

How do I behave when I'm angry?

When I am angry I:

- | | Often | Sometimes | Rarely | Never | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----|
| 1 shout loudly | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| 2 hope it will go away | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 |
| 3 make a joke of it or pretend my partner's issue isn't important | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 |
| 4 agree with my partner so we can keep the peace | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 |
| 5 say 'and another thing' and bring up other issues | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 |
| 6 take things said the wrong way | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6 |
| 7 become adult, logical and overly controlled | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7 |
| 8 think my partner is going to disagree with me before I say anything | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8 |
| 9 think I am always right | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9 |
| 10 force my partner to do what I want or to agree with me | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10 |
| 11 try to turn their anger onto something or someone else, not me | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11 |
| 12 think my partner does things to annoy me on purpose | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12 |
| 13 walk away, I don't like arguing | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13 |
| 14 use phrases like, 'you always...', 'you never...', 'you should...' | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14 |
| 15 become sarcastic | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15 |
| 16 think that I am always being put upon | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 16 |
| 17 lose control and say things I don't mean | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17 |
| 18 tell my partner they are daft or stupid for thinking what they think | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 18 |
| 19 practise the scene in my head beforehand, making up their negative responses | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 19 |
| 20 pretend there is nothing wrong | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 20 |



marriage
care

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W&A= ●

I= ●

N.I.= ●

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Scoring

Fill in the right hand column using the scores:

Often	3
Sometimes	2
Rarely	1
Never	0

Add the ● yellow scores and put the answer next to the yellow box at the bottom of the sheet.

Then do the same for ● green, ● blue and ● red.

The four negative patterns of dealing with conflict and methods to nullify these patterns

Escalation

Escalation occurs when partners' responses to each other are increasingly negative, defensive or attacking, causing anger to spiral. The increasing emotional intensity causes a move from simple anger to hostility towards each other.

Reckless mean words are said that are often not meant and do not reflect what the person really most often thinks and feels about their partner.

Such comments are hard to take back and do a lot to damage any closeness and intimacy.

Sometimes escalation leads to the use of intimate knowledge of the other as a weapon, resulting in them unwilling to share such information again.

Short-circuiting Escalation

- Recognise that it is happening in your relationship.
- Try not to react defensively.
- Use 'I' statements when telling your partner how you feel about something he/she is doing that is making you unhappy.
- Soften your tone of voice – this diffuses the situation.
- Acknowledge your partner's point of view.

Invalidation

Invalidation occurs when one partner subtly or directly puts down the thoughts, feelings, character or worth of their partner. This is different to simply disagreeing with them or not liking what they have done. Invalidation includes an element of belittling or disregarding what is important to them.

Making fun of someone in an attempt to cheer them up or to indicate that what they are concerned about doesn't matter that much, means their feelings are not being recognised as important and leads them to feel invalidated. More obvious ways to invalidate someone are being sarcastic, showing contempt or forcing them to accept what you want.

Invalidation hurts. It leads a person to cover up who they are and what they think because it is too risky to do otherwise.

Preventing Invalidation

- Recognise that it is happening.
- Respect and acknowledge your partner's viewpoint or feelings.
- If you feel invalidated use "I" statements to let your partner know how you feel.
- Show respect for each other's character and get into the habit of validating each other.
- Validation is a powerful tool that you can both use to build intimacy and to reduce anger and resentment but it takes discipline.

The four negative patterns of dealing with conflict and methods to nullify these patterns

Withdrawal and Avoidance

Some people are unwilling to get into or stay with an important discussion especially if there is any anger around.

They may go very quiet during an argument or agree quickly in order to finish the conversation without any intention of sticking to the agreement. They may leave the room or “turn off” during an argument. Some people are expert in avoiding certain topics being discussed. They will change the conversation, have lots of excuses to put off the discussion, may use their partners’ anger as a reason not to discuss an issue or try and put the blame on someone else.

The partner of someone who avoids or withdraws from issues will get increasingly frustrated and fed up. They will try even harder to make the person avoiding the issue face up to it. This in turn makes the avoider feel pursued and sometimes cornered.

Avoiding Withdrawal

- Recognise that it is happening and agree that something needs to be done.
- Accept that you are not independent of each other.
- Agreeing on a time and place to talk about an issue is a good start.
- Withdrawers need to deal more directly with the issue at hand to stop their partner feeling the need to pursue them. Withdrawers are not likely to agree to talk if they feel cornered or bullied.

Negative interpretation

Negative interpretation occurs when a person consistently believes that the motives of their partner are more negative than they really are.

For example: John forgot to post the letters Jane gave him. Jane thinks this is because he can't be bothered and doesn't love her. The truth is John just simply forgot.

People who consistently make negative assumptions about their partners lead their partners to feel hurt and rejected and likely to respond with anger.

This leads to the trust between them falling away.

Negative thinking creates a biased and distorted interpretation of reality and steals your joy.

Battling Negative Interpretations

This pattern of behaviour has to be confronted within yourself because only you can control how you interpret your partner's behaviour.

- Ask yourself if you are being too negative in your interpretation of your partner's actions.
- Look for evidence that is opposite to the negative interpretation you usually take.
- Is it a learned behaviour from your childhood?
- There can be no benefit from being a martyr or feeling sorry for yourself.
- Try to give your partner the benefit of the doubt.

Some level of inward reflection could be very productive.