

WHITFORD - THOMAS GROUP

I'm so mad I think I'm going to explode!

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Sound familiar? If you want to manage anger, the only way of doing so is to listen to your self-talk. This doesn't mean listening to yourself talk. It means listening to your SELF-TALK. What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)?

It's quite true that anger is created from within. No matter how much you say—"She made me mad!" "It makes me so mad when..."—*the anger comes from YOU, not it or she.*

Our *thoughts* about "it" or "she" is actually where the anger comes from. And by *changing our thinking* we can change the way we feel (for example, instead of angry or enraged, annoyed or irritated.)

Doesn't it make sense, then, if anger is created from within *that we have the power from within to keep from getting angry?* The answer is a definitive YES.

By adjusting how you think about a situation, to listen your self-talk, is how you keep yourself from getting mad—period.

How? By listening for demands. What are demands? They're easy to spot. They tend to express themselves in words such as *SHOULD, ought, must, have-to, need.*

Depending upon the context and situation, *when these words or thoughts are used they will create anger.*

Whether you use them on someone or someone is using them on you, a sense of anger, rage or mad evolves from these words/thoughts of demand *when things don't go your way.*

There are numerous examples of how this is true, but here is a simple example that most everyone can relate to:

You're driving in rush-hour traffic, late to get home. Another driver cuts you off, almost hitting you, so he can run a yellow light that actually is quite red by the time he runs it—leaving you stopped at the light and cursing the driver as he speeds away.

Your immediate thoughts are: *"What an idiot! People like that shouldn't be allowed to drive!! He's an accident waiting to happen. They ought to lock him up!!"*

The word *-should-* creates anger because of its demanding nature. Simply stated, *the situation is history*. Yet, *by saying it shouldn't happen you're demanding that reality not exist as it does*, lousy as it may seem. Bottom line: *it happened as it should based upon all the events that led up to it happening*.

Instead if you approach the situation *without demands* then your reaction will change appropriately. You may wish he didn't drive that way, you may prefer it, but he's driving that way...*so don't deny the reality of it*.

It may be illegal, but it's his choice to drive that way. *You'd feel much better to accept it and not demand anything to the contrary*.

This works for anything in life. When you *"should on somebody"* you're creating anger for yourself (or them) when it is totally un-necessary.

When you knock off the demands, shoulds and oughts, you'll notice a difference. It would be nice if things always went the way you want them to go, but that isn't reality, so become more tolerant by listening to your own thoughts and you'll start to see anger withering away.