

Understanding Anger

Notice how each constructive view on the right side of the list below *softens the anger*. Destructive anger is rigid and harsh. You may want to think of it as ice that needs to melt. The goal is to keep perspective, balance your own and others' needs, and understand yourself better. Also, don't feel you have to agree with each view below—just use the ones that work for you.

★ Check (✓) any below that might help you.

Anger toward Others	
<i>Destructive View</i>	<i>Constructive View</i>
"Others should put my needs first."	"Among adults, one's ultimate duty in life is to put one's own growth first."
"If I yell at people, they'll treat me better."	"Yelling alienates people and makes them dislike me. I need to ask for what I want in calm ways."
"I know what's right."	"There are many perspectives on truth. I need to listen fully before I judge a situation."
"The only way people hear me is if I yell."	"People will want to help me more if I talk to them respectfully."
"Other people screw up."	"If other people make mistakes, I need to gently guide them. And I make mistakes too."
"Anger shows how strong I am."	"Strong anger makes me weak. I become out of control."
"Others have to make my life better."	"It's up to me, more than anyone else, to make my life better."
"I can only deal with anger by acting out."	"Everyone can learn to deal with anger safely."
"I'm right to be angry."	"I have a right to be angry, but how I express it is what counts."
"I'm better than other people."	"Everyone in life has a purpose, even if I can't see it. Respect is the basis of all relationships."
"I know I need to stop blowing up, but I can't."	"I need to listen to my emotional pain—that's what's behind my anger."
"If others threaten me, I have to hurt them."	"In a case of serious physical danger, self-defense is appropriate. Other than that, violence is unacceptable."

(cont.)

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Anger toward Self	
<i>Destructive View</i>	<i>Constructive View</i>
"I should put others' needs ahead of mine."	"My needs are just as important as anyone else's. It's time for me to treat myself well."
"I should never get angry."	"It is normal to get angry at times. I need to listen to my anger and respond to it safely."
"If I hurt myself, I'll feel better."	"I need to find long-term solutions to my pain."
"I'm a failure."	"Deep inside, I know that life is about personal progress—not about 'winning' and 'losing.' "
"I can't say what I really think."	"It's <i>how</i> I say it that matters."
"I need to be punished."	"That is a PTSD thought. It reflects my inner pain, but it's not true."
"I want to die."	"I'm in a lot of distress. But I deserve to live."
"This will show people how I feel."	"I need to put it in words, not action."