

*Journeys Christian Counseling would like to welcome **CHERYL ARENS** to the practice!*

Cheryl is a gifted counselor with a warm and welcoming way about her. She listens intently to clients and has a special heart for marriage and family counseling.



Cheryl's online scheduling option will be available soon on our website, but in the meantime please call 573 355-0263 to make an appointment with Cheryl.

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Managing Anger

By Linda Fentress, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor

What makes you mad.....really mad? Maybe it's when someone cuts you off in traffic. It could be rude people, or arrogant people who think they are always right. Maybe your spouse or family member makes you see red!



We generally have two different reactions to anger....we have the **SPEWERS**— those who let it all out, and we have the **STEWERS** — those who push it deep inside.



Which one are you?

Whichever way we deal with anger, we know it is something that we must face. A recent USA Today poll concluded that 60 percent of Americans report feeling angry or irritable, which is up from 50 percent just several years ago. Mishandled anger is dangerous and destructive in whatever way we experience it. It can destroy and tear apart relationships and community like nothing else. So how can we better manage our anger?

We have to start with a basic premise....that anger itself is not the problem. The problem is what we do with our anger. The truth is that God himself experiences anger. Of the 260 scriptures where anger is mentioned, 217 of them refer to God's anger. That means that more than 8 out of 10 scriptures about anger talk about God being angry, and experiencing anger. We are made in God's image, so it is natural and normal that we would experience anger as well. Anger is neither right nor wrong.....it is an EMOTION.

So God shows us that anger is OK, but asks us to manage it well. In Ephesians 4:26 we read **"be angry, but do not sin."** God affirms we will experience anger, and he lets us know that it is OK to do so. Be angry if you have cause! But God also asks us to be very, very careful with it. Spewers tend to hurt those around them as in their anger they attack others. Stewers tend to hurt themselves as they chum up inside trying to hold it all in.

Anger is like the warning light on the dashboard of your car....it lets you know something is wrong. What we usually do when the warning light comes on with our car is to **FIX THE CAR!**

In the same way, a big key in healthy anger management is to **ACT**. Depending on the intensity of the anger you experience, one of things we may notice as we feel anger is a change in our bodies. Often, we experience a physiological arousal along with anger. More adrenaline is secreted, your blood pressure gets raised, your pulse races, the pupils of your eyes get bigger, you secrete more sugar into your bloodstream. In other words, your body is preparing to act. Anger is a form of bodily power as well as an emotion.



There are a number of appropriate actions to take to help resolve our anger:

SET BOUNDARIES — Sometimes we experience anger because our personal boundaries or our self-worth have been trampled on. In that case, an appropriate action to take is to figure out and implement what boundaries we may need to set in order to experience relief from our anger.

BE ASSERTIVE — Sometimes we need to share our feelings with someone and ask for what we need. Too many people believe that partners or friends should "know what I need without me telling them." That is a myth that is simply not true! Grown-ups communicate and tell others about their feelings and needs (whether they are emotional needs or support needs).

EXERCISE CONFLICT RESOLUTION — Maybe its time to brush up on your conflict resolution skills. Some of us avoid conflict resolution because we are afraid of the process and what the other person's reaction might be. Some of us jump in and attack without even giving the process a chance. Let's slow down and commit to a process of conflict resolution with others that is productive!

Once we admit we are angry (and it's OK if you are) we can move into appropriate action depending on the situation. Let's not fall into our old "spewing" habits or our "stewing" default. As we move into appropriate action to help resolve anger we may find there is a better way to manage anger in order to grow in good emotional health in 2016!