

# The Anger Iceberg

THERE IS OFTEN MORE BENEATH THE SURFACE

Anger is a natural and valid emotion. It is often a visible response to deeper, less visible feelings, needs or experiences — like an iceberg, anger is just the tip, with other emotions, thoughts and unmet needs beneath the surface.

01

## ABOVE THE SURFACE

Anger is what we see. It shows up as a response when we feel threatened, hurt, overwhelmed or frustrated.

02

## COMMON TRIGGERS

Feeling disrespected, boundaries crossed, high stress, past hurts activated, unmet needs, feeling powerless.

### ANGER

Hurt  
Sadness  
Rejection  
Stress  
Loneliness  
Helplessness  
Fear  
Vulnerability  
Disappointment  
Insecurity  
Shame  
Guilt  
Unmet needs  
Feeling unheard

03

## HOW ANGER SHOWS UP

Irritability, raising your voice, withdrawing or the silent treatment, criticism or blaming, physical tension.

04

## WHAT IT CAN BE TELLING US

Something important matters to me. A need isn't being met. I need to set a boundary or take care of myself.

**Why does this matter?** When we take time to understand the feelings beneath our anger, we can respond more thoughtfully instead of reacting. This helps us communicate more clearly, meet our needs, repair relationships and make healthier choices.

**Anger vs. Aggression** *One is a feeling. The other is a choice.*

### Anger

#### AN EMOTION

A natural, involuntary state of physiological and emotional arousal in response to a perceived threat, injustice or unmet need. You don't choose to feel it, and feeling it is never wrong.

### Aggression

#### A BEHAVIOUR

An action — shouting, blaming, slamming a door, giving the silent treatment — carried out with intent to hurt or control. Unlike the feeling itself, this is something we choose.



**We can't always choose what we feel — but we are always responsible for how we respond.** Anger itself is never the problem. What we do with it — the words we choose, the actions we take — is where responsibility begins.

## Working With Anger, Not Against It

01

### PAUSE

- Notice the anger and what is happening in your body.
- Take a few slow breaths.
- Give yourself space before reacting.

02

### EXPLORE

- Ask yourself what might be underneath this anger.
- What am I feeling? What do I need?
- Be curious and kind with yourself.

03

### RESPOND

- Choose a response that aligns with your values and needs.
- Communicate clearly and calmly when possible.
- Take small steps to address what's underneath.

*Anger isn't the problem — it's a signal. We are always responsible for how we choose to respond to it.*

## SOURCES

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