

# The Copewell System of Anger Management

By Judith Filek — President,  
Impact Communications, Inc.

Mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, foreign takeover, the down economy, new technologies and the demand for information have created stress and conflict in the workplace. Your score as a business professional depends on how well you handle anger and “challenging” people. **The Copewell System of Anger Management** was developed by **Impact Communications, Inc.** to help you. It is an eight step process. It takes practice. It may feel impossible to use with some people, but don’t give up. People are worth it. Managing conflict effectively will make your star rise in an organization!

## **C** Create an Awareness

What signals does your body send that lets you know your anger is rising? Does your heart beat faster? Do you have difficulty breathing? Do you notice your fists clinching?

Pay attention to your body signals and do or say nothing until you have calmed down.

## **O** Opt for Control

What exactly do you do to relax and calm down when you feel yourself getting angry? Instead of just *reacting* to a person or a situation, make a conscious decision to deal with it without letting emotionalism get the best of you. As simple as it sounds, counting to ten does work. So does breathing from the diaphragm. The more you do some deep breathing, the more you will force adrenaline from your bloodstream. Use the pause to think. The more you pause and breathe, the more you can separate the facts from the feelings, the more you can weigh your words.

Also, be conscious of your level of stress and how often you are getting angry. The correlation between stress and health problems is well known. Make a decision to manage stress with physical activity, meditation, visual imagery and music so that it does not affect your mental and physical health.

## **P** Personal Evaluation

What exactly triggered your anger? Was it a chain of events that could have been avoided with more careful planning? What are the facts? What are the feelings? What do you fear? Most people feel they know exactly why they are angry, but they don’t. Anger is always a secondary reaction. Fear is usually involved. You have to look deeper and examine what’s behind the anger. It’s hard to do because emotions are involved. Once the facts and emotions are separated, the process of working out an agreement becomes easy.

## **E** Examine Expectations

Are your expectations and messages to yourself realistic? Can you do everything you are attempting to do in the allotted time frame? Are your expectations about what the other person should do realistic? If not, change them. Many of us get angry because we have faulty expectations of what people can and should do. Base your relationship on accurate perceptions, clear communication and appropriate emotions.

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**W Watch Communication**

What do you do or say that might trigger anger in someone else? It is not what you say, but how you say it that counts. Do you roll your eyes? Does your voice get strident? Do you get an annoyed look on your face? People want to be treated with respect. They do not want you to interrupt them, belittle them or gloss over incidents. Your insurance policy for communicating effectively under stress is active listening, paraphrasing, and “I” messages.

**E Examine the Other Side**

What are the facts from the other person's perspective? The other party rarely sees the situation with the same degree of intensity. Step into the other party's shoes for the moment. You may see that the other person doesn't even concur on what the problem is. It will help you to come up with options that will result in a win/win for both people.

**L Learn to Problem Solve**

In order to resolve performance problems, you have to know and use the steps to problem solving. You have to invent options for mutual gain.

**L Learn to Forgive**

Do you find yourself holding grudges? Have you become mistrustful of the other person? Learn to forgive. Without forgiveness the hurts multiply, and we become stuck in anger. You must forgive to go on with your life and for the benefit of the organization, not because the other party deserves it.

Don't let anger drag you down. Follow this eight step process and notice the difference it makes to you and your performance in the organization.

*Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. To reach us, phone (847) 438-4480 or contact our web site, [www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com](http://www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com).*