

## Fire Breathing Mad - All The Time - Now What?

Anger is probably the most volatile and troublesome emotion that my clients deal with and is directly related to depression in many cases.

There are two major schools of thought on the issue of anger. *Anger Management* is the one we mostly hear about. It's purpose is to control, redirect, and/or channel the anger into healthier activities. Certainly there is a place for this, however, this act of our will cannot resolve the deep-rooted sources and fuel of our anger; our will can only help us control ourselves. As we all know, the will is susceptible to breaking down under things like stress, pressure, or illness.

My approach to helping my clients with anger is *Anger Resolution* to help them dig deep to find the root of the anger problem, and then to help resolve the anger. I think that managing anything as wild as anger rather than doing away with it, takes a tremendous amount of energy from our lives, energy that most of us cannot spare. To continually have to manage a wild tiger like anger, is far too taxing. Let's get rid of the tiger instead, so we don't have to spend our resources managing him!

Not only is management difficult and temporary, but clinical depression nearly always follows long-term anger, where many people suppress (or stuff) their anger - then we have double trouble. Bottling up the anger in an attempt to contain it equals depression - it's like  $2 + 2 = 4!$  People with more passive personalities are most susceptible to this problem. People who "explode" periodically are characteristic of this combination of passivity and stuffing.

Aggressive, expressive, dominant personalities have just as much trouble getting rid of their anger. While they are constantly blowing it out and letting everyone know how unhappy they are, they are still unable to really resolve their deep rooted anger because people tune them out or don't listen to their tirades. They usually alienate themselves from others because they are so unpleasant to be around. Aggressive people in this category also face depression due to their unresolved anger.

Clinical depression is signalled by over eating or under eating; too much or not enough sleep; lack of energy; lack of concentration; angry outbursts; loss of interest in things formerly loved; feelings of worthlessness; crying

spells; very sad mood; suicidal thoughts or behaviors; isolating behaviors; to name a few.

Some common sources of anger that lead to depression include:

- 1 - Anger modeled from others
- 2 - Blocked Goals
- 3 - Traumatic Events
- 4 - Abuse - Physical, Verbal, Sexual, Spiritual, Emotional
- 5 - Loss - Anger is a Stage of Grief; The One People Get Stuck In
- 6 - Repressed Unresolved Hurts
- 7 - Favorite (Addictive) Feeling
- 8 - A Defense Style
- 9 - Feeling Unprotected by God
- 10- Unforgiveness
- 11- Chronic Illness or Injury
- 12- Lack of Boundaries
- 13- It helps me get my way

A good counselor will help one find the root of the anger, pull it out and examine every aspect of it, deal with people that may fuel that anger, deal with situations that contribute to it, find healthy ways to resolve open-ended anger, teach one assertiveness to avoid such future problems, and hopefully put the issues to rest (instead of on a leash!).

I've seen many, many of my clients reduce and/or eliminate their anger levels so that they are more pleasant, happy individuals with themselves and others. Ridding oneself of anger is definitely possible with the right direction and help. If anger is your problem, do something positive today to reconcile it, thereby avoiding or eliminating depression from your life. Take steps to get the help you may need to find growth and become a man or woman of tolerance, peace, and happiness.

