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Handling Anger

Anger is normal. Anger is neither bad nor good; it's what you do with your anger that counts.

There are different kinds of anger. *Displaced anger* is the kind of anger you feel about one person or thing but take out on someone else.

Righteous anger is the kind of anger you feel when you see an innocent person violated—or a sacred gift deliberately abused. This is the kind of anger Jesus expressed in the Temple after seeing merchants taking advantage of the poor and the prayerful who wanted only to worship God in the most sacred of holy days (Mark 11:15–19).

KEEP IN MIND, DEAR
FRIENDS, TO BE
QUICK TO LISTEN,
SLOW TO SPEAK,
AND SLOW TO
ANGER.

JAMES 1:19 (ADAPTED)

Anger is one of those emotions that will “eat you up” if you don't find a way to work with it. We can use our anger as well as our other emotions to help us experience a rich and full life, or we can become a victim of our emotions.

Here are three basic steps you can take to put your anger to positive use:

NAME

it.

Is it really anger you are feeling? Or is it another emotion such as embarrassment, sadness, fear, guilt, or rejection?

TAME

it.

This usually involves twin tasks:

- Confirm**—Where is your anger really coming from? Many times the “rush” of your anger will drop once you gain clarity or understanding about what someone said or why someone did something.
- Chill**—If you can weather through the “rush” of anger and cool off from the heat of the emotion, you will avoid making yourself (and someone else) a victim of your anger. You can “chill” your anger by intentionally seeking a distraction (TV show, movie, phone call, assignment) or engaging in a physical activity (jogging, shooting hoops, swimming). But be careful. *Chill* doesn't mean “stew in your anger.” It means deliberately giving yourself a chance to gain perspective. “Let go and let God.”

CLAIM

it.

Anger can sometimes motivate you to solve a problem, rebuild a friendship, or have a change of heart. You can embrace your anger and put it to positive use by asking yourself, “What did I learn about myself? What did I learn about others? Is there something productive I want to do about what I learned?”

Naming, Taming, Claiming ANGER

Practice the three-step process of handling your anger by imagining yourself in some of these situations. Be specific when you name the emotion you would feel in each situation. (Maybe it's not anger!) Realistically

figure out how you would tame it, and then talk about how you might claim it in a positive way.

1. Someone spreads a rumor that you "use" people.

2. Someone steals your CD.

3. A classmate physically abuses your eight-year-old brother or sister.

4. Your date doesn't show up for a movie you both agreed to see together.

5. Someone dents your car in the parking lot while you're in a theater.

6. One of your parents is drunk and rude when you bring some of your friends over to watch a movie.

7. You expect to make the varsity but you're among the last to be cut.

8. You don't think that your parents are being fair about your curfew, the car, and your chores. When you discuss these topics with them, they tell you about what they had to do when they were your age.

As a group, feel free to make up your own real-life situations. Then figure out how you would practice the skill of working with your anger.

My Date Hit Me

BY SANDY HOGUE, 18

If you find yourself becoming afraid when your partner becomes angry, you may already be caught in a cycle of violence. You may fear what your partner may do if you try to escape. Many people find themselves trapped once they are caught in this cycle.

Domestic violence includes many forms of abuse. It is often related to physical abuse, but it also covers verbal, emotional and sexual abuse. If the actions of your partner fall into any of these categories of abuse, you may recognize a cycle in his or her behavior.

The first stage in the cycle, the tension builder, has obvious signs that are related to abusers becoming increasingly angry. Definite signs may include pushing, shouting, avid staring, or other threatening behaviors.

During the second stage, the violent episodes begin. The incidents become more serious and occur more frequently.

After the violence, the final stage of loving reconciliation occurs.

happen again. Abusers will most likely try to overwhelm their partners with material goods, i.e., flowers, etc. The majority of the time, however, they will repeat acts of abuse, and the cycle will begin again.

must resist the "second chance" line. If your partner has abused you once, it is very likely to happen again. You do not deserve to experience violence in a relationship. It is very important that you love yourself and look positively at your mind, body and capabilities. It is also important that you establish your own decision-making process and not let anyone else be an obstacle to what you believe in.

You are the only one who can decide who is in control of your life. Don't let yourself be fooled into thinking that you can only be happy if you have a partner. Act on your own influence and don't rely on anyone else to take control of your life. If you find yourself becoming afraid when your partner becomes angry, you may already be caught in a cycle of violence.



Abusers attempt to make rationalizations for their actions and to make assurances that these actions will not

If you are a victim of abuse, you must realize that the actions of the abuser are not your fault. You also

KNOW FEAR?

1. What is the difference between worries and fears?

2. Write a word or an initial or draw a symbol representing three different worries you have.

a.

b.

c.

3. Now do the same regarding three different fears you have.

a.

b.

c.

4. What have you been taught to fear?

FOUR KINDS OF FEAR

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

5. Referring to the four kinds of fear, how would you classify each fear you listed in number 3?

a.

b.

c.

Five Keys to Overcoming Fears

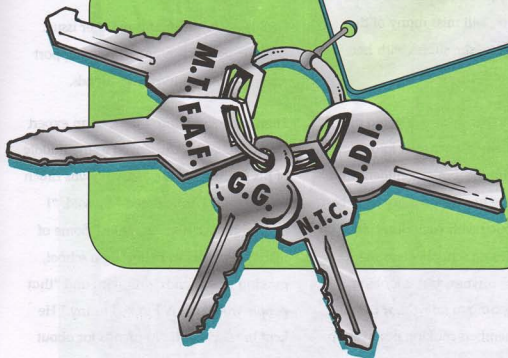
Fear is okay. Fear can be healthy and real. Don't ignore fear; it can serve as a signal that you are in danger, or it can let you know that you may not be properly prepared. But if you don't know how to overcome fear, then you will be overcome by fear.

God gave you the gift of life and the power to live it. If you let fear overcome you, then you waste that gift.

FOR ALL WHO ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD ARE CHILDREN OF GOD. FOR YOU DID NOT RECEIVE A SPIRIT OF FEAR, BUT A SPIRIT OF POWER WHEN YOU ARE ABLE TO PRAY, "ABBA! FATHER!"

ROMANS 8:14-16 (PARAPHRASED)

Here are five keys for you to use in overcoming your fears.



It's So Hard to Say Good-bye

BY CARRIE BETH LASLEY, 18

If it hasn't happened to you yet, it will. You'll have to say some hard good-byes. Many seniors and eighth graders will be saying good-bye to some very close friends.

"I'll cry at graduation," said one senior. Most seniors I spoke to noted that graduation will be upsetting because many of their classmates will be going away, and they fear that friendships will grow apart.

Sara, a senior, will be staying in town and going to college. Many of her friends will be leaving. "Things will change," said Sara, who will miss many of the routine activities she shares with her friends.

One of Sara's friends who is going away to college is Jennifer. Jennifer knows things will change, but is confident that the friends she has now will try their best to keep in touch with each other. She fears going into a school where she doesn't know anyone, but is looking forward to getting to know new people. Jennifer remembers making promises to

keep in touch with her eighth grade class, and hopes that this time she's more successful. "I'll write them and call sometimes."

There are other hard good-byes. There are those you pray will never come: saying good-bye to a relationship with a boyfriend or girlfriend.

Anyone who's ever had a break-up will tell you that some are better than others. I talked to youth who have had their share of good and bad break-ups. They recommend being honest about how you feel.

Dealing with the grief is another issue. One suggestion is going to your support system—doing things with friends.

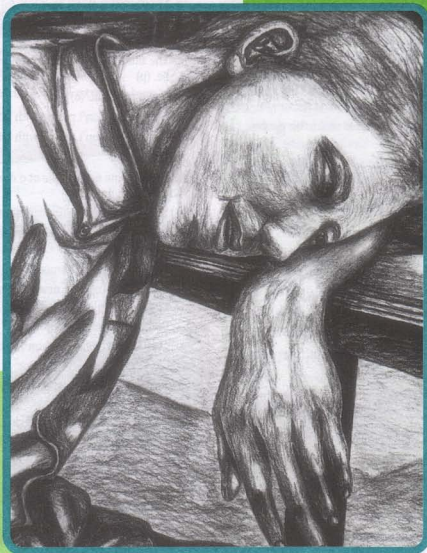
Then there's moving. I went to an expert for this subject. Carl moved in the middle of his freshman year. "Moving was much harder than I anticipated," he said. "I had many decisions to make." Some of his biggest fears were finding a school, making new friends, fitting in, and "that people would think I talked funny." He kept in touch with old friends for about

a year, but time became scarce and he no longer had time to write or call. He hasn't been back, and would like to, "But I fear things will be very different." Carl's fears about returning are the fears and often realities of many people saying good-bye.

Ms. Lincoln, a teacher of seniors for four years, notes that students tackle grief in different ways. Some youth begin earlier

in the year, and others will cry at graduation.

Some get excited about college, claiming they'll be ready to go when the time comes. Others might live off the nostalgia of good times past, as many do after a relationship ends. Regardless, good-byes will be hard, but no one's been proven to have died of a broken heart.



ASHLEY GOODMAN, 17