

How To Pinpoint The Hidden Causes Of Anger

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You're are about to learn a very easy and powerful way to always know the hidden causes of anger, whenever this emotion gets triggered within you. Please pay close attention, because this valuable information can serve you well, both now and all throughout your life.

Once you know how to pinpoint **both** the obvious and hidden causes of any negative emotion, you will then be in position to do something about them. You can even learn how to make your negative emotions quickly and easily disappear....whenever you want....without using cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, food, relaxation, physical exercise, or any type of stress management technique.

NOTE: In this segment, I will only be teaching you how to identify the hidden causes of anger. While this information is extremely powerful and useful, I will not be teaching you all the “ins and outs” of how to make your anger quickly disappear. This subject is covered in great depth in a full training course that I offer, along with similar guidance on how to accurately pinpoint and deal with the hidden causes of five other very commons emotions—guilt, frustration, fear, worry, and sadness.

Also, while I am only going to focus only on the specific emotion of ANGER here, the general principles I will show you apply equally well to identifying the hidden causes of all other human emotions.

The main determinant of your ability to master any stressful problem in your life boils down to two key skills:

- 1) The ability to specifically pinpoint all of the major causes—including hidden, internal causes, which are not always in clear view;
- 2) The ability to know what to do about those causes, especially the hidden ones, once you correctly identify them.

If you like what you learn here about anger, you can do the very same thing with other negative emotions, such as guilt, frustration, fear, worry, and sadness.

You can also use the same basic approach to learn how to recognize, and then deal with, the hidden causes of many other types of stress in your life, such as:

- Relationship and social stress
- Stress in your job or career
- Stress in your marriage
- Stress in raising kids
- Stress related to illness in a loved one
- Stress related to illness in yourself
- Stress associated with public speaking
- Stress associated with major life tragedies or changes
- Stress associated with lack of money
- And much, much more.

Proven Concepts And Coping Strategies

The specific method for identifying (and remembering) the hidden causes of anger that I am about to share with you is one that I've used successfully in my own life for more than 30 years. I've also taught this method to thousands of other individuals, including:

- Doctors
- Lawyers
- Nurses
- Medical students
- Business executives
- College students
- College athletic coaches
- And even the FBI.

Let's start off by considering a few basic principles about human emotions in general.

Triggers and Causes

All human emotions have both triggers and causes:

- **Triggers** are events that activate causes.
- **Causes** determine which particular emotion occurs.

Causes are specific **conversations** and **action patterns** within us.

Triggers and Causes

Say a friend steals money from you one day. When you learn about this, you feel angry. The event—friend stealing money—was the **trigger** (or obvious cause) for your emotional reaction.

But obvious causes are only part of the story. By themselves, they can't make anger or any other emotion occur.

Invisible (Hidden) Internal Causes

Imagine you're sitting in front of a desktop or laptop computer. You've just pressed the letter "A" key on your keyboard, and the letter "A" immediately appears on your monitor screen.

What caused this to occur? Pressing the "A" key, right?

Not exactly.

Pressing the "A" key was just the **triggering event**. A software **program** also had to be running in the background.

This invisible software (word-processing program and operating system) is the internal cause of whatever letters or other images appear on your monitor screen.

Even though these software programs aren't visible to you, they have to be there. Otherwise, the letter "A" would never have appeared on your monitor screen.

Human Emotions Have Invisible Causes Too

When events **trigger** emotions within us, there's always a specific emotion-causing "program" running in the background (i.e. in our bodies). These programs consist of specific conversations and action patterns that get triggered within us in response to different triggering events.

Unfortunately, we have not been taught to understand our emotions in this way.

Even worse, we've been repeatedly taught to believe that **events** themselves directly cause our emotions to occur. This, in my opinion, is another huge way in which both our public and private education systems are failing us today.

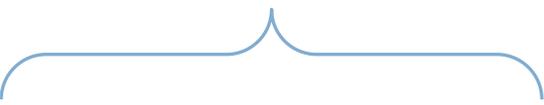
Specific Emotions Always Have Specific Causes

The interesting thing about hidden causes of emotions is they are **exactly the same** for all human beings.

For example, the specific conversations and action patterns that cause **anger** to occur for **you** make up the same invisible “program” that causes anger to occur for human beings all over the globe.

This means that if someone in China becomes angry, or another person in Africa becomes angry, both are thinking and perceiving (at a very basic level) in exactly the same ways.

And if someone in America gets angry, regardless of the triggering event, the same set of internal conversations and action patterns must have been triggered within them as well.



Once you learn to recognize the hidden conversations and action patterns that produce anger in one human being, you will also understand what causes anger to occur in all human beings.

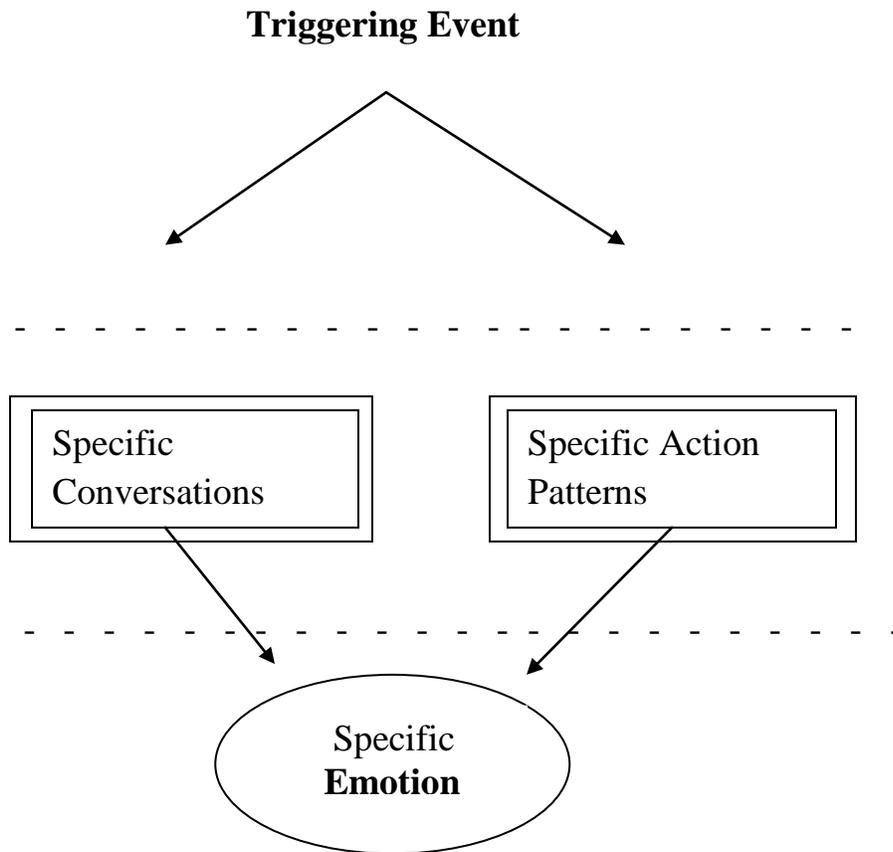


More importantly, every time you become angry, you’ll immediately know the specific ways you must be **thinking, perceiving, and acting** in order for you to be experiencing this particular emotion (and not any other one).



A New Model for Understanding Your Emotions

Here's a simple model for understanding how human emotions occur:



Both the **triggering event** and the **emotion** you feel are obvious components of your experience. However, if these are the only puzzle pieces you notice, you can't truly understand what's causing you to feel the way you do. But when you learn to recognize the **additional hidden causes** of your emotions, then you get a more accurate and more complete picture what is really going on.

KEY PRINCIPLE: We react emotionally to particular events not solely because of the event itself, but because specific conversations and action patterns become triggered within us.

Therefore, if you are feeling any particular emotion, a specific set of conversations and action patterns **must have been triggered within you**. The only question is: Do you know which ones?

The Index Card Technique

I am now going to introduce you to a very powerful tool for recognizing (and always remembering) the hidden causes of your emotions.

I call this tool The Index Card Technique.

Here's how it works:

1. Identify the hidden conversations and action patterns responsible for any particular emotion.
2. Write these causes down on an index card.
3. Carry the card with you, or keep it handy.
4. Whenever you experience that emotion, take out your card and review its contents.

If you are feeling that particular emotion, always assume the conversations and action patterns written on your card **must** have been triggered within you, whether you are aware of them or not.

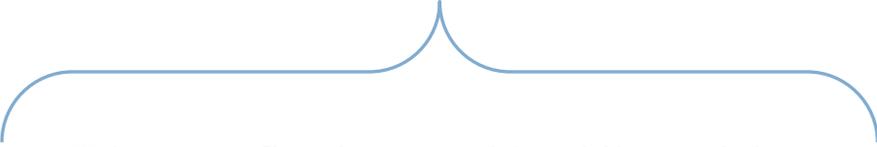
KEY POINT:

Obviously, it might not always be practical to whip out your index card the moment you feel a strong emotion, such as anger. But try reviewing things later on, when you are away from the situation.

See if you can confirm you were thinking and acting in exactly the ways written on your card.

Conceptual “Training Wheels”

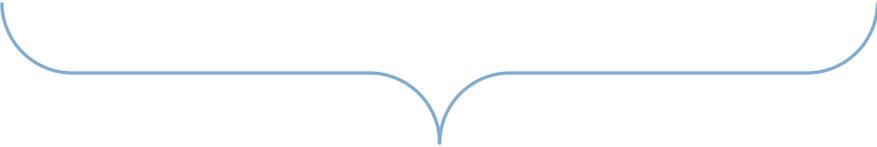
Think of your index card for Anger, that we will build together in a few moments, like training wheels on a bicycle.



When you first learn to ride a bike, training wheels can be helpful until the correct balancing behaviors become ingrained within you.

Once this occurs, you can take off the training wheels and put them away.

The index card for Anger that you will gain from this book works exactly the same way.



Many people have successfully used this Anger index card to train themselves to better understand the hidden causes of this very common emotion.

And just like with training wheels on a bike, once you practice with your Anger card for a while, you won't need to refer to it anymore, as the knowledge it contains will eventually become ingrained within you.

Index Cards Won't Eliminate Your Emotions

It's very important to understand, right from the start, that the Index Card Technique is only designed to help you **recognize** the hidden causes of your emotions.

It is not a technique for **getting rid of** your anger or any other negative emotion.

You can, however, use this technique, along with other coping strategies you can learn about in more advanced trainings, to make your negative emotions **lessen** or even completely **disappear**, once they've become triggered within you.

KEY PRINCIPLE:

Improving your ability to recognize the hidden causes of any type of "stress" is just the **first step** in learning how to eliminate it.

Once you have all the main causes (or puzzle pieces) in front of you—both the obvious and the hidden ones— you will then be able to apply other coping strategies to deal with these causes effectively.

KEY POINT: If you practice with the Anger index card that you will gain from this book, you will quickly improve your ability to recognize the hidden causes of your anger. Once you know how to do this, you will probably be able to modify some of your anger, entirely on your own—just by having this previously hidden information now in plain sight.

Building Your Index Card For Anger (Part 1)

Let's now begin to build your index card for Anger.

Anger-Producing Conversations

Here are **four conversations** that must be present in the background of your thinking/perceiving in order for the emotion of anger to occur:

1. Someone did something they shouldn't have done.
2. Someone was hurt, harmed, humiliated, embarrassed, offended, disappointed, or otherwise inconvenienced by what was done.
3. Some person or persons (other than myself) were unilaterally responsible (i.e. to blame) for #1 and #2.
4. The offending person or persons should acknowledge what they did wrong, offer to make amends, and/or be punished.

NOTE: For conversation #1, you could also be angry at yourself, at a pet, at any other living creature, or even at an inanimate object, such as your car, your computer, or the hammer that somehow just struck your finger. If this is the case, simply adjust the above conversations accordingly.

Let's now look at each of these conversations in more detail.

Conversation 1: Someone Did Something They Shouldn't Have Done

Whenever we feel angry, we've concluded that someone did something **bad** or **wrong**—i.e., something they shouldn't have done.

Example:

Consider our earlier example: A friend steals money from you. When you find out about this, you immediately become angry.

Why did you get angry?

Answer:

Puzzle piece #1—Your friend stole money from you (**obvious cause** or **triggering event**).

Puzzle piece #2—You automatically judged this behavior to be bad or wrong (**hidden cause**).

Conversation 2: Someone Was Hurt, Harmed, etc., by What Was Done

Whenever we feel angry, we also believe that someone (ourselves or others) was hurt, harmed, humiliated, embarrassed, offended, disappointed, or otherwise inconvenienced by what was done.

In other words, we must perceive (or imagine) that some major **negative impact** directly resulted from the **bad** or **wrong** behavior.

If we believe little or no harm or negative impact occurred, we don't usually get angry, even if someone did something they shouldn't have done.

Example:

You're in a grocery store one day, and you witness a mother shopping with her young child. The child makes a fuss, and the mother angrily reacts by slapping the child very hard.

You immediately feel angry. Why?

Answer:

Puzzle piece #1—The mother hit her child very hard for some trivial misbehavior (**obvious cause** or **triggering event**)

Puzzle piece #2—You automatically judged the mother's behavior to be bad or wrong (**first hidden cause**).

Puzzle piece #3—you also automatically concluded that the child suffered hurt or harm—hurt in the immediate sense of physical pain, and possible harm in the longer sense due to potential psychological damage, especially if this maternal behavior continues, as it might (**second hidden cause**).

Let's now look at this same example from the mother's perspective, and see if we can understand (not necessarily forgive or condone) why she got so angry with her child.

Why did the mother become angry in this example?

Answer (Mother's Anger):

Puzzle piece #1—The child became very fussy (**obvious cause** or **triggering event**).

Puzzle piece #2—The mother judged her child's behavior to be very bad or wrong.

Puzzle piece #3—The mother judged that she was being negatively impacted as a direct result of the child's "misbehavior."

*Note: We can't know the exact thoughts or perceptions going on in the mind of another person. But we can be sure that if a person does become angry, some perception of immediate or future **negative impact** must have become triggered within them.*

KEY POINT:

Notice that the hidden causes of your own anger, from just witnessing such an event, are **exactly the same** hidden causes (generically) that provoked the mother to become angry at her child.

This is a good illustration of the principle that the hidden causes of emotions are the same for all human beings.

Why People Have Different Emotional Reactions to the Same Event

If you understand the first two conversations that cause anger to occur for human beings, you should also understand why different people can have vastly different emotional reactions to the same event.

It all has to do with the **internal judgments, evaluations** and **perceptions** (i.e. conversations) that get triggered within each individual.

In the 1491 Example (to the right), the same event witnessed by two different people, living centuries apart, produced two completely different emotional reactions.

KEY PRINCIPLE:

How we react to events in life all boils down to **what gets triggered within us**—and this key dynamic is almost always hidden from everyone’s view.

1491 Example

If you were alive in 1491 and observed a boat carrying people on it disappear over the horizon, you would likely be overcome by strong feelings of sadness, grief, and horror.

Why? Because the prevailing conversations at that time were “the world is flat” and “if you go over the edge, you die.” In 1491, those would have been the likely conversations triggered within your body by witnessing such an event.

Today, we see boats disappear over the horizon all the time, yet no strong emotions occur within us. Why? Because the prevailing conversations in our time are that “the world is round” and that disappearing over the horizon simply means you just “disappeared from view.”

Conversation 3: Someone Was Unilaterally to Blame

Simply judging something to be bad or wrong, and to have produced hurt, harm, or other negative impact, are not enough, by themselves, to produce the emotion of anger.

We also need to identify the responsible **agent**. This is required because we need to know where to direct our anger.

In other words, we need to know **who** or **what** to be angry about (i.e., to blame).

Unilateral Blame

We've been culturally conditioned to view blame from an Either/Or perspective—innocent vs. blame.

This means we tend to look for a primary causal agent, and then we assign most or all of the blame to it, while all other participants or factors are judged to be innocent.

This type of internal conversation is called **unilateral blame**, since it tends to be exclusively one-sided most of the time.

Anger and Blame

Whenever we perceive something bad or wrong that results in hurt or harm, we will automatically seek to assign blame.

Examples:

Take the two examples we've already considered:

A) In the first example (friend stealing money from you), your friend is perceived to be unilaterally to blame for his or her actions.

After all, you didn't have anything to do with this person deciding to steal money from you.

B) In the second example, the mother was clearly to blame for hitting her child.

Even though you clearly observed that the child's behavior also played a role, you still tended to lay the majority of blame upon just the mother.

Three Primary Anger Conversations

These first three conversations which we have just discussed are the **primary conversations** that cause anger to occur in human beings:

Anger-Producing Conversations

1. Someone did something they shouldn't have done.
2. Someone was hurt, harmed, etc., by what was done.
3. Some person or persons (other than myself) were unilaterally responsible (i.e. to blame) for #1 and #2.

If any event triggers all three of these internal conversations within us, the emotion of anger will follow.

On the other hand, if only one or two of these conversations get triggered (but not all three), it is unlikely that anger will occur.

Conversation 4: The Offenders Should Acknowledge What They Did Wrong, Offer to Make Amends, and/or Be Punished

This fourth conversation is not a primary anger-producing conversation.

It is a “bonus” conversation that is prevalent in our society and that intensifies anger in certain situations.

QUESTION: Have you ever noticed what happens when someone does something bad or wrong that caused hurt or harm to another, and the person was clearly to blame for their actions, and then, when confronted, that person refuses to admit it?

Your anger gets worse, doesn't it?

This happens because we live in a society where our **expectation** is that people should acknowledge what they do wrong, especially when their wrongdoings negatively impact others. We also expect them to make amends and/or be punished for their behavior.

When these social expectations are not fulfilled, our anger becomes intensified.

Why Anger Intensifies

If we expect a person to admit their wrongdoings and they refuse, isn't this just another instance of them doing something bad or wrong? And isn't that person totally to blame for their refusal? And might we be disappointed, offended, or otherwise negatively impacted?

Thus, the 4th conversation is just a repeat of the first three primary anger-producing conversations. Therefore, it follows logically that our anger would intensify.

KEY POINT:

While the conversations "program" that produces anger in human beings is exactly the same for all of us, there is great variability in the events that **trigger** these internal conversations.

There is also variability in how emotions such as anger are felt and expressed by different people.

For example, people have different standards for judging behaviors or events as being bad or wrong.

Also, some people are highly in touch with their emotions, while others may suppress feelings of anger, or not feel much at all, even when they have been triggered to become angry inside, as can be measured physiologically.

The Front Side of Your Anger Card

You now know the 4 conversations that cause anger to occur in all human beings. This means you are now ready to create the front side of your Anger Index Card.

Building Your Anger Index Card

Print out this page and then cut and paste (or tape) the information below to a 3x5 index card. Alternatively, you could handwrite the information on a blank index card.

ANGER

CONVERSATIONS:

- 1) Someone did something they shouldn't have done.
- 2) Someone was hurt, harmed, humiliated, embarrassed, offended, disappointed, or otherwise inconvenienced by what was done.
- 3) Some person or persons (other than myself) were unilaterally responsible (to blame) for #1 and #2.
- 4) The offending person or persons should acknowledge what they did wrong, offer to make amends, and/or be punished.

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Congratulations! You are now halfway done creating your Anger index card.

Next, we'll fill in the back side of the card (Action Patterns).

Building Your Card For Anger (Part 2)

Anger-Producing Action Patterns

Here are the hidden action patterns that either cause anger to occur or keep it from resolving quickly:

Anger-Producing Action Patterns

- A) Failing to recognize how your own judgments, evaluations, and standards might not be valid for other people.
- B) Failing to recognize how your own actions, past and present, may have contributed to what happened.
- C) Justifying your anger, instead of looking within yourself for its internal causes.
- D) Retaliating or seeking revenge, instead of openly and honestly dealing with what happened.

Conversations and action patterns can mutually reinforce one another. So sometimes, action patterns may play a primary role in causing our emotions to occur.

In general, however, conversations are more involved in the generation of our emotions, whereas action patterns often kick in later, either to intensify the emotion or keep it from quickly resolving.

Let's now examine each of the anger-producing action patterns listed above in more detail.

Anger-Producing Action Patterns

- A) Failing to recognize how your own judgments, evaluations, and standards might not be valid for other people.

Often, we will judge other people's behaviors to be bad or wrong, based on our own **personal standards**, without being aware we are doing so.

This gives us the illusion that whatever happened “really was bad” or “really was wrong,” instead of the event being one thing and our automatic judgments being quite another.

People Behaving “Badly”

When you consciously remind yourself that what other people do—and your judgments about their actions—are two different things, the next logical question becomes “...on what basis did I arrive at my conclusion?”

Often, the honest answer is you referenced your own personal standards for how you **expect** or **believe** people should behave.

Much of this judging activity goes on automatically, beyond our conscious awareness. This means we are usually unaware that:

- We are actively judging other's behaviors to be bad or wrong.
- We are doing so based on personal standards that may not be valid for others.

Are Our Personal Standards Valid For Others?

Was what the person did that triggered your anger inherently bad or wrong?

Or was it just different from how you would do things?

Ask yourself this question a few times, and you may begin to see just how misguided your automatic judgments can be.

Holiday Stress

When two people get married, each brings a different a family history and set of holiday traditions to the union.

During the holiday season, clashes can occur because each spouse may have different expectations about how to “correctly” celebrate. Each may judge the actions of the other negatively, based upon their own past experiences, preferences, and personal standards.

But are one spouse’s preferences really **right** and the other’s **wrong**? Usually, both are equally valid.

Anger-Producing Action Patterns

- B) Failing to recognize how your own actions, past and present, may have contributed to what happened.

This action pattern is related to our automatic conversations of unilateral blame.

As we've previously seen, this type of Either/Or thinking about blame frequently results in incorrect perceptions about what really happened.

When we automatically view other people as being unilaterally to blame, we often fail to recognize how our own actions, past and present, might have contributed to what happened.

Example: Misplaced Blame

A friend starts acting nasty towards you for no apparent reason.

You judge this behavior to be **bad** and **wrong** and begin to feel angry. You also judge your friend to be **unilaterally to blame** for behaving inappropriately.

But what if you did something days earlier that offended your friend?

Perhaps you didn't realize your friend felt offended by something you did or didn't do. So while it may have initially appeared you were completely innocent in the matter, the truth may sometimes be otherwise.

Anger-Producing Action Patterns

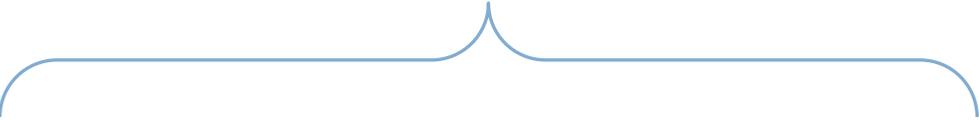
- C) Justifying your anger instead of looking within yourself for its internal causes.

As a result of doing seminars for thousands of individuals, I occasionally meet people who are highly attached to their anger.

These people are quick to justify their anger, and defend the “validity” of their personal evaluations and perceptions that fuel it.

Such individuals find it very difficult to look at, and accept, their own role in causing their anger to occur.

They also feel threatened by anything that might lessen their anger or cast doubt on the importance they have assigned to it, and usually to all of their other emotions.



If you tend to be a person who justifies your anger, and if you share similar concerns, please be reassured.

Nothing in this method will take any of your emotions away from you.

On the other hand, if you want to get rid of any negative emotions that might be bothering you, this approach will give you insights and tools that can enable you to do so....but only when you choose.



Anger-Producing Action Patterns

D) Retaliating or seeking revenge, instead of openly and honestly dealing with what happened.

Another action pattern that keeps anger from resolving is retaliating or seeking revenge. This is tied to the 4th anger-producing conversation we examined earlier.

When we perceive others to have done something bad or wrong, and they don't own up to it, we may want to punish them, or otherwise seek revenge.

To the other person, however, our retaliation seems like something bad and wrong that we are now doing. So they get triggered to punish us in return. This vicious circle can go on for some time, until one or the other party ceases to participate.

NOTE:

While we are busy seeking revenge, we are also engaged in justifying our anger and failing to look at how our own actions (or misperceptions) might have contributed to what happened.

Thus, the first **three** action patterns all feed in to produce this fourth one.

TIP: Rent the movie “Tin Men” starring Richard Dreyfus and Danny DeVito. Set in Baltimore in the 1960’s, this story is about two strangers, both of whom happen to be aluminum siding salesmen, who collide one day in a minor car accident. As you watch this humorous tale of escalating revenge-seeking behavior, notice how the entire script for this movie was taken from the conversations and action patterns listed on your anger index card.

Completing Your Anger Index Card

You are now ready to complete your index card for Anger.

When you add the anger-producing Action Patterns to the back of your card, your Anger index card will be complete.

Print out this page and then cut and paste (or tape) the information below to the back of your 3x5 Anger index card. Alternatively, you could handwrite the information on the back of your index card.

ANGER

ACTION PATTERNS:

- A) Failing to recognize how your own judgments, evaluations and standards might not be valid for other people.
- B) Failing to recognize how your own actions, past and present, may have contributed to what happened.
- C) Justifying your anger, instead of looking within yourself for its internal causes.
- D) Retaliating or seeking revenge, instead of openly and honestly dealing with what happened.

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Congratulations! You have now created a complete index card for Anger.

This Card Works....Every Time!

Remember, if you're feeling angry at any time, for any reason, you must be thinking and often behaving in exactly the ways listed on your Anger index card.

I have personally tested this Anger card thousands of times, both in my own life and in my work with other people.

And I have never found it to fail.

For example, whenever I am feeling angry, it always turns out that I am automatically thinking, perceiving, and often behaving in precisely the ways listed on my Anger index card.

No MysteryAnymore!

You now have a fool-proof way to always be able to identify the hidden causes of anger.

Once you know what these hidden causes are, you will then be in position to make your anger quickly disappear, whenever you want (however, you may need some additional training to be able to do this consistently).

KEY POINT:

Once you do learn how to make anger quickly disappear, you'll discover the process is essentially the same for all other negative emotions.

You should also be aware that this process is basically the same for any other type of "stress" you might experience.

Once you can pinpoint all the hidden causes of any stressful problem, you will then see new opportunities for solving or eliminating the problem, that you didn't see before.

This completes your brief mini-training on how to identify the hidden causes of anger.

I hope you've enjoyed reading this report and that you've gain some valuable insights from it.

If you like what you've learned here, I encourage you to download and read my complete four-book introductory stress mastery series, Stress Relief Secrets Revealed.

"Learn How To Get Rid Of Your Stress...Without Managing It!..."

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Just go to <http://beststresshelp.com> to download all four of these PDF e-books for free.

I look forward to assisting you with developing your stress mastery skills, which can benefit you greatly for many years to come.

Regards and best wishes,

Your Personal Stress Coach
Mort (Doc) Orman, M.D.

Other Books By Doc Orman, M.D.

The 14 Day Stress Cure—A New Approach For Dealing With Stress That Can Change Your Life

<http://14daystresscure.com>

How To Have A Stress Free Wedding—And Live Happily Ever After (with wife and co-author Christina Chambreau, D.V.M.)

<http://weddingstressrelief.org>

Sleep Well Again—How To Fall Asleep Fast, Stay Asleep Longer, And Getter Better Sleep Like You Did In The Past

<http://ormanstressrelief.com/sleepbook>

College Stress Relief—What Every Student Should Know (And Spread Around) ASAP! (NOTE: This book contains similar content to that contained in this complete series of four Stress Relief Secrets REVEALED books.)

<http://collegestress.net>

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About Doc Orman

Mort (Doc) Orman, M.D. is a Board-certified Internal Medicine physician who has been helping people learn how to eliminate stress—without having to manage it—since 1981.

He is a graduate of Duke University (B.A. 1969) and the University of Maryland Medical School (1973).

He is Founder and President of the Health Resource Network, Inc., a non-profit health education organization, which has sponsored National Stress Awareness month (April) each year since 1992.

Doc Orman has lectured widely about stress for both health professionals and the public. He has also written numerous books and articles about human stress, including an award winning book, *The 14 Day Stress Cure*, which received a top non-fiction book-of-the-year award (1992) from the National Association of Independent Publishers.

In this four-book Stress Relief Secrets REVEALED series, and in all of the other programs offered through his Stress Mastery Academy, Doc Orman shares many of the insights and coping strategies that he uses in his own life and that have helped thousands of people deal with stress more effectively.