

HIDDEN ANGER

Anger is a natural human emotion. We are all born with the capability of letting others know we are distressed. As infants, we show natural anger by getting red in the face and crying at the top of our lungs. As toddlers, we threw ourselves down and screamed and kicked when we felt angry. Parents scolded or spanked us for doing this, and little by little we learned not to physically express our natural anger or act in a violent fashion.

Perhaps we learned to use words to express anger, such as profanity, sarcastic remarks and vindictive thoughts. Many of us were taught that, too, wasn't nice.

As we matured and grew into nice, polite, civil, socially responsible people, we became quite adept at hiding and repressing our natural anger, so much so that we often convince ourselves we aren't really angry, when deep down our insides might be raging.

Denial and self-deception are ways we learned to tell ourselves we're okay, even though the anger was still there, no matter how well we covered it up.

Would you call yourself an angry person? What do you do with your natural anger? Do you deny negative feelings or just don't get angry?

ACTIVITY: ANGER SIGNS

Mark the signs of hidden anger which apply to you. Be honest with yourself.

- ☐ Procrastination in the completion of imposed tasks.
- ☐ Perceptual or habitual lateness.
- ☐ A liking for sadistic or ironic humor.
- ☐ Sarcasm, cynicism or flippancy in conversation.
- ☐ Over-politeness, constant cheerfulness, attitude of grin and bear it.
- ☐ Frequent sighing.
- ☐ Smiling while hurting.
- ☐ Frequent disturbing or frightening dreams.
- ☐ Overcontrolled, monotone speaking voice.
- ☐ Difficulty in getting to sleep or sleeping through the night.
- ☐ Boredom, apathy, loss of interest and enthusiasm.
- ☐ Slowing down of movement.
- ☐ Getting tired more easily than usual.

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- ☐ Excessive irritability over trifles.
 - ☐ Getting drowsy at inappropriate times.
 - ☐ Sleeping more than usual, maybe 12 to 14 hours a day.
 - ☐ Waking up tired rather than rested and refreshed.
 - ☐ Clenched jaws and/or grinding teeth, especially while sleeping.
 - ☐ Facial tics, spasmodic foot movements, fist clenching and similar repeated physical acts done unintentionally or unawares.
 - ☐ Chronic depression and/or extended periods of feeling down for no reason.
 - ☐ Chronically stiff or sore neck.
 - ☐ Stomach ulcers.

Don't be surprised if you marked more than a few. Majority of nice adults are going around with hidden anger. Some of us have learned how to discharge our anger in appropriate ways. Some of us have gotten—or will get—physically ill as our body tries to discharge the suppressed anger.

DISCUSSION:

Discuss anger, and safe and appropriate ways to deal with it.