

## Combat Veteran's Guidebook | 4 | Anger, Anger & More Anger

Anger feels like your best friend.

It keeps you comfortable. And safe. It protects you.

People leave you alone when you're angry. You don't have to feel more vulnerable feelings when you're angry. Combat veterans are supposed to be angry, right?

Yes.

And no. At least, not forever.

You do have a lot to be angry about.

It's right that you're angry over shit that happened to you, by you, because of you. And to people you loved, or at people who were supposed to love you.

But, anger is not meant to be your way of life. It's NOT WHO YOU ARE. It's meant to motivate you to take action.

If you're like most, you have no idea why you're so angry all the time. Why you explode, have such a short fuse, seem so intolerant.

There are many reasons. The first is that underneath the experience of war, lies a certain powerlessness that the soul has to face when it's not able to prevent bad things from happening to those we love or are supposed to protect. The fact that we are not as powerful as we expect ourselves to be generates resentment in the soul.

You were not able to save your buddy. You had to shoot the child. The pregnant civilian got in the way.

These are hard things for the soul to reckon with.

Then you have the things you had to do or did during combat that you know violated some innate law of life and humanity. There is no such thing as a clean war. And the grime you feel inside from your experience also generates anger (and guilt, but anger often shouts louder than guilt because it's easier to feel).

Factor in injustices, bad decisions, mistakes, errors in judgment, and the overall energy of having been smack dab in the center of destruction and death and you have a lot to be angry about.

That's all on the unconscious side.

You also have broken relationships, cheating partners, bitter divorces, financial ruin, friends dismissing you, and a broken VA system who can't remember what decency and respect looks like.

So what happens? You're driving and someone cuts you off and the next thing you know, BAM! Rage erupts and seems to come from nowhere.

It doesn't come from nowhere and it's not because of the bad driver. It's boiling in you and it erupts when it finds a socially acceptable place to erupt.

You're not really angry at what it seems you're angry about.

You have to look beneath the surface and away from other people's actions, to get to the root of it.

As long as you don't, it will control you with random and persistent outbursts.

You need to be aware that your nervous system has been slammed with a constant barrage of tension, anxiety, adrenaline, and fear. Your cells hold this energy. And they don't necessarily know it's okay to let go of it, just because you come home. Much of your reactions are rooted in your body's energy field. There are energy workers who can help you get this energy unstuck and release it.

So be aware that it's not just anger causing you to feel on edge, there's also energetic reasons.

Anger is powerful. As I said, it's designed to alert you to something that is not right and propel you to change it. But when you have a bunch of unchangeable facts that your soul is angry about, it ends up getting directed at people around you.

And you end up hurting them and isolating yourself.

Which leads to self-hatred and cuts you off from your own source of Life.

Anger needs a neutral place to be expressed, it must be released from the body in both words and physical movement to take the pressure off and help it move out of you. (And by the way, the Divine is strong enough to absorb your rage, you can rant and rage against the Divine.)

Here are questions to explore:

1. I get angry when..... but what I'm really angry about is.....
2. When I think about my life, I am most angry that/about...
3. I was never allowed to express my anger over...
4. Dear [fill in the name] I am so angry at you for...

5. If I look underneath the surface, what I am really angry about is...
6. What do I feel powerless about?
7. What would my life look like if I accepted what I cannot change and changed the things I can?
8. How does being angry benefit me (what's the pay-off? Perhaps anger keeps you from having to feel guilt, or sadness, or keeps you feeling like you're still a warfighter in battle)?
9. What are some physical activities I can do to release the energy of anger? (boxing, working out, chopping wood, destroying stuff that it's okay to destroy)
10. In what ways is my anger harming people I should be protecting?

The stakes are high for staying stuck in anger. You'll lose your relationships and your children, and you'll hurt them in ways they don't deserve. You must address your anger.

There comes a point when you realize anger won't change what happened or what is.

When you realize that, make a conscious choice to let go of the anger.