

# ELSA Newsletter



***a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility***

A lot of people come to me and say “I’ve got anger problems” or “I’ve always been angry that’s just the way I am” but what is anger? Anger is actually quite complicated and it’s really important to understand how anger works before we look at ways to control it.

Just remember; no body is born angry so where does it come from?

Anger is different in everyone because we all have different tolerance levels. Lots of different things annoy us but some people are quite relaxed and can deal with lots of things that annoy them without becoming angry, this is know as being tolerant. Other people become angry over really small things which means that they are less tolerant.

You could think if tolerance as a dial, some things you can deal with really easily and other things can make you really angry.



When things happen that annoy you they create different negative emotions.

Imagine that you are trying to complete a piece of homework on your computer and you don’t really understand what you are meant to be writing about, it has to be handed in tomorrow and then your computer crashes – how do you think you would feel?

I would imagine you would be feeling;

- Frustrated because the technology has failed
- Stressed because the work needs to be handed in tomorrow
- Annoyed because nothing is going right
- Upset because you do not understand the work

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All of these negative emotions begin to build up inside of you. Lets think of it like a balloon, if you blow air in to a balloon it begins to get bigger but if you blow in too much air, the balloon will eventually pop. This is exactly the same as you, if you are experiencing too many negatives emotions you will eventually become angry and explode. Anger is just a physical reaction to negative emotions which is why it is important to understand what causes these negative emotions so that you can learn how to manage your anger.



## *Anger is a reaction to negative emotions*

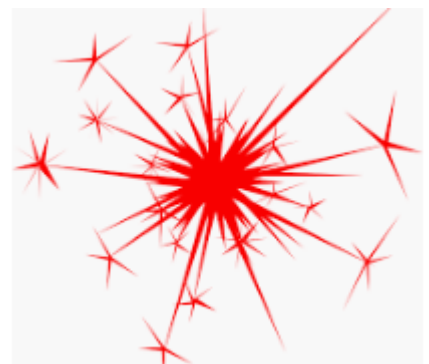
Now that we understand what anger is the next stage is to understand how to control anger. Lets think of anger as a firework, in order for the firework to explode you need a match to light the fuse. The match represents the thing or event that creates the negative feelings inside, the fuse is all the negative feelings that you experience which then eventually makes the firework explode.



The thing/event  
that created  
negative feelings  
– for example;  
too much  
homework



The negative  
emotions building  
up inside you – for  
example; frustration,  
stress, upset



Your reaction to the  
negative emotions  
make you explode

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In order to control anger you need to work out the things that make you angry. Think about the times you have been really angry or really annoyed and write down the things that led to you becoming annoyed or angry. Use the dial that we talked about on the first page and rate them.

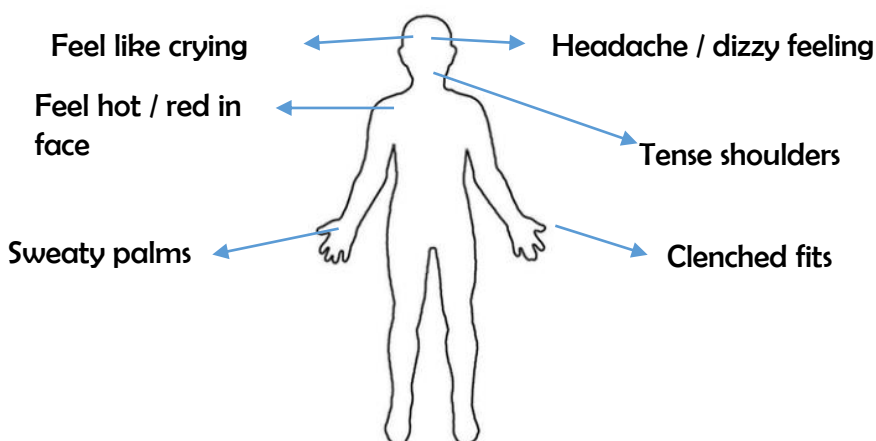
Now that you know the things that can lead to anger you need to come up with ideas of how you can calm down before you explode. We will think of these as a bucket of water. If you think about the firework model that we have just looked at, if we have a bucket of water it will allow us to put the match out before it lights the fuse.



## WARNING

Sometimes anger comes really quickly, some people often say that they didn't even realise that they were feeling angry until it was too late. It may also be the fact that something new has made you feel angry and you were unaware that you would react, therefore it's important to recognise the warning signs when the negative emotions begin to build up inside you. This is different in everyone as we all get angry over different things and all react in different ways. You need to think about a time when you have experienced a negative emotion for example; how did you feel the last time you were really frustrated?

You could draw a picture of yourself and label the feelings like this:

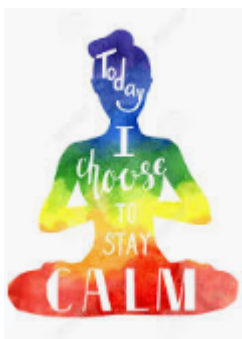


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As soon as you begin to experience these physical feelings this is the time to use your 'bucket' of calming strategies.

## **Calming strategies**

- When you think to yourself "I'm feeling really angry"; try and think "What feelings are inside me?"
- Use positive self-talk; "I can deal with this", "I don't need to lose control"
- Walk away from the thing that is annoying you, if it's causing negative emotions it's not worth being around it
- Go to an area that makes you feel calm, if you are at school you could talk to a teacher and agree a safe place, if you are at home this could be your bedroom
- Stand outside and get some fresh air
- Listen to some music
- Write down what has made you angry and then tear it up into small pieces
- STOP and breath, take a breath in whilst counting to 4, hold your breath for 2 counts and then let your breath out whilst counting to 4. Do this until you feel calm again.
- Whilst breathing imagine your favourite place
- Squeeze a tennis ball in your hand to release tension
- Put your hands on top of your head and press down, this can release the tension you are feeling
- Use a calming jar, make the glitter swirl around in the jar. This is like your brain, when you are experiencing negative emotions you can't think straight as everything is swirling around but when the glitter has settled this will mean that your brain is calm and you are able to make good, positive decisions about what to do next
- Once you're calm it's really important that you speak to someone to work out a way forward, it's not healthy to hold grudges about things that have made you angry or stay angry about the same thing for a long time
- Try not to blame others "It was your fault that I got angry" as this could start an argument. Try and explain the negative emotions either through writing or discussion; "I felt upset because you..." or "I became frustrated because..."
- If you have had a bad day and things have made you angry try and get some exercise



**Tip: Remember that negative emotions don't last forever so don't act on these temporary emotions**  
*Always give yourself time if something upsets or angers you. Don't let your emotions allow you to do or say something you will regret. Say to yourself "I will wait for a while and see how I feel"*

