
Chapter 9: Relapse prevention

Some people will have reached this point in the workbook having decided firmly that they ought to control their anger, but still finding that they are not able to control themselves enough. That is, you may be doing better, but you may still be lashing out in a destructive way occasionally. This will be evident in the MAD table you are filling out in appendix D. If this is true of you, then this chapter may help.

You should work at developing a commitment to take responsibility for all of your actions – whether you were angry when you made them or not. You should take responsibility for not letting yourself get so angry that you have difficulty controlling yourself. And if you do get angry, you should own the responsibility of doing whatever it takes to get away from the situation without being aggressive, and to calm yourself down.

Remember, it is not a valid excuse when people say...

- ❖ I blacked out and don't remember what happened.
- ❖ All the whining and complaining and noise got too much for me and I just blew up
- ❖ I see red and I don't know (or I don't care) what happens next
- ❖ Its not my fault, he got me angry, it's his fault
- ❖ He was following me around the house nagging me! What am I supposed to do?

If you want to control your aggression, it is important that you completely admit your responsibility for doing so. Remember, you will never learn to control yourself if you justify your aggressive behavior or blame it on others.

Taking a break from anger

Plan for the rest of the day to take a break from being angry. You already have most of the tools you will need to do this. No matter what happens to you today, deal with it without being aggressive. If this is impossible, then do not deal with the situation. Just let it go, or put off dealing with it.

If you are dissatisfied with something or someone, concentrate on finding humor in this situation or trying to love other people just as they are. For today, consider aggression to be your enemy. Today, you can fight all your battles with your own habit of aggression, and need no other enemy. Completely give up your right to be angry at other people or with yourself, just for today. If this works for you, you may wish to try the same thing again tomorrow.

1. If you are committed to eliminating aggression, how will you feel if you find that you have reverted to your old habit of reacting with aggression?
-
-