Express anger constructively

The five steps to expressing your anger constructively

1. Before saying or doing anything, take a moment to contemplate whether you are justifiably angry, or whether your angry reaction resulted from an impulse due to a misperception or an unrelated personal trigger. Ask yourself what do I believe is unfair or unjust about this situation? The more specific you can be about the facts, the more objective you can be about how you'd like to resolve or address the situation.
2. Remain respectful at all times. (Do not make judgments or accusations. Avoid raising your voice, name-calling or swearing.)
3. Ensure that the anger stays proportionate to the situation (don't overreact). Ask yourself what assumptions am I making about this situation? These are judgments about people's motives, thoughts or intentions that you couldn't possibly prove.
4. Avoid personalizing the situation (e.g., say "the fact that your project is late is causing real difficulties for the team" rather than "I'm so tired of you not caring about deadlines").
5. Remember that the goal of expressing anger constructively is to address its cause and work toward problem- solving, not to punish those involved in causing it. Ask yourself how can I express my fears or concerns without accusing or making judgments about others? Ensure that you take responsibility for your emotions and assumptions. For example, say "I'm frustrated about having to wait here because I'm anxious about the amount of work I have left," rather than, "I can't believe how rude you were to make me wait."

Remember, the goal of expressing anger constructively is to identify its cause, take ownership of your own emotions and objectively work towards addressing it. The goal isn't to punish others or make them suffer.

Cheat sheet

3 questions to ask yourself when angry

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