A.A. 2023-2024 **Reading Comprehension TEXT 4**

**Don’t Shut Down Your Anger. Channel It.**

*We’re often told to focus on the positive. But new research shows a healthy dose of anger can be motivating.*Inizio modulo

There is an upside to feeling angry.

According to research [published this week](https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/psp-pspa0000350.pdf) in the “Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,” anger is more helpful at motivating people to overcome obstacles and meet their goals than a neutral emotional state.

In a series of seven experiments, researchers recruited undergraduate students at Texas A&M University and, in some cases, elicited anger by showing the students images that insulted their school, likepeople in Aggie shirts wearing diapers and carrying baby bottles.

“It worked well,” said Heather C. Lench, the lead author of the study and a professor in the psychological and brain sciences department at Texas A&M.

The researchers found that anger helped the students solve more puzzles. When they were asked to play a challenging computer game and it was rigged to be nearly impossible to win, this angered the students. But in those moments, they moved faster and their reaction time decreased. The other experiments also showed that anger could be beneficial.

“For a long time, there was this idea that being positive all the time was a life well lived, and that’s what we should strive for,” Dr. Lench said. “But there’s more and more evidence that it’s actually a life that’s balanced by a mix of emotions that seems to be more satisfying and positive long-term.”

Embrace your anger.

Many of us have been taught to push away our so-called negative emotions and focus on the positive. But experts say that being relentlessly positive and leaning on happy platitudes, also known as “toxic positivity,” can harm us.

“Most positivity lingo lacks nuance, compassion and curiosity,” the therapist Whitney Goodman writes in her book “Toxic Positivity.” “It comes in the form of blanket statements that tell someone how to feel and that the feeling they’re currently having is wrong.”

The truth is that all of our emotions can be useful. “We evolved to experience negative emotions,” said Ethan Kross, a psychologist and the director of the Emotion and Self-Control Lab at the University of Michigan.

Anger often results after you have experienced an offense “and you still believe that you can right the ship,” he added. “It can be energizing.”

The first step is to recognize that you’re angry. “It sounds so obvious, but it’s not,” said Daniel L. Shapiro, an associate professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital and the author of ‘Negotiating the Non-negotiable.

Ask yourself: What am I feeling right now? What is this about?

“We get angry when we feel there’s an obstacle that is impeding us,” Dr. Shapiro said. Anger can also derive from emotions that shake us up, like shame, humiliation or the feeling of being unappreciated.

At other times, anger can be set off when we sense a threat to our identity, he added, for example that our beliefs or values are under attack.

When anger surfaces, it is important to remember your overall goal. Otherwise, anger can quickly get out of control, producing an outsize response that is too intense for the circumstances or that lasts an inordinate amount of time.

Say you’re arguing with your spouse. [Some](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191886923001812?via%3Dihub) [studies](https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2F0022-3514.93.1.103) have shown that expressing anger and having a confrontational discussion can improve the relationship, provided that your goal is to strengthen the relationship, express your needs or come to a compromise, Dr. Lench said.

But if you mainly care about being right and winning the argument, then that could “lead you to be aggressive with them in a way that is harmful,” she added.

To argue with someone constructively, Dr. Shapiro said, imagine what the other person is feeling and look at the problem through their eyes; you will be more likely to influence them. That doesn’t mean you need to agree.

If your anger is all-consuming, first try stepping away to cool down.

In the workplace, you can channel angry energy to achieve performance-related goals. For example, someone who didn’t receive the annual review or promotion they wanted could use that anger to plan out steps to do better next year, said David Lebel, an associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh’s Katz Graduate School of Business.

And if you bring up a problem with your co-workers or your manager, try to couple it with a suggestion that would help solve the problem, he added, or ask for help in finding a solution.

At times, someone’s gender, race or position in the organization can make it feel more difficult to have these conversations in the workplace.

Simone Stolzoff, a workplace expert and the author of “The Good Enough Job,” suggested finding support both outside of work and within.

“Find solidarity among other colleagues, especially ones at your level,” he said. Together, you can express demands or talk about what needs to be changed “in a thoughtful, considered way.”

Finally, be wary of venting. [Venting can feel good](https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2019-01038-001), but it doesn’t generally produce solutions, Dr. Kross said. Try to get social support from people who are objective and can help reframe your circumstances.

*Adapted from The New York Times 02.11.2023*

**Now read the following statements and write TRUE or FALSE after each of them.**

1. Experts say that allowing yourself to feel angry when incensed is healthier than being persistently positive.

1. According to the text, giving vent to your anger is as constructive as recognizing you are angry.