

Becoming Familiar with Anger

One of the most difficult emotions for individuals to feel and/or openly acknowledge is anger.



This is typically because we have learned or been taught that anger is bad, unacceptable or dangerous. We may have been told this directly or assumed it from watching others' behaviour and its impact.

Anger is just an emotion. And emotions are information. They inform us about our surroundings and are reflections of our interactions with others. Emotions such as anger give us valuable information.

DON'T shoot the messenger! Receive the message.

Like any emotion, anger can be either constructive or destructive, depending on how it is used.

The first step is to identify anger. Anger is often masked by other emotions (like fear and sadness) or unrecognized. Unacknowledged, or unrecognized anger can affect our ability to perform and react appropriately in situations.

Over the next few days, the aim is become more familiar with your anger.

Notice and become curious about anger if you:

- Feel disappointed
- Feel angry *after* an interaction
- Have a hard time setting boundaries
- Are sad or hurt
- Find that others express anger for you but you don't feel it
- Are overcommitted

The biggest barrier to experiencing anger is guilt

Notice if at any of these times you feel guilty

Give yourself permission to feel anger

It is important to allow yourself to feel angry. This does not mean exhibiting bad or mean behaviour, it just means allowing yourself to sink into the sensation of anger to familiarize yourself with your anger. Once you learn to identify it and tolerate it, your anger can give you courage, and can help you to respond in a more appropriate way.