

Understanding Your Anger “Habits” Score

The Anger “Habits” questionnaire is designed to help you become more aware of your present methods of expressing anger. **Not** to make you feel bad about your present communication habits, but to allow you to make changes if you so desire.

Everyone develops their own personal *menu* of these three styles. Some will pick **one** of these methods (for instance: **Suppression**) as their most preferred method and perhaps have a secondary method (for instance: **Passive-Aggression**). Others might switch between two of the three methods (for instance **Suppression** and **Aggression**). And, then there will be those who will be adept at using all 3 of these styles. The point is that all 3 styles when over-done are *un-healthy* and a score above 18 on any of them indicates a potential area for improvement.

Un-healthy Anger “Habits” are Developed in Childhood

Each person’s history, and the behavioral habits developed to cope with their life experiences, will determine how “skilled” that person will have become at using **Suppression, Aggression, and Passive-Aggression**.

If you want to make changes in the way you express your anger, it’s good to know that no matter how long you’ve been “practicing” these habits, they **can** be changed. It takes time and effort, but with greater awareness and the practicing of new choices, there is realistic hope for improvement. This book teaches those new choices.

As it turns out, there are two main *healthy* methods for the expression of anger and some people are already using them. However, they are not as commonly taught in our society as **Suppression, Aggression, and Passive-Aggression**.



Practical Application:

Identifying your present habits of expressing anger can give you options for self-improvement.

Understanding Society’s Un-healthy “Big Three”

These three common *un-healthy* methods for expressing anger are taught (by example) in our society. Suppression, Aggression, and Passive-Aggression are called *un-healthy* because their expression, most often, *does not lead to the resolution of the problem that caused the anger in the first place*. Usually, these 3 methods actually make a situation worse by creating even more problems. Let’s examine these 3 in more detail.

#1: SUPPRESSION

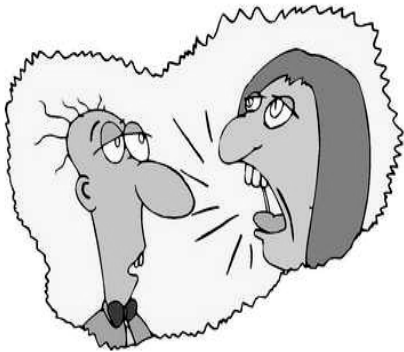


Suppression seems to be the most common form of *un-healthy* expression of anger energy. This method seeks to deal with anger by hiding it and not dealing with it at all. There’s no expression *outward* so a person can only express their anger *inward*, (toward them-self).

People who have learned this method, *hold their anger in, swallow their anger, deny their anger, and can even make themselves sick*. What type of early influences do you imagine, would “teach” a person to not express their anger?

Without expressing anger, it builds up and creates negative consequences. An obvious consequence is a “blow-up”. However, there can also be some not-so-obvious consequences from the build-up of anger. Many medical doctors believe that headaches, ulcers, and depression can result from un-expressed anger.

#2: AGGRESSION



Aggression is the most obvious form of *un-healthy* expression of Anger. Unlike Suppression, Aggression is focused *outward* (toward someone else).

Violence, yelling, name-calling, threatening, blaming, intimidating, bickering, griping, hurtful criticism, and sarcasm are common examples of **Aggression**.

Can you imagine what type of influences in a person's life might lead them to express their anger in an **Aggressive** manner? At first thought, childhood abuse comes to mind, and it definitely is a common cause. However, research shows that the connection of present problems to past experiences is not always so *obvious*. For instance, a child who is too over-protected can develop this style as well.

The “Myth” of Anger and Violence

Without education about *anger*, people can develop mistaken ideas. A common myth is: “*Anger causes violence*”. This idea probably developed because *anger* is invisible and violence provides the most dramatic and *visible* way for us to “picture” *anger*. With this picture in mind, no wonder *anger* is considered “bad” in our society. And, if so, why would anyone want to teach or learn about the subject? But, anger is not violence. Violence is a way a person can *express* their anger, and yet it is not the cause of their anger. Feeling hopeless and powerless is the root cause of violence.

#3: PASSIVE-AGGRESSION



Passive-Aggression is the 3rd method for the *un-healthy* expression of anger. Its focus goes out toward someone else. But, unlike the “in your face” style of aggression, passive-aggression is done in hidden (*sneaky*) ways. Silence, dirty tricks, procrastinating, *emotional withdrawal*, Showing up late, and not participating, are ways to express it. **Passive-Aggression** is similar to **Suppression** because no obvious signs of anger are being shown. **Suppression** is expressing anger *inward* (in a hidden manner). **Passive-Aggression** is expressing anger *outward* (in a hidden manner).