

Three Minute REBT

Eliminating Anger: Developing Motivation to Change

By Philip Tate, Ph.D.

REBT takes a different position regarding the common belief about anger which states that if others thwart you or treat you badly then you have to get angry. We teach that most anger is an emotional disturbance that easily defeats you, and that the bad acts of others do not create this state within you. Instead of making yourself angry, you can merely feel irritated and dislike the actions of others. And, while disliking their behavior, you may occasionally deal with it effectively, and when you don't, you can carry on without being overly upset.

A good first step in eliminating your anger is to recognize that it is often an emotional disturbance: it defeats you. One way to discover for yourself how anger defeats you is to do a cost-benefits analysis, such as the one that follows:

Costs and Benefits of Anger.

Costs: Adverse Effects of Anger

- You may develop high blood pressure.
- You easily create poorer relations with others.
- You may lose a job or a mate.
- You spend less time in achieving happiness for yourself.
- You spend time thinking of the unpleasant acts of others. This, of course, is the opposite of happiness.
- You may worry about the violent acts that you may commit while enraged.

Benefits: Positive Results of Anger

- Commiserating with other angry people gives you something to do and a purpose for living.
- When you are depressed, your anger can feel better than your depression.
- You may feel good in your belief that you're better than someone else, i.e., the person at whom you're angry.
- It may work for you in the short-run – like addictive behaviors. People may stop behaving in a way that bothers you. (But in the medium and long run they avoid you or, worse, they may wait to take their revenge when they get a chance.)

When you look through your list of costs and benefits, you can gain a clearer picture of what you're doing to yourself. The benefits are often short-term, for instance and rarely, if ever, give you much happiness. By repeatedly reading through the list,

such as daily readings, you can get more motivated to change.

This brief article, which focuses on motivation, does not contain a discuss how to deal with your anger. If you would like to go further at this time you may consider the following books and tapes. Future articles will appear dealing with other issues with anger.

Albert Ellis has written a fine book titled *Anger: How to Live With It and Without It* which you may consider. Also, my book, *Alcohol: How to Give It Up and Be Glad You Did* contains a chapter on eliminating anger. You may obtain both of these books at Amazon.com. Remember to order by going to the Smart Recovery website so SMART will benefit through their program with Amazon.com. Finally, The Albert Ellis Institute has several cassette tapes on anger. The institute can be reached at rebt.org or by calling 1-212-535-0822.