

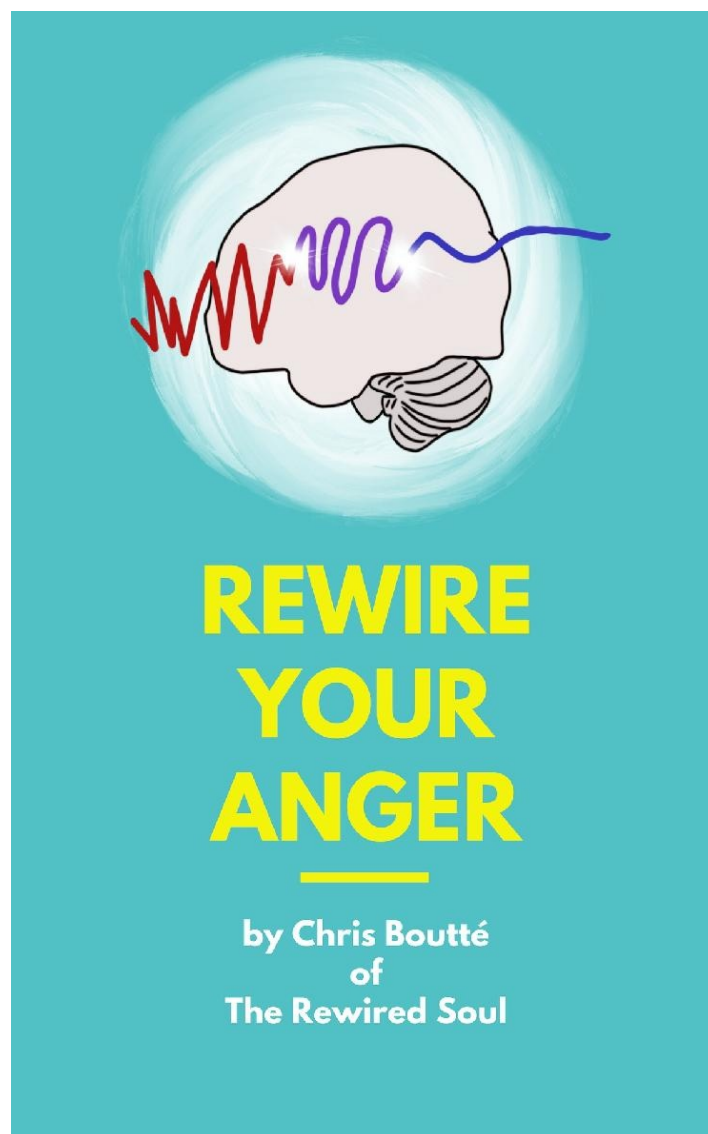
# REWIRE YOUR ANGER

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by Chris Boutté  
of  
The Rewired Soul

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Welcome to Rewire Your Anger, and I guess the first tip I'll offer is that anger is going to happen, but we need to figure out how to turn it into something useful. This book idea came to me at a time in my life when I was struggling with a lot of anger. My anger issues are under control these days, but as I used a variety of different methods, I decided to turn this anger into something useful by writing this short book.

Many people who meet me today would have no idea that I used to struggle with massive anger issues. I wasn't a pleasant person to be around because I had so much anger built up inside of me throughout my entire life. We all have different root causes for this anger, and you may figure out some of them by reading this book. I do want you to keep in mind though that this book is meant to provide useful tips and suggestions that have worked for myself and many clients that I have worked with, but if you have the resources, you should find a mental health professional to work with individually as well.

Before we get started, it's important to understand why we have anger in the first place on a neurological level and from the point of evolutionary psychology. Some of us don't fully want to get rid of our anger because it feels good in a way, and that's actually part of the way we evolved. We needed anger back in the hunter-gatherer days because it helped us stay alive, and the way the brain reinforces behaviors and emotions is by making them feel good. Back in the day, if someone from another tribe or within your own tribe stole from you or challenged you in any way, if you didn't do something, others may take advantage of you as well.

Could you imagine everyone in the tribe and from other tribes thinking it was alright to steal from

you and push you around?

We needed anger to motivate us to do something about being challenged. This helped show the person as well as others not to mess with us. The problem with the brain is that we're no longer hunter-gatherers, but the evolution of our minds hasn't caught up. What I mean by this is that if you get cut off on the freeway, it doesn't mean everyone else is going to think it's okay to get cut off, so the anger we feel isn't as useful as it was thousands of years ago.

Today, anger has the power to ruin our lives, which is why we need to get it under control. It can make us fight with the people who love us the most as well as the people we love the most. It can make us walk out of a job impulsively without bringing to mind the fact that we have bills to pay or kids to feed. Worst of all, in this day and age, if our anger gets the best of us, there's a chance somebody records us freaking out on an innocent employee, it goes viral and our freak out is on the Internet forever.

One of the biggest "a-ha" moments I had was when someone asked me, "How much time have you spent being angry when you could have been doing something worth while instead?" This made me think of how many nights that I couldn't sleep because I was staying angry at someone who probably wasn't even thinking about me. It made me think of how many times I shut down and isolated, neglecting my friends, family or son because I was so angry about something that was ridiculous. Worst of all, if I sat down and roughly quantified how much time I spent being angry, it would probably add up to years of my life being wasted by being angry about a lot of silly things.

Again, anger gets stuff done and can inspire us to do great things. You're never going to fully get rid of your anger, but with this book, you'll hopefully figure out better ways to manage it by causing minimal wreckage in your life as well as to the lives of the people around you.

This section is about how to use this book so it can be effective in your life. My goal is that with this book, you can understand a bit more about the root causes of your anger and have some foundational tools to come back to any time to figure out how to manage the situation.

In this book, I'm going to introduce you to three primary foundations of anger management that have been extremely affective for myself and others. If you can remember these three foundations, managing your anger will be much simpler.

One of the major issues that I found is that we **think** each person or situation makes us angry for a different reason. If I'm sitting in a room of people who all made me angry, I think each one set me off for a different reason. The reality is that we're not nearly as complicated as we think we are. When we figure out the root of our issues and remember a few things to check within ourselves, we realize that there are really only a few reasons we get upset.

This is extremely important because many of us think that "everything makes us mad", and it can seem overwhelming. Some people didn't even get this book because they thought that dealing with their anger was going to be too large of a task because there are **so many** people and situations that upset them. The reality is that once you figure out what your primary triggers are, it's a lot easier to manage and overcome your anger. In my experience, most people (including myself) have about 5 main reasons they get angry.

With that being said, I'm glad you got this book. It means you've acknowledged that there's a problem, but even better, you have the willingness to do something about it. So, let's get started by discussing one of the biggest problems most of us have.

This first foundation is by far the most important. This isn't just important for managing anger either, but for your mental health as a whole. We must **always** remember that it's a lot easier to fix ourselves than it is to fix others. Now, this doesn't mean we need to allow toxic people in our lives, but we'll come

back to that later. What this means is that we have a false idea that we can control and change people. I don't know if this is the ego or what, but it's kind of crazy if you think about it.

I wasted so much time and energy just wishing other people would change. If my boss would just be nicer, or if my friend would have done this for me, or if my parents were proud of me, then I would be okay. This is not a healthy way to live. The reason is because we're allowing circumstances that we have no control over to depict how we feel is a waste of mental and emotional energy. Think about how much time you've spent waiting for someone to change or hoping that they'd change.

If you're someone with a parent or both parents who trigger your anger, think about it logically for a minute. What is the likelihood that they will change? They've been this way since before you were born, so do you really think that now they're going to change just because you want them to? That'd be a little ridiculous.

Sorry, but did I forget to mention that there's going to be some tough love in this book? Don't worry though because I'll give you some tips so you don't get angry at me.

I know this from personal experience. My mom was an alcoholic for the first 20 years of my life, and she was my biggest trigger. I despised her because I blamed her for how messed up my life was and how messed up I turned out (this is one of the roots of my anger). When I was 20 years old she got sober, and when I was 26 she saved my life by helping me get sober. The problem was that I had over 20 years of unresolved anger built up towards her. Even though she was now sober, I still couldn't forgive her for my awful life, and there were a lot of things about her that I didn't like. One of those things is that she struggles with her own mental issues and can be somewhat unreliable...and I hate when people are unreliable.

For years, I spent so much time and energy yelling and fighting with her trying to get her to change, and she never did. Sometimes she'd say she was going to work on it, but she'd fall back into old habits, and it'd make me extremely angry again.

But how much time was I wasting trying to change her? How many hours had I spent trying to change this woman who wasn't going to be changed.

This first foundation was repeated to me constantly by the man who initially helped me get back on the right track with my mental health. I would call him extremely frustrated because I was working so hard to change and become a better person, but she wasn't. He'd always say, "Chris, it's a lot easier to fix you than it is the rest of the world." But I'm a stubborn a-hole, so I kept thinking I could fix the rest of the world.

As most of us eventually find out, our way of doing things doesn't work and we **must** try something new. So, I considered what he said and began working on it. If my mom couldn't change, maybe I could change how I deal with my mom?

See, we don't have control over other people. Some say that the only person we can control is ourselves, but if you're like me, you can't even control your own emotions and actions sometimes. What we can **always** control is our effort though. We can put forth an effort to learning how to deal with the things in our lives that anger us whether it's people or situations.

Today, my mom and I are best friends, but the funny thing is that she hasn't changed at all.

I want you to think about that for a minute...

How are my mother and I like best friends now if she hasn't changed at all?

Because I realized that it was a lot easier for me to fix me than it was to fix her. I now know how to deal with her because I took all of that wasted energy that I was using trying to fix her and focused it on

myself. One of the best ways that I learned how to do this is through foundation number 2, which is our expectations.

This second foundation of expectations is probably going to be the longest part of the book. For some of you, this may sound familiar, but I never want to give you the impression that what I've learned just came from the void of my mind and I figured this stuff out. I was taught in the same way that I'm trying to teach you, and I hope you can pass this knowledge along to someone you care about as well.

Not only is this going to be the longest part, but it's the most important part as well. I'll probably revisit this part of the book in just about every book I write because that's how important it is. I do entire 3-hour groups on expectations in treatment centers and tell my clients that if they haven't paid attention throughout treatment, this is the one thing they need to pay attention to.

I'm going to give you the same advice. Bookmark this page as the most useful tool you can use to manage your anger and mental health as a whole. Take different quotes from this section and write them on post-it notes and put them around your house if you have to because I guarantee if you can figure out how to manage your expectations, your life is going to become amazing.

So what do I mean by managing expectations?

Well, first let's all take a second to acknowledge that we're all major control freaks. How often do we think these things like:

If everyone just did what I thought they should do, everyone would be satisfied including myself! Life would be so amazing if everyone just did exactly what I thought they should do. This world would be such a better place if people would think and act the way I think they should because I know what's best.

What's crazy is that I discuss this in groups of 60-70 people, and I ask by a show of hands, "How many people can relate to this?" Typically, you see about 75% of the hands go up, and I always assume another 20% aren't raising their hand because they're full of crap or didn't hear the question.

**But think about this for a second. If I think the world would be great if everyone did what I thought they should do...and if you think the world would be great if everyone did what you thought they should do, we're automatically going to bump heads.**

This is an insane expectation. We expect everyone to act how we think they should act. What are the chances of that happening? (and don't forget foundation #1) Not only do we expect everyone to act and think how we want, but we expect people to know what we want. How many times have you been mad at someone because you expected them to know how you felt or what you were thinking like they're a mind reader? Pretty silly expectation isn't it?

Now, this is the only first part of the problem. Because we're so selfish and self-centered wanting everyone to do what we want them to do, we try to manipulate situations. A great word for this is "self-seeking". Self-seeking is when we do something expecting something in return.

So when we're trying to get something in return, we might be nice, kind, self-sacrificing and all of those great qualities. Here are some examples:

1. We might be nice to our parents to borrow some money from them.
2. We may clean the house so our significant other thanks us.
3. We may be the perfect gentleman on a first date expecting to get something in return at the end of the night.
4. We might work extra hours so our boss notices and we get a raise.

5. We may help a friend move so they help us at a later date.

This all sounds fine and dandy until we don't get our way. What happens when our parents don't loan us the money? What happens when our significant other doesn't show us the thanks we feel we deserve? What happens when our date doesn't invite us inside? What happens when our boss doesn't give us that raise? What happens when we help our friend, but then they don't help us in return?

### **We get pissed.**

Why do we get upset? Because we set the expectation of "If I do \_\_\_\_\_, they will do \_\_\_\_\_." That is not only an unrealistic expectation, but it's also a selfish and self-centered one. The issue is that many of us think we're great people, but most of the time we're just trying to take from the world and not truly being altruistic. Since we're not self-aware enough to realize this, it fuels our anger.

On the other hand, we might not be kind and generous when we're trying to get our way. Sometimes we can be real jerks. This is another form of self-seeking, but in the opposite direction. Here are some more examples:

1. We might purposely be a jerk to someone we're dating to get them to break up with us.
2. We may be mean to an employee to get something for free.
3. We might scream at our bank to get an overdraft fee reversed like it's their fault that we're not great with money management.

And guess what happens when we try to do this and don't get our way? **We get pissed again.**

Now, expecting people to do what we want is only one type of expectation that messes us up. We also put expectations on others who have different roles in our lives, and a great way to figure this out is to look at how much you use the word "should" when you get upset.

A great writing exercise is to list 7 people in your life who you have issues with, and make a list of your expectations of them. Here's an example:

#### **Mom:**

1. A good mom **should** loan me money
2. A good mom **should** be there for me when I need her
3. A good mom **should** be proud of mine

#### **Friend:**

1. A good friend **should** never lie to me
2. A good friend **should** help me move when I'm moving
3. A good friend **should** respect my opinions

#### **Partner:**

1. A good partner **should** talk to me 24/7
2. A good partner **should** only want to spend time with me
3. A good partner **should** do what I want to do

#### **Boss:**

1. A good boss **should** give me a raise
2. A good boss **should** give me time off whenever I request it
3. A good boss **should** acknowledge how amazing I am

These are just some examples, and I highly recommend you take some time to do this. There's something about sitting down and writing all of your expectations of other people that really gives you some clarity.

When I do this exercise, not only do I see how many expectations I put on other people, but I also see how many expectations that even I can't live up to. For example, we can have an expectation of our partner to only want to spend time with us, but we also expect them to know when to give us space. That's a little silly isn't it?

I also realized as a parent that I put so many expectations on my parents that I wasn't living up to. I remember writing about how my mom should have got sober for me, but I didn't get sober for my son. I remember thinking my friends should never lie to me, but I was lying to my friends. I remember thinking that my partner should always do what I want to do, but I wasn't ever wanting to do what they wanted to do.

If you're nodding your head because you relate to what I'm saying, I hope you're beginning to understand what I mean when I say we're selfish by default.

The biggest problem with all of this is that our expectations set us up for failure. Because we expect so much from this world and its people, we're constantly putting ourselves in a position to be primed for anger.

Now, this doesn't mean that you should be a pessimist and never expect anything good to happen. What I've found is the most useful is thinking of expectations as being on a scale that goes from +10 and -10 on opposite sides with 0 in the middle. I'm in a much better place when my expectations are closer to that 0. This means that I'm not expecting too much, but I'm not expecting something terrible to happen either. I'm simply going into a situation without an expectation.

Allow me to give you the perfect example of how changing my expectations in one small way changed my life.

From a young age, my dad always taught me good manners. One thing that he always taught me was to hold the door open for people and to say "Thank you" when someone holds the door open for me. Because I was taught this from a young age, I figure this is common courtesy and everyone should both hold a door open for me and thank me when I hold the door open for them. Unfortunately, this isn't how the world works and I'd get pissed.

This was such a small, trivial thing in my day, but it'd fill me with rage. I'd get especially angry when someone was far away, I'd hold the door open way longer than I should have, and then they still didn't thank me. This type of thing would get me so upset that I'd be so close to yanking them by the shirt collar back outside since they didn't have manners.

Right now you might be agreeing with me because you know that feel. But can we please take a moment to think about how silly it is to get **that** upset about this situation?

So, how did I fix this? Well, I changed my expectations. I no longer expect anyone to thank me when I hold the door open for them. Yes, that's right. I don't expect **anyone** to thank me. This is a great way to start working on your expectations because it's such a small thing you can do. This small change in perception changed my life because rather than getting furious every time someone **didn't** thank me, I'm now pleasantly surprised every time someone **did** thank me.



# Foundation 3: Anger is Fear

What if I told you that all of your anger was based on fear? When someone told me this, it made me pretty angry. It was taught to me that all of our anger is fear-based, and that sounded crazy because I'm a tough guy who has been through some stuff. I thought I wasn't afraid of anything, so it was ridiculous to think that my anger was based around fear. The reality was that you, me and everyone else who is struggling with anger is dealing with a lot of fear.

As I mentioned earlier in this book, we think our anger is for an endless amount of reasons, but it's not. Once we get down to some of the root triggers, we can also get down to the root fears.

A great example is my relationship with my mother and all of the anger I had towards her.

1. I was angry that she was an alcoholic most of my life.
2. I was angry that she was unreliable.
3. I was angry that she didn't show up to my high school graduation.
4. I was angry at the things she said to me while drunk.
5. I was angry every time she wouldn't loan me money.

But how are these related to fear? Let me show you.

1. Fear that my mom didn't love me (fear of not being loved)
2. Fear of being let down
3. Fear that my mom didn't care about me (fear of not being loved)
4. Fear that my mom didn't love me (fear of not being loved)
5. Fear of being broke (financial fears)

This is another writing exercise that you can do with various people in your life and situations. Write down what you're angry about with a specific person in a list format, and write about what fears you have. When I did this with over 133 people and situations in my life, I realized I had a very short list of common fears that you may be able to relate to:

1. Fear of not being loved
2. Fear of being let down
3. Financial fears
4. Fear of abandonment
5. Fear of being disrespected
6. Fear of being treated like I'm stupid

Let's focus on number 5 and 6 real quick. Take a moment to think about a few people who have recently upset you. How many of these situations are based around a few of being disrespected or fear of being treated like we're stupid? I've found that many of us with anger issues struggle with these two fears.

Something I do with my clients after giving them some examples of how anger is fear-based, I ask them to tell me some things that make them angry and see if we can figure out what fear it's based on. The issue is that you're not currently in my group, and I'm writing this at home from my computer, so I had to think outside of the box. I went to Twitter and asked people to tell me what makes them angry, and I'm going to attempt to relate these anger triggers with various fears (by the way, follow me on Twitter @TheRewiredSoul)

Disclaimer: These are loose guesses based on my personal experience working with people as well

as my own anger management. I will also be leaving everyone anonymous.

**Anger issue:** "My current living situation. Living with my daughter who has BPD. Having to cut my son out of my life because of his addiction. I guess these things piss me off, but only because if I don't stay angry, I'll never quit crying. Ever."

**Fears:** Fear of losing your son, fear of being sad, fear of your daughter not being alright.

**Anger issue:** "My cousin I've never really met deciding to tell me it's my fault my father has never been in my life. Based off what she's heard from him of course."

**Fears:** Fear of being judged.

**Anger issue:** "People that don't thank me when I take the time out of my day to give them advice and listen to them."

**Fears:** Fear of being disrespected. Fear of having bad friends. Fear of not being loved.

**Anger issue:** "Pisses me off when my husband has to cancel plans last minute for work, he's in the Air Force so shit happens sometimes but man it gets to me every time."

**Fears:** Fear of not being loved. Fear of abandonment. Fear of being alone. Fear of being disrespected.

It's extremely important to acknowledge these fears to help your anger because of foundation #1 as well. Remember that it's easier to fix you than it is to fix everyone else. We often think that another person is making us angry, but when we realize that our anger is based on fears, now we're in control. We can't control if other people do things that make us angry, but we can begin to identify our fears and work on overcoming them. We can begin to work on our fear of being judged by not caring so much what other people think. We can work on our fear of abandonment by surrounding ourselves with supportive people who love us. We can work on our fear of being lied to by setting up better boundaries with people who we know lie to us regularly. When we take back control, we're in an amazing position to improve our mental health.

# 1. Quit Causing Your Own Problems

I wasn't even planning on writing this section, but this morning before writing, something happened that made me feel the need to write it. A major issue we have with our anger is that we refuse to take any responsibility for anything. We might feel as though the world is out to get us, which goes back to our foundation #2 about how we expect everyone to do what **we** want them to do. This is silly when we realize we caused our own problem to begin with, and here's a quick story to illustrate that.

Last night, my friend babysat her cousin at her new house while her aunt went out to a show with her uncle who was in town for the week. My friend's aunt said that she would come at 9AM, but as per usual, they were running late in the morning to pick up the kid. Around 10AM, they show up to the new neighborhood and can't find the new house for the life of them. The aunt starts screaming at my friend, "Where is it?! You're going to make us miss his flight!"

Wait. Let's rewind.

The aunt was supposed to come pick up her son at 9AM. She comes an hour later, and can't find the house and blames my friend? Let that sink in for a minute. Had she shown up at the original time, she would have had plenty of time to get lost, find the house and probably get some Starbucks before taking her brother to the airport. But, due to being late as usual, she was worried she missed the flight and took her anger out on my friend.

While you may think this is funny, or ridiculous or even kind of crazy, I want you to ask yourself how many times you do this same exact thing and then blame the world even though you caused your own problems.

How many mornings do you wake up late because you hit the snooze button a few too many times? Then, while getting ready for work, you watch one more YouTube video or scroll through Instagram, Facebook or Twitter for an extra 10 minutes. Then, you leave your house in a panic because you're running late, and now there's an immense amount of traffic. Now, you have road rage and keep asking yourself, "Why won't these people learn how to drive?!"

Do you think you'd be this angry if you woke up on time and didn't spend that extra time scrolling through social media?

Staying in the theme of being late. I'm someone who was notorious for showing up to work 10-15 minutes late for the above reasons. I don't know what it was, but I just could not show up to work on time. Then, next thing you know, the boss says something to me or I get written up. All I can think is, "What an asshole!" or "But what about that other guy who showed up late?!" It's just me refusing to take responsibility for the situation once again.

When it comes to our mental health, there are so many things outside of our control, but we need to focus on what we can control. We can focus on what we're doing that might alleviate some of our own anger issues. I cannot tell you how much of my road rage went away after I started waking up and leaving earlier to go to work.

## 2. Quit Making Dumb Decisions

If foundation #2 was the most important part of the book, this is the second most important. When I teach this to my clients, I tell them that they need to take the following sentence and write it down everywhere as a reminder. I even jokingly tell them that they should get it tattooed on themselves for at least a few months until it sinks in. (Don't do that though...unless you really want to I guess. You're an adult. Do you.)

"We make decisions based on self which later place us in a position to be hurt."

What the hell does that mean?! I didn't know either. But when I was at the height of my anger issues, the man who was helping me stay sober and improve my mental health said this to me ALL.THE.TIME. Let me give you a few examples:

**The Problem:** I'd call him up yelling and screaming about the roommates in my sober living home (it was 18 recovering alcoholics and addicts, so just imagine that for a second). I'd call him to yell about how my roommate smelled funny, people took too long in the bathroom, someone was stealing my food from the fridge, one guy was caught smoking meth in the garage and worst of all, there was one TV in the place, and these fools would watch Pawn Stars all day long.

He'd ask, "Did you make any decisions in the past that put you in the position that you're currently in?"

I'd think, "Are you kidding me?! These people are nuts and rude and inconsiderate! Agree with me!!!"

But he was right...

**My Part:** I'd have to ask myself why I was in a sober living in the first place. It was because of the choices I made with substances. It was because of the fact that I burned every bridge with friends and family so I didn't have anywhere else to go.

**The Solution:** Quit doing drugs and alcohol, and I never had to worry about living in a sober living again.

**The Problem:** I calmed down a bit in that sober living home realizing it was my fault that I was in there in the first place. After a few months, my mom trusted me enough to move into her house. If you were paying attention in the beginning, you'd know that it took me a long time to get along with my mom. So, I'd call him up yelling and screaming. I'd call to complain about how after 20 years of being a drunk, now this woman wants to be my mom. I'd complain about how she didn't treat me like an adult and bossed me around.

He'd ask, "Did you make any decisions in the past that put you in the position that you're currently in?"

I'd think, "This son of a bitch..."

But he was right again.

**My Part:** When I asked myself why I was living with my mom, the answer was simple. It was because of all the decisions I made with my substance abuse. I couldn't afford my own place because I spent all my money on alcohol, drugs and gambling. I couldn't live with a friend because they all still hated me. My decisions were the reason I lived with my mom.

**The Solution:** I make better decisions today. Aside from living sober, I work hard to make my own money so I never have to live with my mom again (and when I say that, I mean under those conditions. If she gets old or hurt or something crazy, she can live with me.)

The reason it was so important that this guy beat that sentence into my head was because it was like learning from touching a hot stove. If you keep touching that hot stove, you eventually learn to keep your hand off the stove because it's going to burn you. I started adapting this to every situation in my life. Whenever I was angry, I'd ask myself, "Did I do anything to put me in the position I'm currently in?" Here are some examples that you may be able to relate to:

**The Problem:** I was unemployed and couldn't get a job because everyone wanted a degree. This angered me because I'm more than capable even though I didn't have a college degree.

**My Part:** I made the decision to drop out of college for no other reason than I felt like making money instead of furthering my education.

**The Solution:** Go back to school and get my degree or find jobs that don't require a degree.

**The Problem:** Every woman I dated destroyed me mentally. They were verbally and emotionally abusive, and some were even physically abusive. Some broke my things. One of them sent an email to my boss pretending to be me in an effort to get me fired. Another one trashed my car after we got in an argument.

**My Part:** I love dating crazy women. I was always looking for a feisty woman that was a little broken. I had the opportunity to date many women who had their stuff together mentally, but that was "boring" to me, and I just wasn't attracted to them.

**The Solution:** It became very clear that I needed a new type of woman that I would date (surprise surprise, the old problems went away).

**The Problem:** My lovely non-crazy girlfriend and I just got an apartment. Because of an old power bill that I neglected to pay, they wanted an extra \$1,000 for our deposit. This made me so angry because it was a \$120 bill from 2012.

**My Part:** I DIDN'T PAY MY FREAKIN' POWER BILL

**The Solution:** Act like a damn adult and pay my bills.

Again, this is about empowering you as much as possible. Shit is going to happen that is 100% out of your control, but if you can start recognizing how **many of your own problems are based on your decisions** like I did, you'll begin to see that you don't have nearly as many problems.

### 3. Everything Isn't About You

Being self-centered is one of the biggest issues that humans struggle with. We think everything is about us. Don't believe me? Go read any Facebook post from your female friend that says, "Guys are such jerks" and see how many guys reply, "NOT ALL GUYS!". How many times have you been out somewhere and heard some people laughing not-too-far away, and you think it's about you?

My favorite is when we're driving and hear a car honk, and we throw our hands in the air in a the gesture of, "WHAT?! I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!". Think about that for a second. You can be on the road with dozens, if not hundreds of other cars, and someone honks their horn, and you immediately think that it's about you. You just got angry because you think the world is all about you and any honk on the road must be directed at you.

Sorry for the tough love, but it's true. We need to also remember this in order to practice some empathy.

Have you ever had a bad day and took it out on the wrong person? Maybe you're stressed out about money, your relationship, your lack of a relationship, your job, your friends or something else that irritates us on a daily basis.

This has been something that I must remember on a daily basis in order to work in the addiction treatment and mental health field. I know you think I'm an extremely lovable guy, but believe it or not, I've had people in treatment tell me to go fuck myself and threaten to fight me. That's okay though, and here's why. Most of the time their anger isn't about me, which is why we must practice empathy.

Working in a drug and alcohol treatment center, these men and women are away from their friends and families. They've destroyed their lives financially. They don't know how to function without drugs or alcohol. They're dealing with symptoms of withdrawal and on a daily basis, they have therapists telling them things about themselves that they don't want to hear. So, when people snap on me, I practice empathy and compassion because I know they're in pain.

This is also how I keep my sanity as a YouTuber. When people come to my comment section acting a fool, I try to remember that they might be hurting. This doesn't mean that it's justifiable, but I have to remember that not everything is about me.

I remember one Valentine's Day, an ex-girlfriend and I went out to eat at a nice restaurant and our waitress was kind of rude to us. This made me furious. I'm paying for this expensive meal at this nice place to impress my girl, and this waitress is gong to give me attitude?! I told my girlfriend that I was going to complain to the manager, but my girlfriend at the time said, "Chris, it's Valentine's Day and this poor woman has to serve all these couples rather than being out with someone herself. Don't you think she has a right to be a little upset about that?"

And that made perfect sense because I quickly remembered that not everything is about me.

**SURPRISE POP QUIZ:** Based on the Valentine's Day story, what fears do you think I was dealing with in that situation?

## 4. Lie to Yourself

This ties in perfectly with the last section about everything not being about you. What we're trying to do is practice some empathy. Not only will our life be a lot smoother when we decrease our anger, but it'll make people want to be around us more and help us have better relationships. I was amazed at how likable I became when I wasn't thinking about myself 24/7.

You might be wondering what I mean by lying to yourself. It's not complicated though. Lie to yourself because it will help your anger.

Let me give you an example of how I manage my road rage. Whenever someone cuts me off or is driving like an idiot, in order to keep my cool by not chasing them down and running them off the road or following them home, I lie to myself. Each time someone is driving like an asshole, I tell myself things like, "Maybe that guy just got the call that his wife went into labor and he has to rush to meet her at the hospital" or "Maybe that woman is a single widow with 5 children and had to do that because if she's late one more time she'll get fired and won't be able to support her family." This may sound silly, but it works.

The other benefit of lying to yourself is that most of the time something really is going on with that other person. You never know if the stranger who was rude to you just found out this morning that their father has a terminal illness. You never know if that person who said something sassy to you just found out that their spouse is filing for divorce. By lying to yourself and making up a story, you'll begin to think more about how you can help people and be there for them rather than retaliating.

In the last section, I mentioned how I'd have clients get extremely mad at me, and I'd often ask, "Are you alright? Do you want to talk about it?", and you'd be surprised that about 90% of them would say yes. By the end of the conversation, they'd apologize to me, thank me and give me a hug.

**Homework:** The next time someone pisses you off, ask them if they're alright and if they want to talk about it.

## 5. It's OK to be Mad

Now that we're about halfway through the book, let's take a moment to discuss how it's alright to be mad. The issue is that we stay mad for far too long. As mentioned earlier in the book, when we quantify how much time we've wasted during our life being mad, it can be quite shocking. The thing is that anger is a perfectly normal human emotion. Our expectation should never be to not get mad again ever because that goes back to foundation #2 of setting up false expectations, but that's for ourselves.

The issue for us is that we don't have a problem with anger, we have a problem with how we react to anger. There's a big difference between reacting and responding. When we react to anger, we might verbally, emotionally or physically hurt others or ourselves, and that is not alright. Neither they, nor use deserves that. When we learn how to respond to our anger, we have a more level head and can make decisions.

Responding to anger puts us back in control. So many of us think we're in control, but our anger and other emotions drive us to do things that we regret. The goal of this book is to empower you to take control of your life by acknowledging that anger is going to happen, but now you have the power of choice as to how you respond to that anger. By working on the foundations of knowing that it's easier to fix you than others, that your unrealistic expectations of yourself and others are affecting your anger and that your anger is rooted in fear, you'll be able to pause and respond to anger rather than react.



# 6. Meditation

Oh. Did you think you were going to make it through this book without me dedicating a section to meditation? You must be meeting me for the first time because meditation is an incredible, easy tool for just about everything when it comes to mental health. If you are skeptical about meditation, welcome to the club. The only reason I started meditating was because of the scientific evidence of how it helps improve your mental health. By meditating every day, you're strengthening a part of your brain called the prefrontal cortex. Think about it like doing bicep curls or push-ups for this part of your brain, but the great news is that you don't even have to leave your house or put on gym clothes to do it.

I'm not going to teach you how to meditate in this book. I'm going to explain the neurological benefits to meditation that science has proved time and time again. The prefrontal cortex is the brain that separates us from other animals and helps us be at the top of the food chain. The problem is that we have to train ourselves to access this part of the brain. This part of the brain has a wide range of responsibilities, but we're going to focus on two for the purpose of this book, which are impulse control and emotional regulation.

When we struggle with impulse control, we say and do things that hurt ourselves or hurt others. I've you've ever punched a hole in the wall, broken your cell phone out of anger or yelled at someone and immediately regretted it, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Due to our lack of impulse control, we cause more wreckage than we need to. Again, it's alright to be mad, but we need to train our "pause button" by meditating. Meditation is all about awareness and knowing what's happening in the moment. By meditating on a daily basis, you'll be naturally training your pause button, which will help you respond rather than react.

Emotional regulation is another huge one, which is why so many people should be meditating. Some of us get far more angry than we should be. This is one of the primary reasons why Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) is so beneficial for Borderline Personality Disorder. Many of the practices of DBT come from mindful meditation practices, and this is because mindfulness helps you regulate your emotions better. So, rather than getting furious when certain things happen, you get a little irritated instead.

**Homework:** Meditate every day for 5-10 minutes minimum. If you're not willing to dedicate at least 5-10 minutes a day to your mental health, there's not much I can do for you.

To get started, the easiest thing you can do is just type in "mindfulness" or "meditation" on your phone's app store. There are many free ones, but some of my favorites are Calm, Headspace and Buddhify.

## **Suggested reading list:**

[Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics by Dan Harris](#)

[Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn](#)

[The Mindful Path to Addiction Recovery by Lawrence Peltz](#)

[Mindfulness for Borderline Personality Disorder by Blaise Aguirre and Gillian Galen](#)

[The Science of Enlightenment by Shinzen Young](#)

[Why Buddhism is True: The Science and Philosophy of Meditation and Enlightenment by Robert Wright](#)

[Anger: Wisdom for Cooling the Flames by Thich Nhat Hanh](#)

[The Craving Mind by Dr. Judson Brewer](#)

[Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion by Sam Harris](#)

[Success Through Stillness: Meditation Made Simple by Russell Simmons](#)

## 7. The Art of Venting

I used to have issues sleeping unless I told someone exactly why I was mad or how they screwed me over. It would literally give me anxiety if I held my anger in, so I thought I was "taking care of my mental health" by yelling at people. It's pretty selfish of us to try to make ourselves feel better at the expense of others.

One of the biggest misconceptions we have is that we think we need to tell people exactly what's on our mind. This assumption leads to us exploding on people and then feeling bad. Speaking of assumptions, I'm assuming that you're reading this book because you feel bad about some of the things you do out of anger. What I learned was that anger is like this bull in a China shop that just destroys your brain via rumination until you let it out. The thing is, you just need to open the door to let it out, but maybe you should open up a different door instead of you blowing up on someone.

What I eventually learned was that I just need to vent some how or some way. I learned this when I just started opening up to my friends about my angers and frustrations. I'd vent to them about my mom, or my baby mama or other random things that irritated me with the world. Every time I did this, I felt better as though a thousand pounds was lifted off my shoulders. The crazy part is that most of the time my friends didn't even respond to me. All they did was listen. Once I realized this, I had my "a-ha" moment.

It's not healthy to hold anger in. We need to let it out, but we don't need to let it out at that person all of the time. This is one of the reasons why you should always have a support group who is there to listen to you vent, and if you don't have that, get a journal.

I can't tell you how many times I was outraged when nobody was around, and all I did was whip out my journal or open up a document on my computer and just start venting. I'd free write all of my anger and frustrations. Sometimes, I'd write that person a detailed letter about how angry I was and everything I wanted to say, and this always made me feel better.

**NOTE:** If you do the angry letter method, destroy it. Don't send it. Don't hang onto it because you may cause more harm later. Our goal with our mental health is to not cause harm to others or ourselves.

## 8. Tell Them How You Feel Without Expecting Anything

This is a follow up to the last section. I never want you to think that managing your anger means letting people walk all over you. The problem is that when anger takes hold of us, we're running off of our emotions and without logic. That's why we need to turn to the three foundations as well as meditation. Meditation helps us pause, and asking ourselves about our expectations and fears helps us work on ourselves rather than trying to change other people.

If you want a more scientific explanation for this, when the emotional part of the brain takes over, the logical part of the brain shuts down.

Controlling our anger isn't going to happen immediately, so don't be afraid to tell someone you can't discuss the topic at that moment. You can be as open with them as you want. You can either tell them the truth (which I recommend if it's a close friend or family member), and simply say, "I'm really upset right now and need to take a break, but I'm happy to talk about this later." If you'd like, feel free to make up an excuse why you can't talk about it at that moment. Pretend your phone rang and it's an emergency and that you have to go if you have to. I do believe you should be honest as much as possible, but that's a whole different book. Right now, people would rather you lie about a phone call and taking a break instead of screaming in their face.

Once you're calmed down, it's important to talk to them about how you feel. Whether it's your spouse, family member, co-worker or boss, you should always talk about it. The trick to this is not expecting anything in return. What trips a lot of people up is that they talk to someone about their frustrations and forget about foundation #2. You might expect an apology or for them to see your point of view. Expecting these things are going to set yourself up for failure and only make you more upset.

Recently I stopped a contracted job to focus more on The Rewired Soul. The couple who owned the business got far more upset than I thought they would, and they sent me a lengthy email saying how I let them down and didn't live up to expectations etc. One of the fears I have is people judging me incorrectly, so I felt the need to explain more in detail why I was ending my contract with them because there were a lot of issues, and I was trying to spare their feelings by saying I was doing it to focus more on The Rewired Soul.

The thing is, when I sent that email explaining more in detail about how I just wasn't happy working with them and had quite a few other issues, I didn't expect anything from them. I didn't expect them to understand. I didn't expect them to apologize for their previous email. I just said my peace and left it at that.

**Some science for you:** When you criticize another person and let them know how they wronged you, their belief system is telling them they're just as right as you. By criticizing a person for what they did to you, their amygdala activates, and they get into fight or flight mode. This is why it's so difficult for anyone to "win" in an argument because you keep triggering each others' anger over and over again.

## 9. Text. Don't Call

That whole impulse control thing is going to take some time. Many of us have to start using little tricks until we get our mouths under control. This why texting is much better than calling. Texting is better than talking face-to-face as well if you're dealing with someone that upsets you. This isn't something you should do forever though. Eventually, you should be in a place where you can control your temper and have conversations with people without flying off the rails. Until then, text instead of calling.

For years, I put my son's mother through hell. I was a drug addict and alcoholic, and she eventually had to leave me. I lied to her, stole from her and put our son in danger because of my substance abuse. When I got sober, I wanted the whole world to praise me because I was now turning my life around. Unfortunately, that's not how it worked out. My son's mother and I have an amazing relationship today, but for the first two years of my sobriety, my name wasn't even Chris to hear. She pretty much just called me a piece of shit.

I have a fear of being disrespected, and I knew I couldn't control what she said to me (see how I slipped foundation 1 and 2 in there?). I couldn't control how she treated me, but I also couldn't control how I'd clap back at her either. I'd say terrible things that I ended up regretting, and it was all bad.

What I started doing was texting because there were a ton of benefits that I found by doing so. The first one was that I could read what I wrote before hitting send. I can write a lot in a text and explain in great detail how upset I am while calling someone names, and my ego tries to make me destroy them by degrading the person. By writing all of these things in a text, I could look at it again and ask myself, "Is this really the person I want to be by sending this?" If the answer was "no", then I could delete it and reply with something else like, "I'm sorry you feel that way."

**Note:** If you have someone in your life who is constantly instigates a fight, the best thing you can do is not engage. If you really want to upset them, be the bigger person and don't engage.

Now, writing out a text, reading it and deleting it if needed sounds great, I don't know about you, but a lot of times my brain tells me that I'm justified in my anger. This isn't good. The other reason why texting is better is because you can send it to someone else and ask them if they think you should send it to the person. We must always remember that we can't always trust our brain, which is why it's good to get a second opinion before we do something dumb and cause our own problems.

Trust me, there were many times that I sent the text to a friend and asked what they thought, and they told me not to send it, and I called them an idiot. I'd then send it to someone else, and they'd tell me the same thing, and I'd get more angry. I'm the type of person who will ask 15 people the same question until I get the 1 answer that I'm looking for. The thing is, eventually I would realize that I was wrong and shouldn't send that message no matter how justified I felt.

Like I said, my son's mother and I have an amazing relationship today, and I also have an amazing relationship with my only mother today. I truly believe that one of the primary reasons for these amazing relationships is because of the dozens of text messages I never sent.

Before I end this section, I just remembered that I often get push back on this section (mostly from older people because they don't like texting). I get people who say, "But I don't want to text someone. I'd rather call." Well my response to that is that when you can't control your anger, you have lost that privilege. Mental health is not about what we want to do, but it's about what we need to do.

# 10. Apologize

I don't know about you, but I hate apologizing to people. Here's a quick mental health life hack that I learned though: If you don't like apologizing to people, quit doing dumb stuff that requires that you apologize to people.

Apologizing is a necessity if we're looking to improve our mental health. You're reading this book because you want to be a better person, and one of the best things you can do is ensure that you go to sleep each night with a clear conscience. If you yelled at someone that day and felt bad about it, it's going to be hard to go to sleep guilt-free. Something that may help you with apologizing for your behaviors is being selfish about it. What I mean is that you're apologizing for yourself and not for them. I know that I'm trying to teach you to quit being so selfish, but trust me, people will like you a lot better for the selfish act of apologizing to feel better when you've been an asshole. It's a win/win situation.

Something that I learned about apologizing is that people don't like to do it because it means admitting that you were wrong. While this is true, you're not always wrong about everything. The reality is that not only can we be assholes, but so can other people. Remember my son's mom? She said a lot of hurtful things to me when I was trying to turn my life around, and she also accused me of many things while I was trying to turn my life around. She was 100% wrong to do these things. I never want you to feel as though controlling your anger means you have to be a punching bag, but that's why there's a whole section that you already read about telling them how you feel without expecting anything.

Although I don't deserve to be talked to like that, this anger management thing is for me more than it is for anyone else. Regardless of what they say, remember that it's a lot easier to fix you than it is to fix the rest of the world. You need to apologize for **your part**. This goes back to the quit making dumb decisions section.

The best way you can do this is by separating parts of the situation so you can take responsibility for what you did wrong. You can apologize without admitting the other person was right for what they said. What the hell do I mean by that?

There were times where my son's mom called me names, accused me of relapsing or lying, and she was wrong. Although she was wrong, it was wrong of me to raise my voice at her and call her names. So, when apologizing, I'd apologize for raising my voice and calling her names. Those were **my part**.

**Homework:** Start apologizing for your part in situations and see how many people end up apologizing as well because you took responsibility and didn't point the finger back at them.

# 11. Pick Your Battles

This is a pretty self-explanatory section, but we need to discuss it. Again, this book isn't designed to have you become someone's door mat and let this world walk all over you. The goal is to find a balance. The issue we have is that we get extremely upset for ridiculous reasons. We need to start picking our battles, and this is especially helpful when dealing with your significant other or people you interact with on a regular basis like co-workers.

The best way to know which battles to pick is to pause and ask yourself three questions:

Does it need to be said?

Does it need to be said right now?

Does it need to be said by me?

The issue that a lot of us have is that we think that angry thought needs to be said right then and there by us. I promise you that if you begin to at least try to pause and ask yourself these three questions, you'll see how often you don't need to say something. It's a great way to keep your ego in check as well because you'll start to get curious and ask, "Why do I think I need to be the one to say this?"

This is something that takes practice though. When I first started using this trick, it was hard because I didn't even know what meditation was at the time and had little to no impulse control. I'd pick stupid battles, feel bad, have to apologize and then remember that I didn't ask myself these three questions. Eventually, it got easier though because of one of my favorite quotes:

"If you can't reflect before, reflect during. If you can't reflect during, reflect after."

This is how you make progress. For most of us, we're going to have to start by reflecting after. By sitting and at least bringing to consciousness that you should have paused to ask yourself those three questions, you'll start to catch yourself in the middle of doing it. If you can catch yourself in the middle of doing it, you may start to pop off at someone but then stop yourself. If you can get to that point, you'll begin to start having the ability to reflect before and have a nice pause where you ask yourself these three questions.

## 12. The Importance of Forgiveness

The only thing harder than apologizing is forgiving someone. The reason forgiveness is so difficult is because it gets wrapped up in our ego. Listen, I get it, people hurt us. But, by holding onto that anger, we're choosing to hold on to that pain. What I often tell people is that we get it twisted. Forgiveness isn't about letting the other person off the hook. Forgiveness is about letting ourselves off the hook.

Forgiving someone isn't excusing their behavior. Forgiving someone doesn't mean you need to hang out with someone or be around them either. Forgiveness means that you're actively making an effort to let go of the past. Whenever that pain pops into your mind and you get angry about what that person did, just ask yourself, "Is holding on to this anger useful or not useful to me?" Even if that anger is fueling us to succeed in some aspect of our life, we need to acknowledge when it's doing damage as well.

The other reason we need to forgive is because we constantly expect it from other people. I work with drug addicts and alcoholics who have been living in chaos for years and causing wreckage to loved ones' lives along the way. They get sober for 5 minutes and expect everyone to forgive them, yet they're still holding a grudge against some kid who stole their milk in 3rd grade. Think about that for a second.

Why do we think that we deserve all of the forgiveness for our screw ups but nobody else does? A little silly isn't it? Forgive others and forgive yourself along the way for your mistakes as well.

# 13. Quit Complaining

Complaining is toxic for a variety of reasons. This section is going to go back into some neuroscience as well, so brace yourself. Whenever you complain, you're training your brain to complain even more. I'm not saying to never complain again (because that'd be impossible), but pick your complaints. When you complain about everything all the time, you're wiring new neuropathways for you to complain more in the future because your brain believes it's rewarding. This is wiring your brain for negativity.

The other issue is that complaining affects your social life. Have you ever had someone not hang out with you anymore because all you do is complain about things? I have. For those who aren't smart enough to get away from our complaining selves, we're actually bringing them down. Complaining is like second-hand smoke. You don't have to do it to be affected by the consequences.

Lastly, those who complain are more likely to have depression and anxiety. When you're constantly complaining, you're training your brain to believe that you're in danger. If all your brain sees is problems, it releases more cortisol, which is a stress hormone. This hormone triggers your amygdala, which is the part of the brain responsible for anxiety. This anxiety and complaining combination can lead to social isolation because you assume everything is going to be awful when you leave your house, which then fuels your depression.

Do I need to give you any more reasons to quit complaining so much?



## 14. Don't Take Your Anger Out on Innocent People

If nothing else, this is the main reason why we need to work on our anger issue. In an earlier chapter, "Everything isn't about you", we discussed how sometimes people are rude to us even though it's misdirected anger. It sucks, right? Well, we're trying to be better people, so we need to not be hypocritical and do the thing that we don't like. Yet, we continuously think lashing out on innocent people our lives is justifiable even though the source of our anger has nothing to do with them. If we're being honest about foundation #3 and realizing that our anger is fear based, our anger is almost always based on our own issues and not other people.

I don't know why, but there's a situation that I'll never forget. It wasn't even that bad, but it reminds me why it's so important to not take our anger out on other people. A few years ago, I was in the grocery store with my son waiting our turn at the deli, and it was around 6PM, so I had just got off work and so had many others. There was a young brother and sister talking quietly, and the mother snapped on them and said, "Can you two PLEASE stop?! I had a bad day at work!" All I could think was, "It's not their fault you had a bad day at work..."

And believe me, I've seen some bad, misbehaving kids in grocery stores before that definitely deserved to be scolded, but this wasn't the case. These two kids were behaving extremely well and got yelled at because this mom had a bad day. There is no situation in which that is justified.

I have a son as well, and I also have a girlfriend as well as many other loved ones. It is not fair for any of these people in my life to be the victim of my anger when they're completely innocent. This is the primary reason that I work on my mental health so much. It's as much for the others in my life as it is for me. I was diagnosed with a Generalized Anxiety Disorder, and when I get anxious, I can become a real asshole, so I take my meds, meditate and do other practices to lessen my anxiety so I don't scream at the people I love for no good reason.

Now, there are days when our anger is going to get the best of us. Remember, it's okay to be angry, but it's not okay to take it out on innocent people.

My first suggestion for this is to let people know that you're in a bad mood and that you apologize in advance if you say something rude to them. I do this with my son as well as Tristin just so they're warned that my mental health is not that great at that moment. Luckily, we all talk about mental health, so we know how to help each other during these moments, but you might not be that fortunate. The best thing we can do is warn others and hope they give us the space that we need.

The second suggestion is to revisit the chapter on why you should apologize. One of my favorite rules from the book [Unf\\*ck Your Adulting by Dr. Faith Harper](#) is Don't Be a Dick.

# 15. Treat them Like Someone or Something Else

Isn't it strange how we react differently to different people? For some of us, we can take criticism from complete strangers, but when our partner or parent points out our flaws, we lose it. This is something that always fascinates me. I'm very mindful of what triggers me, and some of the last anger triggers I had came from interacting with family.

It's extremely weird because working at a mental health treatment center, I've met some of the meanest, awful people ever. People cussing me out or threatening to punch me in the face. For some reason, I'm able to treat them with patience, tolerance and understanding. But, if my sister even looks at me funny, I lose it. Why is that?

Something that helped me start on this journey is to treat people who wrong me like they're sick. While they may not have a physical sickness, they might have a mental or emotional sickness that we can't see. Here's how I explain this to my clients:

**Scenario 1:** Imagine me walking through a hospital ward with my girlfriend where I'm visiting a family member. In the hospital ward, there are a ton of other sick people. I'm with my girlfriend holding hands, and a man in a hospital gown is walking towards us with a limp while wheeling along his IV stand. As he walks passed, he runs over my foot with the IV stand or bumps into me.

How would I respond?

**Scenario 2:** Imagine me out with my girlfriend on date night. We're holding hands, walking down the street just enjoying our night out. Walking towards us is a big, guy, and he's checking out my girlfriend. As we cross paths, he purposely bumps into me and gives me a dirty look.

How would I respond?

If you're someone like me, you're probably pissed about that guy who trying to punk me in front of my girlfriend in scenario 2. But you also probably assumed I'd treat the man in scenario one with more compassion. Why do you think that is?

The answer is because the person in scenario 1 had a physical illness that I could see. In scenario 2, the guy was an asshole, but that's another form of "sickness" if you think about it. The trick is to figure out how to treat the guy in scenario 2 as scenario 1. Now, when we try to do this, our ego tries to justify our anger. But remember, our goal is to fix us and not others.

One of the most difficult relationships I had was with my sister. Since we were kids, we never got along. We both felt as though the other was treated better. This lasted until we were adults, and I had no plans of starting a relationship with her. We'd continue to fight and argue at every turn for the rest of our lives, and I was fine with that.

A couple years ago, I got the terrifying call that our dad was having heart issues. They told me they were doing a quadruple bypass surgery on my birthday, so I called out of work and started driving to Fresno, California, where my family lives. Most of my family was there while dad was already having the surgery done to him, and my family was at the hospital with him. As I was driving there, I was asking myself, "How can I possibly keep it together and not fight with my sister during this time when my dad might literally die?" and "How selfish and self-centered would it be to argue with my sister about something stupid while my dad is having heart surgery?"

Again, my goal is to become a better person regardless of what other people do with their own mental health.

Something I didn't mention is that my sister is mentally ill. To this day, I'm not sure of her exact diagnosis, but she has a ton of emotional issues. I won't go into details, but her mental illness is so bad that she received disability for years because of it.

As I was driving, I remembered this fact. I remembered that my sister is mentally ill. Well, I work with the mentally ill all day everyday. I then had another "a-ha" moment and asked, "If I can show my mentally ill clients patience, tolerance and understanding, why can't I do that with my sister?" So, right then and there, I decided to treat my sister like one of my clients. This was two years ago, and my sister and I have a better relationship than we have had our entire life.

So, this is something that I recommend you start working on because it was life changing for me. I try to treat people like someone or something else. When I get upset, I ask myself, "How would I treat my son in this situation?" or "How would I treat my sick friend in this situation?" and it helps out greatly. It helps me switch from being angry to being a bit more compassionate.

You can do this with anyone or anything that you feel love, kindness. Maybe it's not your son or daughter. Maybe it's not your close friend. Maybe you treat others with the same patience and tolerance that you give your dog or cat. Like, think about it for a second. We love our pets unconditionally, and they can be real assholes, but we forgive them. Our pets will literally throw up or defecate on our carpet and we're kind to them. **IMAGINE IF A PERSON DID THAT.** So, even though some jerk in your office building or class might say something ignorant to you, at least they didn't come in your house and defecate on your carpet. So, try to figure out a way to treat others with the same love that you would a loved one or a pet.

**Pro-Tip:** Do the same thing with yourself. More about this in the next chapter.

## 16. Self-Love and Compassion

So far, this book is how to control your anger so you quit causing so much wreckage to the people in your life, but most importantly, you need to work on being a little nicer to yourself. I was a complete jerk growing up, and most of my anger issues was because I didn't feel good about myself. I did and said so many things out of anger that I regretted. Some people may even say that the old Chris was a bully, and there's nothing worse than being a bully with a conscience.

As I grew older, I realized that my anger was directed at others because I didn't like myself. This was for a variety of reasons that I learned threw therapeutic processes (by the way, get a therapist if you don't have one yet). As the son of an alcoholic mother, I'm prone to a lot of negative self-talk because I never thought I was good enough. My brain tells me that I'm unlovable and not going to do anything with my life. If you're like me, we beat ourselves up and say worse things to ourselves than anyone could ever say to us, and we need to work on it.

The first step is to cut yourself some slack. I'm going to tell you what someone told me a long time ago, which is **you're going to fuck up...a lot.** The the reason this was and still is so important to me is because so many of us have insane expectations of ourselves. We think we're never going to screw up and we can somehow some day be the perfect human being. I hate to burst your bubble, but that is **never going to happen.** Now that we got that out of the way, be a little bit nicer to yourself.

Forgive yourself without becoming complacent. This means to acknowledge that you screwed up and apologize where necessary. One way that I don't stay complacent is to be mindful of the fact that I hate apologizing as I mentioned in that section of this book. As long as you're trying to become a better person each day, you deserve to celebrate that.

Celebrate your small successes! If you went an entire day without freaking out on someone when you would have done that usually, congratulate yourself. Every time I don't lose my mind on someone who was a complete asshole to me, that's a victory, and it helps me love myself a little more.

The best self-love tip I can give you is to just start being nicer to people and do things for others. Again, we're working on minimizing our selfishness and self-centeredness. Honestly, why do you think I love making so many YouTube videos? Why do you think I love replying to comments, DMs and emails? Because it feels good to help people.

The more you go out and do things for others without expecting anything in return, you'll feel better. I've never met anyone who went to feed the homeless or helped an old lady with her groceries who felt like a piece of garbage after. It's extremely hard to believe that negative voice in your head when you're constantly doing good things for other people.

**Recommended reading:** [Real Love by Sharon Salzberg](#) is one of my favorite books of all time, and I'm going to read it for a second time soon. Sharon Salzberg is a meditation teacher who specializes in loving-kindness, compassion and happiness. The entire first part of this book is learning how to be nicer to yourself, and then it goes on to help you with the other relationships in your life because we can't truly love others until we begin loving ourselves, so I highly recommend this book.

## 17. Don't Waste Time Tryng to Change Someone's Opinion

Something I often say jokingly is that the reason I drank so much and used so many drugs was because of how stupid everyone around me was. The problem is that I wasn't entirely joking. I couldn't stand the fact that so many people think so many dumb things. It drove me absolutely nuts. What's crazier is how it affected me so much. My expectations of others was way too high, and I also had to ask myself "Why does it matter what they do or don't believe if it's not hurting anyone?" (I added the "if it's not hurting anyone" because if someone believes there's a demon in your skull and wants to drill a hole in your head, then we need to do something about that).

At a certain point, we care way too much about things that don't matter. When we get into these online debates on social media, we are doing what I told you not to do, which is causing our own problems. We exert so much time and energy trying to change someone's beliefs or opinions, and it is such a waste of time.

If you don't believe me, take a moment to ask yourself when the last time it was that someone changed one of your beliefs. I'm not talking about your belief in the Easter Bunny either. I mean your beliefs on politics or social issues or something more serious that has been ingrained in you since childhood. If it's that hard to change your beliefs, why do you think arguing with someone in a Facebook post is going to change their belief?

Still don't believe me? Let's discuss the neuroscience of this situation.

In [The Moral Landscape by Sam Harris](#), he discusses fMRI brain scans he did as a neuroscientist to see how the brain responds to beliefs. He and his team were some of the only scientists to actually look into this. What they found is that your beliefs activate a part of your brain responsible for ownership. That same good feeling you get when you look at that new car you bought and now own is the same good feeling you get when your beliefs are confirmed (and by the way, this is why confirmation bias is such an issue). They also found that when someone's beliefs are challenged, it triggers your fight or flight response. Your body gets stressed when someone challenges your beliefs, which is why so many arguments happen with no resolution.

Understanding how the brain works has helped me with not wasting my time trying to change someone's beliefs because it's damn near impossible. Again, if their belief isn't hurting anyone and you're not in a place to have a calm, adult conversation, then let them believe whatever the hell they want because it will spare your sanity.

If you're still need help with this, revisit the chapter about picking your battles.

## 18. Do Online Trolls Really Matter?

My next book is going to be about YouTuber mental health, and this is definitely going to be a topic. This is something that so many of us struggle with in the age of social media. Remember how I keep telling you that nobody can make you feel a certain way? You're in control. We let random people online affect us in so many ways.

Don't let something small and insignificant like an online troll ruin your day. We talked earlier in this book about how much time we have wasted on being angry. This doesn't just go for online trolls either. It goes for life in general. Think about how one comment in the morning can ruin the rest of your day. The day is far too long to let one thing ruin it for us. Let it go and figure out a way to be more useful to yourself and others.

Also, remember that everything isn't about you. My son deals with bullies all the time at his elementary school. I always try to remind him that those kids might have an awful home life. While it doesn't excuse the behavior, it helps give us a little empathy for the situation. These trolls online most likely have messed up lives, and even if it's not true, lie to yourself. Just like we discussed in the chapter about lying to yourself, make believe that the online troll just found out their childhood home got destroyed by a T-Rex or something. Whatever it takes to not let that stuff occupy space in your mind.

As someone who spent most of my teenage years as an online troll, I'm here to tell you that these are people with their own issues, and you should feel bad for them. I know that sounds like something corny you tell a child, but it's real talk. That person is probably hurting, and maybe you should ask them if they're doing alright and if they want to talk about it.

On my Instagram, I get mixed reviews about how I post comments from online trolls and my replies. I do it to show people that you don't have to let it affect you. I see so many people have to take breaks from social media or even my fellow YouTubers needing to take breaks because of online trolls. We give these complete strangers far too much power over our lives.

**Online troll hack:** Whether it's a troll or someone online you disagree with, reply once and only once. This is something I've been doing for years. We make the mistake by staying caught in a back and forth with these people, and as mentioned in the previous chapter, you're not going to change their beliefs. Say your peace without being a dick and don't reply again to the comment. Now, you may want to, or you might be thinking, "But Chris, then I'll look like a punk!"...Go back to foundation #3 and ask yourself why you're so afraid of what people think about you.

# 19. Hangry

A lot of you are familiar with the term hangry, but for those of you who don't know what it means, it means that you're hungry and angry because of it. Hangry. This seems like a common sense type thing, but it's really not. Also remember, common sense is much different than common action. For example, it's common sense to not scream at someone for no reason, but it's difficult for many of us to take that action.

Whenever I think of someone being hangry, I think of when one of my best friends, Niki, lived with me. Niki moved in with me during the summer, and she was a first-year school teacher at a high school, and the honeymoon phase faded quick. It wasn't long until the stresses of being a teacher hit her. While it's normal to vent about your bad day at work, Niki took it to the next level. A few times, I noticed how I'd come home, and she'd be like, "CHRIS! WE NEED TO GO OUTSIDE AND SMOKE AND TALK RIGHT NOW!", and she'd vent for the longest time, and then she'd say how she was starving. I'd ask when the last time she ate was, and she'd say, "This morning. I've just been so busy!"

So, after I saw this pattern for a while, whenever I'd come home and she'd demand we talk so she could vent, I'd ask her, "When was the last time you ate?", and she'd say, "Oh yeah!". Eventually, even though she was extremely busy, she started carrying snacks on her and making it a habit to eat throughout the day. Surprise surprise, she didn't need to vent to me nearly as much when I got home from work.

**Note:** I don't condone working through lunch. You're actually less productive at work if you don't take breaks. The thing is that I'm a realist, and I know a lot of you are going to work through lunch anyways, so let's call this tip harm reduction: keep snacks on you.

This seems like a silly section to have in this book, but it's important because we're not mindful about our hunger, and we lash out on people for no reason. Is it really fair to yell at your significant other or child just because you forgot to eat? Of course it's not. This is another reason why you need to meditate every day because it helps improve sensory clarity. There are many times we think we're angry, but we're really just hungry. Regularly meditating will help you catch this more often so if you're feeling irritable, you can ask yourself, "When was the last time I ate?"

## 20. Conclusion

This is by no means a book that is a solution to all of your problems. Just remember that each section of this book is a practice. It's not a magic bullet. We need to train ourselves to manage and control our anger like we would any skill. To try one of these tools once or twice and not have results would be like going to the gym once or twice and thinking you'd have a six pack. The brain is complicated, but it's also something we can rewire. Neuroplasticity proves that there is no such thing as a hopeless situation when it comes to managing our anger. We can create new neuropathways in our brain, enhance the function of our prefrontal cortex and live much better lives.

Remember to cut yourself some slack along this journey. The only thing anyone can ask of you, including yourself, is to put an effort into making a change. The only time you become hopeless is when you give up and don't put the work in.

This short book was designed for you to keep in your phone, tablet or somewhere accessible so you can pause and come back to different suggestions whenever you find your anger getting the best of you.

I am proud of you for taking at least one step towards the right direction of mental health improvement by reading this book, and remember, you're not alone.

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