



In This Issue

- How To Express Anger Constructively In Conflict Situations
- Assertiveness Problem Solving
- How To Meet In The Middle
- Brainstorming Techniques
- What To Do When Someone Is So Angry That Problem Solving Doesn't Work
- Do You Need A Vacation?

Assertiveness Techniques

http://healthyplace.com/communities/Depression/suicide/asserting_ourselves.asp

How to Express Anger Constructively in Conflict Situations

When anger is increasing, the manner in which an individual deals with anger may become magnified. Someone who tends to be passive when angry may find his or herself completely shutting down so that resolution of differences becomes impossible. Or, one's facial expressions words and gestures, and even the volume and tone of one's voice may be magnified into a face of hostility or aggression. This person may come across as irrational or hotheaded, losing the listener's attention entirely or triggering negativity in defense.



In any event, the message is lost, and a relationship may be stressed or damaged. How does one get a message across in a way that defuses anger and focuses on resolving differences?

Use solutions such as assertive problem solving, meeting in the middle, brainstorming and establishing new habits.

Assertive Problem Solving Assertive problem solving begins with discussion that is assertive while not being aggressive: The



message is clear and direct while non-threatening. The individual looks at the other person to talk and listen, conveying interest and a caring and responsive attitude with facial expressions. Gestures and body movements are not abrupt or distracting but smooth, and they calmly emphasize the points you're making. One's tone or voice conveys interest and concern. If the other individual gets louder or more

forceful, stay the course and continue at a calm level or use a "stop" phrase to end the discussion if things get too intense.

It is necessary to learn to fully communicate one's position when problem solving, blurting something out may make the situation worse. Instead try the **STOP** method:

- Lean back and take a deep breath (**S**)
- Decide that the other person's self-talk-- the individual may be putting the other person down on purpose-- is not true (**T**)

Contact Us

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm. Evening hours are available on a limited basis.

(540) 989-6605 or 800-699-9396

Nights and Weekends call
RESPOND:

(540) 776-1100 or 800-541-9992

Advantage EAP does not necessarily endorse any products or services mentioned.

Counseling questions?

<http://www.athealth.com/cons/umer/issues/counselanswer.html>

Source:

Adapted from "Taking Charge of Anger: How to Resolve Conflict, Sustain Relationships, and Express Yourself without Losing Control," by W. Robert Nay, PhD Copyright 2004 The Guilford Press, \$16.95, Softcover, 246 pages. This article is presented as a guide only. For more information on "Taking Charge of Anger", contact Guilford Press, www.guilford.com. W. Robert Nay is a licensed clinical psychologist. He offers seminars on anger and aggression nationally to mental health professionals for the American Healthcare Institute, universities, and other agencies.

- Realize what the objective facts of the situation (O)
- Decide what the best plan is to assertively discuss the situation and to ask the other person to make some changes (P)

Summarize positions so both people involved in the conflict understand each other. The summary should be brief and balanced, considering the positions of each without adding personal interpretations. Focus on what both people agree on as a starting point, and then point out differences that need to be resolved. Next, both state their priorities so that critical needs are worked into a final resolution. Take turns, each considering what is most important.

Meet In the Middle Once differences and priorities are identified, the focus should be on finding a mutually acceptable solution to reduce anger on both sides. Neither party should be pushed into agreeing on a solution that is unacceptable, setting the stage for resentment and further problems. Two methods to know: accommodate and compromise.

Accommodation is a mutual agreement to support one person's position now, with the understanding that the other's agenda will be fulfilled later. Accommodation may be the only resolution when the positions are so incompatible that compromise won't work.

Accommodation should be avoided if one party is being asked to suffer a solution that feels unacceptable, given personality and important values or beliefs. This unfortunate outcome will only set the stage for more resentment in the future.

Compromising involves crafting a position that fulfills the priorities and needs of both parties. For example, spending the morning of a holiday at your parents' home is a compromise position, fulfilling the needs of both.

Compromising does not mean compromising one's values, because that should never be the case in any negotiation. Rather, in compromising a new solution may be reached that neither person originally thought of.

Brainstorming



When there is resentment, compromise may be difficult. Rather than staying stuck in a position that continues to fuel anger, it can be useful to use a structured problem-solving approach, called, "Brainstorming". Both parties try to come up with as many ideas for a solution as they can. Some ideas, may be impractical, unacceptable, or even silly, but the idea is that something worthwhile will emerge from the combined creativity.

Here are a few guidelines for effective brainstorming:

- *Suspend judgment at first.* Even a poor idea may stimulate a good counter suggestion. Try to not let your anger stand in the way of listening. If you find yourself “yes- but”ting, coming up with objections that derail problem solving, try to refocus on reaching a solution.
- *Quantity counts, quality comes later.* Try to generate as many new and creative possibilities as possible. These can be pared down later, using all or parts of specific ideas.
- *Don't rehash the past; stay in the present.* Don't become focused on what did or didn't work before. View all the ideas as being of value, if only to stimulate new thinking.
- *Let others share your wealth. Invite others with special knowledge or awareness to help generate ideas.* Some people can look at situations in unique ways.

What To Do When Someone Is So Angry That Problem Solving Doesn't Work

You may be thinking to yourself, this sounds well and good, but real life doesn't work this way. It's true that sometimes a person may be so angry that assertive problem solving isn't realistic. The following are some ideas when this is the case.

1. *When provoked by someone's anger, dampen your own arousal.* If a driver cuts you off on the highway and gives you the finger as he drives by, is your reaction to roll down the window and make a rude gesture back at him? Instead, quickly take stock of your thoughts. By dampening your arousal and refusing to participate in any escalation of intensity, *you* set the terms of the exchange, and the other person has to come into balance with *you*. If you try to set the terms of the interaction by calming your own anger but find the other person doesn't respond kindly, you always have the option of ending the conversation. Either way, you're still in control of how *you* decide to react.
2. *Deny the other person any payoff for an angry face.* An individual who gets aggressive or hostile toward you when angry may succeed in intimidating you, provoke an angry reaction, or get you to say and do something that you'll regret. Passive faces of anger may be intended to make you feel rejected or guilty (“What did I do wrong?” Or “What will it take for you to talk to me?”) But when you refuse to provide the desired payoff, the other person is faced with a dilemma: How can he or she get your attention now? Obviously, this face of anger isn't working, so he or she will have to try something else. In the best case scenario the other individual will realize that this negative face of anger wasn't effective and will try something more positive. But even when that doesn't happen, you haven't failed. Rather, you've succeeded in remaining in control of yourself and reducing your own discomfort. Also, others will learn that these ways of expressing anger won't work with you, which

Controlling Anger Before It Controls You

<http://www.apa.org/topics/controlanger.html>

Vacation websites

www.vacation.com

www.tripadvisor.com

www.expedia.com

www.travelocity.com

Source:

Adapted from "Take the Vacation that you Deserve". By Tripp Friedler, *Employee Assistant Report*, July 2006, 715-258-2448, For Subscription information contact: *Employee Assistant Report*, 1439 Churchill Street, Unit 302, Crystal Plaza, P.O. Box 322, Waupaca, WI 5491. 1 year subscription is only \$189.00 for 12 issues!

may influence the way people approach you in the future. So even if you don't succeed in defusing the conflict initially, it's important to stay the course and remain in control of yourself and your own anger.

Do You Need A Vacation?



As you may know, it is vacation planning time! Does it seem unfair that all of your friends, family, and co-workers have these amazing summer vacations planned? Well, you can take control, and take charge of your summer plans.

Do you feel like you can not afford a trip this summer? Well, take time to think over it. Take time to think about your priorities and what you really want. If you would rather save money for a nice house, a fancy car, or a big shopping spree, go for it. But, if you want to take some time to explore and relax for a week over the summer, it is your choice. You may decide that you could live with a modest size car and home to save up for extras like vacations.

Once you have thought through your options, decide where you would like to go and set a goal, even if it is not for 5 years down the road, and start making some changes. It is that easy. Worried about planning a nice vacation? Talk to a specialist at your local travel agency. They can give you tour guides, magazines and information on travel prices, airfare and more!

Numerous people work non stop without taking any breaks, and that is not the answer to having a healthy balance.