

Determine Your Anger Style

Because of our temperament or life experiences, we tend to react to upsetting situations in a certain way. Some of our reactions are not healthy or conducive to resolving conflicts. Understanding your anger style can help you adapt more beneficial behaviors.

There are four anger styles: three destructive and one constructive.

- **Reactive**
 - In this anger style, you blow up whenever you are confronted with an injustice or perceived slight. You slam doors, you yell, you may even scare people a bit. Your style may get results in some cases but you may not get the respect you want or need; you may even be considered volatile. Studies have found this anger style may also be related to heart disease.
 - **What you can do instead:**
 - Calm down and take a breath
 - Think of a more effective response than yelling
 - Communicate
 - Use relaxation techniques like meditation, deep breathing, visualization, or affirmations

- **Passive Aggressive**
 - In the passive-aggressive style, you act as if nothing is wrong but you indirectly act out toward the other person. This could involve gossip, the silent treatment, or making snide remarks. This style is easy for others to see and often will manage to cause a confrontation. Passive-aggressive behavior allows you to remain angry longer and makes you feel more stressed and angry.
 - **What you can do instead:**
 - Speak up
 - Think about how you would feel if you were being treated the same way
 - Practice stating your needs

- **Avoidant**
 - This person acts as if everything is fine. This is unhealthy because it affects your self-esteem and can lead to depression. Holding everything in can cause heart issues and digestive system problems as well.
 - **What you can do instead:**
 - Practice admitting and dealing with your anger
 - Face your fears that may lead you to avoid confrontation

- **Directive**
 - This is a healthier way to express anger. Here you know and recognize that you are angry and don't try to avoid the situation. You then spend time thinking about your response to the situation and try to figure out how to effectively deal with it instead of flying off the handle.
 - **What you can do instead:**
 - Continue to communicate
 - Select situations that need a response. All situations do not deserve a reaction.