What Is Anger?

Anger is an emotion that we all feel at times. It can become a problem if it is too extreme, occurs at inappropriate times, or lasts too long. Anger can be just a simple irritation with something. At the other extreme, it can result in hysterical shouting, screaming and lashing out. Anger can often have a negative impact on our relationships and our work. It can also change the way that we feel about ourselves. We might tend to blame other people or a particular situation for our anger. Often we feel angry when we feel let down in some way or denied of something that we feel entitled to.

Physical feelings are experienced when your body reacts to stress, fear or anxiety. These symptoms are often referred to as the 'fight or flight' response. This reaction quickly and helpfully prepares the body for action. It prepares us to either protect against or escape danger.

* Making our heart beat faster - to supply more blood to our muscles.
* Producing more sweat - to cool us down.
* Tensing our muscles - getting them ready for action.
* Taking deeper and quicker breaths - to supply oxygen to our muscles.
* Shutting down body functions that aren't needed at the time e.g. digestion.
* Racing thoughts - quickly narrowing the available options to make a quick response.

In the past such a reaction would have offered us some protection. Preparing us to react quickly in case of predators, and aiding survival as we hunted and gathered food. These days we do not depend so much upon running or fighting as we negotiate difficult circumstances. The symptoms described above are therefore less helpful. They may even end up being quite confusing. Threats like money problems, difficulties at work, unhelpful staff or rude drivers do not require such an extreme physical reaction. These symptoms are not dangerous in themselves. In many ways it is a useful response, but at the wrong time. We need not fear the fight or flight reaction. It is our body's healthy protection system. Understanding this can help you to manage the physical symptoms. You need not worry about them or feel that you need to respond or react. You can allow them to pass, as they will do quite quickly.