

Exercise: Breathing Into the Anger

Having a plan to manage hot and powerful anger when it shows up is incredibly useful. Next time you find yourself in a situation like this try the following five-step approach:

Step One: Notice that you are breathing.

Step Two: Notice the feeling of anger within you and acknowledge it to yourself: “Here is a feeling of anger”.

Step Three: Connect with your breathing and, as you do so, deliberately open up and make space the feeling. Breathe into and around the feeling. As you do so imagine a space opening up around it.

Step Four: From the position of your breath and this feeling, broaden your awareness as if you were expanding the spotlight. Open up your awareness, to take in everything else you can feel within you, and then everything else you can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell.

Step Five: Reflect on your values; think about the kind of person you most want to be, the kind of person you are at your best. From this perspective, how do you choose to behave? What do you choose to do next?

It is important to make clear at this point that the aim of this exercise is **not** to get rid of the feeling. If that is your aim then you will end up struggling with it and getting hooked. This is about simply making space for a feeling, which happens to be present in the moment. When you make space for feelings they are that bit less likely to overwhelm you, and you have more room in which to make conscious, values-based decisions on how you want to behave and what you want to do next.