

# Clergy Health Resource Packet



Canadian Baptists  
OF WESTERN CANADA



Inviting Faith. Acting in Mercy. Cultivating Leaders.

## Clergy Care Book Reviews

### ***The State of Pastors* Barna, 2017**

A review and Recommendation for Pastor and Leader Care (Mark Doerksen)

This book is written from an American perspective, but is helpful nonetheless. The book is a review of the findings of study commissioned by Pepperdine University. The book is broken down into three sections; self-leadership, congregational leadership, and cultural leadership. Self-leadership examines the inward life of pastors and their relationships. Congregational leadership examines the priorities, joys and frustrations of congregational life. Cultural leadership examines the influence and engagement of pastors beyond their congregations.

This is a helpful piece, as it describes aspects of the reality of being a pastor today. It is a challenging time to be a pastor, and to work for a denomination, given the changing culture and role of the church within culture. Pastoral work is affected as less people are inclined towards ministry, or have a very different view of ministry than the local church. This has resulted in a crisis of sorts for pastoral leadership, as this population has increased in age and replacements are more difficult to find.

### **Les Carter and Frank Minirth: *The Anger Workbook: An Interactive Guide to Anger Management***

A review and Recommendation for Pastor and Leader Care (Faye Reynolds)

If you want to save money on counseling and work through some issues that you struggle with in terms of self-esteem, the need to feel loved and understood, the feeling of losing control, etc, then this workbook is an excellent guide. The authors give counseling scenarios of life situations and offer the kinds of questions they would pose in that situation, and in the workbook style, the reader can work through their own responses. Their checklists for many of the sections help to give initial insight into our personal response to situations, and then the questions for written responses offer a tangible tool for deepening personal understanding. This book could be an excellent tool for not simply managing anger, but understanding a greater depth of emotions and their source. This could also be a helpful counseling tool to use as a pastor in ministering to others.

Another resource that I have personally found very helpful is Dr. Andrew Lester's book: *Coping with Your Anger* where he looks at anger as the "smoke detector" of our lives that warn us of impending danger.

Rather than managing the smoke detector so it doesn't go off, he offers ways to discover the source of the threat and how we can turn anger into an ally and trusted advisor. I would highly recommend this book as well.

### **M. Robert Mulholland Jr. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation***

A review and Recommendation for Pastor and Leader Care (Faye Reynolds)

There are many books available on the Spiritual Disciplines, some which give a better teaching on the classic practices such as meditation, Examen and Lectio Divina; or other authors such as Gary Thomas in his *Sacred Pathways* help one understand worship personality preferences such as being drawn to a contemplative style or a naturalist or enthusiast. What Mulholland does so well, is challenge the reader to see what we neglect when we lean into our natural tendency at the cost of other expressions of worship.

Part of his "roadmap" is using the Meyer's- Brigg 16 personality types to reveal why certain personality types prefer certain approaches to their spiritual life over other practices. He looks at the role of our preferred ways of being and doing in the world: how we prefer "either extraversion or introversion as our focus of life, sensing or intuition as our means of receiving data for living, thinking or feeling as our way of processing the data, and perception or judging as our way of relating to the world".

Our life calling is to be conformed into the image of Christ and this is the work the Spirit is doing in us moment-by-moment and day-by-day. Our task is to attend to the work of the Spirit, which requires a disciplined life of spiritual practice; otherwise the world has a way of crowding out or desensitizing the Spirit's touch. Mulholland wants us to work within our own personality, but also to understand the role of community in our spiritual development so he strongly emphasizes the communal aspect of our spiritual

practices, which is a strength of this book. Often Spiritual Formation can be seen as too self-orientated, but Mulholland shows the communal necessity and blessing of our Christ-like transformation. The other unique challenge in this book is his chapter entitled “One-sided Spirituality” where he explains the dangers of nurturing our spiritual preference at the peril of neglecting our “shadow side” and the need to push ourselves into places of discomfort so that God can feed all of our soul. I found this chapter most revealing of understanding potential emotional reactions to a spiritual deficit. For pastors who may be struggling in an area of ministry, this could be a helpful place to start in self-understanding.

### **Review of *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, Peter Scazzero 2003**

A review and Recommendation for Pastor and Leader Care (Mark Doerksen)

The author suggests that there’s something missing in discipleship. We have plenty of people today who are passionate forgotten his work, yet were unconnected to their own emotions or to those around them. This is a deadly combination, both for the church and leaders personal life.

The author goes on to describe six principles of the emotionally healthy church. The first is looking beneath the surface. Here we pay attention to emotions and questions that come up for us in our inner life. The second is breaking the power of the past. Here the author looks at family of origin theory and discusses how our families have shaped us. Though our families have influenced us, our new spiritual family is what are to take precedence. Third, we must live in brokenness and vulnerability. We lead out of failure and pain, questions and struggles, serving the other. Fourth, we must be willing to receive the gift of limits. Here we joyfully receive the talents given us by God the matter how many we have. Fifth, we embrace grieving and loss. We must understand that grieving is a pathway to becoming a compassionate person. Sixth, we ought to make incarnation our model for loving well. Here we learn to enter another’s world, while holding onto ourselves and paying attention to both of those realities in the present.

I think the author has some valuable lessons for churches. It contains some honest and hopeful news about what to do in this location that makes a susceptible to burnout and ill health. He’s not always great on biblical reflection, but is thoughtful in his writing as he attempts to help churches improve at discipleship.

### **Review of *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, Peter Scazzero 2006**

A review and Recommendation for Pastor and Leader Care (Mark Doerksen)

This book makes the claim that it is impossible to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature. In the first half of the book he describes the problem of emotionally unhealthy spirituality. And in the second part of the book describes the pathway to emotionally healthy spirituality.

Here are 10 symptoms of emotionally unhealthy spirituality:

1. Using God to run from God.
2. Ignoring the emotions of anger, sadness, and fear
3. dying to the wrong things
4. denying the past’s impact on the present
5. dividing our lives into “secular” and “sacred” compartments
6. doing for God instead of being with God
7. spiritualizing away conflict
8. covering over brokenness, weakness, and failure
9. living without limits
10. judging other people’s spiritual journey

Defining emotional health:

1. naming, recognizing, and managing our own feelings;
2. identifying with and having active compassion for others;
3. initiating and maintaining close and meaningful relationships;
4. breaking free from self-destructive patterns;
5. being aware of how our past impacts our present;

6. developing the capacity to express our thoughts and feelings clearly, both verbally and nonverbally;
7. respecting and loving others without having to change them;
8. asking for what we need, want, or prefer clearly, directly, and respectfully;
9. accurately self-assessing our strengths, limits, and weaknesses and freely sharing them with others;
10. distinguishing and appropriately expressing our sexuality and sensuality; and
11. grieving well.

#### Defining contemplative spirituality

1. awakening and surrendering to God's love in any and every situation;
2. positioning ourselves to hear God and remember his presence in all we do;
3. communing with God, allowing him to fully indwell the depth of our being;
4. practicing silence, solitude, and a life of unceasing prayer;
5. resting attentively in the presence of God;
6. understanding our earthly life as a journey of transformation toward ever-increasing union with God;
7. finding the true essence of who we are in God;
8. loving others out of a life of love for God;
9. developing a balance, harmonious rhythm of life that enables us to be aware of the sacred in all of life;
10. adapting historic practices of spirituality that are applicable today;
11. allowing our Christian lives to be shaped by the rhythms of the Christian calendar rather than the culture; and
12. living in committed community that passionately love Jesus above all else.

And a helpful piece: on page 47, the author describes the gifts of integration, the gifts of emotional health and contemplative spirituality lived out. They offer three primary gifts which include the gift of slowing down, the gift of anchoring in God's love, and the gift of breaking free from illusions. In the gift of anchoring in God's love, the author talks about self talk, things that we say to ourselves in the midst of life and circumstances. Often we are negative, and we have learned self talk in our own families and cultures growing up. The biblical basis of self talk is gained from Ephesians 3 verses 18 to 19, where we are reminded of God's deep love for us. He suggests that we are entitled to make mistakes and to not be perfect, which may well be a liberating thought for many who attempt to pastor.

I find this to be a helpful resource. In a vocation where introspection often accompanies the work, it is important to know which voices to listen to and how to respond to the emotions that we feel. And as much relief as it is to name some of the realities we face, it is still a challenge to respond the way we should in any given situation. In that regard, this book is once returned to when we encounter difficult situations or circumstances in relationships.

#### **Review of *The Emotionally Healthy Leader*, Peter Scazzero 2015**

A review and Recommendation for Pastor and Leader Care (Mark Doerksen)

This book describes emotional health in our leaders, and focuses on the inner life and the outer life. Scazzero is able to relate to pastors in different situations, and describes different emotions that we may have as we come to a reading of this book. It describes the emotionally unhealthy leader as someone who operates a continuous state of emotional and spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a "being with God" sufficient to sustain their "doing for God." He describes for characteristics of such a leader: first, they have low self-awareness, second they prioritize ministry over marriage or singleness, third they do more activity for God than their relationship with God can sustain, and finally, they lack a work/Sabbath rhythm. I also find it helpful that he speaks of four unhealthy commandments of church leadership; first, it's not a success unless it's bigger and better, second what you do is more important than who you are, third, superficial spirituality is okay, and finally, don't rock the boat as long as the work gets done.

In terms of the inner life, we must find ways to face our shadows, lead out of our marriage/singleness, slow down for loving union, and practice Sabbath delight. These form the foundations for our engagement with others and for the rest of our ministry.

In terms of the outer life, the author focuses on planning and decision-making, culture and team building, power and wise boundaries, endings and new beginnings.

I think the author has something significant to say in each chapter. That's not to say that I agree with all that he says, but there are nuggets in the book that are quite helpful for leaders. He focuses a lot on family of origin issues, and I think there's some wisdom in this, especially as it manifests itself in terms of conflict resolution and relationships. There's a real sense in which Scazzero would say that less is more, that focusing on the inward is really what propels the outward.

I appreciate his perspective, in that he is writing from 26 years of pastoral experience. And the things he says are challenging, in terms of relationships and in terms of scheduling our lives so that we're more attentive to the things of God.

I also struggle a little bit with some of his methodology. It seems as though most of his insight comes from experience and observation, and though he's very good at it, I sometimes wonder if there is more study to be done on some of these issues. That said, I wonder how he comes up with only four emphases of the inner life, as well as the outer life.

### **Review of *Resilient Ministry* By Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, And Donald Guthrie.**

The authors of this book took 5 years to do some research amongst pastors. They have discovered 5 main themes that promote healthy, sustainable ministry that lasts. Because many pastors are men, the data seems tilted that way, but the book is helpful in many ways, and might be especially so in a cohort setting, where a group of pastors agreed to work through the book together.

The five themes are spiritual formation, self-care, emotional and cultural intelligence, marriage and family, and Leadership and Management. (p. 250ff)

Spiritual formation understood here is the ongoing process of maturing as Christians both personally and interpersonally. One's walk with God is very important in ministry longevity.

Self-care is described as the ability to recognize our limits. Pastors need to live into this, and need to help the congregation understand that pastors are more than their role and their calling.

Emotional and Cultural intelligence are two different topics. Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage one's own emotions proactively and to respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Cultural intelligence is an awareness of regional, ethnic, and generational differences and the implications of this differences personally and interpersonally.

Marriage and Family focuses on maintaining spiritual and relational health with one's children and spouse.

Leadership and Management. Leadership is the *poetry (a helpful piece here)* of gathering others together to seek adaptive and constructive change. Management is the plumbing that provides order and consistency to organizations.

I appreciate this book, and I appreciate its practicality. It has plenty of resources at the end of chapters, including movies to watch that relate to specific themes. I found that the authors are able to articulate important aspects of sustained ministry, and I learned more about myself and ministry as I read the book.

# When Conflict Erupts in Your Church

*An Interview with Speed B. Leas*

**W***hat do people fight about in churches?*

People sometimes say that fights are just interpersonal or personality conflicts and that they're not substantive. I don't believe that's quite true. In my work with the Alban Institute, I've found that about half the time congregations are in conflict over issues that are important to the clergy and laity. One thing they fight about is values. They have conflict over liturgy, social action, theology, and lifestyle issues.

Congregations have conflict over other noninterpersonal problems, too. For example, if people aren't doing their jobs, or they don't know how to do them adequately, conflict often develops.

About 46 percent of the time we encounter situations that do have a high degree of interpersonal difficulty and emotional conflict.

*How do serious conflicts get started in a parish?*

Usually people get ahold of clues that they have differences. They realize their values are different; they feel they're not getting the attention or recognition that they need. They discover style differences. Often these are not dealt with while they're still small problems.

People will then begin to collect a bagful of these slights and hurts. When they get enough in the bag, they will do something that precipitates a confrontation: they'll call the bishop or circulate a petition; the choir will walk out; people will attempt to change the slate of nominees for a certain office.

It's at this point that people usually think, "Oh, this is a big fight. This is terrible. We're out of control." Now they will address the problems.

*Conflict is a part of everyday life. How can you tell when you're in the midst of a serious conflict that will require some special attention?*

How do you know how bad it is? The Alban Institute has done a good deal of research over the years. On the basis of observing behavior in conflicts, I differentiate five levels of conflict. The objectives and the language of the people in the conflict distinguish the different levels. The first two levels are easy to work with; the third is tough; the fourth and fifth are very difficult and impossible.

In the first level of conflict the people who are in disagreement will stay focused on the problem. Their language will be specific and clear. They are problem solving and not feeling panicked.

In level two conflict, people become much more self-protective. In fact, self-protection will become their first agenda; the problem itself will become the second. They will also begin to use very general language and not talk specifically about an issue. They'll talk about trust and communication. None of those words means anything until you find out who's not communicating with whom, or what kind of nontrusting behavior has occurred.

In the third level of conflict, people turn from self-protection and become more interested in winning, that is, getting their position sustained in the organization. They will want to get people elected, for example, or have their position adopted by the organization. Their language begins to distort matters rather dramatically. Their talk reveals that they view the world dichotomously. They talk about us and them; they begin to see others as malevolent in their intentions. They become expert mind readers. They talk about perceptions as if they were facts.

In level four conflict, the objectives of the people involved change again. Folks are no longer interested in just winning. They are trying to get rid of someone. They feel there has to be a divorce: the pastor has to leave. Language becomes even more distorted.

In level five conflict, people become religious fanatics about their position. They feel themselves called by God to eradicate from the earth those to whom they are opposed. The pastor must not be simply fired; he must be prevented from getting another church. Or if he is called by another parish, that congregation must be warned.

*When is an outside person helpful in the management of conflict?*

At level three. At lower levels of conflict, people aren't hurting enough to know they need help. They aren't motivated enough to work with an outsider to deal with their differences. An outsider can, however, train people in conflict management skills when they're involved in the lower levels of conflict.

Dramatic, public, precipitating events are good in that they do galvanize the organization. They wake it up. And that's often just what's needed, even if people don't like it when it happens. At least then they're motivated to work on the problem.

*Are there behavior patterns that fuel a conflict and prevent constructive resolution from occurring?*

I've already talked about the role of language that people use with one another. Another common behavior pattern is also debilitating—withdrawing from one another. Instead of talking with people with whom they disagree, people talk only to those they think will agree with them. They organize themselves into clusters of like-minded people.

Also, people use information that is made up, that is, they *guess* about people's intentions and actions. All of these behavior patterns exacerbate the conflict.

*It's hard to get even two people who are angry with each other to resolve their differences. How can a large group of people ever hope to do it? Are there ground rules that facilitate groups working together under high stress?*

There certainly are. One of the key ones is to help everybody who is going to be involved in dealing with the differences set up the process that will be used to work through the problems. They must believe the process will be fair, that they will have ample opportunity to influence the outcome. An environment of safety needs to be clearly developed, too. Making a safe environment includes setting up clear ground rules about how people are going to deal with each other. It includes talking about what different decision-making processes will be used. It includes agreeing not to engage in threatening behavior and talk.

It is important to recognize that issues *are* important—even though some people involved will deny it. It takes a lot of work to define a problem and talk about it specifically. Even naming the issues is frightening.

*What different decision-making processes can people use when trying to resolve their differences?*

The way I prefer people in organizations to make decisions is collaboration. Everybody who is affected by the problem is brought into the arena where the problem will be worked on. No decision is made until the vast majority of the people agree. Everyone works together; they pool their energy and share information to find the solution that is best for everyone.

If the group isn't able to collaborate, negotiation is a second way to make decisions. We trade off with one another: I'll give you this if you give me that. Everyone should get as much as possible, but no one will get everything.

If collaboration and negotiation fail, then people have to move into the authority system of the organization. Sometimes that means voting or sometimes a certain official makes the decision.

There are other ways to make decisions, too. You can *avoid* making a decision. That means that the status quo remains. That in itself is a decision. If people can't make decisions, they won't be able to work out their differences. They will remain stuck in their dissatisfaction. Of course, people must have a clear understanding of what the problem is in order to make clear decisions.

*Are there basic attitudes or assumptions that are essential to successful conflict management?*

An optimistic determination. You've got to believe that it's possible to find a mutually satisfying solution. And you have to set yourself to do the hard work of trying to get that solution. Mutually satisfying decisions don't come easily. They certainly don't come out of a sweetness-and-light or a Walt Disney approach to the world.

It is essential, too, to set realistic goals for your management of conflict. I have four that I focus on: The first is to help people define clear decisions that they can make. Second, I want to help them join in decision-making processes that are fair and legal. Everyone needs a chance to participate appropriately.

My third goal is to reduce tension within the organization. I want to help people not be so frightened, so that when they come into the arena where they are making decisions, they can bring their best selves. If I can help minimize their fears, they can think more clearly and contribute positively and usefully to the conversation. Finally, I want to help people learn

from the conflict itself. They can learn conflict management techniques—what works and what doesn't.

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*This interview originally appeared in Soundings, the magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota, and was conducted by Susan K. Henderson, the magazine's interim editor at the time. It later was reprinted in Action Information 11, no. 5 (September/October 1985): 16-17, to promote Speed Leas's then-new and still-available publication, Moving Your Church through Conflict (Bethesda: Alban, 1985).*

## Strategies for Coping with Stress

Walk through the "self help" section of your local bookstore or library and invariably you will see shelf after shelf stacked with dozens of books about identifying and coping with sources of stress. While they may contain different terminology and examples, nearly every book follows the same methodology:

1. Identify the source of the stress
2. Identify a way to eliminate the source of the stress, or implement ways to mitigate the stress it causes in your life

Following this methodology, the table below lists several of the most commonly cited sources of clergy stress followed by suggestions clergy can use to minimize or eliminate the tension these stressors cause. <http://www.wespath.org/center-for-health/resources/stress-and-clergy-health/>

Source of Stress	Suggestions for Ways to Cope
Balancing time spent with the congregation with personal/family time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Buy a day planner and schedule "family time" and "personal time" throughout your day/week; stick to the schedule</li> <li>- Take a vacation that is at least one week long every year; schedule several shorter breaks throughout the year so you have time to relax and recharge</li> </ul>
Helping parishioners deal with problems (i.e., illness, the death of a loved one, financial hardship, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make yourself available to the congregation, but establish times when you can only be reached in the event of an emergency</li> <li>- Refer congregants to other professionals (medical, financial, etc.) when necessary</li> <li>- Ask a fellow clergy member or your spiritual leader for assistance/tips for assisting people you are having difficulty helping</li> <li>- Contact your EAP if another person's sadness is making you sad as well</li> </ul>
Needing to attend multiple committee/planning meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify the meetings where your attendance is mandatory/most needed</li> <li>- Have a representative attend non-crucial meetings and supply you with a summary of the proceedings</li> <li>- Try to schedule meetings back-to-back and in the same locations to consolidate time and eliminate travel</li> <li>- Identify outdated/redundant committees that can be eliminated or merged</li> </ul>
Public speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practice your sermon in front of family and friends</li> <li>- Ask a fellow clergy member for tips</li> <li>- Join an organization like <a href="#">Toastmasters International</a> that specializes in improved public speaking and leadership</li> <li>- Take a communications course at a community college</li> </ul>
Parish financial concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Have a church budget; regularly update/revise the budget based on the changing needs/circumstances of the church</li> <li>- Utilize the conference resources available to local churches with financial concerns</li> <li>- Keep the congregation informed of the church's financial situation</li> <li>- Seek volunteers from the congregation who have financial planning experience</li> </ul>
Administrative church tasks including supervising staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Train staff to do administration so you can focus on larger concerns</li> <li>- Seek volunteers from the congregation to assist</li> <li>- Make sure current staff has the required skills for their jobs; retrain/restaff if necessary</li> </ul>

**Five Dimensions of Health** to which every pastor must pay daily or weekly attention: Physical health, emotional health, social health, spiritual health and financial health.

1. Physical activity is one of the most effective ways to improve and maintain your health. Research shows that physical activity lowers the risk for many chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, heart disease, obesity and bone and joint problems); improves mood; and boosts energy. Start small, with an activity you enjoy, and consider engaging a partner to help keep you accountable to your activity goals and provide emotional support along the way.
2. The emotional dimension focuses on awareness and acceptance of stressors and feelings—positive or negative. Emotional well-being includes the ability to manage your feelings and related behaviors, cope effectively with stress, and adapt to change. There are practical ways to enhance mood, build resilience, and improve your response to life’s challenges. Just as effort is required to improve or maintain physical health, the same is true for emotional health. Take an emotional inventory and see which emotions you experienced in a week: mad, sad, glad, afraid, confused, ashamed. Was anything dominant and do you know why?
3. Spiritual Health is not automatic, simply because you weekly prepare sermons from Scripture. Study is one aspect, but listening prayer and personal retreats along with daily devotional practice can help the pastor keep fueled for the task. What is your spiritual “me and God time”?
4. Who are my friends and confidants, both within and outside of the church? What friends do my spouse and I hold in common and mutually enjoy, and who are the ones that we relate to individually for personal support and well-being? It can be a challenge for clergy to have solid friendships within their congregations, but even a greater challenge to have none at all. Healthy recreation needs a social component on a regular basis in our lives.
5. We know that financial stress can outweigh many other positive aspects of our lives - perhaps because it may feel like we have the least control over our income, and yet there are many, many ways that we can control our spending. Tracking your spending over a few months can shed interesting light on where the “leaks” are in your budgets. Good financial counsel can go a long way to relieving anxiety over your monetary needs.

Check out these links for detailed articles: <http://www.wespath.org/center-for-health/resources/five-dimensions-of-health/>

**Priorities/Balance Self-Check**

Detail your last week's daily schedule of time usage. Work backwards, starting with yesterday, or begin today and record the next seven days. \*Add the hours of days 1-7 and divide by 7 = daily average

Activity hours	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	average
Sleep								
Meals								
House/yard work								
Exercise								
Leisure								
Family time								
Personal devotional								
Sermon prep								
Ministry								
Total hours	24	24	24	24	24	24	24	

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) What area(s) are out of balance and need a higher priority?
- 2) What did you discover that you were not fully aware of?

## Understanding our Emotions and Particularly Anger

Faye Reynolds

Are emotions good or bad? No – they simply are! We do not have a great deal of control over our initial emotional responses, as they are reactions to our environment and those around us. We have an incredible array of God-given emotions from jubilation to despair. It is important to identify our emotions and name them in order to best understand ourselves and what makes us tick. We all need to expand our vocabulary of words to better embrace what we are feeling and assess the intensity of that emotion. We might say we feel “sad” but what does that mean? Are we sad because we scratched our car, or are we sad because a best friend has been diagnosed with cancer? What is the range of that emotion? This chart moves us from mild to intense emotion. Stretch your vocabulary so that you can properly name and gauge the emotions that you are feeling to expand your self-awareness. Journaling can help.

<b>Mad:</b>	<b>Sad:</b>	<b>Glad:</b>	<b>Afraid:</b>	<b>Confused:</b>	<b>Ashamed:</b>
Bothered	Down	At ease	Uneasy	Curious	Uncomfortable
Ruffled	Blue	Secure	Apprehensive	Uncertain	Awkward
Irritated	Somber	Comfortable	Careful	Ambivalent	Clumsy
Displeased	Low	Relaxed	Cautious	Doubtful	Self-conscious
Annoyed	Glum	Contented	Hesitant	Unsettled	Disconcerted
Steamed	Lonely	Optimistic	Tense	Hesitant	Chagrined
Irked	Disappointed	Satisfied	Anxious	Perplexed	Abashed
Perturbed	Worn out	Refreshed	Nervous	Puzzled	Embarrassed
Frustrated	Melancholy	Stimulated	Edgy	Muddled	Flustered
Angry	Down- hearted	Pleased	Distressed	Distracted	Sorry
Fed up	Unhappy	Warm	Scared	Flustered	Apologetic
Disgusted	Dissatisfied	Snug	Frightened	Jumbled	Ashamed
Indignant	Gloomy	Happy	Repulsed	Unfocused	Regretful
Ticked off	Mournful	Encouraged	Agitated	Fragmented	Remorseful
Bristling	Grieved	Tickled	Afraid	Dismayed	Guilty
Fuming	Depressed	Proud	Shocked	Insecure	Disgusted
Explosive	Lousy	Cheerful	Alarmed	Dazed	Belittled
Enraged	Crushed	Thrilled	Overwhelmed	Bewildered	Humiliated
Irate	Defeated	Delighted	Frantic	Lost	Violated
Incensed	Dejected	Joyful	Panic stricken	Stunned	Dirty
Burned up	Empty	Elated	Horrified	Chaotic	Mortified
Outraged	Wretched	Exhilarated	Petrified	Torn	Defiled
Furious	Despairing	Overjoyed	Terrified	Baffled	Devastated
Blind rage	Devastated	Ecstatic	Numb	Dumbfounded	Degraded

When you think of the word, “Angry” – what comes to mind? Is it a positive word to you or negative? The word itself can carry much emotion if we have had past negative experiences such as angry parents or employers or we lost our temper and it embarrassed us. We may vow to “never get angry”, but is that healthy?

Anger like all emotions is a gift from God. Anger is the **smoke detector** of the body. It goes off to signal that something is not right – that there is a threat to one’s personal well being or to a loved one and it requires a response. What good is it to turn off the smoke detector without looking for the source of the smoke?

The smoke detector of our emotions signals that our person or a loved one is being threatened in some way. Most situations in our lives are not physical threats, but emotional threats. We primarily feel anger when our sense of self or extended self is being threatened. We feel undervalued, misunderstood, demeaned or discredited. The more insecure we feel, the more sensitive our smoke detector will be. Anger is not always expressed by an outward burst of emotion, but can be revealed in other behaviors.

Consider the following list and check which ones apply to you: (From “The Anger Book: An Interactive Guide to Anger Management” by Dr. Les Carter)

- Impatience comes over me more frequently than I would like
- I nurture critical thoughts quite easily
- When I am displeased with someone I may shut down any communication or withdraw
- I feel inwardly annoyed when family and friends do not comprehend my needs
- Tensions mounts within me as I tackle a demanding task
- I feel frustrated when I see someone else having fewer struggles than I do
- When facing an important event, I may obsessively ponder how I must manage it.
- Sometimes I walk in another direction to avoid seeing someone I do not like
- When discussing a controversial topic my tone of voice is likely to become raised
- I can accept a person who admits his or her mistakes, but I have a hard time accepting someone who refuses to admit his or her own weaknesses
- When I talk about my irritations I don't really want to hear an opposite point of view
- I do not easily forget when someone does me wrong
- When someone confronts me from a misinformed position, I am thinking of my rebuttal as he or she speaks
- Sometimes my discouragement makes me want to quit
- I can be quite aggressive in my pursuits or even when playing a game just for fun
- I struggle emotionally (ruminate) with the things in life that are not fair
- Although I know it may not be right, I sometimes blame others for my problems
- When someone openly speaks ill of me my natural response is to think of how I can defend myself
- Sometimes I speak slanderously about a person, not really caring how it may harm his or her reputation
- I may act kindly on the outside while feeling frustrated on the inside
- Sarcasm is a trait I use in expressing humor
- When someone is clearly annoyed with me I too easily jump into the conflict
- At times I struggle with moods of depression or discouragement
- I have been known to take an “I-don't-care” attitude toward the needs of others
- When I am in an authority role, I may speak too sternly or insensitively.

What is your most frequent anger response? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What does the Bible say about anger?** Most verses warn about uncontrolled anger.

Proverbs 14:29, 16:32, 19:11 &12; Eccl. 7:9, Mark 3: 1 – 6; Mark 10: 13 – 16; John 2: 14 – 17; Matt. 5: 21 – 22; Eph. 4: 25 – 27.

**What physically happens when you feel threatened?**

Any threat to your selfhood triggers an internal alarm system indicating that you are under attack. Whether you want to or not, your whole being goes on alert; mobilizing you to respond to the situation.– i.e. If a bear is chasing you – you will have two emotional responses; anxiety (fear) and anger. Body changes occur; rising blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, tense muscles, increased perspiration, and adrenalin hike into blood stream.

- Mental response looks for a way out.
- Physical response: Fear leading to flight or Anger leading to fight.

**Six types of anger:**

1. Initial Anger – a healthy, automatic reaction to danger
2. Sustained Anger – Initial stimulus/threat is gone but continues to arouse anger (the smoke detector keeps ringing after the fire is out)
3. Suppressed Anger – anger that is denied or ignored and not expressed (taking the battery out of the smoke detector)
4. Vented Anger – maintaining a state of tension which generates more and more anger: If one just blows off steam without identifying the threat, then the anger is not released but actually generated. (Smoke detector keeps getting louder and louder)

5. Storehouse Anger – the emotion is not expressed and the threat (trigger) goes unrecognized. The next time that trigger is experienced, there is an explosion – the emotional response far outweighs the level of threat.
6. Dissolved Anger – Recognizes the threat and deals with it so the anger fades.

**Anger can be acknowledged with words alone (I am angry!) and does not necessarily require a grand outward display of expression. Three types of Expression:**

1. Explosive Anger: yelling, swearing, driving recklessly, slamming doors, temper tantrum, hitting and kicking, etc. There is a danger of hurting self or others; words said that can't be taken back or forgotten; signifies a loss of control – a smoke detector gone wild.
2. Subtle Anger: sarcasm, nagging, silence, withdrawal, procrastination, “looks that could kill”, “they don't get angry but the always get even” (retaliation at a later date), passive-aggressive behavior of simply not doing what you've been asked to do.
3. Misdirected anger:
  - i. Toward self (depression);
  - ii. Toward a “safe” party;
  - iii. Projection – think someone is angry at you;
  - iv. Porcupine syndrome – people who are always angry

What does a healthy expression of anger look like? Feel like? Healthy anger is a measured response that works to resolve the threat. It is recognizing the smoke detector as a warning of impending danger, finding the source of the smoke and extinguishing it appropriately or fleeing the fire.

**Anger goes bad when we do not look for or understand the trigger or threat and deal with it.**

We all feel anger because we will recognize an impending threat. The key to healthy anger is:

1. Acknowledging the warning and naming it. I am angry. Why is that? What is the irritation or threat? Is it a real threat or just perceived by me as a threat?
2. Feeling the appropriate level of emotion to match the severity of the threat.
3. Learning through practice to deal with the threat and not just the emotion.
4. Grounded self-esteem in being God's child. Who are you allowing to be “god” – to define your worth?

**What is a threat? Wherever we feel vulnerable**

1. Life and health – threat to your physical self and environment; unmet needs
2. Relationships – threat to your social self or social circles.
3. Self – esteem – threat to your inner self and personal identity – your ideal self
  - a. **Values:** What is really important to you – your convictions. i.e. Respect – you will feel anger if you are disrespected; Personal freedom – angry if you can't do what you want.; a job well done – anger toward sloppy behavior. Anger is triggered when you or others fail to live up to your own values and ideals.
  - b. **Childhood trauma:** Areas of vulnerability violated as a child become huge triggers in adult life.
4. Extended self – other people's values, parents, close friends – in whomever you are invested
5. Your sense of justice and injustice
6. Things – our personal “idols”.

**Threats can be real or perceived. Even if they are not real, the emotional response will be the very same. If we feel threatened, we will respond.** (smoke detector goes off whether it is burnt toast or house is actually on fire)

**Healthy Responses to Anger:**

1. Feel and Tell – know the feeling and choose the expression. Name it and say it – I am feeling angry. Identify the intensity – am I annoyed or furious?
2. Where is the anger being directed? Toward a person close to me? Are they the threat or the trigger? What does that person represent in the moment?
3. Timing – listen to the warning and deal with it as immediately as possible.
4. “Count to ten” – this is not to put off the emotion but the response: Take time to work at perceiving what is the trigger that set off the emotion. What smoke is my sensor detecting and where is it coming from? Where am I feeling threatened – uncomfortable or anxious?

5. Disarming the threat. Is it real or perceived? What is being threatened, my personal well being, my self-esteem, my value system, my idol?
6. Face the offender. If your feelings were hurt, say so and say why. If your values were challenged, stand up for them; if there is physical danger, remove yourself from the situation, etc.

**Disarming the Threat:** This is the key to dealing with anger and it requires a lot of work being done on an on-going basis to understand our personal value systems and where we tend to personally feel most vulnerable. Think of the last time you felt anger:

1. What was the situation?
2. Who was involved?
3. Where was the anger directed – at the people involved or the surrounding circumstance?
4. What personal value was being challenged?
5. Was it real or perceived?
6. How often has a similar situation triggered an angry emotion? Is there any pattern that you might be able to identify?
7. What work needs to be done to desensitize that trigger?

Keep an anger journal and every time you can identify the emotion of anger, answer the above questions and work to see if you can understand the value you hold and why it is a trigger.

### **Helpful anger**

1. A push toward independence and individualization. You own it as your feelings, your values, your loved ones, etc. It can be a healthy rebellion, as you own your personal identity.
2. Champions of Justice: Righteous anger can motivate you to change the world as you identify injustice. *Anger is a creative power to bring about change when hand in hand with love.*
3. Idol – detector – idols need constant defending and justifying because they are false gods in our lives. They cannot bring real joy or peace. Our idols are always being exposed to their deficiencies and our anger can help us see where we are invested into something instead of someone.
4. Anger uncovers guilt and shame. If you violate your own value system, you feel guilt. If you fall short of your ideal self, you feel shame. Anger without a cause can help us see false guilt and shame.
5. Love can lesson the threats in life as can trust in God's hand upon our lives. Dominance, aggression and bossiness are not actions of love. Rather service, sacrifice and submission so we become less defensive with the need to be "right" or "best".

Inviting Faith. Acting in Mercy. Cultivating Leaders.

