

## Part 2: Theoretical Background and Further Information



The first important question is what is anger. Anger is, as we mentioned above, a natural feeling experienced when we are frustrated, hostile, hurt, mistreated, injured, opposed etc. New World Dictionary defines anger as: "...feel of displeasure resulting from injury, injustice, offence, bad treatment, aversion etc. (in.: Dentemarová, Kranzová, 1996, p. 7). Spielberg refers to anger as an emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage (1).

Anger is the emotion which can be both constructive and destructive. As constructive emotion anger signals that there is something out of order in our environment, something that could endanger us, what we feel as a difficulty on the way to our objectives. Anger as energized emotion gives us the energy and power to deal with obstacles. Anger can even save us when we express it in the right way and in the right moment. We can show definite and readable signals- "be careful because I do not agree with this, I do not like that"....! Anger can provide us with the other feelings of vulnerability, and provide us with an opportunity for venting our tension and frustration.

When we summarize, the positives of anger can help us mainly in areas of:

- release, catharsis of our tension;
- better understanding;
- negotiation of barriers and our aims reaching;
- mobilizing against an enemy and dangers;
- delimiting boundaries between us and the others;
- feeling of our own individuality (in Dentemarová, Kranzová, 1996).

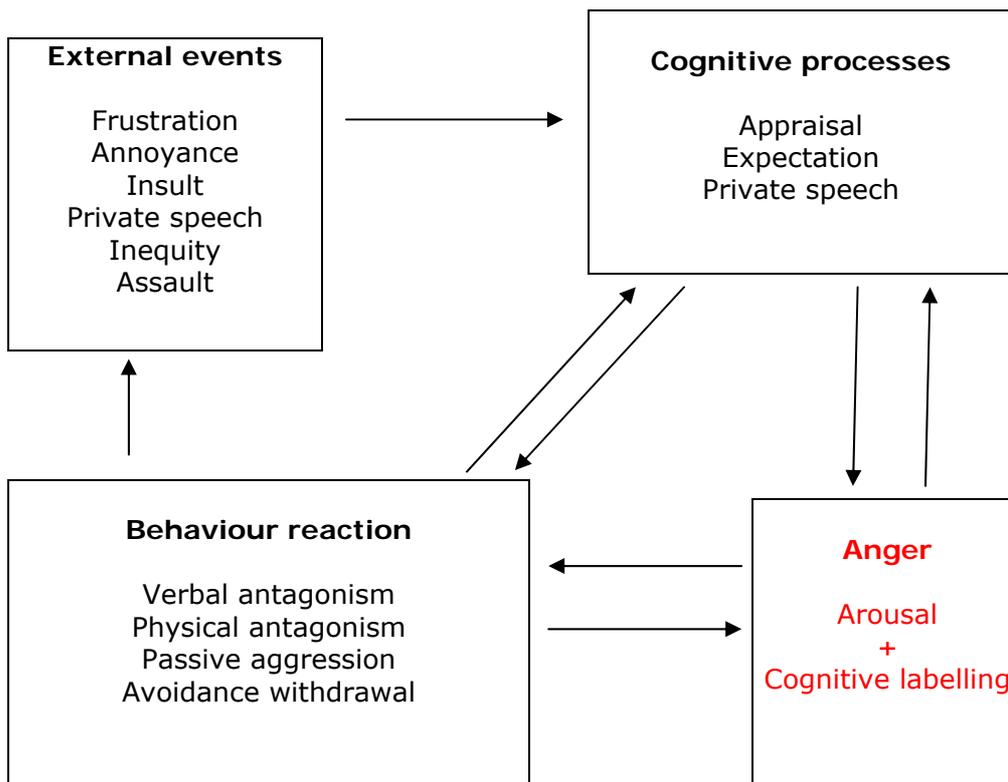
But there could be some negative motivations to anger too. Anger can reinforce a false sense of our self-esteem, illusory feeling of our moral superiority, to bully people into doing something we want to do against their will etc. So anger has a destructive aspect too. When the anger becomes out of control, behaviour starts to be very destructive. People are physically or verbally aggressive and consequences of such behaviour could be tragic. The intensity of anger depends mainly on determinations of anger and residual arousal. The anger also can lead to:

- feelings of injury;
- problems with relationship or its ending;
- feelings of guilt;
- revenge;
- fear of consequences (in Dentemarová, Kranzová, 1996).

The determinations of anger are seen as a combination of psychological arousal and cognitive labelling of that arousal. These cognitions are themselves influenced by internal and external factors and the behavioural responses to the situation (Browne, Howells, 1996, p. 195, 196). Anger may be elicited by both the environment and imaginative cues (Pankratz, Levendusky, Glaudin, 1976, p. 174).

A very important factor is arousal, Zillmann (1983, in Baron, Byrne, Suls, 1989) claims that arousal is a state of mind which supplies behaviour with energy, makes behaviour more intensive. Arousal usually comes out from sources such as participation in competitive games, some exercise, intra or interpersonal conflicts. As he claims in his "theory of excitation transfer" the physiological arousal diverts slowly during time. A part of the arousal can persist from one situation to the other namely on an unconsciousness level of mind. The cumulative arousal leads to reinforcement of future emotional experiences and we deal with the transfer of anger. At too high arousal the cognitive mechanisms are usually ineffective for behaviour correction and we cannot control our feelings.

### Determinants of anger arousal



(Novaco, 1978, in.: Browne, Howells, 1996, p. 196)

As far as the manifestation of anger is concerned Spielberger (1985, 1988) differs three varieties of that:

1. The first component includes anger manifestation against people or objects in the surroundings. It expresses itself through physical or verbal aggression: anger - out.
2. The second component of anger directs in the subject. There is a tendency not to express the angry feeling, respectively to keep it in check: anger - in. In spite of this repression of anger it manifests itself for instance as:
  - misunderstanding;
  - depression, desperation, anxiety;
  - feeling guilty;
  - negative self-picture;
  - over excitability;
  - physical problems (e. g. headaches, stomachic disorders etc.);
  - affectionate explosions (in.: Dentmarová, Kranzová, 1996).

3. The third component determines individual differences concerning the range of management: anger - control (in Stuchlíková, Man, Spielberg, 1994).

So our behaviour, our actions depend both on our feelings and their intensity and on our thoughts, let us say on cognitive labelling.



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