

What's Your Anger Hiding?

Learn how to release yourself from emotional suffering

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What if I told you that you've never just been angry? You probably wouldn't believe me.

Think about the last time you were really, really mad. What was happening? What were you doing at the time? Now, push all of that anger to the side. What was behind it? Fear. Guilt. Shame. Pain. Rejection. Embarrassment. Were any of those emotions present? The truth is, you have never just been angry. Anger is a secondary emotion often accompanied by something else.

Anger often arrives swiftly. In fact, it's usually so quick to appear that we don't even realize it's covering up another emotion. Due to anger's hasty movement, we often neglect the original emotion we were plagued with and solely focus on anger. Anger is like an overprotective big brother who makes sure no one messes with his little sister. But what happens when the little sister never learns to protect herself? What happens when we never learn how to tend to the emotions anger is masking?

Now that you've had a moment to reflect on the last time you felt really angry, poke around at the feeling you discovered behind it. What purpose did this emotion serve? What did it need to be soothed? How was anger protecting it? How would the memory you have of being angry been different if you had tended to the emotion behind anger?

Author Liza Palmer has said, "Anger is just sad's bodyguard." Anger easily portrays itself as powerful, while sadness is perceived as vulnerable, even weak. In reality, they're both equally valid, but one has never been given the opportunity to be seen as such. Below is a list of ways to learn how to identify feelings behind anger and tend to each emotion equally:

Letting Go of Emotional Suffering: Mindfulness of Your Current Emotion

OBSERVE YOUR EMOTION

- NOTE its presence.
- Step BACK.
- Get UNSTUCK from the emotion.

EXPERIENCE YOUR EMOTION FULLY

- As a WAVE, coming and going.
- Try not to BLOCK emotion.
- Try not to PUSH the emotion AWAY.
- Don't try to KEEP the emotion around.
- Don't try to INCREASE the emotion.
- Just be a witness to your emotion.

REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT YOUR EMOTION

- Do not ACT on the sensation of urgency.
- Remember when you have felt DIFFERENT.
- Describe your emotion by saying "I have the feeling of _____", rather than, "I am ____."
- Notice OTHER feelings that you have at the same time you feel the strong emotion.

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PRACTICE RESPECTING, LOVING YOUR EMOTION

- Don't JUDGE your emotion.
- Practice WILLINGNESS with your emotion.
- Radically ACCEPT your emotion.