

Unit 3, Lesson 5

UNDERSTANDING OUR ANGER BUTTONS



IN THIS LESSON

In this lesson, students explore a common and strong emotion for young adolescents—anger. They explore some of the external events that provoke anger and the different ways that people respond to anger.

This lesson is adapted from the Lions Quest *Working Toward Peace* curriculum, a research-based middle-school curriculum that complements *Skills for Adolescence* and provides in-depth skills and information about managing anger, resolving conflicts, and preventing violence. This curriculum is highly recommended for schools that want to offer a comprehensive approach in helping students manage their emotions.

Lesson Purpose

To become more aware of the external events that provoke anger and the physical changes that take place during anger.

Performance Objectives

The student will:

1. Identify external actions that serve as “anger buttons” for himself/herself.
2. Identify physical signals of anger.

Materials and Preparation

- *Changes and Challenges*
 - *Thinking About Anger* worksheet (homework from Lesson 4)
 - *What Makes Me Angry?* worksheet
 - *Anger Situations* worksheet
 - *You Can Do It! Setting a Personal Goal* worksheet (from Unit 1, Lesson 10)

Use the reproducible master provided with this lesson to prepare an overhead titled *What Makes Me Angry?*

Today's Quotation

“If people make me angry, they could control me. Why should I give someone else such power over my life?”

Benjamin Carson



DISCOVERING

05 MINUTES

Write the lesson purpose and today's quotation on the board.

Lesson Purpose: To become aware of events that provoke anger and the physical changes that take place during anger.

Quotation: *If people make me angry, they could control me. Why should I give someone else such power over my life?*
—Benjamin Carson, civil rights leader

Begin the lesson by asking students what they think today's quotation means. How do other people "make" us angry? How do we sometimes give away our control over ourselves?

Note: Use this time to collect students' ideas, thoughts, and reactions related to anger. Write some or all of their comments on the board so you can refer to them later.

Summarize by saying that we often allow external events to make us angry. When we are angry, we can lose control and say and do things that could harm ourselves and others. For this reason, it is important for us to understand anger and learn to handle it in positive ways.



Throughout this course, encourage students to share quotations, proverbs, song lyrics, or sayings from their cultural or language backgrounds that are similar to the quotations provided in the lessons. Consider creating a bulletin board of students' quotations relating to anger and conflict management.



CONNECTING

15 MINUTES

1. Review the thought-emotion-action connection from the pits-to-peaks approach.

Ask students to summarize the relationship between thoughts, actions, and emotions/feelings. Remind them of the guideline *Feel the Feelings and Think the Action*. Write it on the board and keep it there for the remainder of this unit.

2. Explore things that people feel angry about.

Ask students if feeling angry is a normal part of our lives. Let them know that anger is a natural response when our needs are not met, our opinions differ, we are embarrassed, and so on. Remind students that anger is an emotion, and emotions are normal and natural. However, we can choose how we act



Remind students that our backgrounds influence whether a specific gesture or comment becomes an "anger button" for us. An expression of affection in one culture may be considered an insult in another. Model acceptance of these differences, and remind students to avoid comments and gestures that are considered negative or insulting by any group.



WORDS TO LEARN

adrenaline: a hormone produced under stressful conditions, increasing the rate of blood circulation and breathing and preparing muscles for exertion

anger: a natural and intense feeling of frustration accompanied by a physical reaction

external: coming from an outside source



CONNECTING

when we feel angry. Our choices increase when we learn to recognize what makes us angry and how anger affects us physically.

Show the *What Makes Me Angry?* overhead. Ask, “What are some things other people say or do that make you angry?” Write their responses under the heading on the overhead. Explain that these events can be called “external anger buttons.” Remind students that *external* means “coming from an outside source.”

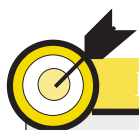
Note: During these discussions, as always, remind students not to use names or share any information that might embarrass someone, including their families.

3. Students identify physical reactions to anger.

Explain that as our anger builds, we begin to experience physical reactions. Ask volunteers to name some of the physical symptoms they listed on their *Thinking About Anger* worksheets. Add these to the overhead. Explain that the tension of the situation causes **adrenaline** to flow through our bodies. Adrenaline can cause faster breathing, a faster heartbeat, sweaty palms, tense muscles, an upset stomach, a flushed face, and a rise in blood pressure. When we pay attention to our bodies, they can signal us that we are getting angry.



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PRACTICING

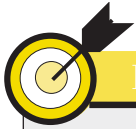
20 MINUTES

1. Groups complete *What Makes Me Angry?* worksheets.

Organize groups of three or four. Assign each group a situation from the *Anger Situations* worksheet. Some groups may have the same situation.

Ask each group to complete the *What Makes Me Angry?* worksheet for that situation by listing the external anger buttons that might be involved, along with possible physical symptoms of anger.

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PRACTICING

2. Students report back to the class.

Ask the groups to explain the situations and to share their responses. Have groups who were assigned the same situation compare their responses. Invite the rest of the class to suggest other possible reactions to that situation.

3. Summarize the lesson.

Guide students to understand that people can respond in different ways to the same anger buttons because we have a choice in how we respond. People can choose and control their responses to anger buttons.

Remind the class that feeling angry is a normal part of being human and results when people experience fear, loss, disrespect, ridicule, stress, or physical discomfort. Knowing what makes us angry and the physical signals of anger helps us recognize when we are getting angry so we can handle our anger constructively. In the next lessons, students will study the different ways people respond in situations that provoke anger and ways we can “keep our cool.”

Closure Questions

- Which anger buttons seem to be mentioned most often?
- What are reasons why people have different anger buttons?
- Do you think your response to anger has changed since you were younger? In what way?

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