

UNDERSTANDING ANGER

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AGENDA



- What is Anger
 - Five Ways to Handle Anger
 - Dependency, Control and Freedom
 - Techniques to Manage Anger
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WHAT IS ANGER?



Anger is multifaceted.

- It can be found in any temperament
- It is felt by all people
- It describes a number of expressions

Frustration, irritability, annoyance, blowing off steam, fretting

HOW STRESS HORMONES AFFECT YOUR BODY



CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM



- Heart rate ↑
- Blood pressure ↑
- Arterial tension ↑
- Blood glucose level ↑
- Blood fatty acid level ↑

When these symptoms become chronic, blood vessels become clogged and damaged. This can lead to stroke and heart attack.

IMMUNE SYSTEM



- Thyroid function ↓
- The number of natural killer cells ↓
- The number of virus-infected cells ↑
- Incidence of cancer ↑



DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

- Blood flow ↓
- Metabolism ↓
- Dry mouth ↑



- Intraocular pressure ↑
- Eye sight ↓



- Migraines ↑
- Headaches ↑



- Bone density ↓

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MASKING EMOTION



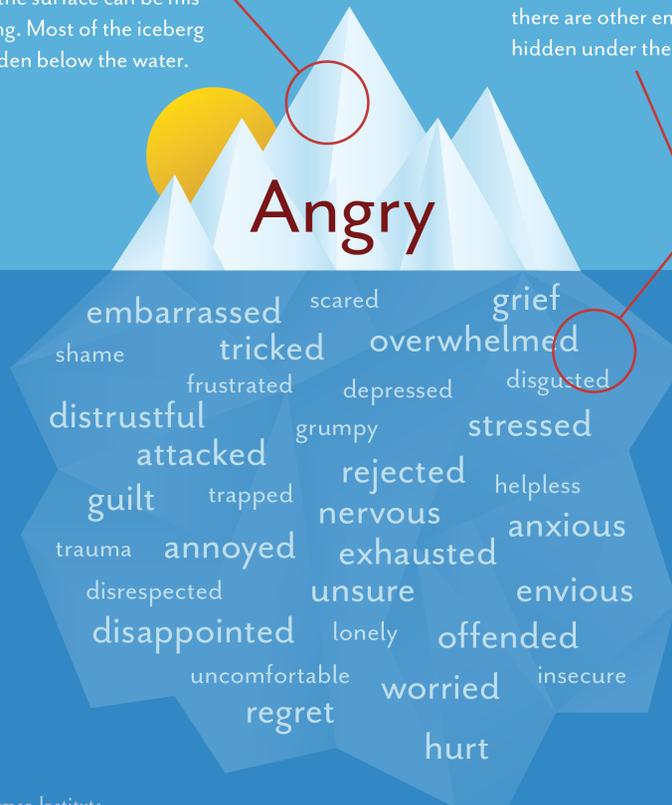
Many people say anger is masking another, more vulnerable emotion. Look for what is underneath the anger.

WHAT'S UNDER YOUR ANGER?

Anger Iceberg

Icebergs are large pieces of ice found floating in the open ocean. What you can see from the surface can be misleading. Most of the iceberg is hidden below the water.

This is how anger works. Often when we are angry, there are other emotions hidden under the surface.



PURPOSE OF ANGER



- Preserving Personal Worth
 - Preserving Essential Needs
 - Preserving Basic Convictions
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PRESERVING PERSONAL WORTH

- Anger can be ignited when the person perceives rejection.
- Ask yourself if you feel invalidated.
- Remind yourself that you can assess if someone's opinion is true, false, or you want to explore it further.

You can create emotional boundaries to limit other's impact on you.

PRESERVING ESSENTIAL NEEDS



- Identifying your true needs helps you control your anger.
- Expect everyone's needs to be different.
- The angry person demonstrates a weariness of having to live without their basic needs being noticed by others.
- In anger, the person is harboring hope that those needs will be restored. Uncertainty that those needs will be met makes you vulnerable to anger.

You can control your vulnerability by knowing your needs and creating a self care plan.

PRESERVING BASIC CONVICTIONS



- Anger can be sparked when others are insensitive to our most fundamental convictions.
- There is a fine line between knowing when to stand firmly in our convictions and when to accept the imperfections in the world.
- Mature adults need to have a firm foundation of beliefs to guide their lives yet also know how to remain composed when others do not share the same beliefs.

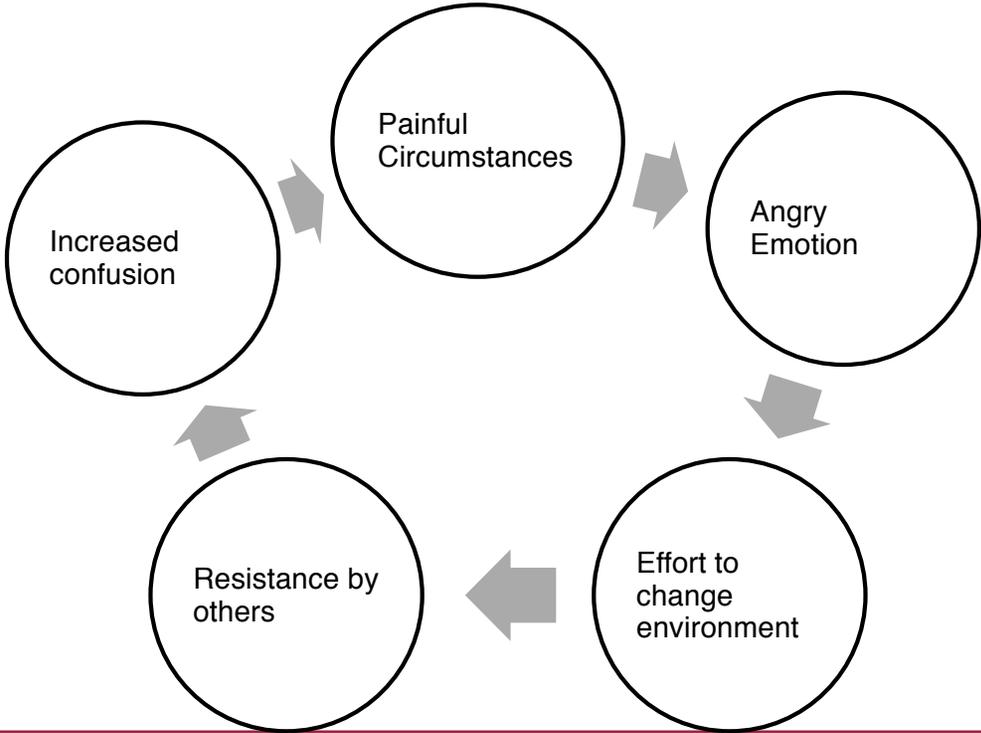
Valuing other people and having good intellectual boundaries helps people control their anger.

IS ANGER GOOD OR BAD?



What do you think?

NONPRODUCTIVE ANGER CYCLE



FIVE WAYS TO HANDLE ANGER



- Suppressing anger
 - Open aggression
 - Passive aggression
 - Assertive anger
 - Dropping anger
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SUPPRESSING ANGER



- Stoically put on a good front and pretend to feel no tension at all.
- Have a history of being invalidated
- Fear powerful retaliation
- “What’s the use?” mentality
- Believing that good people don’t get angry- perfectionists

Suppressing anger is like mold growing in your basement. You may not see it, but it is spreading.

STATEMENTS REFLECTING SUPPRESSING ANGER



I am very image conscious. I don't like to let others know my problems.

Even when I feel very flustered I portray myself publically as having it all together.

I am rather reserved about sharing my problems or frustrations.

Resentful thinking is common for me, although many people would never suspect it.

Sometimes I feel paralyzed when confronted by an unwanted situation.

OPEN AGGRESSION



- Explosiveness, rage, intimidation, blame, bickering, griping, sarcasm.
- Self-preserving stand *at someone else's expense*.
- Focusing so strongly emphasizing personal needs that there is a powerful insensitivity of the needs of others.
- Ongoing struggles with relatives and close associates.
- Emotional stability hangs on other's cooperation.
- Battling for superiority

Accepting imperfections allows people to not let their anger get out of control and let go of non-essential issues.

STATEMENTS REFLECTING OPEN AGGRESSION



I can be blunt and forceful when someone does something to frustrate me.

As I speak my convictions, my voice becomes increasingly louder.

No one has to guess my opinion; I'm known for having unwavering viewpoints.

When something goes wrong, I focus so sharply on fixing the problem that I overlook others' feelings.

During verbal disagreements with someone, I tend to repeat myself several times.

I find it hard to keep my thoughts to myself when it is obvious that someone else is wrong.



PASSIVE AGGRESSION

- Refusing to explode or get caught in verbal abuse.
- Create a “too-strong” determination to resist “ugly anger”
- Preserving personal worth, needs and convictions *at someone else’s expense*.
- Need to have control with the least vulnerability.
- Too risky to be open about anger, so they frustrate others with subtle sabotage.
- Still engaged in battle for superiority.

Being able to see everyone’s worth reduces the need to be superior.

STATEMENTS REFLECTING PASSIVE AGGRESSION



When I am frustrated, I become silent, knowing it bothers other people.

I am prone to sulk and pout.

When someone asks if I am frustrated, I will lie and say, “No, everything is fine.”

There are times when I am deliberately evasive so others won’t bother me.

I complain about people behind their backs, but resist the opportunity to be open with them face to face.

I sometimes approach work projects half-heartedly.

ASSERTIVE ANGER



- Preserving personal worth, needs and convictions while *considering the needs of others.*
- Can help relationships grow.
- Reflects personal maturity and stability.
- Addresses personal worth, needs and convictions while keeping the door open for ongoing love.

“I statements” allow us to communicate our needs in healthy ways.

EXAMPLES OF ASSERTIVE ANGER



- An overworked volunteer politely but firmly says to no a request to do more projects.
 - A parent can state guidelines for discipline without resorting to debate or condescension toward the child.
 - When swamped by more responsibilities than they can manage, a person can request help from friends.
 - A tired parent can tell her family they will take a thirty-minute break with no interruptions.
 - Ex-spouses can talk about their differences, offering helpful suggestions without raising their tone of voice or repeating their message incessantly.
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ASSERTIVE ANGER TIPS



Answer the following statements:

When I speak assertively I still want others to know

Although I want to be taken seriously by others, I want my reputation to be _____



TIPS FOR HELPING WITH ASSERTIVE ANGER



- Make sure the issues are not trivial.
 - Be aware that your tone of voice can help create an atmosphere of respect for others.
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DROPPING ANGER



- Most difficult one to choose.
- There are times when assertive anger doesn't work.
- Accept your inability to completely control circumstances.
- Recognize your personal limits.
- Includes tolerating differences, respecting other's right to have their own boundaries and choosing to forgive.

Anger management does not hinge on someone else's decisions.

TIPS FOR DROPPING ANGER



- Make yourself accountable to a trusted friend. Let that person know when you are struggling.
 - Choose to live in kindness and forgiveness for today. You don't have the ability to decide your emotions for the many years ahead.
 - Write out your feelings. Read them over with the intention of letting them go.
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DEPENDENCY



Let go of excessive dependencies so your anger management is *inwardly* directed rather than *externally* directed.

Unmet love needs breeds unbalanced dependency.

3 WARNING SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY ATTACHMENT



1. Emotional Dependence
 2. Preoccupation with your partner's needs and feelings
 3. Rescue Behavior
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INTERDEPENDENCE



Interdependence: I rely on you for comfort when I am sad, and in return, I comfort you when you are sad.

Emotional dependence: I offer you an unlimited amount of comfort, but I never ask for – or expect – comfort in return.

Interdependence: I enjoy spending time with you, but I also enjoy doing things on my own.

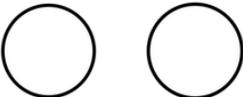
Emotional dependence: I don't enjoy doing things alone, so all of our free time must be spent doing things together.

Healthy (and Unhealthy) Boundaries



Focusing
On Your
Partner's
Wants and
Needs
Too Much

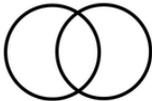
○ = one person



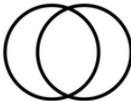
Healthy boundaries with strangers



Healthy boundaries with casual acquaintances



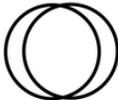
Healthy boundaries with close friends



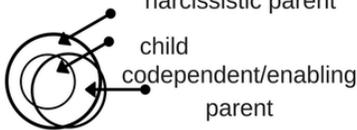
Healthy boundaries with intimate relationships (very close friends, certain family members, spouse)



Healthy boundaries after trust has been broken *my addition



Enmeshed boundaries (unhealthy)



Boundaries in a dysfunctional family

From "Healing the Child Within" by Charles Whitfield
www.thriveafterabuse

RESCUE BEHAVIOR



When you are worried about every little thing that happens to your partner, no matter how trivial, you will try to take charge, make decisions, and provide solutions – even when they didn't ask for your help.

This is called *rescue behavior*.

Anger due to unbalanced dependency reflects the need of that person to focus on their relationship expectations.

BALANCED DEPENDENCY



- Developing self-worth and well-being.
 - Developing a contemplative mind.
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CONTEMPLATIVE MIND EXAMPLES



Dependency: I worry about how others will treat me.

Contemplation: I may want to be liked by others, but I can manage just fine even if others don't think so.

Dependency: I'm not sure I can handle adversity.

Contemplation: If problems arise, somehow I'll manage them.

CONTROL



Choose to relinquish your cravings for control in exchange for freedom.

EXCESSIVE CONTROL CREATES MORE NEGATIVES THAN POSITIVES.



- Performance takes priority over relationships.
 - Differences are threatening.
 - Obligation is taught as being mandatory rather than a choice.
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ACKNOWLEDGING FREEDOM



To break the grip of another person's control and to refrain from becoming controlling ourselves, we can experience freedom.

SELF-INFLICTED ANGER

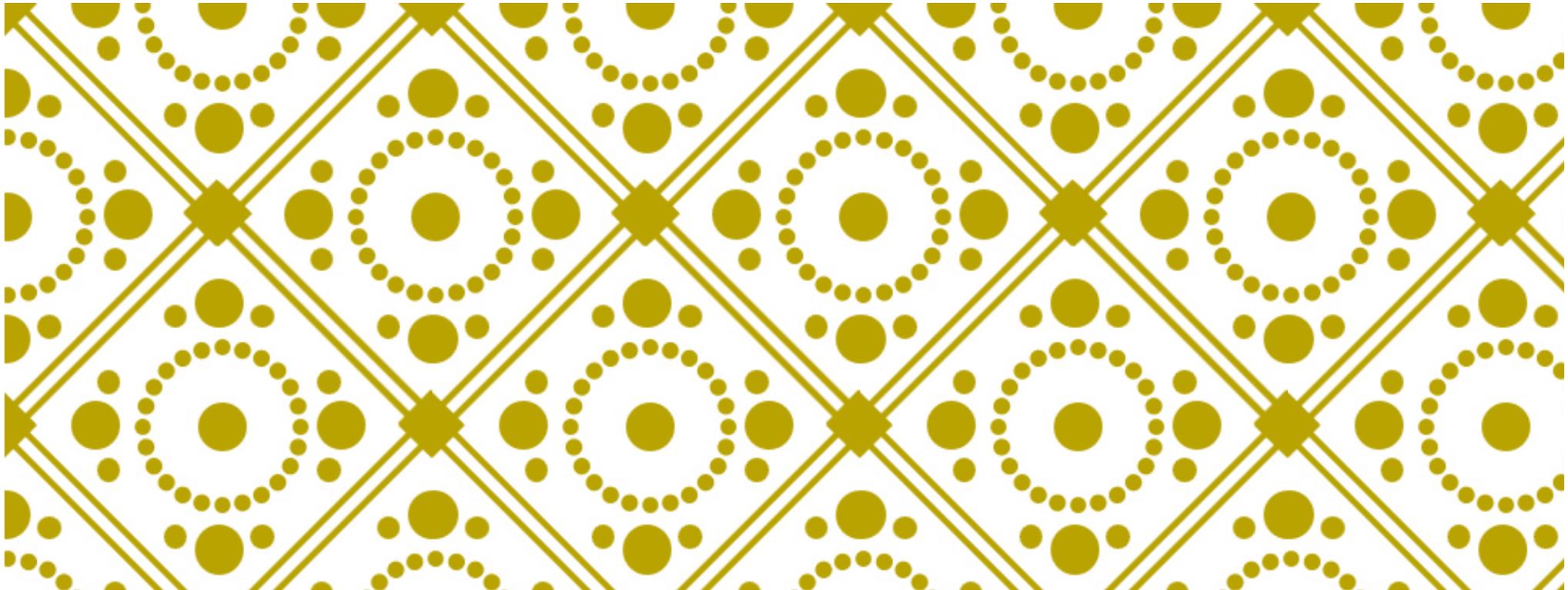


Keep your lifestyle habits consistent with your emotional composure.

HOW WE SABOTAGE OUR EMOTIONAL STABILITY



- Values abandonment causes a compromise of morals in order to be accepted.
 - Work and busyness becomes all-encompassing.
 - Poor health habits. Caring for yourself is a personal responsibility.
 - Material gain is overemphasized. Most people find they are looking for something else.
 - Substance abuse is a sign that someone is not managing their feelings.
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TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE ANGER

IDENTIFYING COMMON TRIGGERS



Disrespect of personal space

Receiving insults

Receiving threats

Being lied to

Being ignored

Being corrected

Being accused of something
that is untrue

Being talked over or
interrupted

Note which might be your triggers. Are they worth, needs or convictions?

NAME IT TO TAME IT



- Naming your anger requires you to take a different view of your experience.
 - There are many words to describe anger. Find one and let it help you identify the intensity of your anger.
 - Take on the role as “sportscaster” or “narrator” and look at yourself from a distance.
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INTENSITY OF ANGER

Annoyed

You're bothered by an incident or situation which brings about short term tension that is more than likely to pass with time. When annoyed you internalize your feelings and keep it under wraps.

Frustrated

You're feeling or expressing distress, mostly due to the inability to control a situation or achieve something. When frustrated you keep your anger to yourself but show physical emotions of being such.

Indignation

You're feeling mistreated or provoked which feels like unfair treatment. When feeling indignation you can no longer internalize your anger and likely voice the emotion with gestures/yelling/vocal resentment.

Infuriated

You're feeling extremely angry and mad, which can come from severe impatience and annoyances stacking up or someone severely mistreating you. When you're infuriated you are enraged with anger, which consumes your actions.

Hostile

You're beyond angry at this point, becoming unfriendly, antagonistic and very negative to everyone around you. When your hostile you're pessimistic, malicious and unkind.

NEGATIVE AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS



- They are always negative
 - They make you feel bad about yourself
 - They are self sabotaging
 - They are uninvited
 - They are believable
 - They are biased
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EXAMPLES OF NEGATIVE AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS



- All or Nothing/Black or White thinking
 - Over-control and Perfectionism
 - Magical Thinking or Fortune Telling
 - Catastrophizing
 - Pessimistic
 - Personalization/ Over-responsibility
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SELF TALK TO MANAGE ANGER



I don't need to prove myself in this situation.

I can stay calm.

As long as I keep my cool, I'm in control of myself.

There is no need to doubt myself; what other people say doesn't have to matter so much.

I'm the only person who can make me mad or keep me calm.

SELF TALK TO MANAGE ANGER



My anger is a signal. It's time to talk to myself and relax.

I don't need to feel threatened here.

Nothing says I have to be competent and strong all the time. It's okay to feel unsure or confused.

It's impossible to control other people and situations. The only thing I can control is myself and how I express my feelings.

It's okay to be uncertain or insecure sometimes. I don't need to be in control of everything and everybody.

SELF TALK TO MANAGE ANGER



If people criticize me, I can survive that. Nothing says I have to be perfect.

If this person wants to go off the wall, that is nothing I need to do. I don't need to respond to their anger or feel threatened.

It's okay to walk away from a fight.

It's nice to have other peoples love and approval, but even without it, I can still accept and like myself.

SELF TALK TO MANAGE ANGER



It's okay to make mistakes.

People are going to act the way they want to, not the way I want them to.

I feel angry, that must mean I have been hurt, scared, or have some other threatening feeling underneath the anger.
It's okay.

4,7,8 (RELAXING BREATHING) EXERCISE



Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound.

Close your mouth and inhale quietly through your nose to a mental count of **four**.

Hold your breath for a count of **seven**.

Exhale completely through your mouth, making a whoosh sound to a count of **eight**.

This is one breath. Now inhale again and repeat the cycle three more times for a total of four breaths.

ACTIVELY SHIFT YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE



Relax – breathe and release the tension in your body.

Detach – clear your mind of all thoughts.

Center – drop your awareness to the center of your body just below your navel.

Focus – choose one keyword that represents how you want to feel in this moment. Breathe in the word and allow yourself to feel the shift.

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION

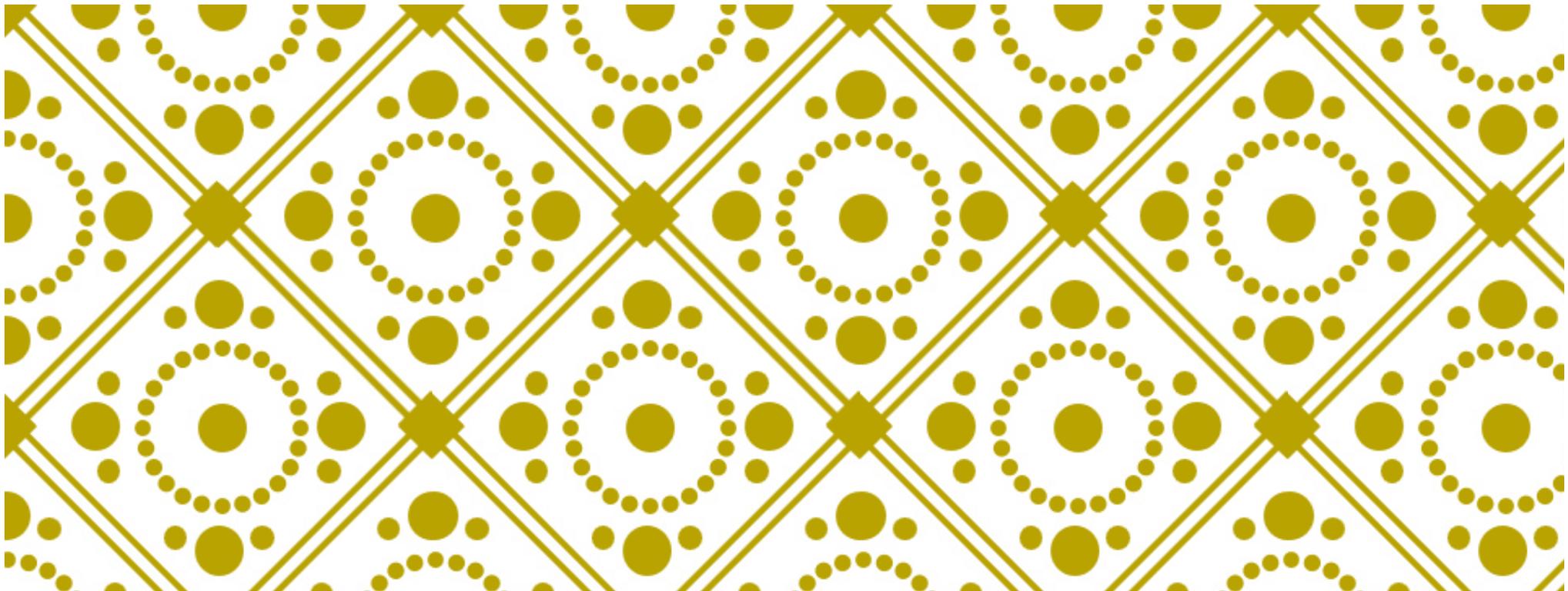


Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that relaxes your mind and body by progressively tensing and relaxation muscle groups throughout your entire body. You will tense each muscle group vigorously, but without straining, and then suddenly release the tension and feel the muscle relax. You will tense each muscle for about 5 seconds. If you have any pain or discomfort at any of the targeted muscle groups feel free to omit that step. Throughout this exercise you may visualize the muscles tensing and a wave of relaxation flowing over them as you release that tension. It is important that you keep breathing throughout the exercise

GUIDED IMAGERY- SAFE PLACE



To begin this guided meditation find a comfortable position and close your eyes. Once you settle in notice your body. How does it feel? Let your body begin to relax by releasing the areas of tension by breathing. Take slow deep breaths and as you exhale let the tension go. Where is your body feeling tense? Focus your attention on this area as you take another breath in. Feel this area relaxing as you breathe out. Allow your breathing to gradually slow down.



QUESTIONS?



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