

READING WHAT'S UNDER YOUR ANGER

The Half-Second — the pause between the feeling and the reaction

A worksheet for when anger feels like your default setting

Education and skill-building — not therapy, diagnosis, or personalized treatment. If you are at risk of harming yourself or someone else, contact 988 or 911. This is not emergency care.

1 Does this fit you?

Not a score, not a diagnosis — a mirror. Check the ones that match your experience.

The reaction is out of me before I've decided anything.

Small things — a tone, a delayed reply, a question — land bigger than the moment seems to warrant.

After it flares, I'm drained, and not always sure why it got that big.

When I'm angry, the other person starts looking like the problem, and calmer options drop away.

I'm often braced for the next thing to go wrong, even when nothing is.

I've been called "angry," and the word doesn't quite match what it feels like from the inside.

2 Name what came first

Anger is usually your second feeling, not your first. Take one recent flare and walk it back.

What happened, in one plain sentence — just the trigger, no interpretation:

What I did or said:

Rewind to the half-second before the anger. The quieter feeling that got there first (circle or write):
unimportant · dismissed · unsafe · blocked · not enough · left out

"I felt ____ just then." Write it plainly:

3

Separate the armor from the hurt

Your anger is a signal you can read, not who you are.

The armor — what showed on the outside:

The hurt it was covering — the first feeling from Part 2:

What the other person actually received (the armor reads as “stay back”):

What that first feeling was really asking for:

4

Practice the pause

One move. Before you act, name what's under it — that naming opens the gap between the feeling and the reaction, and the gap tends to get easier to find with practice.

Next time it fires, before you respond, say silently: “I felt ____.”

One check: is the threat happening right now, or does this moment resemble something older?

Log one time this week you caught the gap:

The first feeling underneath:

What I did differently, even slightly:

5

Where this leaves you

- You weren't overreacting to nothing — you were answering something real with the signal that felt safest to send.
- Understanding where the anger comes from explains the reaction. It doesn't remove what you do with it, or the repair that may be owed.
- The goal isn't to stop feeling anger. It's to read what it's covering before it speaks for you.

The shift is a half-second — and it's yours to practice.

Name what's underneath before the armor speaks for you.

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