

EXPLORING BEYOND DIVORCE

Coaching Guide • Journey 07 of 12

Anger the Good the Bad and the Ugly

Understanding anger during divorce and choosing how to respond

About This Journey

Anger during and after divorce can feel overwhelming, frightening, or shameful. It is a normal human emotion, and it can carry useful information about hurt, loss, unmet needs, or a boundary that matters to you. Feeling angry does not make you a bad person. What you do with that feeling matters.

This journey helps you recognize anger in your body and thoughts, understand common responses, and practice ways to respond with greater care. The aim is not to eliminate anger. It is to make room for it without letting it direct your words and actions.

What Is Anger

Anger ranges from mild irritation and frustration to intense rage. It can arise when something feels threatening, unfair, or beyond your control. During divorce, a difficult message, a changed plan, or a reminder of what you have lost may bring it to the surface.

The Three Components of Anger

Physical reactions: You may notice a faster heartbeat, tense muscles, heat in your face, or changes in your breathing. These can be early signs to pause.

Thoughts and interpretations: Notice the meaning you give the event. Ask what you know, what you are assuming, and what else might explain it.

Behavioral expression: Anger may appear in your voice, words, posture, or actions. Recognizing the feeling creates an opportunity to choose your response.

Anger as a Warning Bell

Treat anger as information to explore, rather than proof that your first interpretation is correct. Ask yourself what feels hurt, threatened, or important, and what response would help.

Three Ways of Responding to Anger

Expression, suppression, and management describe common patterns. You may recognize more than one in yourself. The purpose is to notice your habits without judging yourself and to develop more choices.

1 Expression

Expression means showing or communicating your anger. It can be a calm discussion, a request for change, or an angry outburst. Clear, respectful expression can help another person understand what matters to you. Yelling, threats, slamming doors, or breaking things can frighten others and cause harm.

Try naming the event, your feeling, and a specific request: “When the pickup time changes without notice, I feel frustrated. Please let me know as soon as you know there will be a change.”

2 Suppression

Suppression means pushing anger down or acting as though it is not there. You may avoid the conversation while continuing to replay it in your mind. It can leave the underlying concern unresolved.

Taking a deliberate pause is different from denying your feelings. A time-out gives you space to settle and decide whether, when, and how to address the issue. If it is safe and appropriate, explain the pause and agree on when to return to the conversation.

3 Management

Anger management means acknowledging the feeling and choosing what to do next. Emotional regulation is the practice of noticing your emotional state and responding in ways that support your needs and values. You can feel angry and still choose a respectful action.

Begin by naming the feeling. Notice what is happening in your body, give yourself time, and decide what is within your control. Your next step might be a clear request, a boundary, a later conversation, or choosing not to engage.

A Moment to Practice

Imagine receiving a message from your former partner that feels unfair. Before replying, put the phone down. Name the feeling and write out what actually needs an answer. When you are ready, respond to that issue in a few clear sentences. You do not have to settle every disagreement in one exchange.

Practical Anger Management Techniques

Choose one technique to practice when you are relatively calm. Familiarity can make it easier to remember when a difficult moment arrives.

Delay

Give yourself time before reacting. Counting slowly to ten can be a starting point, but you may need a longer pause. Wait to send a message or continue a difficult conversation until you can choose your words with care.

Relaxation

Try slow, comfortable breathing without forcing it. Notice whether you can soften your shoulders and unclench your jaw. Quiet time or calming music may also help you settle.

Distraction

Take a walk or turn briefly to an absorbing activity, such as a puzzle. Use the break to interrupt repeated angry thoughts, then return to the concern when you are ready to address it.

Choose a Calming Activity

Spend time with a pet, enjoy gentle humor, or do a simple task you find grounding. An activity may help shift your attention; it does not guarantee that anger will disappear. Notice what helps you personally.

The Impact of Anger on Others

Angry words and actions can affect people around you, including children. Keep children out of adult disputes and avoid asking them to carry messages or take sides. If you have spoken harshly, acknowledge it without blaming someone else for your behavior and say what you will do differently.

You can take responsibility for your own response without accepting someone else's threatening or harmful behavior. If an exchange feels unsafe, prioritize safety and seek appropriate support rather than trying to resolve it in the moment.

When More Support Would Help

If anger is repeatedly affecting your relationships or daily life, or these practices are not helping, consider support from a qualified mental health professional. This guide offers education and reflection, not individualized treatment.

Further reading: [NHS, Get help with anger](#), and [Breathing exercises for stress](#). Links are included in the HTML edition.

Reflection Questions

Use these questions to explore your relationship with anger. Write here or in a journal, and return to the questions as your understanding changes.

1. What “buttons” most reliably trigger your anger? What does that anger feel like in your body?

2. How do you typically express anger, and how do you feel about that expression afterward?

3. How long do you typically stay angry? What helps you come back to center?

4. Which response do you rely on most: expression, suppression, or management? How is it serving you?

5. What anger management techniques have helped you in the past? What would you like to try next?

A Closing Thought

Anger can help you notice what matters to you and where change may be needed. You do not have to act on every angry thought. With practice, you can listen to the feeling, decide what it is telling you, and choose a response that supports your healing.

Additional Support

1-on-1 Clarity Sessions • Weekly Zoom Support Groups

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