

Why do you get soooo angry? Three Reasons Why

The first emotional response tool we will focus on is anger. You might not call it anger. You may prefer to say that you get annoyed, irritated, cross or impatient. Perhaps you describe your anger as salty, snippy, agitated, hot, heated, pissed-off, or furious. Whatever you call it, there are times when you lose your cool. We all do. Take a moment to reflect on the times when you are not calm....what triggers your emotion?

What Makes You Mad? Check all that apply....

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Other drivers/traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> High prices | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal failure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stupid people | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone solicitation | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mistakes, imperfection | <input type="checkbox"/> Disrespect | <input type="checkbox"/> Misbehaved kids |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computer trouble | <input type="checkbox"/> Drinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad bosses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Messes, clutter | <input type="checkbox"/> Tardiness | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad employees |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Incompetence | <input type="checkbox"/> Lies/liars | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet seat positioning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unfairness | <input type="checkbox"/> Being ignored | <input type="checkbox"/> Inconsiderate people |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Favoritism | <input type="checkbox"/> Hypocrites | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud cell phone talkers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Misplaced, lost items | <input type="checkbox"/> Interruptions | <input type="checkbox"/> Racism, sexism, bias |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiting, delays | <input type="checkbox"/> Laziness | <input type="checkbox"/> Procrastination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Politicians | <input type="checkbox"/> Rudeness | <input type="checkbox"/> Losing |

The easiest way to learn why you get so angry is to think about your brain, biology and survival. The human fight, flight, or freeze response may trigger you or someone you love to react with that reptile brain—attacking first (verbally or physically) *without thinking*.



1. Physical Danger: We are a human. As a species, our anger response is designed to help during threats of physical danger when predators approach. Danger shuts down the logic centers of the brain and reacts automatically with a series of chemical reactions in the body that trigger “*fight, flight or freeze*.” As a predator attempts to kill and eat us, our anger response helps us move faster, fight harder or play dead. This anger response is primal, it is about survival. Without it, we easily become lunch.

2. Physical Vulnerability: Just like a wounded animal, when the human body is vulnerable, aggression serves as a protective device to distance predators. Low blood sugar and changes in hormone levels, chronic pain and increased fatigue are just a few conditions that create physical challenges. When humans become overly tired, uncomfortably hungry or suffer illness or chronic pain, our body chemistry signals aggression to protect this physical vulnerability. We snap, growl and grunt to distance others. Substance use disorders, mood disorders and other brain disorders create a physical vulnerability that often erupts in a range from irritability and impatience to aggression or tantrums.

3. Emotional Vulnerability: In addition to physical protection, human anger also serves as an *emotional* protection. By focusing attention outward, anger and blame create a defense against identifying and experiencing more fragile and painful human emotions such as fear, anxiety, shame, grief, depression and hopelessness. Emotional vulnerability includes **limited coping skills, unrealistic expectations, narcissistic entitlement, projection, displacement** and those emotionally painful **deeper core issues**. Sound confusing? Need skills? Use the Onion.