



Tips for dealing with anger

What is anger?

Anger is a perfectly natural emotion that everyone feels from time to time. Like all emotions, it can affect how we think, feel, and behave.

As we are all different, the way we experience anger is unique to us. Anger is often thought about as a BIG emotion that is obvious to others.

But that really depends on the person.

Some people might get louder when they are angry, which might look a bit like this:

- *Shouting*
- *Saying things they wouldn't usually*
- *Hurting others or themselves*

But some people get quieter when they are angry, which might look a bit like this:

- *Not wanting to talk or be around others*
- *Not enjoying things they usually would*
- *Keeping anger inside by thinking about it a lot but not expressing it*

For more information on the science behind anger and how it can affect different parts of our body, take a look at our Kooth article on [the science of anger](#).

What makes us angry?

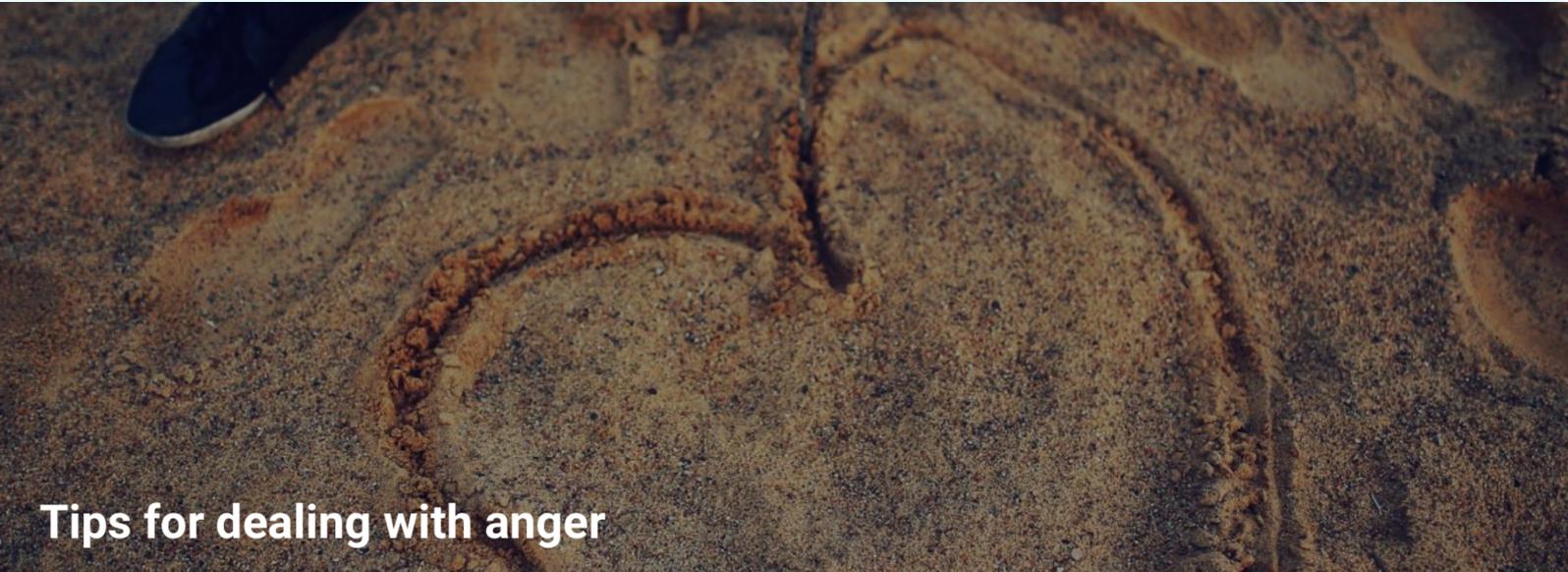
Sometimes, it can feel like there's a lot of anger in the air. This might be due to things you see on the news or on social media, situations in your local area, or experiences that are personal to you - right now or from the past.

Whatever you feel angry about, we want to validate those feelings here.



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Despite anger being something we all experience, it has a pretty bad reputation for being negative. It can be associated with destruction, aggression, and even violence - but there's more to anger than that.

Anger is neither a “good” nor a “bad” emotion. It can be a healthy and helpful response to many situations. It's therefore important to know when your anger is helping you, and when it's hurting you.

Let's take a closer look

It might be useful to think about anger in two different ways: helpful anger and unhelpful anger.

Unhelpful anger

This is the anger that affects your relationships, your school, home, and social life in a way that hurts you and generally gets in the way of feeling other everyday emotions such as excitement, happiness, and joy.

If the cause of your anger is traumatic, it might feel necessary to make healthy changes. For example, you may need to rethink relationships or distance yourself from people who have caused you pain.

Unhelpful anger might feel overwhelming and, in some cases, also lead to aggression and violence directed at others or even yourself.

This is what unhelpful anger might look like:

- *Having physical fights*
- *Shouting or using inappropriate language with people you care about*
- *Throwing or hitting objects*
- *Being alone with your anger and feeling unable to express it*





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Please note that unhelpful anger isn't just the loud kind; it can also be the quiet sort that we talked about earlier.

It's also helpful to remember that expressing anger loudly is not such a bad thing as long as it doesn't hurt you or others. In fact it can be really useful and can be a healthy way to discharge that energy. More on this later!

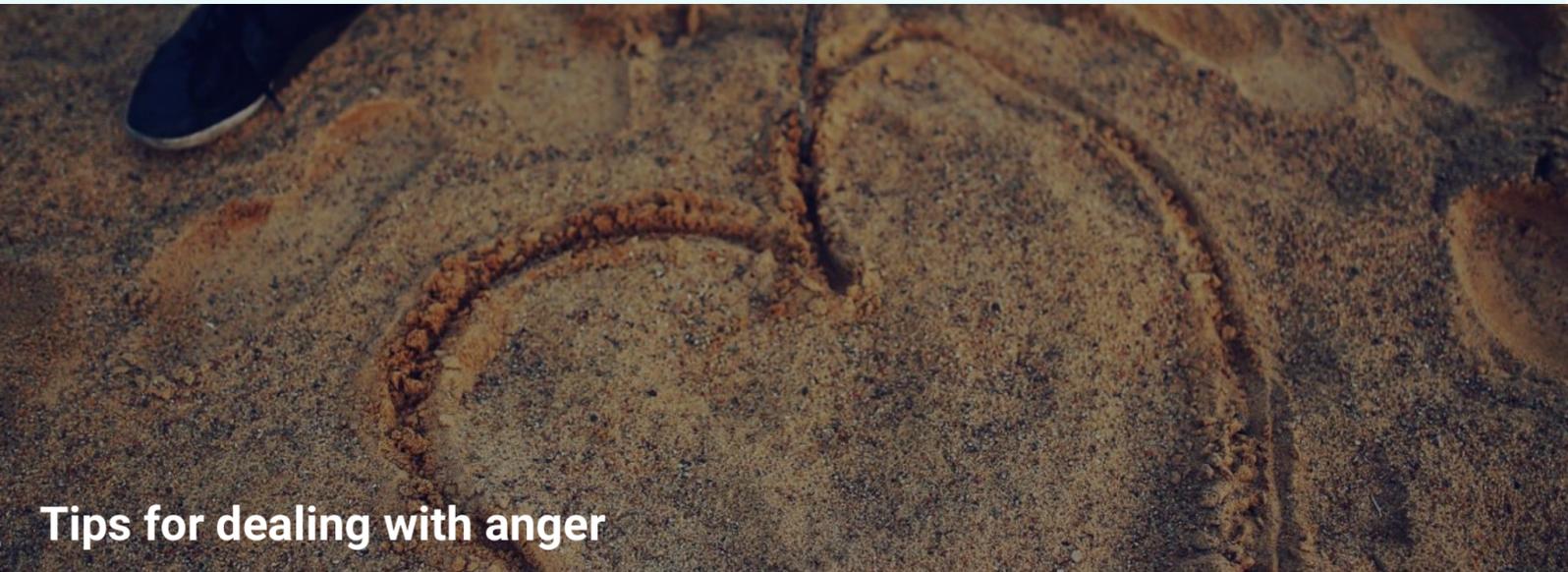
Helpful anger

It might be difficult to think about anger as being helpful. However, when used appropriately and in moderation, anger can be a really useful tool.

Here's how:

- It can make us aware of injustice and motivate us to speak up. Examples include: going to a peaceful protest, speaking up about something that is important to us, signing a petition, or defending someone or something we care about if it's safe to do so.
- It can help us recognise when we haven't been treated fairly or in a way that really isn't okay. The feeling of anger can help us make sense of what happened, acknowledge that we didn't deserve to be treated that way and even reduce any other difficult feelings attached to what happened such as guilt or shame. This is especially helpful if we blame ourselves for something that wasn't our fault. Anger is that useful voice that says, "hang on a minute, this is not okay and that wasn't my fault."
- It can help us to feel hopeful. For example: when our anger about something leads us to decide that we are not putting up with it anymore, it can motivate us to work towards change. For example, if we are sick of always being the social organiser in our friendship group, we might decide to calmly express our thoughts and gently ask for others to take responsibility too in order to make a change.





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- Expressing anger appropriately and without hurting ourselves or others can help us to feel calmer. For example: when we allow ourselves to be angry instead of holding it all in, we can release all that tension in our body, which then allows us to eventually feel calmer.

How to deal with feelings of anger

With all this in mind, we thought it might be useful to think about how to deal with feelings of anger to help

- *motivate and encourage you*
- *calm you down*
- *find solutions*
- *stay in control*

We are all unique, so if some of these tips don't work for you, that's okay - as always, do what feels right for you.

Here are a few tips we wanted to share with you:

Tip 1: Pause before you act

Taking some time to think about what you want to say or do can help you stay in control, rather than reacting too quickly and saying or doing something that you later regret. Taking your time can help you gather your thoughts, plan what you want to say, and also think about what you want to achieve.

If you have a real urge to respond to something that has made you feel angry by text, Whatsapp, social media post, or something else, why not wait 24 hours and see how you feel then? This gives you a chance to pause and respond appropriately, rather than reacting in the moment and regretting it later.





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Tip 2: Express your anger creatively

Expressing your feelings in a creative way can help you get those feelings out in a safe way, instead of taking them out on someone else (or yourself).

There are so many creative ways to do this: writing about it, ripping up a cardboard box, painting your anger, or even creating a character to represent it. To create a character, for example, you might draw, paint, or even use mixed media to create an angry character that symbolises how you feel.

For a creative way to express your anger, take a look at this Kooth activity on [writing to express your feelings](#).

Tip 3: Practise being calm

When we feel angry, did you know that our whole body can be affected too? An increased heart rate might give you that racing heart feeling. An increased body temperature might make you feel hot and sweaty. When you are angry there might also be an increase in cortisol (the stress hormone) and adrenaline which might make you feel shaky, tense, or anxious (see our science article above for more on this).

Practising being calm isn't a way to ignore or avoid your anger but it can help your body to relax and regulate, so that you can think straight and respond mindfully - rather than reacting in the moment.

For some different ways to practise being calm, take a look at our Kooth article on [grounding](#) and our [calming meditation](#).

You might also like our Kooth [bubble breathing activity](#), which helps to slow down your breathing and feel calmer when things feel too much.





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Tip 4: Get your body moving

When we hold anger in our bodies, it can cause tension, aches and pains, and thoughts and feelings that make us feel unhappy.

Releasing those feelings physically can really help. Doing a sport you love, practising some simple stretches, or even dancing in your bedroom can help release those tensions and difficult feelings. They can also increase the “feel-good” hormones that can help us to feel calmer and more able to cope.

For an idea on how to do this, take a look at our Kooth [get your body moving activity](#).

Tip 5: Think about a solution

Feeling angry is a natural response, but focusing on the solution rather than the anger can help us make positive changes and feel more in control, too.

For example:

- Being angry about a latest test result or piece of homework might motivate you to focus on preparing for the next one.
- Being angry after an argument with a friend might help you think about how to talk about it calmly to resolve what happened.
- Being angry about something that has happened in your local community might motivate you to write to your MP about how you feel. We have a great Kooth article on [writing to your MP](#) if this is something that interests you.

What makes you angry? And do you have any tips for our readers? We'd love to hear from you over at [kooth.com](#).

