

UNDERSTANDING ANGER

Anger is an essential emotion that has an important job. When you are in tune with how anger feels, it can function like an alarm system that alerts of a real or perceived violation of your boundaries, values, needs, or safety concerns for you or loved-ones.

Unfortunately, many of us were not taught emotional health skills, nor how to understand our anger. We may automatically feel shame and depress anger or reactively express anger due to lack of awareness and skills.



Without Emotional Health Skills to process through our angry and hurt feelings , we can end up lost in the extremes of anger - either depressed /repressed or reactive/expressed. Both extremes are destructive to relationships, self-worth and life overall

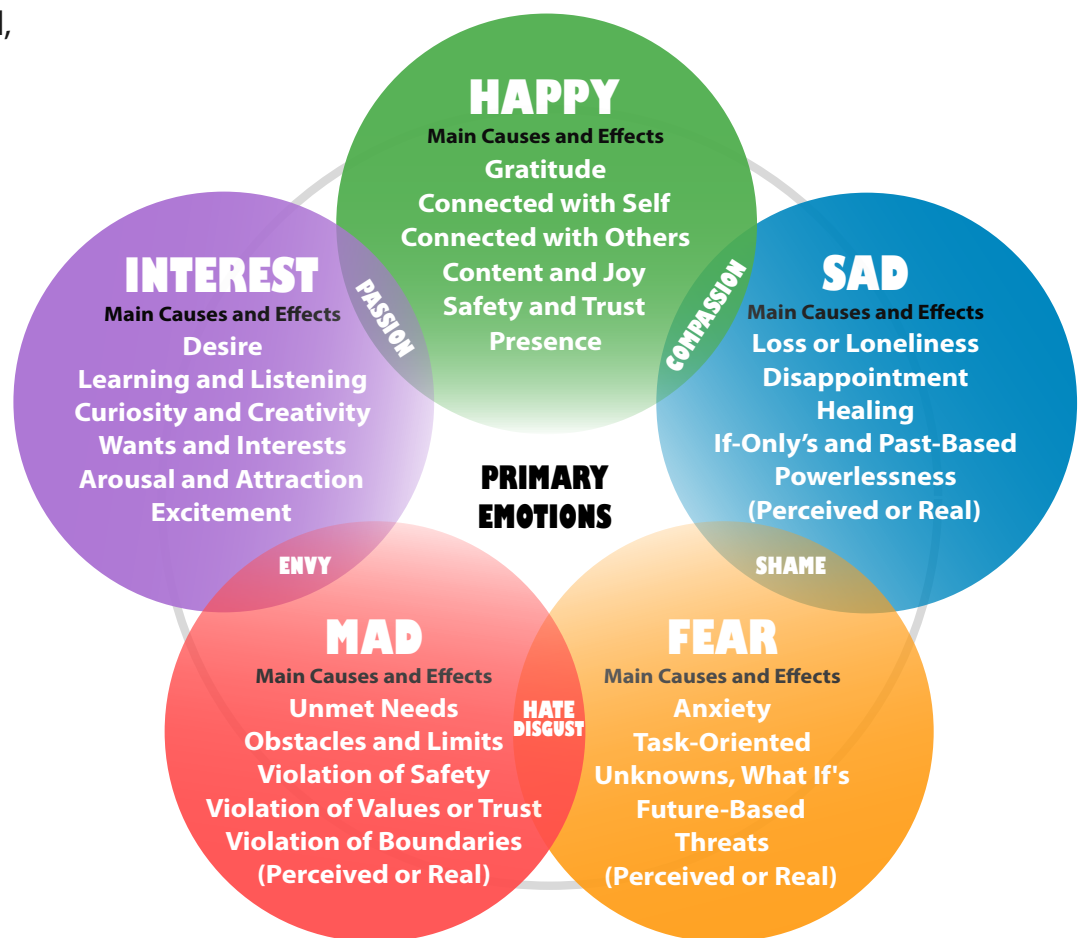


ANGER IS OUR PROTECTIVE EMOTION

Anger is an essential, healthy emotion that activates your nervous system and triggers release of hormones like adrenaline.

Reacting to anger is usually not healthy, unless you are in immediate danger. Even then, it's typically better to FLIGHT (RUN AWAY) than to fight.

Learning to identify and process anger (rather than react or suppress it) is an imperative life skill.





WHAT ANGER MEANS

WE ONLY FEEL ANGRY ABOUT WHO OR WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO US.

- Potential violation of your safety or a loved-one's safety
- Potential violation of your values (injustice)
- Potential violation of your boundaries
- Potential violation of your trust (betrayal)
- Potential violation of your own trust (self-betrayal)
- Potential obstacle to an important need or want
- Attempt to protect from hurt, vulnerability or powerlessness
- Unmet need (like being 'hangry')
- Unmet needs in relationship (seen, heard and valued)
- Past violations or unmet needs (not feeling seen, heard, known and valued from parents, Childhood Emotional Neglect, abuse, bullying and other types of trauma)

Anger is your protective emotion and nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, your anger is something to honor. Anger is your inner alarm. Own, honor, understand and process your anger... and notice how you have all the power you need to calm your anger.

ANGER PROCESSING

Learning to identify and **process** emotions, like anger (rather than react/express or suppress/depress) is important.

- Anger is an essential, healthy emotion. It's job is to protect you and loved-ones
- Reacting to anger is usually not healthy, unless in immediate danger. Even then, it's usually ideal to flight (run) than fight.

PROCESSING ANGER WITH EMOTIONAL HEALTH SKILLS



DEPRESSING ANGER INNER CRITICISM, SHAME, DEPRESSION, UNMET NEEDS



EXPRESSING ANGER CRITICISM, COMPLAINTS, BLAME, CONFLICT, UNMET NEEDS



ANGER PROCESSING

When experiencing angry feelings, you can use H.O.T. to PROCESS, rather than DEPRESS or EXPRESS it. Remember, anger is a messenger, not the problem. Unless you are in immediate danger, take time to TuneIn to anger with curiosity.

H	<p><u>HONOR</u></p> <p>HONOR AND FEEL GRATEFUL FOR YOUR ANGER AS ITS JOB IS TO PROTECT YOU</p>	<p>Anger's job is to protect us and ensure our survival needs are met, including our social connection needs, such as feeling seen, heard, valued and respected. When we honor anger, we are honoring our need for protection and connection.</p>
O	<p><u>OWN</u></p> <p>OWN YOUR ANGER INSTEAD OF SHAMING IT. ALTHOUGH OTHERS MAY TRIGGER IT, IT'S YOUR OWN ALARM</p>	<p>Taking 100% Responsibility for our anger is self-respecting and empowering. Anger is like our inner alarm that detects of a potential violation to our safety, loved-ones safety, our own values, boundaries or to unmet needs.</p>
T	<p><u>TUNE IN</u></p> <p>TUNE IN TO ANGER TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PROTECTION, VALUES, BOUNDARIES, AND CONNECTION NEEDS</p>	<p>Once you understand what anger is pointing to, in terms of what you are needing in order to feel safe, seen, heard, valued and respected it will subside. You may need to plan for value-aligned action to restore calm.</p>

A photograph of a man and a woman in a tense conversation. The man, on the left, is wearing a grey t-shirt and blue jeans, looking towards the woman with a serious expression. The woman, on the right, is wearing a pink t-shirt and light-colored pants, looking down with a distressed or angry expression. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the image, containing text.

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When people don't know how to work with anger — when they attack others with it, or repress [depress] it and lose their way — anger can be a real problem.

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Karla McLaren, MEd



EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH ANGER

Your childhood experiences with anger have a major impact on your current relationship with your own angry feelings and your ability or inability to process through it in an ideal way.

Were you shown to EXPRESS or DEPRESS anger? Or were you taught how to process your anger by EXPERIENCING AND PROCESSING? Is your experience with anger seeing adults REACT and EXPRESS, yell, shame, complain, seethe, punish, etc.?

Or did your parents show you how to connect with your angry feelings so you could set healthy boundaries, and ask for your needs and wants in a clear, calm, forthright, self-respecting manner?

Learning how to process anger is an EMPOWERING life skill. In fact, it will improve your life and relationships. Instead of being scared or ashamed of your anger, or reactive, you will learn to be empowered by it, while building self-trust and confidence.



REPRESSED / DEPRESSED ANGER

Tom grew up with parents who acted nice but they didn't talk about feelings. If he or his siblings got mad or said anything 'not nice' they were scolded and told to stop and be quiet.

Tom grew up feeling guilt and shame whenever he felt angry, so he repressed it so fast he wasn't even aware of it. Without awareness Tom is left disconnected from his "inner radar" system. Repressing anger blocks you from noticing your needs and boundaries. Tom's wife, Lisa, unintentionally took advantage of Tom's easy-going nature. She splurged and spent all his savings. She thought Tom was fine with it, since he never said anything. Tom sank deeper into compliance, low self-worth, suppressed anger, resentment and depression.

Repressing anger does not solve anything - it creates more problems! It festers into resentment, shame, unmet needs, low self-worth, disrespect, self-hate, codependency patterns, disconnection and clinical depression.



REACTIVE / EXPRESSED ANGER

Angie is an example of someone who reacts to her angry feelings by expressing it. Angie grew up with a father who screamed at her during his rages. Her father believed this is how you make children respect and behave.

As an adult, Angie feared her anger because she didn't want to lose control like her father. Anger felt overwhelming and disgusting. However, her attempts to ignore her angry feelings didn't work. She'd flip into reactive rages. This caused major issues and became too much for her fiancée who left her.

Angie needed to learn that anger is a constructive tool when she is able to recognize, honor and process it.

Attempts to suppress and control anger doesn't make it go away. It eventually erupts. With Emotional Health Skills, we realize that anger has important information, including what we need to feel safe, valued, respected, appreciated and loved.



As a psychiatrist it is not unusual to discover patients' repressed anger has turned into a sense of powerlessness, anxiety and depression.

Expressed anger is also repressed as expressing it does not rid of it. It leaves it unprocessed within where a ripple effect manifests in all aspects of life - careers, relationships, confidence, even our longevity.

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Joseph A. Shrand M.D.



**The more we try to avoid our emotions,
the more control they have over our
thoughts and behavior.**

Brene Brown, PhD

EARLY EXPERIENCES WITH ANGER

Growing up in my family I remember anger was...

Punished (if I tried to tell my parents about my angry or frustrated feelings, they'd punish me or tell me anger is bad)

Terrifying for the most part (I remember feeling scared when my parents were angry because it would be in outbursts)

Something only adults are entitled to feel and express (children were not allowed to be angry)

Loud and disruptive, usually involved yelling or attempts to instill fear

Something my parents used as a way to yell and punish me in attempt to control behavior or make me do something

Violent and destructive (I recall at least 3 events of violence or destruction in my home growing up)

Viewed as tough and powerful

Resulted in causing physical pain, hitting, spanking, punching, etc.

Viewed as weak and out-of-control

Communicated in a calm, constructive manner - I learned that we are all 100% responsible for processing our own anger and it can help us set boundaries

Viewed as 'bad' as if only 'bad' people have angry emotions

Viewed as a normal, healthy emotion that helps us understand our own needs, wants and limits (need boundaries)

To alert of real danger, like yelling, "watch out" to prevent getting hit by a baseball, for example



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Anger is one of my favorite emotions, because when you know how to work with it, it helps you become more yourself — and more able to interact authentically and honorably with others. Anger is a pro-social emotion when you know how to work with it.

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Karla McLaren, MEd

EARLY ANGER

To understand your relationship with anger, it is imperative to look back on what you learned about anger in childhood, both in terms of how your parents worked with their own angry emotions, expressing or suppressing, and if and how they helped you process your subtle and overwhelming angry emotions and feelings.



I think my mother dealt with anger by
(denying it, silent treatment, yelling, slapping, scolding, slamming doors, ranting, blaming)

I think my father dealt with anger by
(denying it, silent treatment, yelling, slapping, scolding, slamming doors, ranting, blaming)

As a child, what did I do when I felt angry (hid, ignored it, yelled, cried, clammed-up, temper tantrums, acted-out, lied, raged)

My parents responded to my anger by (yelling at me, shaming, sending me to my room, told to stop complaining, sat with me calmly and showed me how to understand my own angry feelings so I could learn to ask for what I needed calmly)

As a child, I believed anger was (bad, would make things worse, destructive, too much to handle, shameful, evil, or did I learn that anger is an essential emotion to take 100% personal responsibility for in order to process through in a healthy way)

How has your family's expression or denial of anger affected your expression or suppression of anger? (my parents would express rage so now anger terrifies me, I feel guilty when I feel angry, I try to hold it in, or I blame others for it, etc.)?

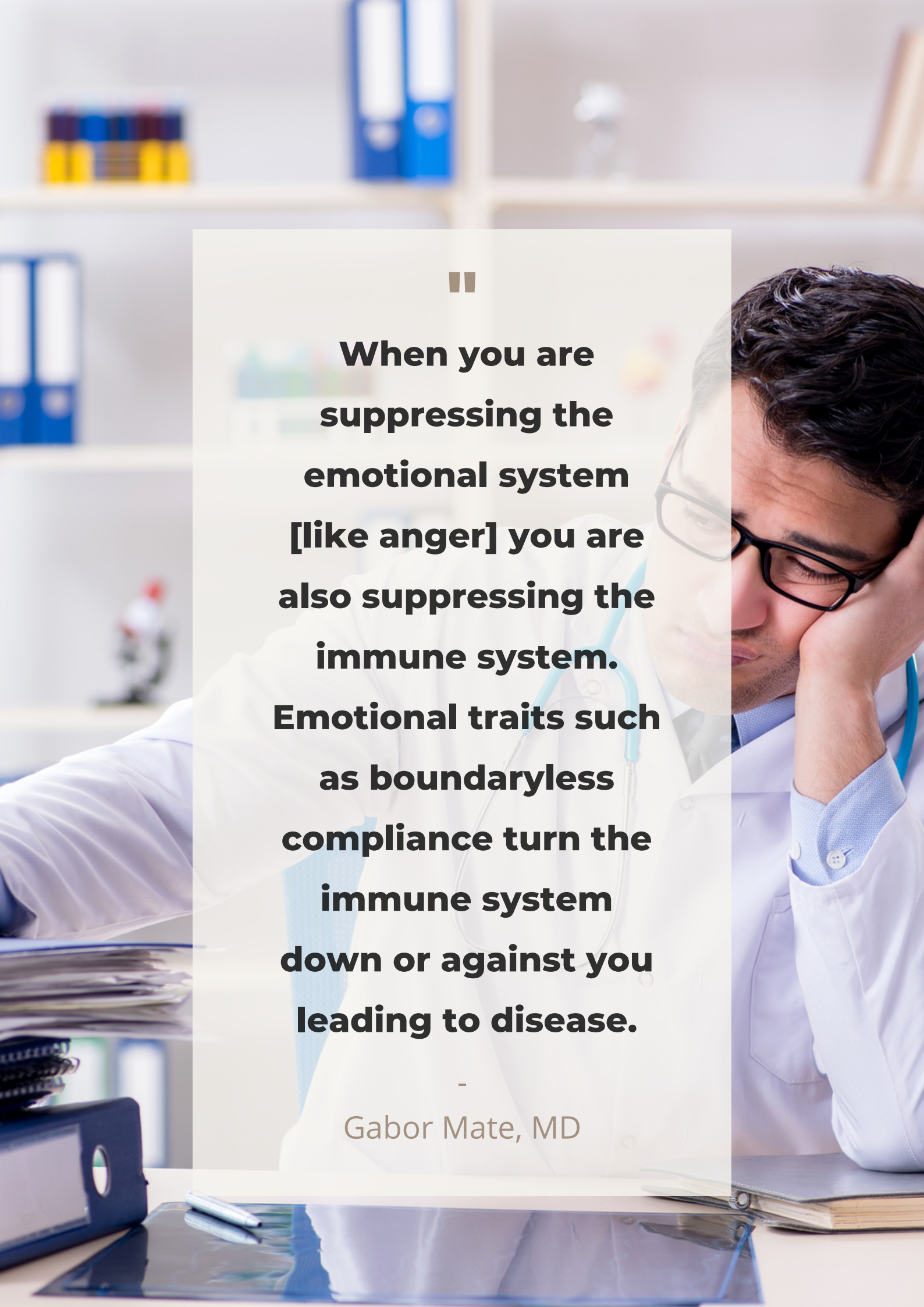
How do you tend to deal with your anger now as an adult? Summarize and provide recent examples of feeling angry, frustrated, irritated, resentful, violated, etc.



When you are suppressing the emotional system [like anger] you are also suppressing the immune system. Emotional traits such as boundaryless compliance turn the immune system down or against you leading to disease.

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Gabor Mate, MD





ANGER ROOTED IN THE PAST

SAVE WORKSHEET BEFORE CLICKING ON VIDEO



How To Release The Anger |
Rage Trapped in Your Body ...

109.4K views · 6 months ago

YouTube › Your Inner Child Matt...



Experiencing rage... not acting it out, is the way to process the harmful emotion. You sit with yourself, understand why you feel the way you do, and work effectively towards resolving it constructively instead of letting it out on another person.

Gabor Mate, MD



ANGER ROOTED IN THE PAST

SAVE WORKSHEET BEFORE CLICKING ON VIDEO



**Anger Rooted in Yesterday's
Rage: (Childhood Emotional
Neglect)**

103.8K views · Jun 12, 2017
YouTube › Alan Robarge / Attachment...



It's always YOUR anger. Remove the projection of anger on others. Drop into the raw, pure energy of your anger. Meet it in a mature way so you can work with your anger, connect with it, and understand it.

Alan Robarge, LPC



ANGER ROOTED IN THE PAST

ADDITIONAL VIDEOS ON SUPPRESSED ANGER AND TRAUMA



A current event can have only the vaguest resemblance to a past traumatic situation and this can be enough to trigger the psyche's hard-wiring for a fight, flight, or freeze response.

Pete Walker, MA



Healthy anger helps you relate authentically and respectfully. Connection to your anger provides a clear sense of your boundaries and you'll be able to honor boundaries and individuality in others; therefore, your relationships won't be based on power struggles, projections or enmeshment.

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Karla McLaren, MEd



MEDICAL DISCLAIMER

Content provided and presented in this document or otherwise is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Content is intended for educational purposes only. It should not be used as a substitute for medical or psychiatric advice, cannot diagnosis or treat any medical or psychiatric condition and does not replace care from your physician. Always consult a healthcare professional if you suspect you require medical or psychiatric treatment.

If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency, in danger of hurting yourself or others, feeling suicidal, overwhelmed, or in crisis, you can access the following resources to find help.

If you are experiencing an emergency dial 911

Crisis Text Line www.crisistextline.org

Suicide Prevention 988lifeline.org

National Domestic Hotline www.thehotline.org