

Exploring Anger

Created By

Katie Bingner, MS, LCPC

KatieBingner.com

Understanding the Value of Anger

Like any emotion, **anger plays a significant role** in our lives. It energizes our bodies when we need to fight back or assert ourselves. Additionally, it signals when our boundaries are being violated, allowing us to reclaim our power in situations where we might otherwise feel disempowered.

However, many of us perceive anger through a different lens. Often viewed as a “bad” or “inappropriate” emotion—particularly for women—across various cultures, anger can trigger feelings of discomfort in others, even in the absence of any real threat of violence. This perception makes it a less desirable emotion to express within close relationships. The **ineffective expression** of anger can impede our success in numerous areas of life.

Exploring Effective Expressions of Anger

But what about **healthy expressions** of anger?

- What might that look like?
- What does it feel like?
- How can we achieve that?

These are the questions we will delve into in this exercise, aiming to provide you with insights that you may not have learned before—how to understand, express, and embrace feelings of anger as beneficial tools for enhancing your life and relationships.

The Power of Writing for Self-Discovery

Writing serves as one of the most powerful tools we possess to gain insight into ourselves. There is something truly transformative about transferring our internal experiences—such as thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, urges, and memories—from within to the outside world. Whether you choose to use pen and paper or jot down notes on your phone, writing provides an opportunity for free expression and allows us to view those expressions from a fresh perspective.

Writing Prompts for Exploring Anger

To kickstart your writing journey into exploring anger, consider using any of the following prompts:

1. Write an emotion-fueled message to someone that's hurt you
2. What emotion would you like to feel instead of anger?
3. What do you think has made you feel this way?
4. Write a love letter to your hurt self
5. What can you forgive yourself (or someone else) for that you've been holding on to?
6. Make a list of all the things that can trigger an outburst of anger within you
7. What makes you want to scream?
8. How can you focus on your own successes, rather than others/ failures?
9. What would you love to be doing right now instead of this?
10. What helpful thing can you take from this moment?
11. How can you be kind to yourself in this moment? What can you appreciate about your anger?
12. What does anger mean to you?
13. What do you have control over? What do you not have control over?
14. Can you pinpoint a moment in your past that has made you feel the same degree of anger?
15. Write down a few lines about how you'd like your authentic self to deal with your anger
16. What helps you feel calm?
17. What should you avoid when you're feeling angry?
18. What feels like a safe place for your anger to exist?
19. Write down how long your angry thoughts usually stay with you
20. When was the last time you felt angry? When did you last feel at peace?
21. Write down five ways you can prioritize your mental wellbeing or physical health, even when you experience anger
22. How does your body feel when you're angry?
23. If anger was a creature or person, what would it look like? (feel free to draw or use any other creative outlet here!)
24. Write a letter to your angry part – try to be curious about it
25. Which social media channels feed your anger is an unhelpful way? Which offer comfort or empowerment?
26. Write down one thing you're willing to let go of that's been holding you back
27. How have you previously coped with your anger?
28. How could your daily routine help you move through anger in a value driven-way?
29. Write down a place you can seek out calm and peace when you're angry
30. What's one compliment you can tell yourself or give to your angry part?
31. How can you expand your focus to see both positive and negative when your angry?
32. When in life have you felt the most anger? How did you handle it?
33. When do you get frustrated with yourself?
34. What other words could you use to describe how you feel right now?
35. Write down the name of a song or movie that symbolizes your anger well?
36. What things make your anger stronger? What makes it softer?
37. How do you feel after your angry feelings have passed over?
38. Does anger cause you physical pain? If so, where?
39. Which friends or family members are good role models for dealing with anger? What can you learn from them?
40. How does your breathing impact your anger?
41. How can you put anger down in a moment?
42. Which affirmations can help when you feel anger?
43. How can you channel this anger into something useful, like personal growth?
44. What underlying emotions have led to this situation?
45. How did your family express anger growing up? How does that impact your experience with anger today?
46. What would "effective anger" look like to you?
47. How are you managing anger now? Are there any techniques you haven't tried yet?
48. How does your anger relate to your unmet needs? How can you change this?
49. How do you use exercise to manage your anger? What do you notice about the impact exercise has on your anger?
50. What are you afraid will happen if you DO and/or DON'T express your anger soon?

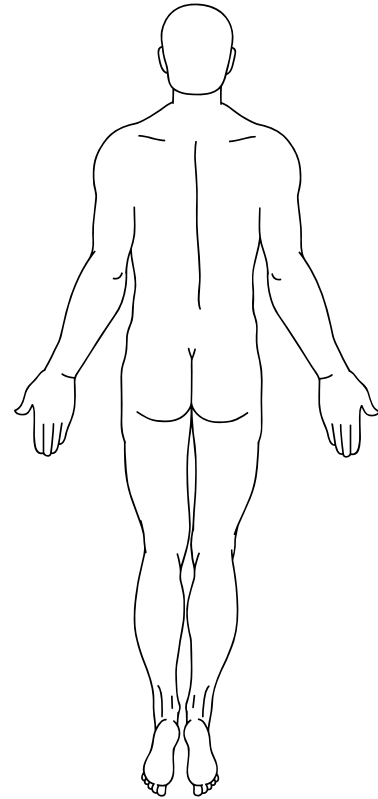
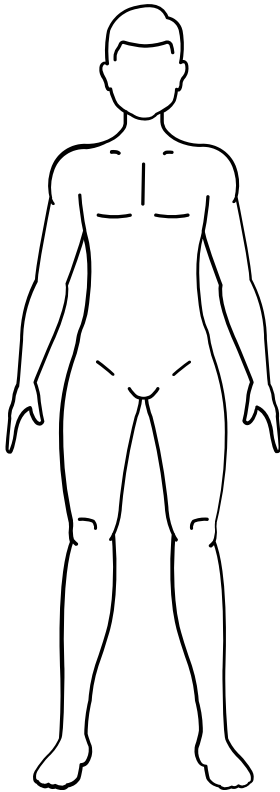
Embracing Your Creativity

In the next exercise, you get an opportunity to delve deeper into your creative side. Use the space below (or any medium of your choice) to draw, paint, create a collage, or symbolize the anger you experience in any other way. Engaging in creative arts can be an effective way to process anger, as it enables us to tap into various parts of our brains to explore and comprehend what our anger is expressing and what it may require for healing. I have provided some visual examples below you get you started!



Where Do I Experience My Anger?

The following exercise is intended to help you turn your focus inward, allowing you to recognize and pinpoint where and how anger manifests in your body. Using the image below, draw connecting lines to the areas where you feel anger, and if possible, take note of the sensations you experience in those specific parts of your body. If you're unsure, try filling this part out the next time you feel angry.



Circle the descriptions below that most accurately describe what your body does when you feel anger.

Add any descriptions that aren't listed!



Whole body tension
Scream/Yell
Stomp
Clenched Fists



Gritting/showing Teeth
Clawed hands
Big arm movements



Blushing/Flushing of the skin
Increased body temp
Crossed arms/legs
Downward turn of mouth



Glaring
Furrowed Brows
Flared Nostrils

Reconnecting with My Values

After spending considerable time understanding and acknowledging your anger, it's time to reestablish your personal values. By integrating your values into this journey, you'll be better equipped to recognize what effective anger expression looks like in your life.

Step 1: Review Your Personal Values

Locate your list of values and take a moment to reflect on the core principles you've chosen for yourself. As you review them, think about which values might aid you in feeling and expressing anger more effectively.

Step 2: Identify Values That Resonate with Your Anger

Consider the values that are compromised when you become reactive, as well as those that can guide you towards healthier behaviors, such as assertive, honest communication and boundary-setting.

Step 3: Outline Value-Driven Behaviors

Write down specific behaviors aligned with your values that will enable you to express, honor, and validate your feelings of anger. Focus on avoiding unproductive behaviors like lashing out, blaming, name-calling, and other actions that lead to feelings of guilt and shame, rather than pride and fulfillment.