

ESSENTIAL HELP IN TROUBLED TIMES – THE HUMAN GIVENS APPROACH

Joe Griffin and Ivan Tyrrell



Release from anger

PRACTICAL HELP FOR
CONTROLLING
UNREASONABLE
RAGE

 Change is much easier
than you think...

The Human Givens Approach 'Essential help in Troubled Times' Series is a range of best-selling books, each of which explores a recognised psychological or behavioural problem and shows in clear, non-jargonistic language how to treat it effectively with psychological interventions.

Release from Anger is the latest title in the series which includes: *How to Lift Depression – fast*; *Freedom from Addiction: The secret behind successful addiction busting*; *How to Liberate Yourself from Pain*; and *How to master anxiety*. (The series is part of a larger nationwide effort to move counselling, psychotherapy and education away from ideology and more into line with scientific findings about how the brain works and what people really need to live fulfilling lives.)

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Release from anger

Practical help for controlling
unreasonable rage

*Change is much easier
than you think...*

Joe Griffin & Ivan Tyrrell

with Denise Winn



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*“Let us not look back in anger
or forward in fear,
but around in awareness.”*

JAMES THURBER

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INTRODUCTION

Time to take charge

*P*URE ANGER is terrifying to behold in others and wildly overwhelming when it erupts in ourselves. But it is an emotion that we are all genetically programmed to experience; it evolved aeons ago as a survival mechanism to enable creatures like us to stand their ground under threat. And it can still be useful today: to motivate us to do something about a situation, for example, or when we occasionally need it to defend ourselves. But when it flares up inappropriately and rages out of control for no good reason, it is highly dangerous – as you almost certainly know if you have picked up this book.

Stress overload, generated by the way we live now, accounts for much of the increase in the expressions of anger in society. In today's stressful modern world (where we are driven to earn money *and* accumulate debt, where our innate needs are frequently undermined and time for reflection is hard to find), few of us live in the type of close and caring community in which most potential causes for anger outbursts can be diffused naturally before they do damage. And,

as we are forced to engage with more and more systems that automate and dehumanise our work and social life, and endless red tape and regulations govern how we do the simplest of things, it is not surprising that even those who think of themselves as mild-tempered are driven to distraction from time to time and blow their tops.

For many other people, however, the cause of anger is more deep-seated and violent outbursts may occur seemingly out of the blue, due to reminders, conscious or not, of traumatic past experiences.

It is always devastating and frightening to experience anger outbursts that you feel powerless to control. It is equally devastating and frightening to be on the receiving end of uncontrolled anger – with considerable damage often done, as a result, to your confidence, self-esteem and sense of personal safety. As you are probably well aware, uncontained anger causes major upsets in relationships and family life, crises at work, college or school, and problems in coping with life generally. It also badly affects your physical and mental health. And if anger turns to violence, it can, quite literally, be a matter of life and death (as the increasing reports of murderous attacks on people who have been kicked to death show).

Perhaps you say, “I can’t help myself”, if you repeatedly lose your cool, or think you should forgive others who become aggressive or violent because they can’t help them-

selves, either: they don't mean it really, despite the pain they cause you – and, perhaps, the black eye and broken ribs. But anger does *not* come out of the blue, nor is it ever inexplicable or unmanageable.

This book will help you to understand the causes of over-the-top anger that put you and/or others at risk. It explains why sometimes our actions and reactions seem to wind

other people up and lead to furious, regretted, rows with those we love, work with etc. – and why what *they* do may push the buttons that trigger anger in ourselves. By reading it you could find out some things that surprise you. If this is the case, remember that life rarely works how we think it does.

If you ever feel at the mercy of anger – your own or other people's – you will discover that you have the power to disarm or deal with it. We will show you how to stop being taken over by anger, how to keep yourself safe from anger in others, how to defuse inappropriate anger, and how to prevent resentments and annoyances from escalating into bitter or dangerous confrontations.

We have successfully used the methods we describe with countless clients over the years. They are highly effective because they involve working *with* the givens of human nature, instead of trying to struggle against them, as often

“ Anger does *not* come out of the blue, nor is it ever inexplicable or unmanageable. ”

happens. (For instance, no amount of reasoning with a person who is in a blind rage will ever calm them down.) We call this way of working the human givens approach and it underpins all the ideas and information we use and teach.

Whether you are on the receiving end of aggression – from a partner or parent, boss or colleague, customer or neighbour

– or whether you are struggling to understand and control anger in yourself, you will find this book full of fascinating facts and insights, as well as simply explained techniques to put into practice.

“ ... you will have the knowledge and skills to control anger, instead of letting *it* control you. ”

Some people prefer to back up what they learn with professional help, so we have also included guidance on where to seek effective therapy and what to expect from it.

Excessive anger and aggression, delivered by you or else directed at you, can ruin your life and that of others. But if you absorb and use what you can learn from these pages, you will have the knowledge and skills to control *it*, instead of letting it control you. There's no better time than now to reclaim your life.

PART 1

Understanding anger

*A*NGER can erupt in many ways. Sometimes it creeps up on you without you even noticing, building up inside like steam in a pressure cooker. Maybe you have had a trying day, which started with sleeping through the alarm clock, then missing the bus to work or finding the car wouldn't start. Or maybe one of the children forgot something crucial that they needed for school and you had to turn back and get it, making you late for whatever you had to do next. Then perhaps someone – a colleague, a parent at the school gate, or a stranger whom you accidentally obstruct for a second on the street – passes an unkind remark (at least, that's the way you read it) and you feel unsettled and a little threatened afterwards. Other little things continue to go wrong throughout the day, causing you to feel more pressured, more uncertain that you can cope and more out of control until, suddenly, it finally gets too much and – BANG – you lose your temper over some tiny, tiny thing! Perhaps you let rip at an innocent shop assistant or a stunned colleague, your bemused partner

or shocked child. And later you feel so bad and ashamed, because you know that your reaction was uncalled for, and you have hurt someone unforgivably.

Or else you might find you get angry a lot. "It's just how I am" you say, "how I've always been" – at least, that's what you think. It's because you don't tolerate fools gladly, you tell yourself, and anyway, there is so much to get angry about – poor service, shoddy goods, bad manners. But perhaps you have noticed yourself becoming even more intolerant as time goes on, or that other people don't get angry in similar circumstances? Maybe you have a constantly simmering sense of resentment about virtually everything, which is tarnishing your outlook on life and leaves you ever ready to explode. Perhaps someone important to you has told you that you need to get a grip on yourself ...

Or are your anger outbursts a complete shock to you? Something ridiculously minor will trigger one off and you end up having a stupid row with your family or friends, ruining what should have been a happy occasion. Or else a 'red mist' descends and you just explode – sometimes seemingly over nothing. At that moment you are consumed by your rage, yet have no idea *why* at all. In your mind there is no question that you are right and your response – the delivery of a barrage of verbal insults or even blows – is completely justified. But then, when you have calmed down, you are

utterly shocked and mystified by what you did, and find yourself pleading yet again for forgiveness, especially if it is loved ones that you have hurt. Or perhaps you are so ashamed that you cannot own up to your feelings of guilt, and say nothing at all – and gradually the emotional distance between you and those you love grows.

“ At that moment you are consumed by your rage, yet have no idea *why* at all. ”

Or maybe you have a violent temper which, when it bursts out, sometimes even lands you in trouble with the police. You know you have got to find a way to curb it but you just don't know how. Or perhaps it is your child's explosive anger that you don't understand and don't know how to cope with.

Perhaps you live with someone with a violent temper and are often on the receiving end of physical abuse. It is terrifying, shocking, yet always so seemingly out of character. “He only does it when he is drunk.” “He doesn't mean it; he is so apologetic afterwards.” And so you go on putting up with it and, the more you put up with it, the more powerless you feel and the more you may blame *yourself* for causing such rage.

Whatever the cause of the anger or the form it takes – and whether the anger is yours or you get the brunt of it – you know it is ruining your life, as well as hurting others. And, try whatever you may, you have never been able to take back control ... *till now*.

Wouldn't it be great to know *why* you are at the mercy of excessive anger and to discover that you already have all the tools you need to take back control? There is always an

explanation for an anger outburst, even if, at the moment, it is hidden from you. Once you understand it, you can learn how to change your responses – those that make *you* uncontrollably angry or trigger inappropriate anger in others –

and, also, to realise whether or not you are to blame for it. Sometimes it is others who need help. Whatever the case, it is urgent that you take action because anger can be a killer.

“ There is always an explanation for an anger outburst, although it may be hidden from you at the moment. ”

ESSENTIAL HELP IN TROUBLED TIMES

"If out-of-control anger is ruining your life – this is the book for you." **Mike Beard**, Education Consultant

Are you struggling with anger outbursts or excessive rage – either your own, or someone else's? If so, you are not alone. Aggression, both verbal and physical, is on the increase in our society. Shedding light on this situation, *Release from Anger* explodes some common myths and gives you effective strategies to curb it. It reveals important facts about the causes, effects, triggers and behaviour patterns of anger and aggression, and explains the difference between healthy anger – a natural survival strategy – and destructive anger.

Release from Anger is also packed with clear advice and practical examples of how to deal with inappropriate anger, whether yours or someone else's. It explains what happens, both mentally and physiologically, when anger suddenly erupts, looks at anger as an addiction and explains the reasons behind many compulsive outbursts. It also shows you how effective communication skills, verbal and nonverbal, can unlock the trance-like state of anger and defuse aggression in even potentially violent situations.

VITAL INFORMATION THAT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

- Why anger is essential for survival and what it does to our bodies
- How excessive anger can affect our physical and mental health
- How to avoid the common triggers for anger
- Why venting angry feelings will not make anger go away but is actually more likely to increase it
- How to predict anger outbursts in yourself and others
- The connection between anger and depression, and anger and trauma
- Why talking about angry feelings rarely helps – especially for men
- The importance of effective communication skills
- How to use your body language to reduce the emotional temperature of a situation.

ALSO INCLUDES:
An Emotional Needs Checklist

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