

Making Everything Easier!™

Managing Anger with CBT

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Understand the consequences of anger
- Cool down your angry thinking and manage your emotions
- Implement change for a happier, more balanced life

Gill Bloxham
Chartered Psychologist



Making Everything Easier!™

Managing Anger with CBT

FOR
DUMMIES®

Learn to:

- Understand the consequences of anger
- Cool down your angry thinking and manage your emotions
- Implement change for a happier, more balanced life

Gill Bloxham
Chartered Psychologist



Managing Anger with CBT For Dummies®

Visit

www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/angerwithCBT
to view this book's cheat sheet.

Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[About This Book](#)

[Conventions Used in This Book](#)

[What Not to Read](#)

[Foolish Assumptions](#)

[How This Book Is Organised](#)

[Part I: The Knowledge: Anger, CBT and
Change](#)

[Part II: Managing Your Anger: Putting CBT into
Action](#)

[Part III: Changing for the Better, Changing for
Good](#)

[Part IV: The Part of Tens](#)

[Icons Used In This Book](#)

[Where to Go From Here](#)

[Part I: The Knowledge: Anger, CBT and Change](#)

Chapter 1: Things You Need To Know About Anger

Grasping Normal Emotions

Following the CBT loop

Feelings about your feelings

Knowing More About Anger

Discovering the point of anger

Suffering the Consequences of Anger

Living an unhealthy lifestyle

Losing relationships

Struggling at work

Dealing with ill-health

Falling short of your potential

Using New Tactics to Manage Your Anger

Chapter 2: Knowing About CBT and Making Changes

Uncovering the Basics of CBT

Linking thought and feeling

Looking at thinking mistakes

Understanding About Thinking

Getting to the bottom of your personal attitudes and beliefs

Thinking scripts and expectations

[Seeing the effects of personality style on anger](#)

[Finding out about Behaviour](#)

[Looking at physical reactions to anger](#)
[Using the trigger-reaction-results chain](#)

[Considering Making Changes](#)

[Why bother changing?](#)
[The problems anger causes you](#)
[Results: The upside of changes](#)
[Making change work](#)

[Part II: Managing Your Anger: Putting CBT into Action](#)

[Chapter 3: Investigating Your Own Anger](#)

[Using Experience to Investigate](#)
[Taking Charge of Your Anger](#)
[Understanding What Goes on When You're Angry.](#)

[Confusing anger with other feelings](#)
[Comparing anger and irritation](#)
[Taking your anger temperature](#)
[Recognising your anger style](#)
[Spotting your anger triggers](#)
[Finding the roots of your anger](#)

[Looking at the Long-Term Costs](#)

Seeing what anger does for you
Getting into trouble because of your
anger

Chapter 4: Cooling Down Your Angry Thinking

Spotting Typical Anger Triggers

'You're treating me badly'

'It's not fair'

'It's so frustrating'

'Don't be so annoying'

'I can't stop thinking about it'

Managing Your Angry Thinking

Spotting your angry thinking mistakes

Catching your hot thoughts

Finding evidence for your angry thoughts

Separating thinking from feeling

Replacing Unhelpful Thoughts

Stopping worry and fear in their tracks

Beating suspicion, distrust and paranoia

Seeking forgiveness, not revenge

Accepting less than perfection

Steering clear of demands and threats

Avoiding coercion and bullying

Finding the positives in any situation

Developing an Emergency Thinking First Aid Kit

[Keeping anger in mind](#)
[Improving your problem solving](#)
[Caring about others](#)
[Focusing on your aims](#)

[Chapter 5: Dealing With Your Real Feelings](#)

[Feeling Balanced](#)

[Knowing your feelings better](#)
[Finding words for feelings](#)
[Looking at other feelings behind anger](#)

[Managing Your Personality Style](#) [Clearing Up Common Myths About Feelings](#)

[Myth #1: Anger is your enemy](#)
[Myth #2: Feelings are weak](#)
[Myth #3: Hiding anger can't hurt you](#)
[Myth #4: It's all in the mind](#)
[Myth #5: Anger is about getting revenge](#)
[Myth #6: Grief doesn't last long](#)
[Myth #7: Hopelessness isn't caused by anger](#)

[Chapter 6: Changing Your Angry Behaviour](#)

[Acting Calmly](#)

[Analysing the actions of anger](#)
[Knowing your anger reactions better](#)
[Relaxing physical tension](#)
[Predicting the results of actions](#)

[Picturing answers to problems](#)

[Treating Your Body Better](#)

[Reducing your adrenaline level](#)

[Eating well](#)

[Sleeping soundly](#)

[Exercising regularly](#)

[Reducing medication](#)

[Reducing harmful substance intake](#)

[Managing pain and illness](#)

[Controlling Your Signals](#)

[Playing with a poker face](#)

[Toning down your voice](#)

[Choosing your words carefully](#)

[Talking with body language](#)

[Tackling Anger Face to Face](#)

[Pressing pause](#)

[Staying focused](#)

[Being honest](#)

[Negotiating win-win results](#)

[Handling Hidden Anger](#)

[Describing your anger style](#)

[Accepting help](#)

[Giving up payback and revenge](#)

[Chapter 7: Using Assertiveness to Bypass Anger](#)

Defining Anger Styles

Assertiveness in action

Aggression in action

Passive aggression in action

Becoming More Assertive

Asserting Yourself: Your Rights and Responsibilities

Bringing on the benefits of assertiveness

Following basic steps to being assertive

Solving Common Problems: Tips and Tactics

Using assertive signs and signals

Saying 'no' and meaning 'no'

Questioning guilty feelings

Using the 'broken record' technique

Dealing with criticism helpfully

Accepting that life's not perfect

Part III: Changing for the Better, Changing for Good

Chapter 8: Changing Old Habits for New

Starting to Change

Recognising your possible future self

'Yes, but . . .': Avoiding excuses that block change

Learning without failing

Turning Changes into Habits

Changing your thinking

Feeling differently

Behaving in new ways

Changing old habits - some tips and tactics

Chapter 9: Getting Past Setbacks and Finding Support

Taking Two Steps Forwards and One Step Back

When Old Habits Die Hard

The ABC of behaviour change

Spotting setback triggers

Practising Positive Ways to Make Progress

Thinking tactics

Feeling tactics

Body tactics

Action tactics

Staying motivated

Keeping new habits going

Finding Help and Support

Seeking information and top-up tips

Managing in a crisis

Getting professional help

Part IV : The Part of Tens

Chapter 10: Ten Tips to Put Out the Fire When You're Angry

Letting Anger Evaporate

Staying Motivated To Stay Cool

Having SMART Goals

Taking Time Out

Giving Up Negative Self-Talk

Accepting You're Not Always Right

Forgiving Other People

Seeing Red but Keeping Control

Asking Whether a Fight's Really Worth Your Energy

Finding Help in a Crisis

Chapter 11: Ten Tips for Dealing With Angry People

Turning Lemons into Lemonade

Using Your Anger Knowledge

Spending Energy Wisely

Taking Time Out

Showing Sympathy

Appreciating the Power of 'Sorry'

Avoiding Walking on Eggshells

Dealing with Bullies

Using Cooling Tactics

Dealing with Extremes

About the Author

Cheat Sheet

***Managing Anger with CBT For
Dummies[®]***
by Gill Bloxham



A John Wiley and Sons, Ltd, Publication

Managing Anger with CBT For Dummies[®]

Published by
John Wiley & Sons, Ltd
The Atrium
Southern Gate
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 8SQ
England

www.wiley.com

This edition first published 2013

Copyright © 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, West
Sussex, England

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester,
West Sussex, PO19 8SQ

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services
and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse
the copyright material in this book please see our website at

www.wiley.com.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with the respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services and neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at

877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at (001) 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-118-31855-3 (pbk), ISBN 978-1-118-31852-2 (ebk), ISBN 978-1-118-31851-5 (ebk), ISBN 978-1-118-31853-9 (ebk)

Printed in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



Introduction

Anger management's a hot topic these days. Many sources claim that people are more stressed and angry now than in the generations before them. Anger is normal, a natural emotion that's part of your survival mechanism. Anger management doesn't try to get rid of or stop your anger. Instead, managing your anger means staying in control of your feelings, thinking before reacting. Getting the best from life is about solving problems instead of reacting in ways that cause you more trouble. I think of anger management as a life skill. Life skills are skills you learn to run your life smoothly with, such as looking after yourself, getting on with people, managing money, communicating, learning new things and solving problems. The ways you manage your anger now are the habits you've learned; by learning new ideas and tactics, you can make the changes you're looking for.

A couple of essentials are needed for success with your anger management. Accepting that learning how to control your anger's like learning anything – driving, speaking a new language, cooking, working, dancing – means you'll take time and put in genuine effort to pick up good habits. As a guideline, most people work on anger management for three to six months before the changes really start to feel familiar. If that sounds a long time, think that it's only 12–24 weeks of your life. Not bad, considering you've taken your whole life so far to develop your habits. It's not simple, or even possible, to change your anger overnight. But even setbacks are just another chance to practise, when you're using cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). And accepting that you're the only one in control of your anger frees you up from thinking about other people and how they affect you. Your anger's *yours* to control, so you're in charge – you're not waiting for anyone else to agree there's a

point to changing your anger habits or tackling your problems differently.

About This Book

Anger's a normal human emotion. If you get angry, you're not unusual, wrong or crazy. Frustrations, outbursts, feeling too uncomfortable to speak up are all normal in life. If you're looking for ways to handle anger better, to get the results you really want from people and situations without losing your temper or feeling badly treated, or to get on without other people's problems getting you down, then this book's for you.

CBT is a world-recognised approach to dealing with human problems – psychological, emotional and physical. An enormous amount of research shows that using CBT increases your chances of solving your problems, and that using CBT together with other help (including medication) if you're stuck has better results than going it alone.

Reading this book now can help you later. When you're irritated or angry and it's leading to trouble, you'll need information and tips to hand that have a good track record of success. Working out new ways to think, feel and act in the heat of the moment isn't practical – by preparing in advance, you're giving yourself the best chance of success.

You can just browse through this book for interest, but I suggest you also get stuck in and try the many CBT tips and tactics, questionnaires, short exercises, record sheets and quizzes to help you make changes to manage your anger or the anger of others. This isn't a test, and no one else is looking at your answers, so be honest with yourself. The whole point of understanding your anger better is to make changes that benefit you.

The exercises are for practice; they're not exams! You don't have to show anyone what you write or discover about yourself. Spelling and writing style don't matter either – what you get out of an exercise does. Exercises also remind you later where you were to start with – it's all too easy to lose sight of how far you've come.

Practice makes perfect. Practising positive thinking, calm behaviour, a healthy lifestyle and daily stress control all make a difference. Improving your skills in anger management is one way to protect yourself from the ups and downs of life and from coming off worst.

If your anger has already got you in trouble with the law, using both this book and the help you may get from professionals doubles your chances of making changes for good.

Life can be wonderful but also unpredictable, unkind and unfair. Anger's normal; it's how you handle it that counts.

Conventions Used in This Book

I keep the conventions to a minimum in this book. Here are the ones I use:

- ✓ I use *italics* for emphasis or to highlight new words or phrases.
- ✓ **Boldfaced** text indicates key words in bulleted lists or the key steps of action lists.
- ✓ Monotype font is used for websites and email addresses.

What Not to Read

This book is organised so that you can just dip in. Like all *For Dummies* books, you don't have to read it in a certain order or from cover to cover. Have a look at the Contents at the beginning and pick out the parts that look interesting or that you think may help. You can go through the chapters in any order you choose.

You don't have to read a lot of negative things about anger. In here are tips and ideas to make a difference. You only have to try them to find the ones that suit you best. The more new ideas you try, the better your chances of success are.

Foolish Assumptions

Making assumptions – guessing what people think or feel, what has happened or the reasons for something – is foolish when you don't have all the information. I almost never recommend assuming, because I've never met a good mind reader! But for the book to be helpful, I'm making a couple of assumptions about you and why you're reading it:

- ✔ **You're human and you've already got experience of anger.** Going through it isn't the same as understanding it or knowing how to handle it every time. You're looking for interesting facts, tips and tactics for managing your anger or dealing with people when they're angry.
- ✔ **You're smart enough to look for help when you hit problems.** Self-help books are a great start, and you're in good company, too – anger management's something everyone needs to know how to do. Evidence suggests that anger, revenge, hate and rage are becoming common problems, meaning that more and more of us need some help with these emotions.

How This Book Is Organised

This book is organised into four parts and a total of 11 chapters.

Part I: The Knowledge: Anger, CBT and Change

In this part, you discover the things you need to know about anger: When it's healthy, when it's not, and what the consequences of unhealthy anger can be for you and those around you. I also introduce you to the basics of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and how it can help you to bring about real change in your life.

Part II: Managing Your Anger: Putting CBT into Action

In this part I give you a toolkit of tried and tested methods to start to manage your anger. I guide you through ways of investigating the roots and triggers of your anger, show you how to calm your angry behaviour, and give you pointers on using assertiveness to bypass anger. Pick the chapters that best fit the difficulties you're experiencing, or work through each chapter in turn.

Part III: Changing for the Better, Changing for Good

In this part I concentrate on managing anger as an ongoing part of your life. I cover the ways in which you can develop new,

more positive habits, and how to deal with the occasional relapse. This part helps you make the changes to your life permanent, and gives you some ideas for sources of support.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

Here you'll find vital information about using CBT to manage your anger. You'll find ten tips for quenching the fires of your own angry thinking, and ten more on dealing with anger in others.

Icons Used In This Book



This icon reminds you of important ideas or handy information to hold on to, so that even in the heat of the moment, you can handle anger well.



This flags up a chance to practise your skills, get more information about your anger, or find out what works to help you handle anger better.



This highlights practical advice for using CBT tactics on your anger.



This icon reminds you about essential, sometimes urgent, facts or about times when you need to stop and think before reacting as you're learning new habits.



This icon marks out CBT terms or jargon sometimes used in the psychology of anger management.

Where to Go From Here

Books like this exist because anger is normal and anger management is a life skill everyone needs.

Reading this book may really help you. But self-help isn't always the full answer. If you've dipped in to most chapters, tried different exercises and ideas but still feel stuck, some professional help is the next positive step.

If you're in trouble with the police because of your anger, the long-term effects on your life and your health are serious, never mind the effects on those around you. For this reason, finding some support while you learn new ways to deal with old problems is worthwhile. If changing was easy to do alone, you'd have done it already.

If anger has destroyed or affected your close relationships, maybe you're ashamed or avoiding what you've really said and done. However bad you feel, professionals trained to help with anger have heard and seen it before. What you talk about gives a picture of what you're good at and what you find hard. Professionals aren't interested in judging you as a person – CBT is all about the view you have of life, not the professionals' view of you. See Chapter 9 for contact details and web addresses.

Part I

The Knowledge: Anger, CBT and Change

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



“The only thing that will improve Greg’s performance around the greens is a course of anger management.”

In this part . . .

In this part, you discover the things you need to know about anger: When it's healthy, when it's not, and what the consequences of unhealthy anger can be for you and those around you. I also introduce you to the basics of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and how it can help you to bring about real change in your life.

Chapter 1

Things You Need To Know About Anger

In This Chapter

- ▶ Defining anger
 - ▶ Picking up new ideas and information
 - ▶ Understanding the way anger works
 - ▶ Avoiding the pitfalls of anger
-

Anger is a natural survival mechanism and a normal emotion, even if you're usually a calm, optimistic and positive person. Healthy anger usually passes quickly without being intense or happening several times a day. Anger is meant to work as an alarm, warning you about possible threats – to your life, your values and beliefs, people you care about, even your pride. But when your angry feelings distract you from finding answers, anger gets in the way of your potential happiness and damages your health.

In this chapter I give you the basic facts about anger and how it works – this book's for you if you're looking for ideas or ways of changing your anger habits, or for more options for dealing with anger from others. Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is tried and tested on anger and many other common human problems. Cognitive simply means thinking – you're using the power of thinking to change your actions. The aim of CBT is not to get rid of your anger but to help you react to anger in less intense, lasting and extreme ways. Instead of acting on impulse or angry feelings, you'll pick up ways to feel calmer and to solve problems without causing new ones.

Grasping Normal Emotions

Research into human nature shows that everyone shares some basic emotions. Studies suggest that having feelings helps the human race survive and thrive. Having feelings motivates you to act and react to what's happening in your life, as well as making it possible to get on