



# Taming The Beast

**9 KEYS FOR MASTERING YOUR ANGER**

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## 9 KEYS FOR MASTERING YOUR ANGER

1. Awareness and Acknowledgement
2. Track It
3. Find the Triggers and Roots
4. Hit the Pause Button
5. Change Your Internal Conversation
6. Challenge Your Beliefs and Perceptions
7. Chillax
8. Make it Humorous
9. Keep the Benefits



## Several Things You Should Know

One of the most popular movies of all time is Walt Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. The Beast, who used to be a prince, had great difficulty in controlling his manners and his anger.

Although there was a charming gentleman inside of him who knew the right way to behave, Beast often felt powerless and believed that there was little he could do in regards to his behavior. After all, he was a beast, right?

Eh...not quite.

A lot of people have the same problem. They think things like:

*"Well, that's just how I am"*

*"What problem? I don't have a problem."*

*"I wouldn't be mad if he didn't **make** me mad!"*

Why do people do this? Because making excuses about their behavior is easier than changing their behavior. Think about that.

**Duncan Nugget® #110**

**You can make an excuse or you can make a way,  
but you can't do both.**

Taming the Beast—your anger—is challenging. Therefore, before we talk about these 9 keys for mastering your anger, here are a several things you should know:

**1. It's not always the anger that's the problem; it's the behavior that accompanies the anger.**

Suppression and over expression of anger are two different roads leading to the same destination. Complete suppression can destroy relationships, lead to bad health, and ruin outcomes in a similar fashion to over expressing anger.

**2. You might need professional help.**

If you have serious anger issues then some of these keys may be difficult to use on your own. If so, you may need to see a coach or a therapist.

**3. Anger Management for teens requires exceptional communication and patience.**

If you are a young person reading this, understand that you may need some help making your way through the process. If so, and you aren't sure who to talk to, shoot me an email or find me on Facebook. I'll get you pointed in the right direction.

If you're reading this with the intention of helping out a tween or teen with anger management problems, then be patient—extremely patient. And get some help. Shoot me an email or find me on Facebook. I'll get you pointed in the right direction.



## Awareness and Acknowledgement

The starting point for mastering your anger is the same starting point for bringing about many types of change. It begins with awareness and acknowledgement.

You probably already know that when a person has an addiction or behavioral problem, getting him to acknowledge the problem can be challenging.

Awareness is the foundation of self-empowerment. If a person wants to tame the beast, he must acknowledge that his anger management is something that needs to be addressed.

Recently, I was talking to Chef Tim, a good friend of mine, and he reminded me of a catchy phrase from G.I. Joe:

**“Knowing is half the battle.”**

So, if you are reading this e-book in order to deal with your own anger issues then kudos to you. You’re half way there.

On the other hand, if you are reading this article with the intention of helping someone else—someone who isn’t aware that his anger needs

to be tamed—here's a quick little exercise I use to help people acknowledge that their anger maybe doing more harm than good.

1. Get a piece of paper.
2. Draw a line down the middle.
3. On the left side write down everything good that happens when you get angry. (Believe it or not there are good things. For example, feeling respected.)
4. On the right side, write down everything bad that happens when you get angry.
5. Which side has more?
6. If it's the right side, let's work on your temper.

Once the person has acknowledged that there may be a little problem with his temper then it's time to *Track It*.

### Some Signs Of An Anger Problem

According to a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* (Vol. 58, No. 12) individuals with high trait anger tend to report:

- ✓ More physical aggression
- ✓ Negative verbal responses
- ✓ Drug use
- ✓ Excessive negative consequences due their anger
- ✓ Long-lasting and frequently occurring, intense reactions

**"Anger is one letter short of danger."**

—unknown



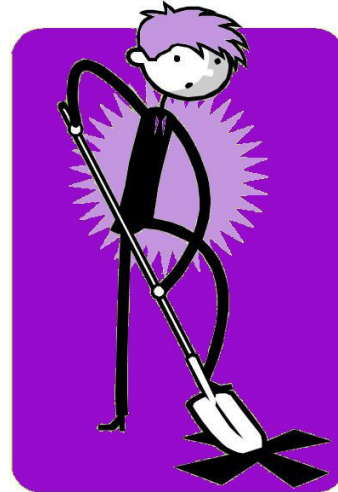
One of the most effective methods of tracking anger (or any other emotion) is to keep a journal. Go to my website and get a copy of my book, *My Success Journal For Young People*, or a small notebook to keep with you and follow these steps:

1. At the start of the day draw a line down the middle of the page.
2. Using a scale of 0 to 100, every so often during the day note the time and level of your anger on the left hand side of the page.
3. On the right side write down what is happening.
4. It is important to record any peak periods of anger.

Colorado State University psychologist, Jerry Deffenbacher, says that in his experience most people find anger a problem when it exceeds 40 on a scale of 0 to 100.

With a journal used for tracking your anger, it will be easier to *Find the Triggers and Roots*.





## Find the Triggers & Roots

By keeping an anger journal, it will be much easier to identify and break patterns that trigger an episode of extreme anger.

Bad traffic, idiot drivers, conniving co-workers, a slow waitress, a computer that constantly freezes up, and delayed or canceled flights are examples of things that bring out the beast in some people. Others may get angry at a certain time of the day, week, or month.

### **Million-Dollar Question: What triggers your anger?**

Once you recognize a pattern in the types of events that trigger your anger, it's time to dig deeper and find the roots.

### **Million-Dollar Question: What past experiences have compelled you to react the same way?**

Finding the root of your anger may take some time; you might have to sleep on it for a while. In the meantime, whenever the beast starts to come out *Hit the Pause Button*



## Hit the Pause Button

Here's my version of a story that I read in Norman Rosenthal's book, *Emotional Revolution*:

A guy named Michael has a terrible day at work and he can't wait to go home to get some peace and quiet. When he arrives home his 11-year-old daughter and some of her friends are playing in the living room. He tries to find a quiet spot in the kitchen, but his wife is in there with her friends—one of the mothers of her daughter's friends.

So, Michael heads off to his bedroom. Still no luck. Every 10 seconds he can hear a loud chorus of "ooh's" and "ah's". His 17-year-old son and some friends are upstairs in his son's room playing video games on the Xbox.

Feeling robbed of his peace and quiet; Michael can sense the start of a volcano of anger. It began with a feeling in the pit of his stomach shooting up to his head, causing a sensation of heat and pressure. Blood started rushing to his head. He was enraged.

**Duncan Nugget® #70**  
**When emotions fill the room,**  
**logic goes out the window.**

Michael erupted. He started yelling at the top of his lungs about not getting any respect and not being able to relax in his own house after a hard day's work. His wife and kids were embarrassed and their friends were, too. For the next few days Michael had more peace and

quiet than he bargained for because nobody was talking to him. Can you say “silent treatment”?

I can feel where Michael was coming from. His anger was understandable, maybe even justified depending on how you look at it, but the behavior was destructive. Suddenly, he wasn't the only one angry and eventually he regretted his behavior.

**Million-Dollar Question:  
What should Michael, or anyone else for  
that matter, have done?**

Pretend life is a DVD player, hit the pause button, and take the proverbial deep breath.

In an article called [With Friends Like These](#), I explain the scientific validity to that old saying: count to ten. Taking at least a 6-second pause allows a bit of logic to return and the wave of emotion to subside. (Well...at least a little.) Hitting the pause button also gives you chance to *Change Your Internal Conversation*.

**“If you wish to master your house  
you must first master  
your emotions.”**

—Ancient Egyptian Proverb

**BONUS!**

## **FACT OR FICTION?**

### **Letting It All Hang Out**

**When you are angry, "letting it all hang out" is a good idea. (Example: punching a pillow until you feel better.)**

**Is this a fact or is it fiction?**

(Answer on page 17)



## Change Your Internal Conversation

The messages that you give yourself in the heat of the moment can agitate the beast or calm the beast—messages such as:

*"I don't have to put up with this crap."*

*"You can't treat me like this. It's so unfair."*

*"What a bunch of bull!"*

Of course, some of these phrases may be true. There are a lot of people shoveling some serious cow manure these days! But that doesn't mean that they have to be anything more than a mild irritant.

Phrases like:

*"If person isn't polite to me, then that means he doesn't respect me and I'm not putting up with that crap."*

Can be turned into something like:

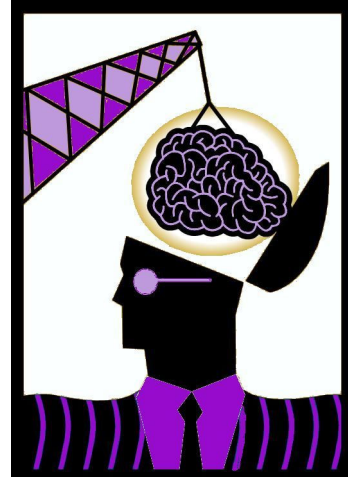
*"Some people are just rude, but I refuse to let them get to me. My time is too valuable to waste on crap like this."*

This method, which is known as *self-instructional training*, may not work for you instantly, especially if your beast has been off the leash for years. It takes practice to develop the ability to create useful self-messages for yourself, but it's proven to be effective for a lot of individuals.

Changing your internal conversation isn't always easy because it requires you to *Challenge Your Beliefs and Perceptions*.

**"If a small thing has the power to make you angry, does that not indicate something about your size?"**

—Sidney J. Harris



## Challenge Your Beliefs & Perceptions

Your beliefs and perceptions determine the boundaries of your world. Think about that.

When you challenge or change your beliefs and perceptions, you're altering your concept of reality. You are changing your world. If you understand what I'm saying, then you'll understand why it's so hard for people to give up certain beliefs and perceptions.

**Duncan Nugget® #84**  
**Being open-minded is a master ability.**  
**People rarely seek information**  
**that contradicts what**  
**they believe.**

Watch Duncan Nugget® #84 on video here:  
<http://duncannuggets.com/2012/07/duncan-nugget-84-genuine-open-mindedness.html>

In fact, it's not unusual for people to completely ignore evidence that refutes what they believe. They tend to look for anything that validates and reinforces their beliefs.

If you were hanging off of a cliff and the only thing keeping you from falling was the rope you were holding on to, how tightly would you hold on to that rope?

You probably hold on to most of your beliefs the same way.

Once you believe that your anger is justified (and it might be), it can be incredibly challenging to let go of that belief.

Once you have a perception that someone has intentionally said or done something negative to you (and he may have) it can be extremely difficult to let go of that belief.

**Duncan Nugget® #192**  
**Mastering your anger requires**  
**you to challenge your beliefs and perceptions.**

While you are working on challenging your beliefs and perceptions, keep in mind that sometimes you just have to *Chillax*.

**“Get mad, then get over it.”**  
—Colin Powell



**BONUS!**

## **FACT OR FICTION?**

(Answer from page 12)

### **FICTION**

**Although catharsis, commonly referred to as “letting it all hang out”, is a concept that has been popular since antiquity, there is no evidence that proves it to be helpful.**

**In fact there are many studies and a great deal of research that proves “letting it all hang out” can make anger worse.**

**In one study—published in 1999 in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology—subjects were tricked into believing that catharsis would be an effective remedy for their anger. After subjects expressed their anger by hitting a punching, they did NOT feel less aggressive, they felt more aggressive.**



## Chillax

Chill and relax. Chillax.

### **Million-Dollar Question: When should a person with anger issues chillax?**

One of the pioneers in behavioral-therapy research, Joseph Wolpe, reasons that it is impossible to feel highly aroused and relaxed at the same time. Therefore if a person is able to relax while being exposed to an unpleasant stimulus, there is a good chance that he will be deconditioned.

But be careful. Relaxation alone is not enough. Attempting to treat anger by simply learning relaxation techniques is not as effective as imagining or remembering triggers and roots combined with relaxation.

This exposure and relaxation technique has worked great for quite a few of the young people I've worked with. J.T., a young guy in his late teens, used to get ridiculously mad over just about anything.

While thinking about things that would make him angry, I would have J.T. do deep breathing exercises. Eventually, by combining this technique with the 'hit the pause button' technique, he was able to chillax and regain his composure much quicker in the heat of the moment.

Out of all of the keys, this can be the most challenging one to do on your own. A lot of people find that certain experiences are way too unpleasant or painful to relive. If that's you, as I said earlier, get some professional help.

King Solomon wrote: "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." So, when extremely angry about something it's beneficial to *Make It Humorous*.

**"15  
minutes  
of laughter on  
a daily basis is probably  
good for the vascular system."**

—Dr. Michael Miller  
University of Maryland School of Medicine



## Make It Humorous

Have you ever been mad, frustrated, or upset about something and a few months or years later you started laughing as you thought about it? What makes it funny later on?

You do. **It's ALL Mental!**

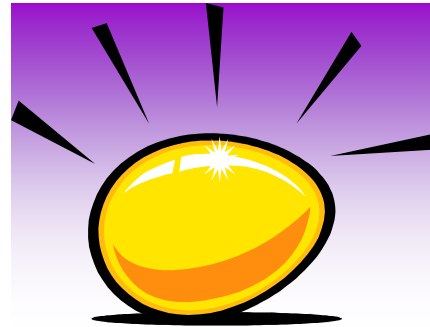
When it comes to anger management, the ability to find the humor in a situation is a priceless asset.

While you are angry, it's helpful to ask—what will be amusing about this when I think about it later. Is it your facial expression? How about someone else's facial expression? Is it something that you or someone else said?

Good comedians are great at turning emotional turmoil into humor. Pretend that you are your favorite comedian. What would he or she say about what is happening?

Although it can be challenging to find humor in a situation, it is worth the effort because humor is such an effective antidote for anger. And who knows? Maybe you'll become a great stand-up comedian in the process!

Even after making it humorous and using the other seven keys we've talked about so far, there is little hope for lasting change unless you *Keep the Benefits*.



## Keep the Benefits

The behavioral expression of anger always produces at least one perceived benefit. This is known as a secondary gain. Receiving attention, maintaining self-respect, feeling powerful, and keeping the peace—in the case suppressing one's anger—are examples of benefits that are gained.

Unless a person finds an alternate course of action that produces the same benefit(s), he is likely to resume the undesired behavior.

### **Million-Dollar Question: What do you gain as a result of your anger?**

I used to have a bad temper that made me feel like I gained self-respect or a sense of control. But after devoting time to developing self-awareness, I've realized that the calmer I am, the more I'm in control of the situation.

I'm not saying that I'm a mystical, master monk who is always in control of my anger. Sometimes it's a tug-o-war. Nonetheless, I do eventually win. So will you as long as you keep the benefits.

Here's an excerpt from an article that I wrote based on a question someone asked me about reverting to old behavior:

1. All behavior has a secondary gain. What are you gaining by engaging in the old behavior? Even if you think you aren't, you are gaining something by reverting to your old behavior. Is it friendship? Is it satisfying your desire to bond? Is it maintaining your self-esteem or pride? What is it? Write it down.
2. Whatever it may be, ask yourself the following questions to facilitate a change in your behavior. How can your sense of what has been gained be maintained without the old behavior? Not sure? Well, imagine or pretend that there is a way. What did you imagine? Write it down.
3. Test what you wrote down by vividly visualizing yourself performing the new behavior when you come in contact with the individual that you have in mind. Take note of your feelings. Repeat this step several times until the new behavior becomes anchored and you feel good and confident.
4. If you still feel like reverting to old behavior or if you don't feel confident about the new behavior then you probably haven't maintained all of your gains. Go back to step one to be sure that you haven't overlooked any secondary gains.

Excerpt from "Reverting To Old Behavior"

You probably realize that taming the beast is not a one-size-fits-all process. Start with whichever key caught your attention and from there move on to the others.

Remember, suppressing your anger is not the goal. **You are not trying to cage the beast; you are taming the beast.**

**Sources & Recommend Reading:**

*Emotion* – Dylan Evans

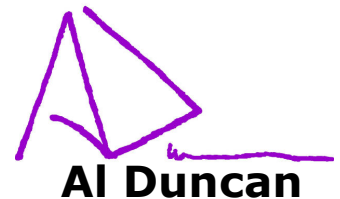
*Emotional Discipline* – Charles C. Manz

*Emotional Hostage* – Leslie Cameron-Bandler and Michael Lebean

*Emotional Intelligence* – Daniel Goldman

*Emotional Revolution* – Norman E. Rosenthal, MD

**Duncan Nugget® #11:**  
**“You are guaranteed**  
**to win once you defeat the**  
**enemy within because...**  
**It’s ALL Mental!”**



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**Al Duncan** is an award-winning youth advocate, publisher, and an internationally recognized authority on soft skills. He is the publisher of [DuncanNuggets.com](http://DuncanNuggets.com) a resource center packed with free videos, articles, and activities on soft skills. **Duncan Nuggets®** have been used by **over one million people** in hundreds of schools and youth serving organizations around the world.

Al is also the author of 4 books including, *My Success Journal for Young People*.

### Devastated, but not defeated

Al was born and raised in one of the most dangerous neighborhoods on the planet in North Philadelphia and by today's standards, would've been **labeled an “at-risk” student**. When he was 5 years old he was molested by a male friend of the family.

Emotionally traumatized, it took him years to remember what happened. At the age of 15, Al's world was torn to shreds again when he found out that his father, his childhood hero, was addicted to crack cocaine.

**Devastated, but not defeated**, Al refused to allow his personal problems stop him. He went on to enjoy careers as a professional saxophone player and a professional chef. His father's struggle and incredible recovery inspired Al to write **Duncan Nugget® #21: Failure is only permanent if you quit**.

At the age of 24, he walked away from his musical career and took on the tremendous responsibility of raising his youngest brother who was 12 years old at the time.

Today, as a **tireless advocate for youth empowerment**, Al is a high energy, high content, high impact speaker, lecturer, and motivational powerhouse.

He serves on the Anti-Prejudice Consortium Board of Directors and his expertise in the field of soft skills as well as youth development & empowerment has been sought after by a long list of organizations and institutions including:

- ✓ U. S. Dept. Education
- ✓ Army Reserve Child, Youth, and School Services
- ✓ The National Guard
- ✓ U.S. Department of Juvenile Justice
- ✓ The Ontario Ministry of Children & Youth Services
- ✓ U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- ✓ Dekalb County Family & Children Services
- ✓ FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America)
- ✓ FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America)
- ✓ 4-H
- ✓ The National Society of Leadership and Success (Sigma Alpha Pi)
- ✓ Georgia Adult Education Association
- ✓ Texas A&M University
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- ✓ How to be more successful NOW.
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[www.alduncan.net/mysuccessjournal.html](http://www.alduncan.net/mysuccessjournal.html)

Dear Mr. Duncan,

I know it was meant for me to be here at the Multicultural Leadership Retreat so that I could hear your **life-changing keynote and your great workshop.**

I heard about the retreat at the last minute, but I can honestly say that if **I didn't come and hear you I'm not sure what I would have done about continuing in school.**

Thanks for showing us how to create a vision, identify our values, and find our purpose in your keynote speech yesterday and thanks for showing us how to create a strong personal brand today in your workshop.

Now I know how to set my goals and actually attack them and achieve them.

Al Duncan stay up and keep going. Thanks."

*Calvin Whitehead  
Pre-Med Student  
Wartburg College*

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Thank you for your **great speech and inspiration. I learned a lot...**It was my honor and pleasure to meet with you... Thanks for sharing."

*(Moon) Yue Hua Li  
School of Management  
Syracuse University*

"Mr. Duncan, I really enjoyed your presentation because it actually was a 'breath of fresh air'. There are a lot of 'entrepreneurs' who talk about how they made it and that the way THEY did it is the way to go.

You told us what type of mindset you should have to be successful, period. And you showed us how to develop that mindset. **We need more people like you."**

*Gregory Reddick  
Alpha Phi Alpha  
African-American Student Union  
Georgia Tech*