

“Anger is a short madness’ (Horace)

“It is hardly possible to build anything if frustration, bitterness, and a mood of helplessness prevail.” (Lech Walesa)

“I know from personal experience how damaging it can be to live with bitterness and unforgiveness. I like to say it's like taking poison and hoping your enemy will die. And it really is that harmful to us to live this way.” (Joyce Meyer)

“Something my mum taught me years and years and years ago, is life's just too short to carry around a great bucket-load of anger and resentment and bitterness and hatreds.” (Kevin Rudd)

And finally, alluding to just how seductive the retaliatory self-righteousness of bitterness can be, this simple edict: “Never succumb to the temptation of bitterness.” (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

What Is Anger?

Anger is one of the basic human emotions, as elemental as happiness, sadness, anxiety, or disgust. These emotions are tied to basic survival and were honed over the course of human history. Anger is related to the “fight, flight, or freeze” response of the sympathetic nervous system; it prepares humans to fight. But fighting doesn't necessarily mean throwing punches; it might motivate communities to combat injustice by changing laws or enforcing new behavioral norms.

The **main difference** between anger and rage is that the **anger is an emotion while rage is the violent, uncontrollable anger, often accompanied by violent physical actions.**

Anger and rage are inter-related. Anger is a human feeling or an emotion that occurs as a result of being annoyed or irritated towards something. Thus, there may be varied reasons that cause anger. Rage is the extreme or violent form of anger, which is followed by hostile behaviour.

Anger has several levels, which can be repressed and not manifested to the outside. On the other hand, rage is the ultimate manifestation of extreme anger that has welled up inside a person for a long time. Therefore, this is a major difference between anger and rage.

The difference between anger and rage

Anger and rage are completely different phenomena with different origins, purposes and, therefore, different therapy needs.

Anger is not an emotion to be “conquered” or “beaten.” On the contrary it is an extremely important emotion – one that is vital for our continued well-being. It helps us to care for ourselves. It helps us to identify when something is not quite right and needs attention. Anger itself has very different characteristics to rage.

Anger can be characterised as follows:

- It is respectful of yourself and others. Anger doesn't mean shouting and screaming – it means taking care of yourself.
- Anger alerts us to the fact that something in the environment around us needs addressing.
- Anger can prevent us from being exploited or manipulated – it's a kind of self-preservation mechanism.
- Anger protects our sense of self as a unique individual.

Rage, however, is disrespectful to others. It doesn't solve a problem but only serves to make it worse. Rage can be both hot and explosive or cold and seemingly ‘reasonable’. In both cases however it remains a highly destructive emotion.

Unlike anger, rage is an unconscious process, which cannot be tamed by pure willpower or by attempting to alter behaviour. These approaches will not result in a longer-term resolution to ongoing anger and rage issues.

As an individual is unable to deal with more and more life's experiences in a healthy way, they experience more and more stress. This, in turn, can lead to a feeling of a whole raft of different emotions trying to get out, which then explode in an uncontrollable rage.

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Transforming Rage - Justice