



DAILYGOOD

News that Inspires

10 Life-Changing Facts About Anger

by Gail Brenner, PhD

☐ “Yes, I was angry. And I was a little afraid. After all I’ve not been free in so long. But, when I felt that anger well up inside of me, I realized that if I hated them after I got outside that gate, then they would still have me. I wanted to be free so I let it go.” ~Nelson Mandela upon leaving prison after 27 years of confinement

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☐ Frustrated, impatient, raging...aaarrrrrrgh! Yes, it’s normal to feel angry – you are human, after all. But if anger causes problems in your life – if it interferes with your health and happiness – then consider these 10 life-changing facts. Get curious about anger, and you just might discover an untapped well of vital energy that improves your life circumstances and wakes you up to the whole of life.

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☐ 1. It’s easier to feel anger than hurt.

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☐ Anger tends to be a surface emotion. But if you look at what is driving the anger, you will often find hurt, pain, or fear. Can you tell the truth to yourself about what you are actually feeling? Can you meet the depth of your experience with supreme kindness? You might be surprised at the freedom you discover.

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☐ 2. Anger has a strong physical component.

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☐ Bring out the microscope when you are angry, and you will find strong physical sensations – tightness, contraction, burning. Anger is a fiery emotion full of energy. If you don’t want to be caught in anger, bring your attention right into these physical sensations.

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☐ Without running a story in your mind, fully allow yourself to feel what is present. It might be difficult, but you won’t actually combust, I promise you. Be real with your sensations, and eventually the anger will stop controlling you.

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□3. Perfectionists are angry.

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□Are you a perfectionist? Then take an honest look at what you are saying to yourself. You will undoubtedly find a repetitive loop playing in your mind that is harsher than you might imagine.

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□Don't kid yourself – this is anger. If you don't want to be a slave to your perfectionist tendencies, then go to the root of the problem and learn to meet your anger with love.

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□4. Stories sustain anger.

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□Angry stories barrel through our minds like an out-of-control train careening down the tracks. To find freedom from anger, you must recognize the story and see that repeating it doesn't serve you. Yes, what happened happened. But how much longer are you going to let it be your ball and chain?

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□Here are some strategies to help you soften the story:

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□** Open up with compassion to everyone involved, including yourself.

□** Recognize that you are bringing the past into the present by repeating the story endlessly.

□** Bring your full attention into the sensations you are experiencing in the moment.

□** Commit to bringing all your actions in alignment with what you really, really want.

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□5. Anger comes from an overblown sense of self-importance.

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□Often, what underlies anger are statements like, "I'm right" and "I want my way." There is a huge attachment to "I" and the beliefs that "I" holds that causes separation and disharmony.

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□ Recognize these “I”-focused statements and know that they keep you locked into one way of thinking. Then inquire:

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□** Am I really right?

□** Does this wanting to be right serve me – and others?

□** What does it mean to want my own way? What are the implications?

□** Exploration of these “I”-focused beliefs can lead you to untangle the deepest knots that block your happiness.

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□6. Anger causes separation.

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□ Speaking of separation, what are the effects when you are angry? Anger pushes people away, scares them, makes them fight back or shut down. Relationships don’t have room to breathe when they are defined by anger. “How could you?” “You shouldn’t have...” Sound familiar?

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□ Remember that anger – or any reaction – is not the fault of the other. If you are angry, look within yourself. Lovingly investigate what has been triggered in you, and your whole perspective on the situation will shift.

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□7. Anger gets attention.

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□ Maybe you express anger because you want attention. Depending on the circumstance, this could be a useful strategy.

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□ But consider this: there may be other ways for you to express yourself so that you are heard. Open up your mind and heart to all the possibilities.

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□8. Unexplored anger can mute your experience of life.

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□ Are you sitting on a hotbed of anger, but keeping it so underground that you can hardly live? Some people are so intent on keeping peace that they minimize the truth of their

experience.

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□Are you asleep at the wheel, attached to inner peace and pleasant living? Exploring the seeds of anger can enliven you to all of life.

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□9. Anger can transform into useful action.

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□Taking in all the problems in the world can bring about a sense of injustice. Yet, if you move from anger, you are missing out on the whole picture.

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□Meet your anger with love and let your heart break open. Then move forward with actions that are wise and skillful.

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□10. Anger traps you.

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□The arising of anger is not necessarily a problem, and is not even under your control. What matters is how you relate to anger once it is present. If you dwell in the energetic sensations and convince yourself that your thoughts are true, anger overtakes you.

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□But there is an alternative: feel the sensations and tell the truth about the story. Then anger is your ally - revealing more and more deeply the essence of you.

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□How does anger impact your life? What is your experience of dealing with it? I'd love to hear.