ANGER

(CHOICE, CHOICE, CHOICE)

STEP 1. Learn to recognize the many faces of anger

What is anger?
A personal attack against one’s sense of self-worth, needs, or convictions, or a strong emotional reaction that results from a sense of being wronged, threatened, or hurt.

Is anger good or bad?
Anger is neither good nor bad; it is a natural, normal response to a perceived personal attack that all people face routinely. Actually, anger helps us by clearly defining our personal boundaries. It acts as a “red flag” to let us know another person has stepped over the line in some way. The real issue lies in how we respond with our anger to the multiple daily interactions that we have.

Remember, anger is a God-given emotion, which needs to be managed, not denied or suppressed. When handled properly, God will be honored by your responses (Mark 3:1-6; Romans 5:6-11; Ephesians 4:14,16, 29, 31, 32).

What are some symptoms of anger?

- **Physical**: Fast heartbeat, Sweating, Shaking, Clenched jaws, Clenched fists, Fast breathing, Headaches, Stomach aches, Upset feeling in the stomach, Tight chest, Tense muscles, Frowning, scowling, Red face

- **Mental**: Problems concentrating, Confusion, Memory problems, Thoughts of doing harm
  Angry thoughts, Irritability, Short tempered

- **Other**: Yelling, Swearing, Withdrawing from others, Throwing things, Pacing

GOD also got angry, 2 Kings 17:18 So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence.

Defining your Anger “The emotion of self-preservation”

- Anger comes when you feel the need to clearly communicate that your personal boundaries have been violated and your intent is to preserve either your 1. Personal worth, 2. Essential needs, 3. Basic convictions!

  1. Preserving Personal Worth
     a. Your DIGNITY has been damaged
     b. You feel lack of RESPECT
     c. Made to feel WORTHLESS
Ps. 8:4 What is man that you are mindful of him, And the son of man that you can visit him? The Lord was assuring David that he had been created with glory and majesty. God places high value on each of us.

We need to **CHOOSE** to accept our worth and that in itself will have a major impact on the intensity of our anger.

2. Preserving Essential Needs
   a. Safety and security = Survival
   b. Food and Shelter = Survival
   c. Other needs: Love, respect, social activities, time alone

When our needs are not addressed or are invalidated, the result is emotional turmoil. We feel hurt or angry which is a type of protest: *Can't anyone understand who I am? I have legitimate issues that you should care about!!!* Philippians 4:19 “And God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ” Do not fret when others refuse to acknowledge our needs: nor does it mean not to try to communicate those needs; instead, **CHOOSE** to recognize that life can and will go on.

3. Preserving Basic Convictions
   a. Others bad habits, rude people, bullies, politics, religion.

Above are examples of convictions that if violated can cause anger. We sometimes are so rigid and unmoving in our beliefs we become dogmatic; I am right and you are wrong….period!! It is possible to be so filled with good opinions that they give us justification for unloving outbursts. **Being right can lead to being wrong.**

So ……. is Anger Good or Bad?

By defining anger as the emotion of self-preservation, it is easier to detect your moments of vulnerability to it.

The answer: it all depends. **There are times when anger is in-correctly associated with trivial matters. And times when it may be associated with legitimate concerns, but is managed irresponsibly. Balance is found when anger is linked to a reasonable issue and is communicated in a proper manner.**

**STEP 2. Admit that all angry expressions, good and bad, are the result of choices.**

Once you have learned to identify your anger and understand it meaning, you can then learn to distinguish right and wrong ways and **CHOOSE** the best way to
manage it. With choice you are saying, "Although my world may not be stable, I can be stable in it".

Nonproductive Anger Cycle
Painful Circumstance (that triggers the angry emotion)
  Devaluation, unmet need, or event that counters your convictions
Angry Emotion
  Frustration, irritability, annoyed
Effort to Change Environment
  Convincing others of their errors, moving to a distant part of the area, plunging into a project, screaming, yelling,
Resistance by others
  Increased friction in personal relationships
Increased Confusion
  Why am I still devalued, and needs not met
Return to the top "Painful Circumstances"

Five Ways to Handle Anger
1. Suppressing Anger (The denied anger) – pushing it deep down where it stays bubbling. These types of people always put on a good front and pretend to feel no tension at all. They answer with “Who me? Angry? EVERYTHING IS FINE
   a. Why suppress? Some believe anger is bad, some are perfectionists that never want to seem rattled, Some are image conscious, some fear rage that they may have seen in the past, and some fear their anger may be invalidated
   b. Outcome? It does not eliminate it. Like moss in a damp, dark corner, you may not see it but it is spreading. Can cause depression, irritability, frustration. “The circle starts again”

2. Open Aggression (The worse kind) – A self-preserving stance at someone else’s expense. It includes: Explosiveness, rage, intimidation, blame, bickering, griping. FOUL PLAY IS VIRTUALLY GUARANTEED
   c. Why? 1) Trivial imperfection that simply won’t go away. Emotionally balanced people accept life’s imperfections but the aggressive person will not rest until these are solved.....at all costs.
      2) Personal Insecurities: These folks are so needy of respect they communicate unbending demands. “You have to acknowledge me. I need to be affirmed”
   b. Results: Recurring power plays, loss of relationships, depression, diminished self-worth, Etc.
3. **Passive Aggression** – Like open aggression except done in a quieter manner, causing less vulnerability.

These types assume it is too risky to be open, so they frustrate others by subtle sabotage. They are OUT TO WIN and use sly ways to keep themselves in the driver seat.

4. **Assertive Anger (GOOD)** – preserving your personal worth, needs and convictions while considering the needs and feelings of others. This style helps relationships grow and represents maturity and stability.

   *Eph 4:26 says “Be angry, and do not sin”* You can be angry but communicate it in a manner that keeps the door open for ongoing love. Two key reminders
   - Make sure the issues are not trivial
   - Use a tone of voice that will help create an atmosphere of respect by others.

   *Eph 4:15 “Speak the truth in love”*

   Assertiveness requires self-discipline and respect for the dignity of others.  
   *James 1:19 “Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”*

5. **Dropping Anger** – of the choices the most difficult one is to let it go. It means you accept your inability to control the circumstance and recognize your personal limits. You now have a tolerance to the differences and are choosing to forgive and opting for a cleaner life anchored in kindness.

   **NOTE:** Only God can remove memories so you may have to sign up again to drop it.

   *Eph 4:31 tells us that such problems as bitterness, anger, and malice can be “put away” and Eph 4:32 instructs us to choose kindness and forgiveness as a way of life.*

Questions for group time

1. How do unmet needs feed your anger?
2. What are some convictions (smokers, rude people, bad drivers) that can result in feeling of anger?
3. What anger style do you normally use/ (Suppressing, Open Aggression, Passive Aggression, Assertive Anger, Dropping it.
4. As you think about your current relationships, what are some legitimate needs you might openly address?
5. What do you need to do to ensure that your behavior is assertive rather than aggressive?
6. Are there some situations in your life in which you could drop your anger?