

## Anger Log Template



Date

Enter the day, date, and time.



Story

Describe what happened in less than three lines. If you write more than three lines, you will focus on the situation or the other person and actually become angrier.



Beliefs

What beliefs, distorted thinking patterns, and judgments contributed to this situation?



Feelings

What feelings were you experiencing at the time? We know that you were angry, of course, but how would you describe it? What was the intensity like on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is not angry at all, and 10 is when you flew off the handle and had the scariest reaction you can imagine having?



Actions

What did you do about it? Here you can write more than three lines; develop your emotional intelligence as you expand your library of anger response options. This will also give you a concrete record of how you apply anger management techniques.



Challenge

This is a fun way to work through your anger. Challenge your own assumptions about the event. Look at the judgments that you are making. Talk out what happened, the actions you took (or will take if you cannot act immediately), and the healthiest way to resolve the problem.

## Understanding Distorted Thinking

Type of Thinking

What It Looks Like

Coping Strategies

Magnifying



- Turns the consequences of a negative event into a catastrophe

- Make a realistic assessment of the situation. How bad is it really?
- Be very precise and accurate in the language you use to describe the bad situation.
- Look at the whole picture, not just the annoying piece.

Here are some coping thoughts that you can use:

- Yes, this is frustrating but it's not the end of the world.
- "By next week, none of this will matter."
- "It's a setback; it's not worth getting all bent out of shape."

Destructive labeling



- Extreme form of overgeneralization
- Broaden one or two qualities into a global negative judgment

Here are some coping thoughts that you can use:

- "Why am I swearing?"
- "I feel frustrated and things aren't going the way I'd like them to, but I can cope."

Imperative thinking



- Inflexible rules about how you and others should act
- Usually means that you have unrealistically high expectations

Here are some coping thoughts that you can use:

- "I'm not being reasonable here."
- If you use the words should, must, or always, stop yourself and ask, "Is that really true?"
- Try thinking of the situation from someone else's perspective.

Mind reading



- Rarely check out your presumptions but act as if they were true
- Become self-fulfilling prophecies

Here are some coping thoughts that you can use:

- "How do I know that this is true?"
- "What assumptions am I making?"



## Laugh it Out!

Laughter is the best medicine of all. A good belly laugh can lower blood pressure, slow your adrenaline, and reverse the stomach acid that comes with negative responses. Be on the lookout for jokes and cartoons you can share with family and friends. For a smaller dose, find a cartoon or picture that always makes you smile and post it near your desk. (Just make sure it's appropriate for all audiences!)

## Deep Breathing Techniques

Loosen your clothes, close your eyes, mentally relax your body, and take ten or more deep breaths. Your goal is to breathe into the bottom of your lungs (where the oxygen is readily absorbed), not the usual upper lung breathing we do. Put your hand on your stomach and feel it move as you inhale to make sure you are getting the air in good and deep.

We call this **diaphragmatic breathing** because you are using your diaphragm muscle to breathe. When people are experiencing anxiety, they are most often breathing into the upper area of their lungs rather than the bottom.

Each time you exhale, count silently: "one," after the first breath, "two," after the second breath, etc., up to at least ten. If you lose count, or find yourself working on thoughts as they pass through your mind, start your count over again. When you are finished, you should feel more calm and relaxed. (Your blood pressure will go down temporarily too.)

If you're in a meeting, on the phone, or dealing with a customer, count in your head.



## 14 Easy Coping Strategies



1. Soften your language.



2. Avoid using swear words.



3. Lower your voice (but not in a sinister way).



4. Apply problem solving tools: investigate the root of the problem, create an action plan, follow through, and get things done.



5. Suggest an alternative solution or compromise.



6. Communicate better: make a decision to respectfully listen to the other person's point of view.



7. Use "I" messages, which are less threatening.



8. Try to express your understanding of another person's point of view.



9. Withdraw from a situation rather than let it get worse.



10. Use humor! This can defuse some problems and is very effective in many situations. Think of a time when you got angry over something that you dropped or broke. Laughter is helpful in realizing that it is not the end of the world. However, don't give in to sarcastic humor, which is another unhealthy way to express anger.



11. Agree to disagree and let it go.



12. Describe a problem without blaming the other person.



13. Try to listen to the other person to better understand what they wanted.



14. Try to change the subject so things won't get worse.

## Using the Assertiveness Formula

Steps

Goal

Example

Step 1



Non-judgmentally describe a specific behavior of the other person.

When you...

Step 2



Describe as specifically as possible the effect or practical problems this behavior is causing in your life.

The effects are...

Step 3



Describe how you feel as a result, without using the expression, "You make me..."

I feel...

Step 4



You describe what you want, preferably after you give the other person a chance to state what he or she thinks might be done.

I prefer/would like...

**Example:** "When you leave your papers all over my office, it causes it to be cluttered and I feel disorganized and upset. I would like it if you could pick your papers up when you are done."

## Understanding Assertive Behavior

Definition

Needs and wants are taken care of by knowing, accepting, and acting on them in constructive, straightforward, and authentic ways.

Characteristics

- Caring
- Genuine
- Sensitive to the needs and feelings of others
- Selfless
- Expresses needs and feelings in constructive and straightforward ways
- Persistent without being offensive
- Levels and confronts from caring and reasonable position
- Good sense of timing and judgment about when to assert themselves
- Self-confident
- Calm in a crisis

Major Consequences

- Able to know and take care of needs in a constructive way without doing so at the expense of others.



## Is Anger the Best Response?

Sometimes we find ourselves responding to particular events with anger. We begin to think it is the event itself that is making you angry. Don't forget: **anger affects your thinking!**

To help you determine whether anger is your best response, ask yourself: **"Is my anger helping me or hurting me?"**

Is my anger helping me or hurting me?

