**Anger: A Discussion**

Anger is an emotion that results from frustration. Some people are more prone to becoming frustrated than others.

* Sometimes, it is beneficial to “let it go”. We have no control over anything except ourselves. Anger can build up, manifest, and cause strains on relationships and personal health.
* Other times, it is important to confront the source. If, for example, a friend is doing something that is bothering you, they may be unaware that you are bothered by it. Clear, effective communication can save your frustration and your relationship.

**So, when do you “let it go” and when do you “confront the source”???**

1. Recognize that you are experiencing anger.
2. Focus on the fact that you are responsible for your feelings. You got angry. No one made you that way.
3. Remember that angry does not mean “aggressive”.
4. Don’t let anger build up. Practice assertively expressing anger when necessary.
   1. Avoid sarcasm, name-calling, and put-downs. This will only build a wall between you and others. It will shut down constructive communication.
5. Learn coping strategies for anger management.
   1. Relaxation
   2. Cognitive Restructuring (re-framing how you see the problem, taking a “step-back”
   3. Problem-Solving
   4. Communicating (the “TLC” method)
      1. Trust (use honesty and believe the other person is using honesty)
      2. Listen (focus on what the other person is trying to say, rather than your feelings about what they are saying)
      3. Clarify (try to identify any misunderstandings and clarify them)
6. Focus on specifics about what triggered your anger. Do not generalize. Generalizing, such as “he always does this”, muddles the issue and gives your anger an excuse to get out of control.
7. Work towards a “win-win” situation where you build resolution. Avoid “Power Struggles” and avoid trying to prove the other person wrong.
   1. Define
   2. Defend
   3. Explore
8. Use the “agree to disagree” method. You will not always agree with others, and not everyone has to agree with you. It is important that both sides are heard, but you do not have to sacrifice your own values to find resolution.
9. Keep your life clean. Do not let the little things build up. Deal with them as they come.

**Activity Option I: Remembering**

Create a mnemonic device, write a song, write a poem, or create a piece of art that can help remind you and other of the 9 points above that help deal with anger.

Share your creation with others.

**Activity Option II: Questions** (Reflect, Respond, Share)

1. Which of the 9 points above do you feel you struggle with the most?
   1. What can you do to improve?
2. Think of a time when you experienced anger.
   1. Which if the 9 points above do you feel would have helped you the most during that time?
3. Many of these points focus on finding “resolution”. Why do you think finding a resolution is more effective than attempting to “win”?
4. When is it time to “let it go”?
5. What should you do if someone continually causes you to feel angry and refuses to participate in working towards a resolution?
6. What do you think happens when you allow the little things to build up, rather than deal with them?
7. Do you agree with the following statement “You are responsible for your own feelings”? Why or why not?
   1. What is the consequence of blaming others for how you feel?
8. Do you think that practicing “Anger Management” is a useful tool for you? Why or why not?