:

1. When this person gets angry, I sometimes feel so fearful that I am kind of paralyzed and just go along with it so it will stop. Y N [i]
2. I imagine this person will do something, whether intentional or not, that results in me or someone I love (e.g., a child, other family member) getting hurt emotionally or physically. This causes me to give in. Y N [i]
3. I sometimes feel I cannot act or speak out for fear that the situation will just get worse. Y N [i]
4. Sometimes I just don't know where to turn to cope with this person's anger—it is so overwhelming. Y N [j]
5. I have thought of ending this relationship because of the anger, but still care and want it to work. I feel stuck between the two. Y N [j]
6. I feel so powerless and overwhelmed at times I just shut down. Y N [j]

CONTRACT FOR BEHAVIOR/COMMITMENTS TO CHANGE

I, _____, on this date of _____, commit myself to do everything within my ability to accomplish the following new behaviors:

New Behaviors: [Describe new behaviors in measurable, behavioral, and attainable terms]

Time and Context: I will begin my new behavior starting _____ and will be focused on doing so in any situation involving: _____

Affirmations of Task and Personal Commitment: I affirm that managing my _____ [face(s) of anger] is of value to the quality of my life, will likely improve my relationship(s) with _____, and will improve my health in the following likely ways: _____

My relationships at work and elsewhere will likely be better if I listen more and use my new anger actions. I can do this and am capable of awareness of my self-talk and emotions and actions. I have made major changes in the past like: _____.

Other affirmations that will help me be successful include: _____

Monitoring of Contract: I will fill out an Anger Incident Log anytime I or _____ [other who will help you monitor yourself] believe I have handled my anger poorly so I can measure my progress.

Terms of Contract: I will continue using this new anger behavior until: _____. If my and _____'s Anger Incident Logs indicate I have gone ____ days without my old face of anger, I will treat him/her and me to: _____.

Thereafter each and every ____ days that occur without a recorded episode of anger will result in: _____

Signed: _____ Witnessed: _____

ANGER INCIDENT LOG

Circle and fill in as appropriate.

What happened? _____

With whom? _____

Where? _____

Who else was present? _____

Trigger: What did you expect that didn't occur?

I think that he/she should have: _____

This shouldn't have happened because: _____

Thoughts that made you mad:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Sensations of anger: What did you feel and where in your body? _____

Review your muscles, heart and breathing rates, stomach/GI sensations and any skin temperature changes to write in which new sensations came first when your anger seemed the mildest: _____

_____ ;

(cont.)

ANGER INCIDENT LOG (cont.)

and then next, as your anger intensified (moderate level): _____
_____;

and then next as your anger intensified (intense level): _____
_____.

If you noticed even higher levels (overwhelming level) report what you felt : _____
_____.

Face of Anger: Passive aggression Sarcasm Cold anger Hostility Aggression

Describe what you did or said: _____

What did the other person do in reaction to your face of anger? _____

Outcome: How did it turn out? Any negative consequences of your anger expression?

Affect another person? How? _____

Affect the rest of your day? How? _____

Affect you physically afterward (e.g., tense, headache, irritable)? _____

Any serious consequences (e.g., legal, referral at work)? _____

LEVELS OF ANGER WORKSHEET

Levels of anger arousal	Heart rate	Breathing	Muscles	Stomach/GI	Temperature
First noticeable changes (mild)	Describe the sensation	Describe the sensation	Describe the sensation	Describe the sensation	Describe the sensation
Next changes (moderate)					
Next changes (intense)					
Final level (overwhelming)					

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PERSONAL ANGER SCALE

Ratings	Physical sensations	Desired behaviors
0–20	When completely relaxed, I feel:	Awareness of self
21–40	First noticeable changes: Mild	Be aware of body—“signal breathing” as needed. Use a self-instructional phrase to stay focused, like:
41–60	Next changes: Moderate	Begin “STOP” method: Stop (sit, signal breath, count down anger), Think, Objectify, Plan. Take time-out if cannot reduce arousal below 60.
61–80	Next changes: Intense	Should be gone before you reach this level. If not, leave immediately. Continue STOP method.
81–100	Final level: Overwhelming	Should be gone well before this. If not, leave situation immediately—continue to use signal breaths and STOP method until ready to return to the triggering situation.

Fill in “0–20” sensations by recording how your body felt, from your head to your toes, as you got really relaxed.

Fill in “21–40” as Serg did by looking at the sensations he recorded as “First noticeable changes” (mild).

Fill in “41–60” with the sensations you recorded for “Next changes” (moderate).

Fill in “61–80” with the sensations you recorded for “Next changes” (intense).

Fill in “81–100,” the “danger zone,” with the sensations you recorded for “Final level” (overwhelming).

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RELAXATION ASSESSMENT SHEET

Relaxation Technique: _____

Practice Number: _____ Date: _____

Check the box that best describes your results.

Body part	Fully achieved	Somewhat achieved	Not achieved
Face feels cool and calm, eyes feel relaxed			
Jaw feels loose			
Scalp feels smooth and loose			
Chest feels loose, relaxed, and free			
Shoulders feel completely loose and relaxed, dropping down			
Hands and arms feel loose and relaxed			
Heart rate or pulse is reduced/ unnoticeable			
Breathing feels loose, light, and completely free			
Back feels loose, free, and without any discomfort			
Abdomen feels loose, moving freely with each breath			
Upper legs feel loose, relaxed, and completely at rest			
Lower legs feel loose, relaxed, and completely at rest			
Ankles and feet feel loose, relaxed, and completely at rest, almost numb			

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ANGER FLOW CHART

Episode date: _____

Situation that led to anger outcome—who, what , where, and when:

Beliefs:

Expectations:

Self-talk:

Emotion of anger (physical anger sensations I felt):

Thoughts about your anger:

Anger actions/faces of anger (what I said or did in anger):

Outcome (impact on me, others, relationship):

MY BELIEF CHANGE STEPS

New rational counterbelief:

New supporting self-talk, like the following:

1.

2.

3.

New supportive behavior, like the following:

1.

2.

3.

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COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING PROTOCOL

Anger Situation	Camera Check (facts a camera would record):
Old Belief(s)	New Rational Belief(s)
Belief:	New belief:
Belief:	New belief:
Belief:	New belief:
Self-Talk	Rebuttals Using the Three Criteria
Thought 1:	What are the facts?
	How do I need to feel?
Distortion:	What is my plan?
Thought 2:	What are the facts?
	How do I need to feel?
Distortion:	What is my plan?
Thought 3:	What are the facts?
	How do I need to feel?
Distortion:	What is my plan?

LISTENING SKILLS FEEDBACK FORM

Date of interview: _____	
Person: _____	Did the listener use this skill?
Sat directly across from me, turned toward me, and gave me eye contact.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Feedback: _____
Showed facial (responsive facial movements) and body signs of interest (e.g., head nodding, leaning forward) as I spoke.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Feedback: _____
I felt my opinions were listened to and/or the listener asked me for my opinion on the issue.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Feedback: _____
I felt my feelings were listened to and/or the listener asked me how I felt regarding the issue we discussed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Feedback: _____
I got to state my needs—what I wanted the listener to understand or do—and/or I was asked about my needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Feedback: _____
The listener took the time to review/paraphrase what my ideas and needs are. Rate how well the listener accurately paraphrased.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Rating (1–10): _____
The listener took the time to reflect my feelings. Rate how well the listener accurately reflected your feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Rating (1–10): _____

CONFLICT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Person who is the focus of my answers: _____

Check off each question you would answer with a “yes.”

- I sometimes have a difficult time deciding exactly what my position is, and this makes me feel “one down” (inferior position) in the discussion. [a]
- I often feel overwhelmed by the other’s strongly stated position and just give in. [b]
- When the other takes a strong position and seems unwilling to budge, I don’t know what to do. [e]
- I often find it difficult to compromise—it feels like I’m giving in when I don’t get exactly what I set out to achieve. [d]
- It seems like some important agreements never get implemented and things stay the same. [f]
- I’m willing to let differences remain, even if they create discomfort, as long as I can avoid an unpleasant confrontation. [b]
- Sometimes I seem to lose an argument because I am just too easygoing and not fully committed to what I want. [a]
- I don’t feel like I possess the debating skills necessary to win an argument, so I try to avoid arguing at all costs. [c]
- When I try to resolve a difference, it seems like the discussion gets off track and my position gets lost—never resolved. [c]
- I tend to avoid following through with agreements if I have to give up something I wanted. [f]
- I can’t stand loudness and will do almost anything to avoid discussion if there is a possibility of voices being raised. [b]
- At the end of the discussion, I often feel like I’ve been taken advantage of or victimized. [e]
- I am not good at being clear about what I want, so the other often seems to “win” the argument. [a]
- I don’t like to give in, even if it is probably necessary to achieve a resolution of differences. [d]
- In my attempts at reaching resolution I often find myself bringing up the past or focusing on my anger, and the discussion doesn’t seem to get anywhere—except more intense. [c]
- Once we have stated our ideas we don’t seem to be able to come up with a solution that works for both. So we end up in a stalemate. [e]
- It is weak to compromise. If you really believe in your position, any giving in is disrespectful to you and others who believe as you do. [d]
- I blame “stress,” my schedule, and other roadblocks for often failing to follow through on what I have agreed to do. [f]

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Scoring: Add up the number of items you checked off for each letter and enter them below. Each letter represents a different factor that may be hindering you from reaching consensus with the person you focused on. Note the suggestions for how to understand your score for each factor on which you scored a 2 or more. Ideas for coping better are also included.

___ a = **Difficulty defining what your position is for the issue being discussed.** Recall the Awareness Wheel from Chapter 12, which focused your attention on each major component of your awareness for any issue: your thoughts, feelings, and needs (what you want). You must take the time to determine what your awareness is before beginning to try to negotiate a resolution with another person. You cannot be successful if you cannot articulate your thoughts, feelings, and needs. Chapter 12 will show you how.

___ b = **Managing arousal.** Most of the preceding chapters have addressed how you can identify and manage fight-or-flight arousal as anger is instigated. If you checked off two or more items identified as “b” items, it is important to review each of the components of the STOP model covered in the preceding chapters (and summarized in Chapter 14). Before you begin a negotiation you should be aware of your level of arousal via your Personal Anger Scale (Chapter 7), taking steps to dampen it if you are at a 40 or above. As you will recall, if your arousal is escalating to high levels, you are unlikely to be able to remain calm enough and to think clearly enough to focus on problem-solving differences. You must lower arousal before you can proceed to conflict resolution.

___ c = **Communication skills.** As you learned in Chapter 12, good communication should proceed with a clear statement of position using the “I” message format and with active and empathic listening. One person takes the floor to talk on one issue while the other gives full attention to understanding the message. If you don’t use “I” messages or listen empathically and accurately paraphrase the other’s position and reflect the feelings conveyed, a “win-win” resolution is impossible and conflict may actually be magnified. It will be important to review and polish your communication skills via Chapter 12.

___ d = **Coping with compromise.** Looks like you see reaching agreement as a matter of doing what you want and not giving in to what the other wants. Agreeing to consider and implement some portion of the other’s ideas in your solution is the only way to reach a truly collaborative decision: one that you both can feel good about and invested in. Saying that, it is also important that you never compromise on your morals and values as a person. In most cases you can find a solution that is collaborative, fair, and doesn’t require you to give up on your core beliefs. The conflict resolution methods in this chapter can help.

___ e = **Problem solving.** You need to improve your skills at generating possible solutions to the problems you face. In this chapter you will learn to identify the priorities of what each person wants and learn the steps of “brainstorming” so that you arrive at a solution you can both live with—one that will work.

___ f = **Implementing the solution.** From your responses it seems that you find yourself agreeing on a solution with this person only to end up back where you began—nothing seems to change. In this chapter you will learn how to ensure that each party takes responsibility for implementing your decision, with a way of monitoring how your solution is or is not working.

STOP PRACTICE WORKSHEET

Stop (Stop–Sit–Breathe):

- *Tell yourself in your loudest inner voice to “stop, right now!” Picture a bright red stop sign or the face of someone who could get you to stop.
- *Sit down if possible and lean back/loosen your shoulders and arms. Take a deep signal breath.
- *If you can’t reduce your anger below “60,” take a time-out using a stop phrase (leave the situation for at least 30 minutes).

Think:

- *What self-talk is most upsetting right now? _____

- Answer the three questions:
 1. *Is it a fact? Yes No Why is it not a fact? _____

 2. Is it calming you? Yes No Why is it not calming? _____

 3. Is it giving you good ideas to get what you want? Yes No What “bad” ideas is your self-talk fueling?

- *If you answer “No” to one or more of these “three questions,” your thinking is the problem and you should change it.

Objectify:

What are the important facts of the situation? Review one or more of the following:

- *Perform a camera-check: What are the actual facts of what happened or what the other person said or did?
The facts about what was said or done are: _____

(cont.)

STOP PRACTICE WORKSHEET (cont.)

- Think of the facts that can affect you. Try on these:

If I let this get to me this might happen: _____

Other facts that can affect me: _____

- Think of a less threatening reason the other person acted the way he/she did, like these:

This behavior is not typical of this person because: _____

Maybe he/she acted this way because: _____

- *Ask yourself, "Is this trigger really worth my losing it?" Try on some thoughts like these:

How important will this situation be to me tomorrow? A week from now? In 1 month? Why not important? _____

Is what I want in this situation worth the price I pay if I lose it?" Yes No If not, why not? _____

- What are the strengths you can employ in this situation?

I have successfully handled worse than this, like when: _____

My skills at work that I can apply to solving this situation include: _____

Other personal strengths/qualities I have that will help me include: _____

PLAN: How to stay cool and deal with this situation—to get your needs met. Planning ideas include:

- *Keep yourself calm and self-aware. For example:

*I could take some signal breaths and also I could use these techniques to calm myself: _____

What other calming techniques could you use in this situation? _____

Other ways I could plan to calm myself include: _____

- *Communicate with the other person to resolve any issues.

*I could suggest we sit down and each take the floor to talk while the other listens.

I can prepare for this discussion by doing the following: _____

*As I use “I” messages and then actively listen, I will keep in mind the following: _____

I can offer these initial ideas for accommodation or compromise: _____

I can think about what has worked in the past in similar situations, like: _____

Other ideas I can implement to solve this problem:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Asterisked items are the foundation of a Quick STOP.