

Seven Mistaken Assumptions Angry People Often Make

1. **They can't help it.** Angry people have lots of excuses. Women will blame their PMS. Both sexes will blame their stress, their exhaustion, or their worries. Never mind that other people who have PMS or who are stressed, tired, or worried don't pop off at the world. Angry people don't yet understand that they are actually giving themselves permission to rant. In that sense, they are very much in control.
2. **The only way to express anger is to explode.** People who rage believe that anger is like the build-up of steam in an overheated steam engine. They think they need to blow off the steam in order to be OK. In fact, raging tends only to produce more of the same.
3. **Frustration is intolerable.** Angry people can't sit with frustration, anxiety or fear. To them, such feelings are a signal that they are being challenged. When life doesn't go their way, when someone doesn't see things as they do, when their best-laid plans get interrupted or they make a mistake, they simply can't tolerate it. To them, it's better to blow than to be left with those feelings. They don't get it that frustration is a normal part of everyone's life and that it is often the source of creativity and inspiration.
4. **It's more important to win than to be right.** Chronically angry people often have the idea that their status is at stake when there is conflict. When questioned, they take it overly personally. If they are losing an argument, they experience a loss of self-esteem. At that moment, they need to assert their authority, even if they are wrong. When it is certain that they are wrong, they will find a way to prove that the other person is more wrong. For mature people, self-esteem is grounded in being able to put ego aside in order to find the best solution.
5. **"Respect" means that people do things my way.** When another driver tailgates, when a partner refuses to go along with a plan, when a kid doesn't jump when told to do something, they feel disrespected. To them, disrespect is intolerable. Making a lot of noise and threatening is their way of reasserting their right to "respect" by others. Sadly, when the basis of "respect" is fear, it takes a toll on love and caring.
6. **The way to make things right is to fight.** Some angry people have learned at the feet of a master. Having grown up with parents who fight, it is their "normal." They haven't a clue how to negotiate differences or manage conflict except by escalating. Then they become very much like the parent they loathed and feared when they were kids.
7. **Other people should understand that they didn't mean what they did or said when they were angry.** Angry people feel that anger entitles them to let loose. It's up to other people not to take seriously hurtful things they say or do. After all, they say, they were just angry. They don't get it that other people are legitimately hurt, embarrassed, humiliated, or afraid.

Which of these assumptions are driving your rages. Some or all may apply. You may even have a few that are more uniquely your own.

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