
ANGER MANUAL!!!

What to Do When Your TEMPER Flares

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In the Driver's Seat

Have you ever driven a car?

If your answer is yes, let's hope you're talking about a bumper car at an amusement park, or a battery-run car in your driveway. When you're older, you'll learn to drive a real car.

Driving is fun. You get to decide where to go, and you're in charge there. It's also hard work. You have to steer. You have to turn just the right amount, not too much or too little. You have to speed up, but not too fast. You have to avoid all the other cars around you. You have to follow the rules. It's easy to lose control and then *CRASH!*



QUESTIONS:

What is your favorite type of fuel? :)

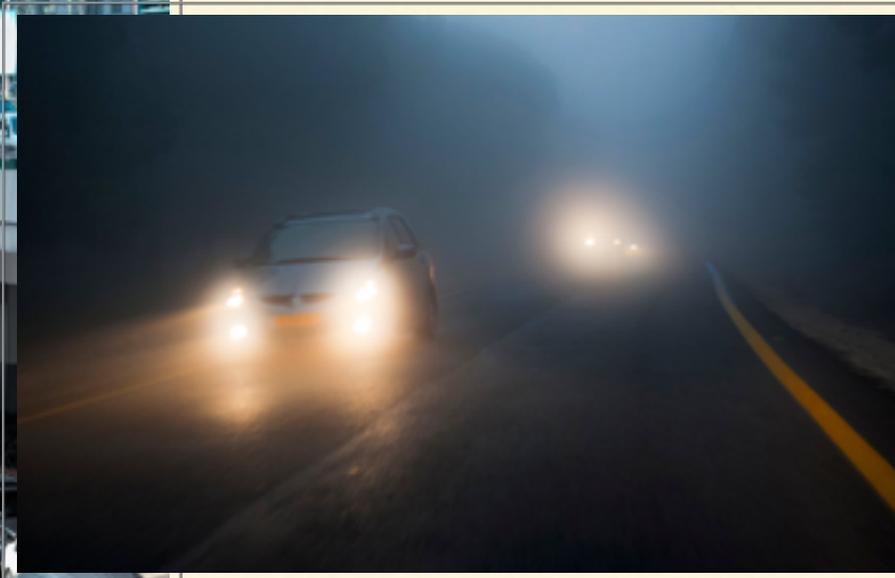
What are some safety rules you have to

It's fun to crash a bumper car. That's what they're made for anyway. And it's fun to crash a remote control car, especially the kind that's designed to climb walls and flip over.

But in a real car, it isn't fun to crash. It's scary and dangerous. That's why people need to take lessons before they drive a real car. And one of the main things you learn when you take driving lessons is to stay in control of the car.

Our bodies are kind of like cars. We need fuel to run well. We need to be kept clean. We need to get checkups every once in a while. And we need to follow rules that help keep everyone safe.

When you're driving, sometimes there are no other cars on the road, and the road is straight, and you know exactly where you're going. All of these things make it easy to follow the rules and stay in control of the car.



QUESTIONS:

Have you ever been in a car wreck?

How can cell phones make driving dangerous?

But sometimes the road is crowded or bumpy or full of turns. Sometimes you're in a hurry or tired or lost. Sometimes it's windy or foggy or so dark you can hardly see, even with your lights on.

Good drivers know that under all of these conditions, even if they're in a bad mood or their phone is ringing or people in the car are arguing, even if other cars are driving too close or cutting them off, even if it's snowing or raining, no matter what, they still have to stay in control of the car. Otherwise, there could be a disaster.

You have a few years to go before you get behind the wheel of a real car, but you can still learn how to be a good driver. You can practice **ON YOURSELF!**

That's right, you get to be in the driver's seat of your own life, right now, starting today.



QUESTIONS:

What are some things you get to control that you enjoy deciding?

What are some things you wish you could control?

Sometimes it's easy to be in control of yourself, and it's fun, too. You can decide how loud to sing or how high to jump or what book to take out of the library. But sometimes it isn't fun. Sometimes there are rules you don't want to follow. Sometimes you want something but you can't have it. Sometimes people do things you don't want them to do, and say things you don't want them to say.

Yet, you are still the driver, not in charge of other people, but in charge of steering and controlling your own car --yourself. And just like the driver of a real car, the things you do and the choices you make determine what kind of trip you're going to have.

Maybe your trip has been rocky, making it difficult for you to stay in control. Maybe you're a kid who gets overheated when things go wrong, a kid who tries to cool down but ends up exploding instead. Well, guess what? If you're a kid ready to learn to be the driver in your own life, to control yourself even when it's hard, you are getting ready to learn how to avoid crashes and get where you want to go.

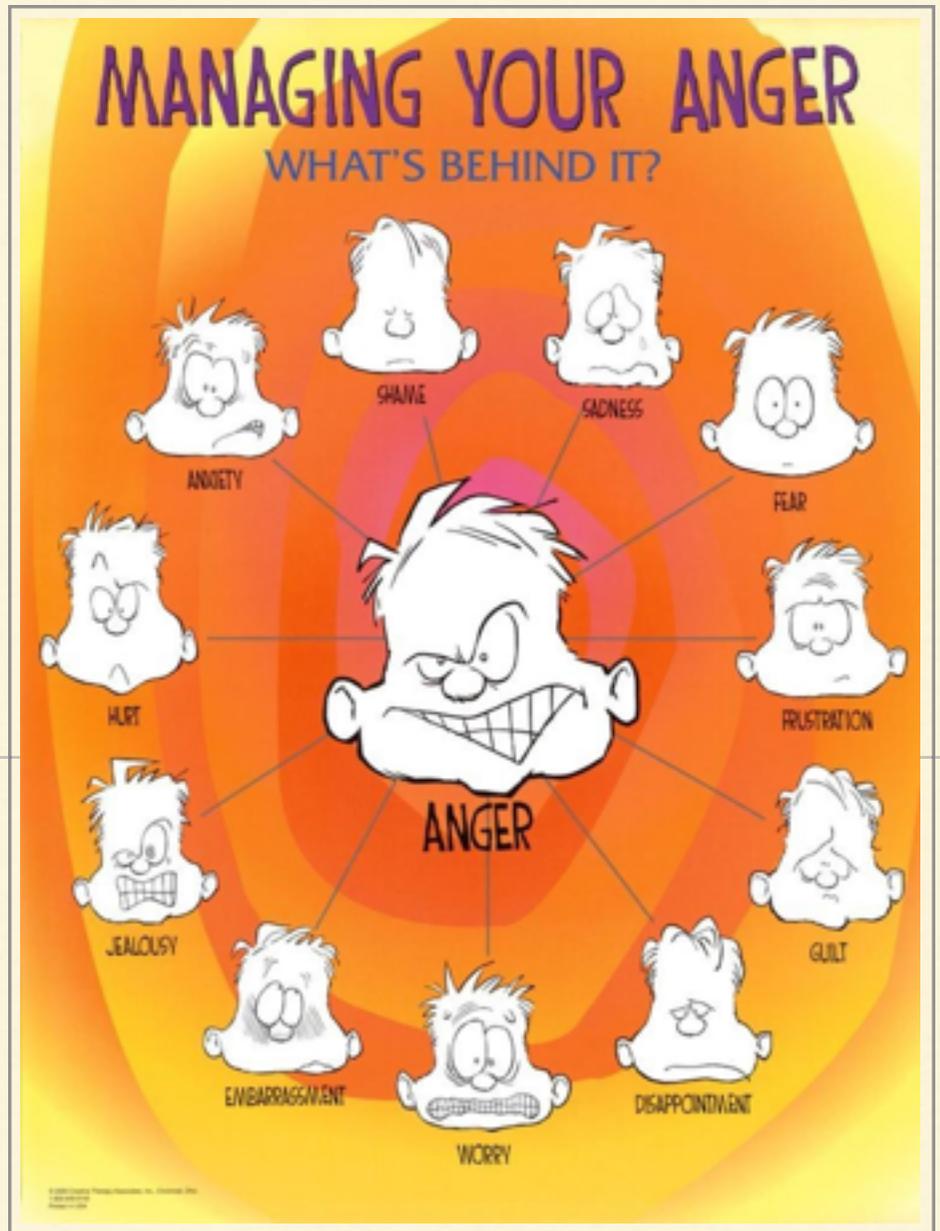
2 A Secret About **ANGER**

Can you think of times you felt like the faces on this chart & were ANGRY?

Everyone gets angry sometimes. In fact, it's such a common feeling that we have lots of things that set it off. The

list is long. Sometimes when we are really **sad**, we act angry. Some people act angry when they are **afraid**. **Frustration** causes many people to show anger. When we feel **guilty** and **ashamed** about something we've done, some show the anger they feel toward themselves. **Disappointment** is often hard to deal with and make us become angry. Do you **worry**? People who worry may show their worry in anger. It is also true that being **embarrassed** and having others laugh can make you very angry. It can also happen that being **jealous** of someone else or what they have can make you angry.

When someone **hurts** your feelings, it may make you angry. Being **anxious**, which feels like worry and fear mixed, can cause some people to show anger. WOW! There are a lot of feelings that can set off anger!





HOT
IRRITATED
ENRAGED
EXPLOSIVE
FURIOUS
BOILING
BALLISTIC
MAD
RAGING
LIVID
FUMING

Being ANGRY is such a common feeling that even cats get angry! Anger is everywhere. There are many words that mean ANGRY.

Think about what it feels like to be angry. Think about all the times when someone has been mad at you. Those times do NOT feel very good. In fact, when you think about it, it probably seems like anger is something to be avoided.

But actually, anger is a GOOD thing. It is the way our body tells us that we don't like what is happening.

The problem is, that anger can get big fast and cause us problems. It can cause us to say things we don't really mean and do things we would never do if we were calm and in control. Anger that has gotten too big can make bad situations even worse than they were and get us into lots and lots of trouble!

THINGS THAT MAKE ME

ANGRY!!!

THINGS THAT MAKE ME
MAD AT SCHOOL

THINGS THAT MAKE ME **MAD!**
LIST TIME

THINGS THAT MAKE ME
MAD AT HOME

THINGS THAT MAKE ME
MAD AT MY BROTHER,
SISTER

THINGS THAT I WANT AND
CAN'T HAVE THAT MAKE
ME MAD

THINGS PEOPLE SAY THAT
DRIVE ME NUTS!

THINGS MY MOM & DAD
DO THAT MAKE ME
ANGRY

THINGS MY FRIENDS DO
THAT MAKE ME ANGRY





TOP SECRET!

**So what is
this TOP
SECRET
secret?**

There is a secret about anger, something that will save you from exploding when something goes wrong. Once you know this secret, your anger won't get so big, so scary, or so likely to get you into trouble anymore. (By the way, lots of adults don't know this secret either, which is why they get mad so often, too.)

If you're like most kids, learning this little secret might make you say, "THIS BOOK IS STUPID!"

Hang in there, though. Take a deep breath. Grab a marker. You are about to learn something really, really interesting, something that might even **CHANGE** your life.

???



The Last Cookie

TOP SECRET TRUTH!!!

The only
thing that
makes you
angry is
you.

1. Imagine someone (NOT you) taking the last chocolate chip cookie from the plate. You are standing right there ready to pick it up, and someone snatches it! That would make you mad, wouldn't it?
2. You might be thinking and SAYING:
“Hey, I wanted that!”
“Those are my favorite!”
“No fair! I was getting that cookie!”

Can you see the anger on your face?

3. But, what if **these** thoughts were in your head instead?
“I'm not really hungry anyway.”
“Mom said she'd buy more cookies when she went shopping.”
“I think we have popsicles in the freezer.”

If these were your thoughts, how might you be feeling and acting?

You see, it isn't what happened that made you mad. Both ways, someone took the last cookie. Instead it was your *thoughts* about what happened that made you mad, OR your thoughts about what happened that helped you feel fine.



Let's try another --

Next week is spring break. Your teacher is worried about the class falling behind, so she includes 30 words on this week's spelling test instead of the usual 20.

What might you be thinking that would make you mad?

"She's so mean. Now I won't have time to play after school!"

"Why does she always have to spoil everything?"

"It's not FAIR! We always have 20!"

**CHANGE YOUR
THOUGHTS --**

IT'S A CHOICE --

Okay, here's the exact same situation, only let's change the thoughts -- thoughts that would help you deal with the 10 extra words

"Oh well, there won't be any words at all next week."

"No matter what I say or do, I still have 30 words this week, and she's the boss. She isn't going to change her mind, so I'll just do them."

"Well, 30 words is better than 40 words. She could have doubled it for the week we are out for break."

**I MAY NOT HAVE
CONTROL OF
WHAT HAPPENS,
BUT I HAVE
CONTROL OF
ME!!! :)**



It isn't what happens that makes you mad. It's what you think about what happens that decides how you feel.

Have you ever watched a professional baseball game on television? Sometimes if the pitcher throws a wild pitch to the batter --and it hits the batter --the bench and the outfield get in a big fight! The batter's team think the pitcher did it on purpose, and they are mad. The fielders and the pitcher's team know it was an accident, and they get mad at the other team. We see adults choosing bad thoughts and acting badly.

Think about it? The pitcher is trying to strike out the batter. If he hits the batter with the ball, the batter automatically gets on first base. Is that what the pitcher wants? No one is perfect. Even National League pitchers sometimes throw wild pitches.

There are two ways to think about wild pitches:

"You did that on purpose!!!"

OR

"It was an accident..."



Now, you already know that *you can't control what happens to you*. People say things and do things that you don't like. It rains on the day of your pool party, or you lose a board game, or someone makes fun of you at school. You can't control any of those things.

But...*you can control what you think*, and what you think decides how you feel. So, if you change your thoughts, you can change your feelings. And if you're tired of being a kid who BLOWS UP whenever something doesn't go your way, all you have to do is learn how to move away from the angry thoughts that are causing those explosions. It's something everyone needs to learn to do --including YOU!



A

You might be wondering, **“Why bother? Maybe I want to show people I’m angry!”** Well... answer these questions:

- 1. Has anger ever helped you get good grades in school?*
- 2. Has anyone ever said, “I want to be your friend because you are so good at losing your temper?”*
- 3. Has your mom or dad ever been nicer to you because you got mad about something?*
- 4. Have you ever fallen asleep with a smile on your face, thinking about all the times you got mad that day?*

Does
Anger
Win
Friends
or Lose
Friends?

...If your answer is no to most of these questions, then anger isn’t helping you out in any way. NOW... answer these questions:

- 1. Have you ever gotten in trouble for something you said or did when you were angry?*
- 2. Have you ever felt bad after you calmed down, for something you said or did when you were mad?*
- 3. Have you ever lost out on doing something or having something because you got in trouble for showing your anger?*

Any yes’s? Anger is NOT helping you, it’s also making things **worse**.



It takes practice for a lion tamer to control a lion. The lion roars and roars and shows his anger. But... the lion tamer doesn't give up. He is determined, and succeeds.

Anger doesn't win you friend.

Anger doesn't make things easier for you at home.

In fact, it's probably causing you LOTS of trouble.

That's why it's a good idea to learn to *tame your anger*.

You might be thinking that if other people would just stop bugging you, you would be fine. And you might be right about that, but the thing is --you can't control what other people do.

That's the bad news. ***YOU CAN'T CONTROL WHAT OTHER PEOPLE DO.***

But the good news is that you can be happy anyway. You can learn to control your own temper. You can learn to tame it, just like the lion tamer, even if other people are bugging you or making things tough.

Kids who are in control of their anger are generally happier kids.



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FIRE!

FIRE!

People often say that anger is like fire. It's **HOT**. It can **RAGE** out of control. It **BURNS** anyone who gets too close. It's a good comparison, so let's talk about fire for a minute.

Even if you have never actually built a fire, you probably know how it's done. You need some wood, arranged so the air can flow through. You need some "tinder," like twigs or crumpled pieces of paper. The tinder is the stuff that will quickly catch fire. And then you need something to get the fire started, maybe a match.

If you want the flames to blaze higher and last a long, long time, what would you need to do?

Adding more wood to the fire will keep it going. Creating a breeze by fanning or blowing on the fire will help, too. Tending the fire by adding to it is called **FEEDING** a fire.

But what if you want the fire to go out? What would you need to do?



There are many ways you can douse a fire.

There are many ways you can douse your temper, too.

If you leave the fire alone by not blowing on it or adding any more wood, the fire will eventually run out of fuel. And with nothing left to burn, the fire will go out. If you want to put the fire out faster, you need to pour water on it, sometimes lots of water. This is called *dousing* a fire. Water extinguishes the flames and soaks the wood, making it hard to burn.

Anger really is a lot like fire, isn't it? Sometimes all it takes is one little thing to get it going. Anger can flare up and burn out quickly, or it can turn into a roaring blaze that wrecks everything in its path.

Whether anger flares up or fizzles out is totally up to you. When things happen that make you mad, you have a choice. You can FEED your anger, or you can DOUSE it.

You already know how to feed anger. All you have to do is think lots of angry thoughts and your anger will get bigger and bigger. Angry actions, like hitting someone or tearing something up, or shouting at someone, make anger get bigger, too.

SO... how do you douse anger? How in the world can you do that? Actually, there are lots of ways.



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Dousing #1 Take a BREAK

Being angry is like standing in front of a giant vacuum cleaner.

What happens if you touch the hose of the vacuum cleaner to your hand and turn it on? What do you feel?

It's powerful, isn't it?

If you leave the vacuum cleaner on and move your hand away from the hose. What do you feel? Nothing right?

But... if you move your hand back in front of the hose. Yikes! It sucks your hand in again! That's strong, isn't it?

What if there was a giant vacuum cleaner with a giant

hose turned on, right in front of you? It would suck you right in, wouldn't it. What if you didn't want to be sucked into the giant vacuum cleaner? What would you need to do?

- 1.Reach up and turn the vacuum cleaner off.
- 2.Move out of the way before it got near to you.

Anger is like that giant vacuum cleaner. It will grab you and hold on tight. So...what can you do?



Take a Break



Ways to Take a Break

Go to your room

Shoot some baskets

Read a book

Play with your dog

MOVE OUT OF THE WAY!

The way to get out of anger's way is to *take a break*.

Taking a break means walking away from the scene of your anger. It means going off by yourself so you can calm down and think more clearly. It is a very, very helpful thing to do, but it's also a hard thing to do.

WHY IS THAT?

AT SCHOOL?

Get a drink

Draw a picture

Sharpen your pencil

Think about the giant vacuum cleaner again. The longer you stand in front of it, the more it's going to pull you in and the harder it will be to break away. You have to be really determined and strong to decide, "I'm outta here!" and step out of the giant vacuum cleaner's path. But once you do, things become a whole lot easier. As soon as you step away, you break the vacuum cleaner's hold on you.

CAN YOU THINK OF OTHERS?

Anger is like that, too. You have to make a decision to step aside. *That doesn't mean you're giving in.* It just means you are taking a break.



GET YOUR PARENTS TO PLAY THE **10** KNOT GAME TO HELP YOU PRACTICE

It helps to practice “Take a Break.” Ask for a long piece of yarn and put it in your room at home. Each time you step away from the giant vacuum cleaner of your anger at home, go to your room, and do something fun or relaxing while you calm down. Then tie one knot in the string.

When you have ten knots, show your mom and dad so they can celebrate with you. Decide ahead of time what your ten-knot celebration might be: a board game, a snack, video game time, etc.

After you have ten knots, try for twenty. Then thirty.

When you start to feel angry, think about the giant vacuum cleaner pulling you in. Don’t just stand there! Decide to get out of its way. Go take a break.

Taking a break helps you feel better so you can think more clearly. When you’re thinking clearly, you’re less likely to get in trouble and more likely to come up with a solution to what’s bothering you. TRY IT! You’ll see.





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Dousing #2 Think Cool Thoughts not...

“No fair!”

“I hate that!”

“She always gets her way!”

“I never get what I want!”

Have you ever noticed that you talk to yourself? Everyone does. It’s like there’s a tiny voice inside each of us commenting on what we see, what just happened, what’s coming up next. This tiny voice is really our thoughts, not something separate from us, but an important part of who we are.

Some people are aware of this tiny voice. If you ask them what they’re thinking, they can tell you. Other people aren’t so aware of it. If you ask them what they’re thinking they’ll shrug or they’ll say they weren’t thinking anything. But everyone’s brain is busy all the time churning out thoughts, whether we realize it or not.

When we’re angry, the first thoughts our brains churn out are usually **HOT** ones. For most people, this happens automatically. They get mad, and then they start thinking about and talking to themselves about being mad. As you might imagine, these hot thoughts actually keep anger going. They are tinder (*remember that word*) that feeds the fire of anger.



Hot Thoughts make your anger worse!

“Taking a break” gives you a chance to calm down.

It’s like walking away from a small fire. As long as you don’t keep thinking **hot** thoughts during your break, your anger will fizzle and go out. Then you will be able to deal with the problem more effectively.

Imagine **YOU** are the voice inside your head (actually, you really are that voice!), what would be the first **HOT** thought that would pop into your mind in these situations?

You are playing your favorite video game and losing **BIG** time! *What is the first **hot** thought that pops in your head?*

Your mother gave you broccoli for dinner, and you’ve told her you hate broccoli! She put the broccoli on your plate anyway. *What is the first **hot** thought though pops in your head?*

You are working on math problems at school. You get to one that you have no idea how to solve. *What is the first **hot** thought that pops in your head?*

Your friend, who promised to play with you at recess today, runs off with someone else instead. *What is the first hot thought that pops in your head?*



COOL thoughts only work when you think them yourself. When someone says a cool thought to you, it only makes things worse.

Cool thoughts are things you can say inside your own head to feel better. **Cool** thoughts don't tell you what to do, but they do calm you down. The point of **cool** thoughts is to sprinkle water on the **hot** thoughts, lowering the heat.

You can't simply **IGNORE** your **HOT** thoughts. That doesn't work. But **COOL** thoughts do work well. Using **COOL** thoughts is different from ignoring because thinking **cool** thoughts is active. **Cool** thoughts put out the fire of hot thoughts. Always.

Imagine YOU are the voice inside your head, what would be a COOL thought you could pop into your mind to put out the HOT thoughts in these situations?

1. You just struck out at bat.
2. Your mom yells at you for teasing your brother, but he started it.
3. You can't find your homework, and the bus will be here any minute.
4. You are really thirsty and you want to stop for a soda, but your dad says he's not stopping.



Using **COOL** thoughts show that you can deal with disappointments and upsets.

Bad situations end a whole lot quicker when you aren't busy making them worse with **anger**.

Pretend your class is going to the aquarium. Everyone has a partner, and you got paired up with a kid you don't really like. **Hot** thoughts might come bursting into your head:

“No fair!” “That’s stupid!” “I hate this!”

Are your **hot** thoughts likely to magically change who your partner is? NO. Are your **hot** thoughts likely to help you enjoy the field trip? NO.

But... **cool** thoughts will help. So, you remember what you learned about **cool** thoughts, and you think:

“He’s not who I wanted to have as a partner, but I’ll survive.”

You might need to say it a few times. You might need to tell yourself to calm down and take some deep breaths. You might need to take a short break, maybe by thinking about all the amazing fish you're going to see. You can't help the **hot** thoughts, but you CAN decide to replace them with **cool** thoughts, so you will start to feel better.



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Dousing #3 Release Anger Safely

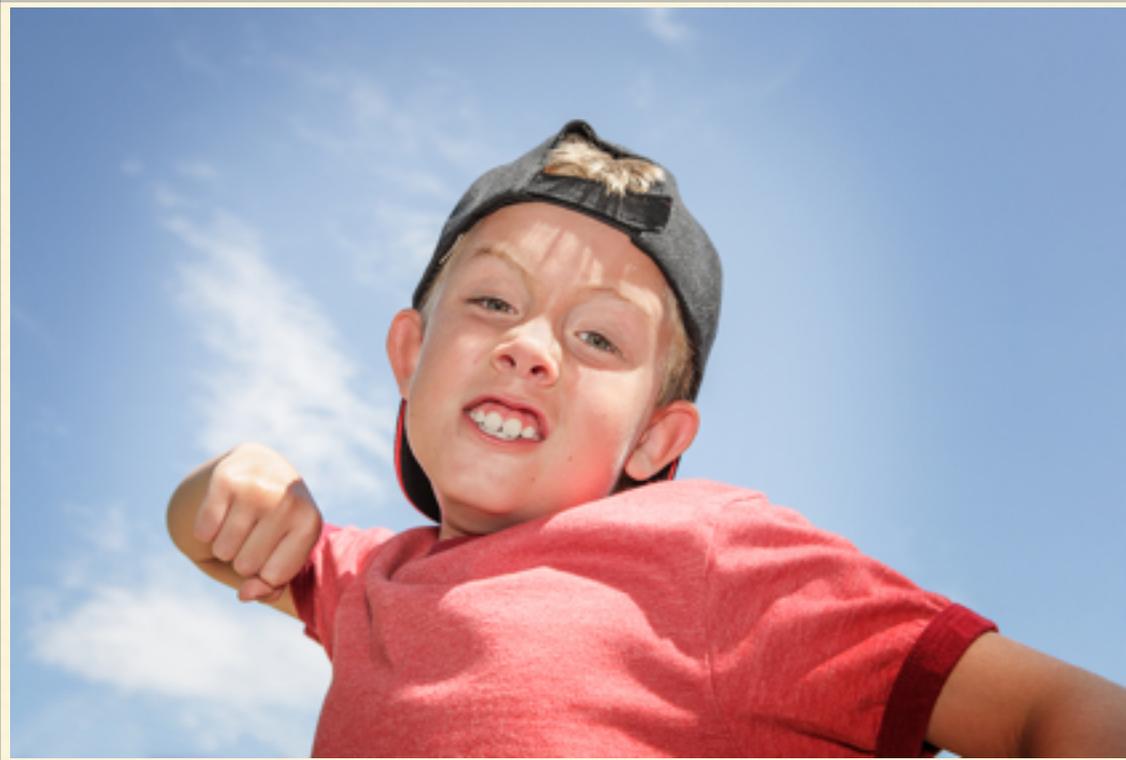
Cooling thoughts help, but sometimes they aren't enough. We need a way to release our anger.

Our brains and bodies work together to keep us safe. When a wild pitch results in a baseball flying toward us, our brains quickly tell our bodies to get ready for action. We can duck down or spring out of the way or do whatever we might need to do to protect ourselves.

Our brains see ANGER the same way they see a flying wild pitch, baseball. DANGER! When we get angry, an alarm goes off inside our bodies.

Our hearts start beating faster and our muscles get ready for action, in case we need to defend ourselves. Angry thoughts fuel our body's reaction, just like wood fuels a fire. The more angry thoughts we have, the hotter and tighter and angrier we feel.

When we are angry we breathe differently, in a more shallow way. Our muscles tighten up, and a charge of energy goes through them, making them feel like they could explode. We feel like we have to DO something, to kick or smash or rip something to pieces, to get the angry energy out.



What Anger Looks Like...

hitting

screaming

crying

saying mean
things

kicking

pushing

Some kids try to release their anger by shouting out angry words, hitting, shoving, tearing something up, or saying hurtful things they really don't mean.

Kids who try to release their anger in these ways find that their anger is still there and has gotten even worse. That's because actions of anger, don't really do anything except get you in trouble.

Some people think that doing things like punching a pillow are a safe way to show anger, but they don't work very well. That's because they are still angry actions, so while you are punching the pillow, your brain is still ROARING and your bodying is still churning up all that angry energy.

There are two different ways to get this kind of anger released that works. One involves moving your body fast, to burn up all that angry energy. The other involves slowing your body down, to snuff the anger out.



Active Method

You already know that **anger** is like fuel in your body. To get rid of it, you have to burn it off. One of the ways to burn off **angry** energy is physical activity, the faster the better. Hop on your bike and race around the block. Do jumping jacks. Go running. Crank up some music and dance.

This works best if you think about something totally unrelated to whatever you were angry about. So... count in your head, or imagine yourself inside your favorite book, or sing really LOUD, or say the same word over and over again, or count from ten to one, backwards, over and over again. This gets your mind off of what you are angry about and uses up your angry energy.



Can you think of an active way to burn off **angry** energy at home, at school, when you are outside?

Can you think of other things to think about or imagine while you are burning up **angry** energy?



REVIEWING THE ACTIVE METHOD

Have a plan!

**Practice your
plan BEFORE
you need it.**

...remember the **ACTIVE METHOD** is different from taking a break. Taking a break is a quiet way, like playing a video game or reading a book --both those things aren't going to help you if your **anger** is charging through your whole body! The ACTIVE METHOD gets your heart beating fast and makes you start sweating. Burning up all that **angry** energy will leave you feeling good inside.

You need to have a plan for what anger energy burning activity you will use before you need it. Your plan needs to be appropriate for all the different places you might be. For instance, at school you can't hop on your bike and ride. Maybe you can get permission from your teacher to do jumping jacks in the hallway if you need to work off that anger!



Slowing Down Method

SLOWING DOWN methods are quiet, relaxing, and private, which means you can do them anytime, anywhere.

Breathing is an important part of each of the slowing down methods. Breathing deeply helps to **SLOW DOWN** your heart, making you feel better inside.

Everyone knows how to breathe. DUH! Slowing Down Method breathing involves: **closing your mouth, slowly pulling in a BIG breath slowly through your nose, and super slowly, letting the breath back out through your nose.** The key is to breathe in and out, **SUPER SLOW.**

******notice that the kid in the picture above is doing it WRONG! What is wrong about how he is doing Slowing Down breathing?***

Some kids like to close their eyes and imagine something as they breathe in and out. Slowing Down breathing lets out all of your hot, **angry** feelings. One of the best things to think about is imagining all the **anger** leaving your body as you think of your favorite smell. What is your favorite smell? Some kids say they like to count when breathing. Anything is fine. The important thing is to breathe...breathe...breath. **S L O W L Y**



Slowing Down Method Part TWO - Choice 1

The second part of the SLOWING DOWN method gets the rest of your body involved. There are three different choices for doing this. Choose the one you like best.

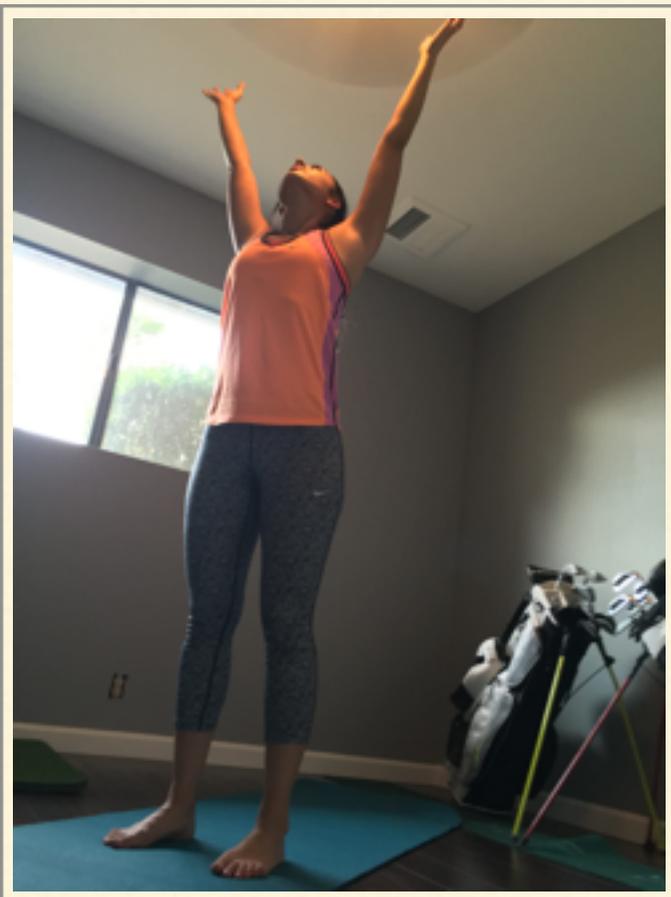
CHOICE # 1: STRETCH

Stand up and stretch your arms way up over your head. Reach as high as you can. Hold that and breathe in and out SLOWLY through your nose. Remember to hold your breath in and count to 4.

Now put your hands on your shoulders with your elbows pointed out. Breathe in as you twist slowly to one side. Breathe out as you twist to the other side. Twist back and forth, gently stretching your body. Keep breathing in and out slowly and holding your breath. 1-2-3-4.

Next, clasp your hands behind your back with your arms straight out. Bend forward while you bring your arms up, behind you, stretching gently to raise your arms toward the ceiling. Breathe in and out slowing twice.

Now... straighten up and drop your hands to your sides. Roll your head gently to one side, then the other, back and forth. Keep doing the SLOW DOWN breathing.





Choice 2: Squeeze

CHOICE 2: SQUEEZE

Lay down on your back on the floor. Grab a pillow, placing it on your stomach, and suck in a big lungful of air (through your nose, remember).

While you are breathing in, squeeze the pillow as tightly as you can. Tighten your arms around that pillow, scrunch up your face, and stiffen the muscles in your legs at the same time! Keep your whole body in that GIANT SQUEEZE, holding your breath while you count 1-2-3 in your head.

Next, loosen your grip on the pillow and relax everything, while you breath OUT, counting 1-2-3-4.

While you are relaxed, take a SLOW, deep breath and count 1-2-3 (in your head) and out 1-2-3. Then breathe in and squeeze again.

Go through this pattern five times: breath in, squeeze and hold, release and breath out, breathe in and out one time without squeezing, then start again.



CHOICE 3: TAP

Sit on the floor and cross your legs, Indian style. Cross your arms to make an X across your chest.

Tap your right shoulder with your left hand, and then your left shoulder with your right hand. As you tap, count in your head. Tap once for each number you say to yourself.

Breathe slowly, but don't count your breaths. Count your taps instead.

Keep going - right, left, right, left --tapping back and forth, over and over again, until you get to 100.

Keep your arms crossed and take two extra breaths, slow and relaxing, in and out through your nose.

In... 1 - 2 - 3 . . . out... 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 . . . pause.

In... 1 - 2 - 3 . . . out... 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 . . . pause.

Then start tapping again. Tap, tap, tap, tap, until you get to 100.

Choice 3:

Tap



Slowing Down Methods work best if you practice them first when you aren't **angry**. It is important to practice your favorite slowing down method every day for 5 or 10 minutes. Practice when you're just hanging around, not when you are mad.

You can TEST your favorite Slowing Down Method by doing something really active to get your heart beating fast. Then... practice your favorite Slowing Down Method. Practicing will help you calm your body better when you really are **ANGRY**.

Practicing might seem a little boring to you. Some kids try to skip the practice. But the Slowing Down Method won't work as well if you haven't practiced.

Maybe you can get one of your parents, or even your teacher, to practice with you. (*Adults need to calm down, too!*)

After several weeks of practice, you'll be ready to use one of the Slowing Down Methods when you're actually angry, and you'll see that it really does help you calm down.

***Which method do you think will be your favorite?
Which method is best for school?***

PRACTICE!



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Method # 4

Solve the Problem

When you are **angry**, the door that leads to the thinking part of your brain slams shut. All you can see or feel is **ANGER**. The part of you that knows how to be reasonable and solve problems is locked away behind that closed door. That's why the **ACTIVE** and **SLOWING DOWN** methods to calm your anger are so important. They reopen the door to your thinking brain, helping you to deal with the problem.

When there is a problem, you always have two GOOD choices. You can:

** work it out (or)*

** move on*

WORK IT OUT --

This means facing the problem head on. It means deciding to do something that will make the situation better.

In order to work the problem out, you need to **ASSERT** yourself, which means to speak up calmly and clearly. Yelling doesn't help. But talking does. The first step is to say what the problem is. Most kids know the problem.

what's the Problem?

Being ASSERTIVE & Naming the Problem

Being assertive means speaking up calmly and clearly. What would you **SAY** in the following situations to show how you feel, and what the problem is?

** You want to stay up to watch a special show on TV, but the show is past your bedtime.*

** You want to ride your bike, but your friend wants to play catch.*

** You want to use your sister's bicycle, but she won't let you.*

** You are working on your language arts homework, and you can't figure out what the adverb is.*

The next step is to think about what you WANT. This is where things get a little trickier, because what you want and what is actually possible might not be the same. You might say, "Can I have it?" ...and the answer be, "No."

What then?????????



Flexible Solutions

Being **FLEXIBLE** means being able to accept something a bit different from what you originally wanted. It's a way of thinking creatively rather than staying stuck. And once you learn how to do it, you'll see that it feels good. Here are some examples of things going wrong. In each example, what you want is different from what you can have. See if you can think of a flexible solution for each one.

You love playing kickball at recess, but no one remembered to bring the ball.

Flexible Solution _____

You are in the mood for chicken nuggets, but your family is going to a Chinese restaurant for dinner.

Flexible Solution _____

You have almost beaten your video game, but your time is up and your sister is waiting for her turn.

Flexible Solution _____

See how many ideas you can think of... thinking of lots of ideas is called **brainstorming**.



Compromise

When you think flexibly, brainstorm, and are willing to compromise, problems get worked out without a lot of anger.

Solving problems in an assertive, but calm way feels good, makes people happier with you, and makes you feel happier, too.

Sometimes what you want and what the other person wants are totally different. When this happens, it's time to ***compromise***.

In a compromise, everyone gets part of what they want, or something close to what they want. Everyone gives up a little of what they want, and everyone gets a little of what they want to come up with a solution. Even though you don't get exactly what you wanted, a compromise is often the best you can do, and it sure beats not solving the problem at all.

See if you can think of a compromise for these problems.

**** You are starving, but the rule at your house is no snacks right before meals.***

Compromise_____

**** You want to play video games, but your friend wants to play basketball.***

Compromise_____

**** You want to go outside, but your mom says it's time for homework.***

**** Compromise_____***

Moving On!

Just Move On

“Whatever”

“Oh, well...”

“It’s not that big
a deal”

“It’s not worth
getting angry
about”

Moving on means deciding not to keep thinking about or working on the problem, even if it hasn’t been solved. It means shrugging your shoulders and moving on to the next thing, without complaining or grumbling or holding a grudge.

For example, imagine a game of tag. You have ten minutes of recess left. It’s pretty outside, and it feels great to be running. All your friends are playing, and you’re “It.” You take off running, reach out your arm, and tag someone on the shirt sleeve, except they didn’t feel it and start arguing about whether you tagged them or not. Do you really need to stop the whole game to work this out?

Probably not. It would be more fun to keep the game going, to run after someone else and tag them instead. Sometimes the best thing to do is just accept what has happened and move on.

Moving on means totally letting the problem go --not exploding, not fuming in silence, not brainstorming or talking it out. Moving on isn’t giving up, and it isn’t giving in. It means you are smart enough to decide not to waste your time or energy about something that really doesn’t matter all that much.

WORTH IT -OR- NOT WORTH IT

It's up to you to decide when to work on solving a problem and when to just move on. In many situations, either choice is fine.

Decide which of the following problems you would work on, and which ones you would decide just to move on. Explain your choice to your neighbor.

You are in line at the water fountain, and someone cuts in front of you.

Work it out

Move on

Your friend promised to go on the swings with you at recess, but now she is playing kickball.

Work it out

Move on

Your mom just got home from work, and she snaps at you for something you didn't even do.

Work it out

Move on

Your best friend told you he can't make it to your birthday party.

Work it out

Move on

Your brother calls you a name just to make you mad.

Work it out

Move on



As you get better at working on problems or deciding to just move on, you will find that you don't get angry nearly as often as you used to.

Knowing that you'll be able to handle the problems that come your way makes you less likely to have those hot thoughts that used to cause so much trouble. Instead of thinking, "No fair!" or "He did that on purpose!" you'll begin to think the more useful cool thoughts.

Share with your mom or dad or teacher about a problem you feel you handled well --

****How did you keep yourself calm?***

****How did you solve the problem?***

****Or did you decide to just move on?***

****How did you feel afterward?***



9

Recognizing Sparks

We have been talking about and practicing the **four anger dousing methods**. That doesn't mean that you will never get angry. Everyone gets angry sometimes.

One of the reasons we all get angry is that **SPARKS** continue to happen. A spark is something that sets off a reaction (*in the campfire above, the spark starts the fire*). An anger spark can lead to hot thoughts and **ANGER!**

Here are some anger sparks that cause anger in many kids.

Teasing Homework Smacking
Being Rushed Losing a Game Waking Up

What are some of your anger sparks? What are feelings or situations that make you want to SCREAM!



People are different.

People have different anger sparks.

What are your's?

It helps to know what your own personal anger sparks are because you might be able to keep some of them from happening so often.

For example, if having to stop doing something before you are finished is a spark, try asking your parents to give you a ten minute warning.

Look at the anger sparks below and think about what could be a **plan** to stop the spark from happening so much.

THE SPARK

THE PLAN

doing homework at home

?

my brother getting my iPad

?

cleaning up my room

?

poor sportsmanship when losing

?



Some sparks cannot be prevented, because they are not in your control at all.

Getting teased or losing a team game are things you cannot control --they are not sparks.

Some sparks are going to happen no matter what. For instance, you can't stop your brother from calling you "a baby." When that happens, the best thing to do is practice **cool** thoughts and think, "*He's just trying to bug me. I can still stay calm.*"

Anytime you feel angry, use one of your anger dousing methods --you know quite a few to use! Then when you are calmer, try to figure out what sparked your **anger**.

If you notice that the same spark keeps happening over and over again, see if you can make a **plan** that will help you avoid that spark in the future, **AND** help you stay in control when it happens the next time.



10

Paybacks & Prickly Balls

Some *sparks just happen* and are no one's fault. Maybe you get sick on the day of your best friend's party. Sometimes frustrating things happen, and no one is to blame.

Some sparks are *someone else's fault*. Your teacher assigns a test on the same day your grandparents are coming to visit. Or, your mom doesn't get around to doing the laundry, and the shirt you want to wear is still dirty.

When someone causes a spark to happen, stop and ask yourself if they did it on purpose. ***Were they trying to upset you?*** Did your mom NOT do the laundry just because she didn't want you to have the shirt you wanted? Did your teacher assign the test just to get in the way of your time with your grandparents? Almost always, the answer to that question is no.

When someone sets off one of your sparks, but they never intended to hurt you, it is the time to think a **COOL** thought, solve the problem, or move one.



I'M OUT OF HERE!

There's no need
to pick up or
catch a prickly
ball.

Sometimes a person may set off one of your sparks on purpose. Someone does something just to be mean, to bug you, to get you in trouble, or to make you angry.

For example, you hate being teased and there's this one kid who loves to tease you. You might feel like getting revenge. It's tempting to think about getting back at people who hurt us. This is sometimes called a **payback**. While it might seem like paybacks even things out, they really just keep the anger going and get you in trouble.

It's like a giant game of catch. Someone is mean to you, so you are mean back, so they are mean to you. Back and forth and back and forth --only the game is being played with a prickly ball. And each throw and each catch hurt!

But think about this: When someone throws a ball to you, you have a choice to catch the ball and throw it back, or you can simply decide not to play the game.

If you decide not to play the game, you can just let the ball drop. Let the prickly ball lie there. It doesn't have to be your problem.

Think a cool thought and walk away.



Prickly balls & Paybacks take you out of the driver's seat

Imagine your best friend threw a paper wad at you in class while the teacher wasn't looking. He wasn't mad at you, but simply horsing around. You see your chance and throw one back at him --you both are grinning. But the boy sitting near you tells the teacher on you. You both have to stay after class and empty the trash cans as punishment.

By the time you get outside, you've missed more than 5 minutes of recess, but you and your friend join a group playing kickball. The kid who told on you is playing, too.

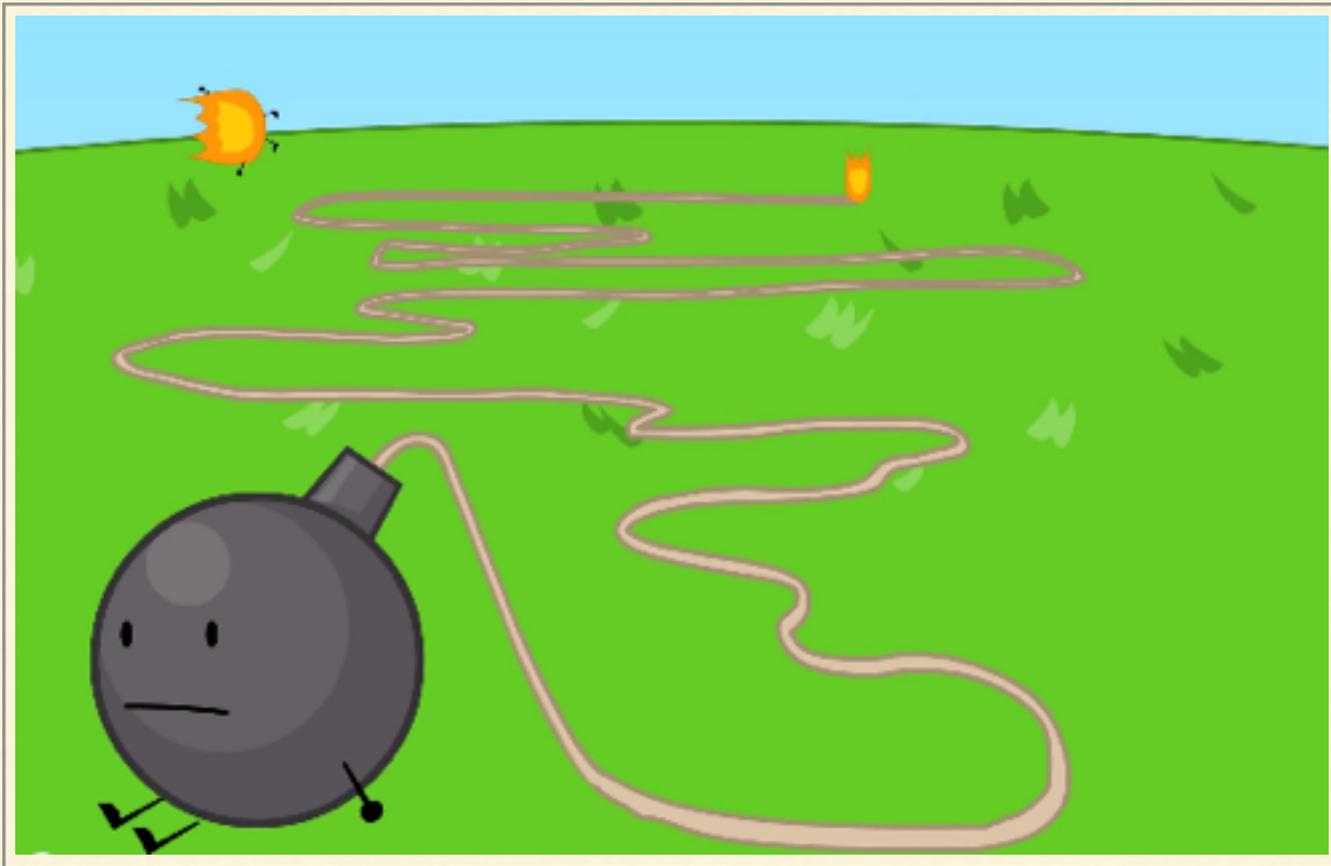
DO YOU?...

--slam him with the ball when you get a chance and pretend it was an accident?

--call him a tattletale?

--make fun of the way he plays ball?

All of those are examples of paybacks. The best choice is to have fun playing kickball. Tell yourself that the paper wad episode is over, and you shouldn't have been doing it anyway. Deciding not to go for the payback puts you in the driver's seat. You think a cool thought, stay in control, and stop your anger from causing you problems.



11

Grow a Fuse

Back in the days when you used to flare up quickly, people might have said you had a “short fuse.” That’s another way of saying you explode quickly. It’s like the dynamite you may have seen in cartoons. Sometimes there’s just a tiny piece of string attached and then KABOOM! the dynamite explodes.

But sometimes cartoon dynamite has a l-o-o-o-n-g fuse, stretching around rocks and lakes and all sorts of things. It goes on and on, and the whole length of it has to burn before anything bad happens.

When people have a long fuse, they have time to think and breathe and decide what to do. Long fuses help people take care of their anger before it becomes too big to handle. They can put out the fire before an explosion happens.

Taking a break, thinking cool thoughts, releasing anger safely, and working out problems all stretch fuses, so explosions don’t happen as quickly, or even at all.



It feels good to be in control of yourself. Being in control makes it easier to get where you want to go, and to enjoy the scenery along the way.

Getting plenty of exercise is a great way to lengthen your fuse. It releases stored-up tension and burns off angry feelings that get stored in our bodies.

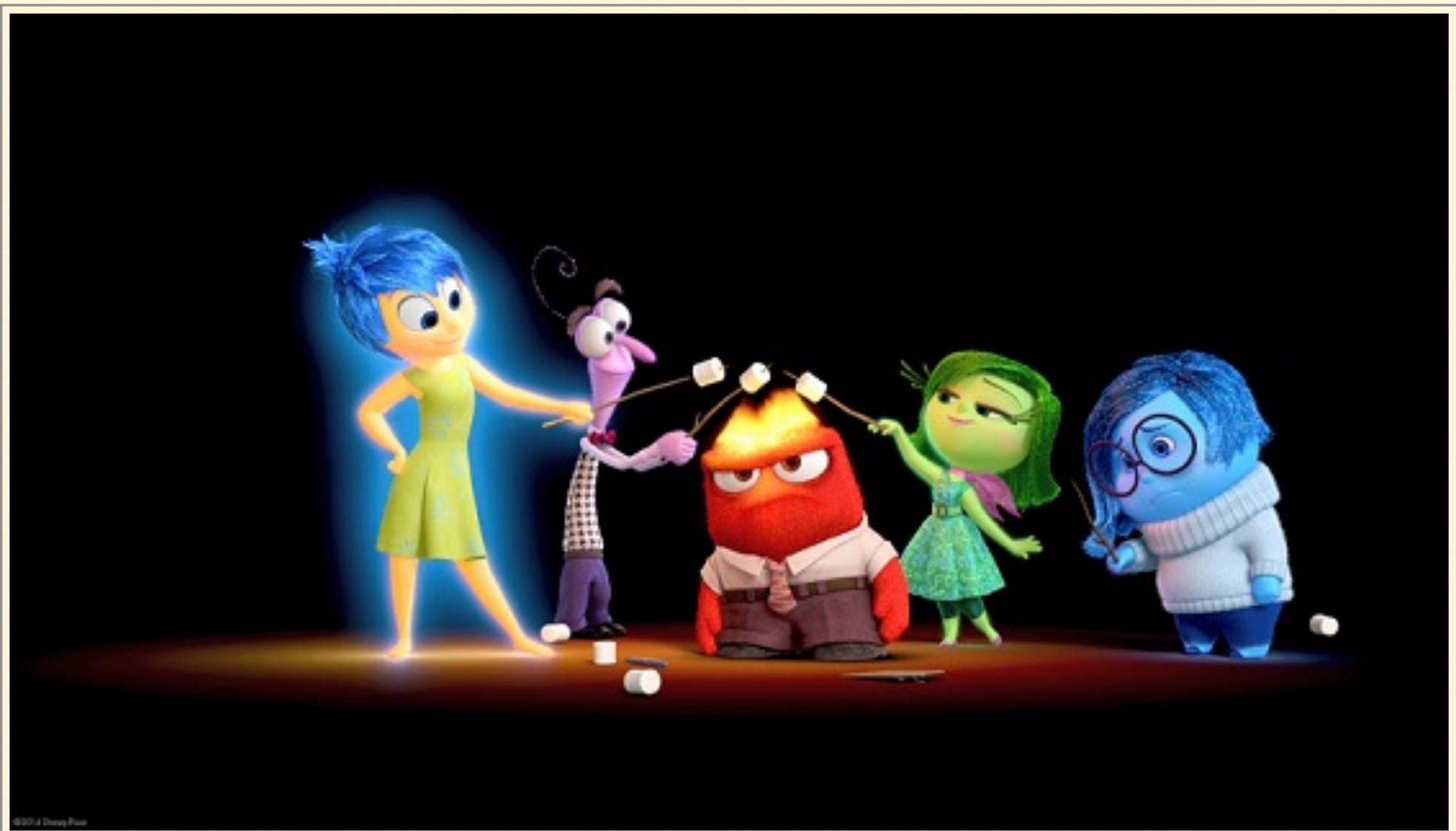
Playing or physically working hard for at least 30 minutes every day helps your body produce the kind of energy in your brain that makes you feel happy. It can actually help you handle the problems that come your way.

And besides... it's good for your body!

Eating healthy foods also stretches your fuse. Just like the right fuel in a car makes the engine run smoothly, good food helps your body run smoothly. And when you're running at your best, you're in better shape to handle the obstacles in the road.

Getting enough sleep is a fuse-builder too. Kids need between 9 and 11 hours of sleep every night. It is easier to stay calm and handle disappointments when you are well rested.

Having free time and doing things you enjoy keeps fuses long, too, because being relaxed and enjoying life helps you handle bumps in the road --the frustrating, disappointing, unfair things that happen to all of us.



CONGRATULATIONS!

**Your ANGER has
lost its control over
YOU!**

**...maybe it can
roast marshmallows**