

# Ten Top Tips<sup>©</sup>



## When you want to control your anger

1. **Anger is OK.** Just because you get angry doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. It's normal to get angry, but it is not acceptable to hurt another person.
2. **Outbursts, which look like anger,** may be caused by a range of feelings such as fear, grief, physical or emotional pain. We hit out when we feel threatened. It may be that what someone has said or done to you has touched a sore spot within you and you have reacted in this way to protect yourself.
3. **What another person says or does** and how we understand their action can be two totally different things. Always take time to check your own interpretation of what they are doing.
4. **Don't think that everything another person does or says is about you.** You may be the last person on their mind. Try to imagine what other things might be preoccupying them. Admit you aren't the centre of everyone else's universe.
5. **Keep a mental or written diary** of the things that stress you and make a list of the really bad ones. Then think about how to handle them. If you are stressed by delays, e.g. in traffic, then resolve to leave early in future. If the kids stress you when you get home, take some time out before they descend on you.
6. **Learn to know when you are stressed** by understanding the parts of your body which are affected. For many people, this includes the neck and back muscles. Be sensitive to your body's signals and start learning new ways and techniques to help you relax when you are stressed. It may simply mean stretching, going for a walk, drinking some water or doing something that makes you laugh.
7. **Try listening** instead of talking back and over the other person. Ask others to clarify what they mean. While they are talking, listen to them carefully and repeat to them what you think they mean. Keep doing this until you both know exactly what the dispute between you is. This helps to keep out personal issues and the history of previous conflicts. Once you really understand where the other person is coming from, you may still disagree with them, but your feelings about them may be more positive. Agreeing to disagree can be a useful outcome.
8. **Talk with a counsellor or someone you trust** about the hurtful things that have been said and done to you in the past, particularly when you were a child. We all need to find at least one situation when we can safely take off the: 'I'm in control' mask. Know that it is okay to cry. And know that counsellors are kept to a code of confidentiality.
9. **If you must have everything in order** and under control to feel okay, then try making a deliberate mess of something, such as your bathroom or clothes' drawer. Learn to live with some disorder. Embracing chaos means it has fewer times to jump out and bite you than when you failed to keep 'it' under control.
10. **Think very carefully about what you want in life.** Set yourself long-term goals and remain focused on them. This will help to keep you grounded and in control of yourself when everything else around you seems to be in disarray. Make sure your goals include consideration of those close to you.

