

Anger Management Worksheet #1-1: Steam Journaling Angry Conversations (Skill 1)

Step 1 is Steam Journaling: On five different occasions over a 3 day period, write out your angry thoughts for 15 minutes without stopping to evaluate or judge your thoughts. Your total minutes of writing should be at least 1 hour and 15 minutes.



Step 2 is reading over what you wrote at the end of 3 days and then answering these questions:

QUESTION 1: IF I FORGET ABOUT BLAME, WHAT ACTIONS ARE IN MY POWER TO REDUCE THE TENSION OF THIS SITUATION IN A POSITIVE WAY?

QUESTION 2: WHAT ARE MY FEARS ABOUT TAKING ONE OR MORE POSITIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION?

EXAMPLES OF FEARS:

- I'm afraid to speak up for what I need or want.
- I'm afraid I will lose face, if I apologize for any of it.
- I'm afraid of his or her reaction.
- I'm afraid he or she will twist my words and use them against me.
- If I take responsibility for any of it, then he/she will think I'm weak.

Do you ever catch yourself arguing with someone in your mind for hours or even days? Your brain does this to reprocess the angry thoughts and feelings of a relationship or situation.

Worksheet Skills and Concepts



Reprocessing is the brain's way of "digesting" the memory of something so that all that anger doesn't just sit in your gut and weigh you down.

But when the angry conversation is stuck in a repeating loop, the reprocessing has hit a snag. In other words, you can't stop talking and arguing with the person in your mind. This repeating argument is only real inside your own head. It drains your energy without accomplishing anything constructive in the real world where you would like to see a solution.

Skill 1 one is about increasing our emotional intelligence by using a simple journaling technique to get those angry conversations unstuck. I call it "Steam Journaling." It's about venting and letting off steam by writing out all those repetitious, angry thoughts that add so much stress to our lives.

Writing uses a different part of our brain and so it is often useful for opening up a new pathway for your thoughts. This paves the way for us to remember the situation, to "see" it, from a new angle. It can be especially useful for people who like to avoid conflict because the avoidance of real, angry conversations prevents the brain's reprocessing of anger that often occurs by talking something through.

So isn't this just venting by writing? The answer is "Yes" and "No." Steam journaling lets off steam by just writing your thoughts, unfiltered and uncensored. But it is different from simply venting or complaining because there is second step in which you look at what you wrote and ask yourself two questions in order to start seeing things from a different perspective.

Instructions

The instructions are on the worksheet and summarized here:

Step 1 is Steam Journaling. It's letting off steam while you write continuously in a stream-of-consciousness manner.

On five different occasions over a 3 day period, write out your angry thoughts for 15 minutes without stopping to evaluate or judge your thoughts. Your total minutes of writing should be at least 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Step 2 is reading over what you wrote at the end of 3 days and then answering these two questions:

1. IF I FORGET ABOUT BLAME, WHAT ACTIONS ARE IN MY POWER TO REDUCE THE TENSION OF THIS SITUATION IN A POSITIVE WAY?
2. WHAT ARE MY FEARS ABOUT TAKING ONE OR MORE POSITIVE STEPS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION?