

# Change Anger to Positive Response Management

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Anger depletes our energy and is counter-productive. When people are angry at each other, each one feels like an innocent victim and sees each other as a bully. The more we feel bullied and try to get them to give in or back down, the more they feel bullied and keep it up. Getting more angry makes it worse. When energy is directed only toward being angry, we actually lose control and power over the outcome.

Positive interactions with the co-parent on a regular basis is crucial for our happiness and parenting satisfaction.

We can't help having our feelings, but we CAN choose how we respond. People can manage how they respond when angry. A managed response allows us to expend less energy and get more of what we want. What we control is a response that lets them know they no longer have the power to get us mad.



**When we are angry  
we feel like a victim  
but look like an abuser**



**Turn yourself into a winner** – Don't be afraid. Fear is something we feel towards enemies. It makes them seem stronger and makes us seem weaker. See yourself as a problem-solver instead of a victim.

**Conserve your energy.** Our instinct is to fight back to stop losing more ground. Anger may cause a short burst of energy, but it's seen as aggressive or abusive by others. This continues the downward spiral that makes you work even harder to get out.

**You earn respect when stop defending yourself.** The moment we defend ourselves we are treating others as the enemy, then they treat us as an enemy in return. We are the automatic loser. Winners don't need to defend themselves. The treat others with respect and get it back in return.

**Forget about defending your "rights."** This is loser thinking. It gives up power by insisting that others have the power to fix the problem for us. Take responsibility to improve the situation. Don't waste energy trying to persuade others to do it. No one is as committed to fixing this as you.

**Avoid Resentment** We choose how to respond. Even if we manage our response to come out a winner, we still have feelings about how we were treated. You can come up with alternative reasons for why your partner, children, or friends are mistreating you too. It's not because you are vulnerable or defenseless, it's because they are thoughtless, frightened, anxious, etc. You don't need to be a victim.

**If someone hurts you, only show that you are hurt. Do not respond in anger.** Anger creates enemies. You must use a positive managed response 100% of the time. If people see you react in the old way, they will try harder to get the reaction they are used to getting.



## THE MANAGED RESPONSE

**Stay calm** (practice will help you eventually break the instinct to lash out). We get angry because others have “no right to treat us that what.” Unfortunately people have the freedom to make each other miserable inside the letter of the law. Treat what others say as if it was coming from your best friend. We tend to discount what is said by people who frustrate us. Pretend no matter how insulting it may sound, they are trying to give you valuable information or advice (but you don't have to believe it).

**Relax and hear them out** (This may really take patience at first). In order to have the freedom to speak, you must let others have their say too. Wait your turn. Don't butt in. When others are allowed to say whatever they want, surprisingly, they eventually stop being nasty. Relax your stance and show by a neutral facial expression that they can call you names or challenge your motives all day long but it won't throw you off your focus. As others work hard to provoke you, they are using up energy. After a while they will give it up.

When someone else is blaming you:

*“I'm sorry you feel that way. If you choose not to forgive me, I'll just have to live with it.”*

When you need to turn down another person's request, soften a harsh “No” (which creates enemies) with . . . . .

*“I really wish I could, but I can't”*

If someone accuses you of trying to hurt them:

*“I don't want to hurt you – that's the furthest thing from my mind”*

**Try hard to listen to what is being said.** We want others to think well of us. It hurts when they do not. Their opinion is not necessarily valid and they may even be saying things just to get back at us. Remember ... you have the power to accept or discard what they are saying. Just because they say it doesn't make it so.

## Head for the Finish Line as a Winner

Winners are problem-solvers. They develop the skills to engage others in solving the problem with them. They gather allies instead of making enemies. They use their resources wisely and don't expend unproductive or unnecessary energy. Your choice to manage your response in a positive way will improve the opportunities to solve the problem and maximize your satisfaction (winning) on issues important to you and your child.