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**Anger Management.**

By Carole Spiers (Pressure Gauge)

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LAST WEEK's article which looked at how to defuse angry situations, produced a tremendous response, with many of you wanting to know what to do when you find it difficult to keep your temper.



I've also received a steady stream of emails from people asking for advice on how to make themselves more resilient to the pressures of everyday life.

So this week, I thought that I would look in a little more detail at these two related topics.

Choosing how to remain healthy by keeping ourselves 'in control'

There are very many situations that can result in, otherwise calm and peaceful, people experiencing a sometimes violent reaction to the circumstances in which they find themselves.

A driver, gesticulating out of the window of their car when being stuck in yet another traffic jam. A holiday-maker shouting at a hotel receptionist when they cannot have the room of their choice or someone slamming their keyboard in frustration when their computer crashes.

The common point about all these situations is that for whatever reason, the individual in question has temporarily lost their self-control.

**How do you respond when presented with a difficult situation? For example, do you:**

- Shout and scream at the offending person or object?
- Get angry on the inside but appear calm on the outside?
- Get increasingly upset until you have to walk away from the problem?

Whichever route you choose, research shows that you may well be doing yourself harm. There is considerable evidence to suggest, for example, that anger and hostility might be greater risk factors for heart disease than high blood pressure, smoking or high cholesterol.

Chronic anger against yourself, or others, can also release a regular flow of stress-related chemicals. And it's also wrong to think that screaming or shouting will help to dissipate your anger - evidence shows that it simply makes matters worse.

One of the major lessons of anger management is that anger is a choice. You can choose to get angry or you can learn to choose to stay calm - it's up to you. It may not be easy - but then neither are the consequences of losing your self control. And the best remedy of all? Try to avoid disagreements from turning into conflict in the first place - through better communication, mediation, or simply telling yourself that allowing your frustration to boil over into anger really isn't worth it.

**Developing resilience - your mental protection**

'Resilience' is the new buzzword for the process of adapting better in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or other 'stressors' such as health, family or relationship problems.

It's how we 'bounce back' from difficult situations that counts. Fortunately, resilience isn't a characteristic that we either just do, or do not, possess. It involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed - by every one of us.

Studies have shown that one of the most important factors in resilience is having caring and supportive relationships, both inside and outside the family. Other associated factors include the ability to make realistic plans and to take practical steps to carry them out; possessing a positive view of yourself, and confidence in your strengths and abilities; good communication skills; and being able to manage strong feelings and impulses, and to explore solutions to problems without getting too 'worked up'.

**From this, there are many ways in which you can increase your resilience - you can:**

- Develop your inter-personal relationships - for example, by accepting support from those who care about you and will listen to you; or alternatively by helping others who themselves are in need.
- Avoid seeing difficult situations as impossible. You cannot change the fact that stressful events happen, but you can change how you interpret and respond to them.
- Accept that change is part of living, and that situations and goals may (and often will) change.



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- Develop targets for yourself that you can realistically achieve.

- Develop a positive view of yourself by gaining confidence in your ability to solve problems and trust in your instincts.

- Keep things in perspective - try to consider stressful situations within the 'bigger picture' of your life.

- Take care of yourself, by paying attention to your own needs and feelings.

- Accept the futility of fighting against those situations where you have - and never will have - any control. It's

pointless!

Resilience has been called the 'it' skill of the 21st Century. Because our lives are so stressful and change is everywhere, we have to find new ways to cope with all of these stresses. And building our resilience is a very good place to start!

**Key learning points**

- Anger is a choice. You can choose to get angry or you can choose to stay calm - it's up to you.
- Resilience isn't a characteristic that we either do or do not have. It involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed.
- Accept those situations over which you have no control.

**Carole Spiers, the UK's leading Guru on corporate stress-management and organisational change, is also a regular BBC broadcaster and international author on these major, business issues. She is also a regular motivational speaker at UAE conferences. Your questions and input on this article or any related topic, is welcomed. Each Friday, we will discuss a selection of your letters or case studies. Please write to Carole Spiers at: [ktwkd@emirates.net.ae](mailto:ktwkd@emirates.net.ae). Website: [www.carolespiersgroup.com](http://www.carolespiersgroup.com)**

