

Six Ways to Handle Anger—(from least effective to most effective)

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Anger is an energizer. It helps us recognize when we want change. It helps us better understand what we need. Child development specialist and author, Katharine Kersey, Ed.D created a six-step model for handling anger, from the least effective to the most effective.

1. **TURNING IT INWARD**- The least effective way to handle anger is to turn it inward. This often results in depression and can lead to suicidal thoughts and physical illness.
2. **LASHING OUT**- A common reaction to anger is to lash out at others physically and/or verbally. This is an ineffective way to handle anger because it creates more conflict.
3. **FINDING A NON-PRODUCTIVE OUTLET**-Anger has a lot of energy that needs to be released. Finding a way to get some of the energy out of the body is a helpful start. Screaming loudly in a safe and appropriate place, hitting a pillow, drawing or scribbling with a black crayon, stomping loudly outside without disturbing others, or any other outlet that can help release the energy, but doesn't result in anything productive.
4. **FINDING A PRODUCTIVE OUTLET**-This is similar to step three, however something productive occurs as a result. Examples include working out, running, baking bread, playing the piano, painting, etc.
5. **TALKING ABOUT IT**-Sometimes it is helpful to use step three or four to release some of the energy prior to talking to the person about how you are feeling. Once you have calmed down it is good to have a conversation about how you are feeling without the intensity of the initial anger.
6. **PROBLEM SOLVING**-The most effective way to manage anger is to problem-solve with the other person and/or yourself about what the anger is about and what may need to change. (See attached 6-Step Problem Solving Process.)