

Q & A Mindline



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Q My short temper and irritable manner is becoming a problem at work, as I speak out without considering the aftermath. I work as a programmer and feel my work in not much appreciated. Please share your advice with regard to the best way in which I can control my anger, because at times I get very aggressive.

Anger is a primary and healthy emotion and in many ways, necessary. We have a right to feel unhappy and angry when we have been mistreated or when things don't go the way we want it to. The feeling isn't a problem, but the way we react and how we allow those feelings to manifest makes a difference. However, uncontrolled explosive anger can have dire consequences on one's relationships, health and his/her world. Therefore, one should seek ways to control emotions, especially anger and find ways to express it in a way that resolves and does not worsen a situation.

I wonder if your anger is a cover up for other feelings. And one clue is that you feel unappreciated, despite the volume and quality of work you may be doing. Perhaps you take on more than you can chew and maybe you struggle to

say 'No,' which may be adding on to your work load.

I think you should take stock of your workload and responsibilities and complete the commitments you have taken on, before accepting any new work. Focus on quality and not quantity, which I think will lead to more satisfaction and perhaps the much expected appreciation from colleagues and clients. Leave no feeling unattended and talk it out by the end of the day if possible.

Remember, an important key to better emotional/anger management is effective communication. Listen more and talk less. Where matters are sensitive, take a step back from the situation as this will allow you to consider it and respond in a measured manner rather than reacting abruptly. Try speaking calmly without losing your composure or unduly asserting your thoughts. It's wise to accept others' viewpoint without feeling challenged or threatened. Also, sometimes having a one-to-one discrete talk with the person concerned can facilitate an open discussion and resolve any issues in question.

Finally, it is recommended you watch Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi's talk on Ted.com. He says, "Transform your energy into ideas and action. Use anger to challenge and change the evils of the world."

Q My friend has been diagnosed with OCD and is finding it hard to come to terms with it. He is feeling low and avoiding contact with others, as he's afraid they will come to know about it. Please explain what it is and how we can help him.

OCD is an abbreviation for obsessive compulsive disorder, a form of anxiety disorder wherein unwanted, unpleasant thoughts, images or urges (obsessions) repeatedly enters a person's mind and causes anxiety. These are followed by

repetitive behaviour (compulsions) one needs to carry out to prevent fear of the obsession coming true. Also, individuals often find it hard to contain these obsessions or compulsions which could be frustrating and more so, when they are under stress or in a fragile mental state.

It may be genetically inherited and/or be predisposed by environmental influences like strict upbringing in an overprotective family. Significant life events like bereavement or a loss of job can trigger OCD in people who already have a tendency to develop the condition.

Untreated OCD affects mood, functioning and relationships. So, the first step is educating yourself and your family about this condition. Remember, it is treatable as more than two-thirds of people respond well to treatment.

When afflicted with OCD, it is important not to belittle oneself as this will affect self-esteem and willingness to engage with needed psychotherapy (talking therapy). Seek professional help from qualified experts for formal talk therapy and medication if required. Treatment mainly entails cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) which is proven to be effective in fixing unhelpful manner of thinking and behavior that accompany OCD.

In exposure and response prevention (ERP) - a form of CBT, the person with OCD is exposed to a task or situation that causes anxiety at a level he/she can cope with and taught to avoid carrying out anxiety-relieving compulsions (the actions usually taken to help cope with the situation). Additionally, there is a role for reducing baseline anxiety with medication in order to engage better with the above therapy.

A person's recovery has already begun when he/she decides to read up on OCD and strives to learn more about it. Ask your friend to keep an open mind and seek help, which is a sign of strength and not weakness.