

**8
STRATEGIES
TO
RESPOND
TO
SOMEONE
WHO'S
ANGRY**

Have you ever been in the awkward situation where someone you were with became totally frustrated and angry? How are you supposed to react to something like that? Are there ways to diffuse the situation graciously?

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT FROM NOW ON, YOU CAN BE ARMED WITH THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU MANAGE THIS UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION:

1. **Just listen.** When angry, many of us want to vent our feelings to someone. And it's usually done to those who are in close proximity at the time. So a great strategy to use is simply to listen to the person express their anger until they "wind down."
2. **Don't worry about whether you agree with them or not.** Your thoughts and feelings about the situation are best kept to yourself when someone is angry.
 - Unless they're angry with you and you're personally involved in the situation,

refrain from sharing your own feelings about whatever's happening to agitate the other person.

3. **Say you're sorry.** Although the situation that angered the person may not be your fault, it's perfectly appropriate to say, "I'm sorry you're upset." **Interestingly, when an angry person hears this, they often calm down.**
4. **Attempt to relate.** You could say something like, "I don't blame you for feeling that way. I'd feel the same way if that happened to me." When the other person feels he isn't alone in the world, he just might calm down. When you relate with him, the angry person might feel justified and understood and, therefore, his anger will dissipate.
5. **Trust your instincts to protect yourself.** Although most people won't become threatening or physically aggressive when they get angry, trust your instincts. If at any point you feel threatened or in danger, leave the area immediately, without hesitation and without saying anything else to the person.
6. **After some minutes have passed, change the subject.** When you believe the person has had enough time to talk through or vent his anger,

work to make a shift in the conversation to a less anger-provoking topic for him. Ask him about his son who plays baseball or his wife's job.

- **Those who are angry can actually feel quite relieved when someone provides a reason for them to shift their attention away from the source of their anger.**
7. **Offer moral support.** It's appropriate to say, "Is there anything I can do" or "What can I do to help this situation" whenever a person is venting anger about something. For many, asking one of these simple questions is a wonderful way to help the person recognize he has someone right there who cares about how he feels.
 8. **Be encouraging.** If you know the person well and he's comfortable with you, you could provide some verbal encouragement during the challenging situation. "I'm sure you'll be able to get this straightened out with them" or "Perhaps if you make that phone call you'll be able to resolve the situation right now."
 - Determine in the situation how you can best be encouraging and then do it.

Knowing how to respond effectively to people who are angry is a wonderful “tool” to have in your arsenal of social skills.

Apply these strategies: listening, keeping your feelings out of it, and stating you're sorry the person is upset. Also, try to relate to the person, trust your instincts to stay safe, and change the subject. Finally, give moral support and be encouraging.