

# Control Diabetes: Managing Your Anger

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## Taking Charge of Your Diabetes Will Take Time

### “Listen” to your feelings.

Anger is common when dealing with diabetes. You have heard it a million times, “Diabetes care is up to you.” This is easy to say but hard to do. Staying on track 24 hours a day, seven days a week can tire anyone out. If you find you are in a slump, you might want to check to see if your feelings are getting in the way.

### Anger

Anger can start when you are told that you have diabetes. You ask the question, “Why me?” You may dwell on how unfair diabetes is. “I’m so angry at this disease! I don’t want to treat it. I don’t want to control it. I hate it!” This type of anger causes more harm than good. Learn to use your anger instead. You can even put it to work for better diabetes care.

### Anger and Self-Care

Anger worked against Mary, a woman in her thirties who was told she had diabetes six months ago. She was so mad! She saw diabetes not just as a threat to her health, but to her whole way of life. *“I have three little kids to take care of! I do not have time to fix special food now for me!”* Mary even felt that her husband saw her as a “sick person” and that she was “less of a woman”.

### Breaking Out of the Anger Circle

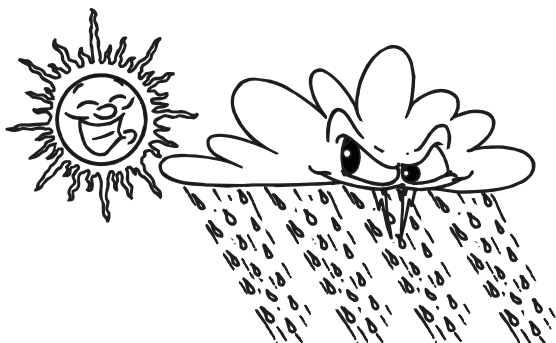
Mary was stuck in an anger circle. She was angry at diabetes for changing her life.

She refused to face her health care needs. She refused to change her life. As the disease went on poorly controlled, Mary felt worse and her anger at diabetes grew.

You do not have to stay stuck if you find yourself in an anger circle, like Mary. One way to break the circle comes from Dr. Weisinger’s book *Anger Work-Out*. He says you do three things:

- 1. Find out what is making you angry.** How is anger changing your life? Keep track of when you feel angry. Each night, think back over the day. When were you angry? What time was it? Who were you angry at? What did you do about it? After a few weeks, read over your notes. See any patterns?

When Mary read her anger notes, she learned that she did not like talking about her diabetes in public. She felt angry if friends asked her what she could eat or if they made special food. When she and her husband tried to go out with friends, she felt her diabetes was what all our friends were thinking about.



**2. Change the thoughts and actions that fuel your anger.** Look for warning signs that your anger is building. Do you feel tense? Are you talking louder and faster? Take charge of your anger by the doing the following:

- Talk slowly.
- Slow your breathing.
- Get a drink of water.
- Sit down.
- Be quiet. Silence can be best when anger is building.

**3. Find ways to make your anger work for you.** Your anger notes can help. Read your notes again and look at each time you got angry. Ask yourself, “How was my anger helping me cope?”

Mary found out her anger was helping her avoid talking about her diabetes with others. Mary’s anger told her that she still had not accepted having diabetes. To get more support, she joined her local American Diabetes Association. Meeting other people with diabetes helped her feel less alone. She also learned that having diabetes did not make her less of a woman. Slowly, she was able to enjoy her friends again. She was able to talk about her disease with others. She was also able to tell her friends that she did not want special treatment.

## Let Anger Be Your Ally

The goal is not to get anger out of your life. When you feel afraid or frustrated, anger is a normal response. But you can put your anger to work for you. Your anger may be a sign that you need to take action. Talking with someone can help. Anger can be a force for action, change, and growth. The better you understand your anger, the better you will be able to use it for good self-care.



### For more information

**Contact a Diabetes Educator** (nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, and other health professionals)

To find a diabetes teacher near you, call:

**The American Association of Diabetes Educators toll-free at 1-800-TEAMUP4 (1-800-832-6874)**  
or visit the website at [www.aadenet.org](http://www.aadenet.org) and click on "Find an Educator."

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