

HOLDING ONTO ANGER CAN AFFECT YOUR HEALTH

Dear Jerry and Diane,

I'm having headaches and backaches and am gaining too much weight. I'm also angry at people a lot. Could my anger be causing some of this?

Bill R.

Nobody lives in this world without

experiencing anger and it can play a significant role in many of your physical ailments. There's nothing wrong with anger. It's how we handle it that is important.

Holding onto anger can cause not only headaches and backaches, but neck, stomach, and heartaches as well. See a physician to make sure your symptoms do not have a physical cause. Your aches and pains could be coming from the distress or tension you may be feeling. Over eating can often come from your bottling up the anger inside which can act as a toxin within your body, adversely affecting your health.

CONSIDER THIS...
~~JUSTIFIED ANGER DOESN'T BRING ME~~
~~WHAT I REALLY WANT.~~

EATING YOUR ANGER

You may be over eating not because you are hungry, but because you have feelings that are difficult to face. Eating does in fact bring temporary comfort, but afterwards, the anger is still there along with the weight. Anxiety around guilty feelings is a common cause for over eating. Look for the things you may be feeling guilty about and choose to no longer hold on to them. Assistance from a qualified counselor can help in dealing with the painful past and ridding yourself of your aches, pains, and food cravings in the present.

Overeating is a way of hurting yourself. Resist the temptation to eat impulsively. Before you put anything in your mouth, pause for a few seconds and ask yourself if you are really

hungry or are you eating to relieve your anxiety. Care enough about yourself to make better choices in your eating habits. Some weight loss programs have been helpful. Research has shown that vigorous exercise can shift mood and release tension which often diffuses anger.

ANOTHER WAY OF HANDLING YOUR ANGER

Anger is an emotion which can generate aggressive feelings and behavior. Gone unchecked, it can run your life, damage your relationships, and lead to an unhealthy lifestyle, both mentally and physically. Becoming aware of your anger then allows you to employ techniques to diffuse it like relaxation, problem solving, and changing your thinking.

STEPS TO UPDATING ATTITUDES

- _ Choose how you experience your anger
- _ Practice letting go of judgments today
- _ Decide that your actions will not be hurtful to others or yourself

It often seems it's only the other person's attitude that needs to change when in reality it is your own thoughts and attitudes on which you need to work. A small shift in your perception, like seeing others as fearful instead of attacking, will result in a big shift in your life. Understanding that you actually have a choice about the way you behave is the most important step in gaining control over your anger and your over eating as well. Although it may seem otherwise, other people aren't responsible for your anger, your overweight body, or your unhappiness. You are responsible for creating your own happiness.

Where to Go...

The Dance of Anger by Harriet Learner
It's Not About Food by Normandi and Roark
The Anger Habit by Carl Semmelroth
www.vix.com/menmag/anger.htm
www.apa.org/pubinfo/anger.html