

Still true in twenty minutes

A short book about losing your temper, and how to keep
your point instead

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First edition

Written by AI with human guidance. It can
contain mistakes, which later editions correct.

Contents

1. Before you start
2. Ten minutes after
3. What anger is for
4. "I need to let it out"
5. "If I hold it in, it'll make me ill"
6. "It's the only way anyone listens"
7. The story in the gap
8. The wrong person
9. "That's just how I am"
10. "If I stop, people will walk all over me"
11. The decision
12. When the heat comes back
13. Old anger
14. After a bad one
15. The next time
16. Notes

Before you start

You can read this book in two evenings. I kept it short because a person who loses their temper doesn't need four hundred pages of reasons to feel bad about it.

Most of the book is about why the outburst happens and what it seems to give you. The practical part comes in chapter 10. I put it late because you already know the usual advice. You've been told to count to ten and take deep breaths, and you may have tried it with your jaw clenched while the other person kept talking. The advice isn't wrong, and slow breathing turns up again in chapter 10. My view is that it fails because it asks you to give up something you still believe you need. So we'll go through those beliefs one at a time and see which of them hold up.

You won't be asked to stop being angry. I don't think that's possible, and I don't think it would be good for you. The book is about a narrower thing, which is what you do in the first few minutes after the anger arrives.

You don't need to wait for chapter 10 to change anything. If you feel a row starting tonight and you'd like to walk away from it, walk away. Nothing in the later chapters depends on you having one more bad evening first.

A few chapters ask you to look at your own recent history and check a claim against it. Please do those. You have years of evidence about your own temper, and it's better evidence than anything I can offer.

Ten minutes after

The house has gone quiet. A door is shut somewhere upstairs, and it was shut hard. You're standing in the kitchen with your heart still going, and the thing you were shouting about a few minutes ago is already getting harder to defend. It was about the recycling, or the tone of a text, or somebody being late again. It felt enormous. It's shrinking as you stand there.

What comes next is familiar. First the replay, where you go over what they said and why you were right. Then the replay starts to include what you said, and one sentence in particular. You knew where it would land when you chose it. After that comes the flat, slightly sick feeling, and then the work of putting the evening back together.

I'll say early what this isn't. You don't have a knowledge problem. Nobody needs to tell you that shouting at people you love is bad for them and for you. You've worked that out, probably on many evenings like this one. You may also have made promises, to them or to yourself, and meant every word, and then broken them on some ordinary Thursday.

That last part is what worries people most. If you know the cost, and you've sworn to stop, and you still do it, the obvious conclusion is that something is wrong with you. You have an anger problem, or a bad character.

I think the conclusion is wrong, and the rest of this book is my argument for why.

Here it is in brief. Anger and the outburst are two different things. Anger is a feeling that arrives on its own, and much of the time it has a fair point. The outburst is what you do with it in the first few minutes, such as the shouting, the cutting remark, the slammed door, the email sent at speed. For some readers it's the opposite, a cold silence that lasts three days. That part is a habit. Like most habits, it survives because it pays you something every time, and because you're afraid of what would happen without it.

The payments are real. An outburst does bring a kind of relief. People do sometimes jump when you shout. There's a moment in the middle of it when you feel strong and clear, and if most of your day is spent feeling neither, that moment is worth something. I won't pretend otherwise, because you'd know I was lying.

What I'll try to show is that each payment is smaller than it looks and comes with a charge you've stopped counting. The largest charge is an odd one. The outburst wrecks the anger's own purpose. You had a point, and because of the way you delivered it, nobody heard the point. They heard the volume. When you see that clearly, in your own history, the habit becomes much less attractive, and the practical steps that never worked before begin to work.

I can't promise you'll become a serene person. I doubt you want to be. What I think you can have is the ability to be angry and still choose what happens next, so that the people around you hear what you meant.

Two things before we go on.

If your anger has ever included hitting, grabbing, throwing things at someone, or threats, or if people in your home are frightened of you, this book may help but it isn't enough. Please talk to your doctor or a specialist service as well. Chapter 13 says more about how to do that.

And if you're reading this because you live with someone else's rage, and you've been told the fault is your reactions, this book isn't aimed at you. Another person's violence is not something you fix by managing yourself better. A domestic abuse helpline in your country can talk it through with you in confidence.

What anger is for

Many people who pick up a book like this one have reached a simple verdict about anger. It's the enemy. It has cost them friendships, maybe a job, some very bad Christmases. The goal, as they see it, is to feel less of it.

That's understandable, and I think it's the wrong goal. It's also one you can't reach, which matters because failing at an impossible goal is a good way to end up hating yourself.

Anger is a signal. It turns up when something you care about seems to be under threat, or blocked, or treated with contempt. Somebody pushes in front of you, breaks an agreement, talks down to your child, takes credit for your work. The feeling says that this isn't right and something should be done. Along with the message comes a body ready to act on it. Your heart speeds up, your muscles tighten, your attention narrows onto the target, and you feel a push to move towards the problem and force it to change.

You can see why people would come equipped with this. A person with no anger at all would be easy to cheat and easy to push around. Plenty of good things in the world began with someone getting angry about how things were and refusing to put up with it. If you've spent your life being told to calm down whenever you objected to anything, you may have good reason to be suspicious of a book on this subject. So I'll be plain about it. Nothing here asks you to drop a fair complaint.

The signal has two weaknesses, though, and they cause most of the trouble.

The first is accuracy. Anger is usually right that something happened and often wrong about what it was. It fires on a fast first reading of events, and that reading tends to assume the worst about the other person's motives. It's also poor at judging size. A lost parking space and a betrayal can produce surprisingly similar feelings for the first thirty seconds. A smoke alarm behaves the same way. It makes the same noise for burnt toast as for a house fire, and the sensible response is to go and look before you do anything else. You wouldn't take the battery out, and you wouldn't call the fire brigade every time you grill a sandwich.

The second weakness is the body. The state anger puts you in is built for physical confrontation. It makes you faster and stronger, and it makes you worse at most of what a modern disagreement requires. In that state you listen badly, you lose nuance, and your memory hands you every previous offence by the same person, neatly filed. It's a good state for pushing a car out of a ditch. It's a bad state for talking to a teenager about their phone.

So I'd like you to start thinking of any episode of anger as having two parts. One is the point, meaning the message about what's wrong and what you'd like to be different. The other is the heat, meaning the bodily surge and the urge to strike. They arrive together and they feel like one thing. They aren't. The point can be true or false, and if it's true today it will be true tomorrow. The heat is temporary. It usually fades within minutes if nothing feeds it.

This is where the title comes from. If your point is a good one, it will still be true in twenty minutes. Nothing about it requires delivery at the peak of the heat. The habit this book is about is the habit of letting the heat deliver the point.

Here's something to check against your own record. Think of the last three times you lost your temper. For each one, ask whether there was a fair point somewhere inside it. My guess is that in at least two there was. Then ask whether the other person took that point on board. I don't mean that they went quiet, or apologised to end the scene. I mean that they understood what you were upset about and changed something. Hold on to your answers. We'll need them in chapter 5.

"I need to let it out"

Ask people why they blow up and the most common answer involves pressure. "It builds and builds, and eventually it has to come out." "Better out than in." "I just needed to get it off my chest." After the outburst they often report feeling better, lighter, as though something has drained away.

Almost everyone pictures anger this way. It's a fluid under pressure, like steam in a boiler, and if you don't release some, the vessel will burst. The language is full of it. We let off steam, we blow our tops, we simmer and boil over. Whole businesses exist on this idea. You can pay to stand in a room and smash plates with a bat, and people come out smiling.

If the picture were accurate, the outburst would be a kind of maintenance. Unpleasant for bystanders, but necessary, and you'd be right to fear giving it up.

So it's worth knowing that researchers have been testing the pressure picture for decades, and it has done badly.

The best-known experiment is by Brad Bushman, a researcher now at Ohio State University. He arranged for students to have an essay they'd written harshly criticised, supposedly by another student. One group then hit a punching bag while thinking about the person who'd criticised them, which is venting in its purest form. A second group hit the bag while thinking about getting fit. A third group sat quietly for a couple of minutes and did nothing. Afterwards everyone reported their mood and got a chance to blast

their critic with loud noise. If the pressure picture were right, the venting group should have been the calmest. They were the angriest and the most aggressive. The people who'd done nothing at all came out best.

One study proves little, so here's the larger result. In 2024 Sophie Kjørvik and Bushman pulled together 154 studies of anger-reducing activities, with more than ten thousand participants between them. They sorted the activities by what they do to the body. Activities that lower arousal, such as slow breathing, relaxation, meditation and yoga, reduced anger across all sorts of people and settings. Activities that raise arousal, such as hitting a bag or going for a hard run, didn't reduce it on average, and some made it worse.

That pattern tells you what's wrong with the boiler picture. Anger isn't a stored substance. No tank of it sits inside you, filling up. It's a state your body gets into and then either keeps up or lets go of, and whether it keeps it up depends on what you do. Shouting, hitting things and rehearsing your grievance keep the body worked up and keep your mind on the target. You're practising being angry, and you get better at what you practise.

Now the fair objection. You have felt better after blowing up. That wasn't imagined.

I believe you. I'd only ask you to look at what the relief is made of. Partly it's exhaustion. A surge like that can't be kept up for long, and when it drops you feel the drop as calm. Partly it's the end of the build-up itself. The half hour of rising tension before an outburst is miserable, and the outburst ends it. You'd also feel the

end of that tension if it had eased another way. Notice too how long the good feeling lasts. If your experience is like most people's, it's gone within minutes, and what replaces it is the kitchen scene from chapter 1. Relief from steam that's truly been released shouldn't turn into dread that quickly.

There's a second objection. "What about talking to a friend? Surely that's healthy." It can be, and it depends on which kind of talking. If you ring a friend to work out what happened, whether you've read it right, and what to do, that usually helps. If you ring them to tell the story again with the outrage turned up, and they say "he did what?" in all the right places, you'll put the phone down angrier than you picked it up. You can tell the difference by how your body feels at the end of the call.

The practical meaning is this. You can stop treating the outburst as something your health requires. It isn't a release valve. If anything it's a rehearsal. When the heat is on you, the things that help are the ones that slow the body down, and we'll get specific about those in chapter 10.

"If I hold it in, it'll make me ill"

If the outburst isn't a release valve, you might expect people to give it up happily. Mostly they don't, and one reason is the alternative they picture. They see themselves standing there with a fixed smile, saying "it's fine" through their teeth, while everything they haven't said goes sour inside them. They've heard that bottled-up anger causes ulcers, or heart trouble, or a far bigger explosion later on. Given that choice, shouting looks like the healthier option.

The fear has something real in it. Putting a lid on a feeling while it's still running at full strength is hard work, and the work shows up in the body. James Gross, a psychologist at Stanford, ran an experiment on this in the 1990s. He showed people an unpleasant film. Some were told to hide any sign of what they felt. Others were told to think about the film in a way that made it less upsetting, which researchers call reappraisal. Both groups looked calm from the outside. The group that only hid their reaction felt just as bad as before, and their bodies were more worked up than those of people who'd simply watched. The group that changed how they thought about the film felt less to begin with.

So you're right to distrust the fixed smile. Anyone who has said "I'm fine" in that particular voice knows it fools nobody and settles nothing.

The mistake is thinking those are the only two options. Blow up or clamp down. Both of them deal with the heat and the point as a single package. When you blow up, you deliver the package at full

heat. When you clamp down, you hold on to the package, still hot, and try not to let it show.

There's a third option, and the rest of the book is built on it. You separate the two. You let the heat fall, which it does within minutes when you stop feeding it. You keep the point. Then you decide what to do with the point, and if it's still worth raising, you raise it in a normal voice with the right person. Nothing has been bottled. The complaint gets made. It gets made a little later, by a version of you who can think.

People who clamp down often find this hard to believe, because in their experience the anger doesn't fade. It sits there for days. That's true, and it's worth seeing why. The silent sufferer is rarely letting anything go. They're replaying the offence in their head, polishing what they should have said and collecting further evidence. In Bushman's punching bag study, the group who kept thinking about the person who'd insulted them stayed angriest. Going over and over a grievance, which psychologists call rumination, is one of the most dependable ways to keep anger alive. The feeling lasts for days because it's being fed several times an hour.

This is why I count the long cold silence as a form of the same habit. If you're the reader who never shouts, and who goes quiet and distant for three days until the other person works out what they did, most of this book applies to you with small adjustments. The silence is an outburst in slow motion. It gives the same sense of power, and it's the same failure to say what's wrong. It also costs you more time.

As for the big explosion that's said to follow a long spell of holding it in, I agree that it happens. My reading is that it comes from unsaid points piling up, and not from stored-up heat. You let forty small things pass without a word, each one goes into the file, and one day the file comes out all at once over a teaspoon left in the sink. The other person is baffled, because from where they stand you've gone berserk about a teaspoon. Shouting more often won't cure that. Saying the small things calmly at the time will, because it keeps the file thin.

One caution about health claims in general. You'll find articles saying that expressing anger is bad for your heart, and others saying that holding it in is bad for your heart. The research is mixed, and I'm not going to pick a frightening statistic to push you in either direction. You don't need one. The argument here depends only on something you can observe in yourself, which is that neither blowing up nor clamping down gets your point heard, and both leave you feeling bad.

So the choice was never between exploding and swallowing it.

"It's the only way anyone listens"

Here's a common household scene, offered as an example. A parent asks a child to put their shoes on. They ask again, pleasantly. They ask a third time, with an edge. On the fourth go they shout, and the shoes go on. The parent has learned that shouting gets shoes on. The child has learned that the first three requests don't count.

Of all the payments the outburst makes, this one is the hardest to argue with, because it's partly true. Raised voices do get results. A colleague backs down. The builder suddenly finds a free day next week. The family scatters and the mess gets cleared up. When you've asked nicely and been ignored, then shouted and been obeyed, it's reasonable to conclude that shouting is what works.

It also works unpredictably, and that makes the habit stronger. Behaviour that pays off every time is fairly easy to drop once the payments stop. Behaviour that pays off now and then, on no schedule, is much stickier. Each outburst that gets you what you wanted keeps the rest going, including the many that got you nothing except a ruined evening.

Go back to the answers I asked you to hold on to at the end of chapter 2. Take the outbursts where you found a fair point. How often did the other person take it on board?

My bet is that your honest answer is almost never. It's worth being precise about what happened in its place. The other person reacted to the heat. They defended themselves, or shouted back, or went silent and waited for it to be over. If they gave in, they gave in to

make the noise stop. Afterwards, what stayed with them was how you behaved. The point didn't stay. In their account of the evening, "you didn't ring to say you'd be late, and I was worried" has become "you screamed at me in front of the children." You started the evening with a fair grievance. By the end of it you owed them an apology.

It's as if you'd posted your letter by tying it to a brick and throwing it through the window. The letter may be reasonable and well argued. The recipient is going to talk about the window.

That's the central charge I'd like you to weigh against the payment. The outburst defeats your own anger. The signal went off because something mattered to you, and the way you delivered it guaranteed that the thing which mattered wouldn't be dealt with. That's why the same rows come round again and again. The point never lands, so the problem never gets solved, so the anger fires again next week.

There are slower costs as well.

People adapt to a person with a temper. They learn to manage you. They choose their moment, soften the news, leave things out, or stop telling you things altogether. A manager known for blowing up finds out about problems last, when they're already expensive. A parent known for it ends up with children who are skilled at concealment. You get a quieter life and worse information, and you may not notice, because what you can see looks like things going smoothly.

Compliance won by volume also wears out. The child in the example now waits for the shout, so the shout has to arrive earlier and louder to work at all. If you've noticed that you have to get angrier than you used to for the same result, this is why.

And the obedience is thin. Frightened people do the minimum while you're watching. Think about whose requests you take seriously yourself. It's probably the people who say something once, calmly, and then do what they said they'd do. Chapter 9 is about how to become one of them.

So the honest summary of "it's the only way anyone listens" is that people comply now and then, and at a price. They don't listen. If being listened to is what you want, the outburst is the worst tool you have for it.

The story in the gap

A car pulls out in front of you and you brake hard. In the first second you feel fright. In the second, you're furious, and the fury comes with a sentence, something like "that idiot doesn't care about anyone else on the road."

Look at what that sentence contains. You know one fact, which is that a car pulled out. Everything else is a story. You don't know the driver is an idiot, or that they don't care. They might have been dazzled by the sun, or lost, or distracted by a child being sick in the back seat. They might be a careless fool. You have no information either way. Your mind supplied a motive instantly, and the motive it picked was the most insulting one on offer.

We say "he made me angry" as though the event produced the feeling directly. It's more accurate to say the event produced a reading, and the reading produced the feeling. The reading happens so fast that it doesn't feel like a thought at all. It feels like seeing. Still, the same event read differently brings a different feeling. If you found out the driver was rushing to a hospital, the anger would be gone in a moment, though nothing on the road had changed.

Psychologists have a name for the habit of reading unclear behaviour as deliberate. They call it hostile attribution bias. In 2019 Stéphanie Klein Tuenté and colleagues reviewed twenty-five studies of it in adults. People who tend to see hostility in unclear situations were more aggressive, and this held across very different groups, from students to forensic psychiatric patients. The links

were small to medium in size, and studies like these can't fully settle which comes first. They do fit what you can observe for yourself. The more readily you see intent, the more often you're angry.

The usual stories fall into a few families. One is "they did it on purpose." Another is "they don't respect me." A third is "they always do this." And there's the one about yourself, which is "I can't stand this." Underneath them you'll usually find a rule with the word "should" in it. People should be on time. Drivers should indicate. My children should do what they're told the first time. Nothing is wrong with having standards. The trouble starts when you treat a preference about how other people behave as a law, so that every breach registers as an outrage when it's really an annoyance.

I need to be careful here, because this idea is easily turned into something false. I'm not telling you the other person is always innocent, or that it's all in your head. Sometimes they did do it on purpose. Sometimes they don't respect you. The aim is to be accurate, which isn't the same as being charitable. If you're going to act on a story, it should be the true one, and the first story anger hands you is only a guess.

Here's an exercise that takes two minutes. Take the most recent thing that made you properly angry. Write down what happened in a way a camera could have recorded. "She looked at her phone while I was talking." Then write three different explanations for it, including at least one that has nothing to do with you. She was waiting for news about her mother. She does it to everyone. She

was bored by what I was saying. You don't have to believe any of them. You only have to notice that you don't know which is true, and that your anger had already chosen.

Often the simplest move is one the hot state would never think of. You ask. "You seemed distracted when I was telling you about the meeting. Is something up?" Nobody flinches at that sentence. It gets you real information, and if the answer turns out to be "I was bored," you now have a real problem to deal with where before you had an imagined one.

You won't catch the story in the first second. It's too fast, and the heat arrives with it. You'll catch it on the second pass, a few minutes later. That's one more reason the first few minutes are a bad time to act. The story you'd be acting on hasn't been checked yet.

The wrong person

Consider two versions of the same moment. In both, you walk into the kitchen at half past six and your partner says, "Did you remember to ring the plumber?" You didn't.

In the first version you slept well, the day went fine, and you had a proper lunch. You say, "No, sorry, I'll do it first thing tomorrow." In the second version you were awake from four, a meeting went badly, you skipped lunch, and somebody nearly took your wing mirror off on the way home. The same question now sounds like an accusation, and you hear yourself say, "I do have a job, you know," much louder than you meant to.

The question was identical. What changed was the state it landed in. We talk about anger as though it were always about whatever just happened, and often the thing that just happened is only the last small addition to a load that was there already.

Several kinds of load are well studied.

One is leftover arousal. In the early 1970s the psychologist Dolf Zillmann showed that the bodily stir from one event hangs around after the event is over, and that people don't keep track of where it came from. When something irritating happens next, the old arousal gets added to the new and the whole amount is blamed on the latest cause. That's the near miss on the drive home turning up in your voice in the kitchen.

Sleep is another. Zlatan Krizan and Garrett Hisler took 142 people and had half of them cut their sleep for two nights. They then had everyone do a rating task with irritating noise in the background. The short sleepers got angrier, and they also failed to get used to the noise the way rested people did. Hunger seems to work in a similar direction. A study led by Viren Swami had 64 adults report their hunger and mood five times a day for three weeks, and the hungrier they were, the more irritable and angry they reported feeling. Pain and illness shorten the fuse too, as does a long run of days with no time to yourself.

Alcohol needs its own mention. A review of thirty experiments by Bushman and Harris Cooper concluded that alcohol does cause more aggressive behaviour, which won't surprise anyone who has been in a town centre at closing time. If many of your worst rows happen after the second or third drink, you've found something practical, and it'll do more for you than any breathing technique. I'll add one caution. If you drink heavily every day, speak to a doctor before cutting down sharply, because stopping suddenly can be dangerous for a dependent drinker.

None of this excuses anything. The person you snapped at is just as hurt whether you were tired or not. The point is practical. Look at when your outbursts happen. For many people it's the first half hour after getting home, or late at night, or on the school run. If yours cluster like that, the conditions are part of the cause, and you can change conditions more easily than character. Eat something at four o'clock. Sit in the car for five minutes before you go inside.

Agree that no difficult subject gets opened after ten at night. These are dull measures, and I'd expect them to do more good than many clever ones.

There's a second pattern here. Ask yourself who gets your anger. Often it isn't the person who caused it. The boss who humiliated you gets a tight smile. The customer who was rude gets politeness. Your partner, your children or your mother get the rest, hours later, over something minor.

This has been studied too, under the name displaced aggression. A review of several decades of experiments found it to be a sturdy effect. People provoked by someone they can't safely hit back at will take it out on someone else. Two experiments from the same research group added a detail you may recognise. A trivial annoyance from the second person made no difference on its own. After an earlier provocation, the same trivial annoyance drew more aggression than the provocation alone did. The rule your anger follows is a bleak one. It lands on whoever is safest to be angry at, and they're usually the people who love you and won't leave.

I'd ask you to look at your own last five outbursts with that in mind. If the targets were mostly the people closest to you, and the true sources were mostly elsewhere, two things follow. One is that the people at home have been paying for debts they didn't run up. The other matters more for where this book goes next. You held it together all day in front of the boss and the customer. You did that without any technique or book to help. We'll look at what that means in the next chapter.

"That's just how I am"

"I've got a temper. Always have. My dad was the same, and his dad before him." People say this in different tones. Some say it with a shrug, some with a bit of pride, and a good many with something nearer to despair.

Of all the beliefs in this book, this one has the strongest hold, because it comes with a lifetime of evidence. You've been this way for as long as you can remember. You've tried to change and gone back to it. When the moment comes, it doesn't feel like a choice. It feels like a wave that goes through you, and afterwards you can hardly believe what you said. "I just saw red." "I lost it." The language describes something that happened to you.

I accept part of this. People do differ in temperament, and the differences show up early. Some babies startle easily and howl loudly, and some of those babies grow into adults who feel everything at high volume. If that's you, you'll probably always get angry more quickly and more strongly than your placid brother-in-law. I'm not going to argue with your nervous system.

But temperament governs how fast and how strongly the feeling arrives. It doesn't dictate what you do next, and you can find the proof in your own week.

Go back to the end of the last chapter. You didn't shout at your boss. You were just as angry, perhaps angrier. The feeling was there at full strength, your heart was going, and you kept your voice level

and said you'd look into it. You've likely done the same with a police officer, a customer, a doctor or your child's head teacher.

There's an even smaller example, which most people recognise with a wince. You're in the middle of a blazing row at home and your phone rings. It's a colleague, or a neighbour. You pick up and say "Hi, no, not at all, it's a good time" in a perfectly pleasant voice. Then you hang up and carry on with the row.

I'm not raising this to catch you out. It's the most hopeful fact in this book. It means the control you think you don't have is control you use daily. Something in you weighs the situation in a fraction of a second and works out whether an outburst here would be too costly. With the boss the answer is yes, and the outburst doesn't happen. At home the answer is no, because the people there have always forgiven you, and it does.

So "I lost control" is closer to "I was somewhere that control didn't seem required." It's uncomfortable to admit. It's also good news, because building a skill from nothing is hard and extending one you already have is much easier. You don't need to become a different person. The task is to move the people at home onto the list that your boss is already on.

I don't mean they should get the tight smile the boss gets. That's the clamping down from chapter 4, and it's part of the load you carry home. What you're borrowing is the pause, the fraction of a second in which you didn't let the heat speak. At home the pause comes with something the boss never gets, which is you coming back later with the point.

Now the family part. If you grew up in a house where disagreements were handled by shouting, you learned that this is how disagreement works, in the same way that you learned your accent. You may also have learned that the angriest person in the room wins, and that the only alternative to being that person was being the frightened one. It was a sensible lesson for a child in that house to draw. It explains a lot, and what you were taught as a child isn't your fault. It also means that what you inherited was mostly a method, which you can replace. You've probably noticed that you now sound like the parent you swore you'd never resemble. That tends to happen when you've only ever seen one way of doing things, so the book will show you another.

One more mechanism keeps "that's just how I am" in place, and it's the shame. After an outburst you feel awful about yourself. The feeling that you're a bad person is heavy and tense to carry, and it makes you touchier, quicker to hear criticism in a neutral remark. A touchy, tense person is nearer to the next outburst. That loop is my reading. The research behind it is more modest, and finds that people who are prone to shame also tend to be more irritable and quicker to blame others. Contempt for yourself feels like taking the problem seriously. In practice it feeds the problem. You can hold yourself fully responsible for what you did and still treat yourself as someone who can learn. That's how you'd treat anyone else you were trying to help.

One caveat, and I mean it. Some things do reduce a person's control in ways that no change of belief will mend. They include a head injury, dementia, some mental health conditions, certain medications, and heavy use of alcohol or drugs. If your temper has

changed sharply or recently, or the rages come from nowhere and feel unlike you, see a doctor before you take it for a habit. If you take prescribed medication and suspect it's involved, raise it with whoever prescribed it, and don't stop taking it on your own.

"If I stop, people will walk all over me"

This may be the fear that matters most, so I'll put it as strongly as I can. You might say your temper is the only thing standing between you and being used. At work, the people who never make a fuss get the extra shifts and the worst desk. At home, if you didn't kick off occasionally, nothing would ever change. You've seen what happens to nice people. Perhaps you were the nice one once, as a child or in an earlier relationship, and you promised yourself never again.

If giving up the outburst meant giving up your defences, I'd tell you to keep the outburst. It doesn't. The fear depends on the same false choice we met in chapter 4, where the only alternative to the aggressive person is the doormat. There's a third kind of person. Most of us know one, and they tend to be the most respected person in any building.

Take two managers as an example. The first one blows up. His staff get yelled at over a missed deadline, things are tense for a day, he's friendly again by Thursday, and nothing else follows. The second never raises her voice. When a deadline is missed she says, "This was due on Friday and it's Tuesday. I need it by five tomorrow. If that's not possible, tell me now and tell me why." And if it doesn't arrive, there's a consequence, and it's the one she said there'd be.

Most people will say they'd think twice before crossing the second manager. The first manager's anger is like weather. You wait it out, and you learn to discount it. It even gives the staff something. They get to feel like the injured party, and they can tell each other he's

unhinged in place of asking whether he was right. The second manager gives them nothing to dismiss. All that's left in the room is the missed deadline and the question of who missed it.

That's why I think calm firmness is the stronger position. Look at what happens to your authority when you lose your temper. Partway through the scene you switch from the person with a grievance to the person who is out of order. You apologise afterwards, and the apology cancels the complaint. People who want to walk all over you would find that arrangement very convenient.

What protects you is a boundary, which is quieter than a temper and asks more of you. It comes down to a few things, and I'll set them out plainly because they're the working alternative to everything in the last few chapters.

Say what happened, in words a camera could confirm. "You told me you'd be home at seven, and it was nine, and you didn't call." That's a different sentence from "You're so selfish," and the difference matters, because a person can argue with a verdict on their character for ever and can hardly argue with a time.

Say what it cost you. "I'd cooked, and I sat there not knowing whether to worry."

Say what you want. "If you're going to be more than half an hour late, text me." Surprisingly often this is the part that gets left out. The other person has been told at length that they're in the wrong and has no idea what would put it right.

Deal with one issue at a time. The hot state wants to bring the whole file, with last month and last year and the thing at the wedding. Each addition gives the other person another exit, because they can pick the weakest item and contest that one.

Then, if there's a consequence, make it one you'll carry out, and carry it out without drama. "If the report's late again, I'll have to take you off the account." A small consequence that happens is worth far more than a large one that's shouted and then forgotten.

Be careful with this one at home. Between adults, a consequence is something you'll do to look after yourself, such as eating without them or no longer lending the car. It isn't a penalty you hand down. If you catch yourself designing punishments for a partner, you've gone back to winning by fear, only in a quieter voice.

Nothing on that list requires you to be pleasant, or to pretend you aren't angry. "I'm very angry about this" is a perfectly good sentence, and it carries more weight when said quietly by someone plainly in command of themselves. You can also refuse, stop lending money, leave the room, and in the end leave the job or the relationship. Anger is often the thing that tells you it's time for one of those. Keep that. I'd only say that decisions of that size should be made on the twentieth minute or the twentieth day. The first minute is the wrong time for them.

Some situations can't be fixed by any way of speaking. If you've stated a boundary calmly and clearly several times and it's been ignored each time, the other person understood you perfectly well.

They aren't going to change, and what you have to decide now is what you'll do about that. Your volume has stopped being the question.

The decision

Here's where we've got to. The outburst doesn't release anything, and mostly it keeps the anger going. Swallowing the feeling whole isn't the only alternative to it. The outburst gets compliance now and then and almost never gets you heard. It runs on a story that hasn't been checked, it's often fuelled by a day that had nothing to do with the person in front of you, and it lands on whoever is safest. You already hold it back in front of people whose good opinion you can't afford to lose. And you lose nothing in strength by dropping it.

If that's persuaded you, what's left is a decision and a method. The decision is one sentence.

For the first twenty minutes of being angry, I don't say it, send it or decide it.

That's the whole rule. It doesn't tell you not to be angry, and it doesn't tell you to drop the matter. It moves the conversation to a time when you can think, on the grounds that anything true will still be true by then.

A word about the number. Twenty minutes is my working figure. It isn't a measurement from a laboratory. The body's surge takes minutes to settle and not seconds, so a count of ten taken while you're still standing in the argument is rarely enough. How many minutes it takes varies with the person and the provocation. Start

with twenty and adjust it from experience. If you're still rehearsing speeches at twenty, you need longer. For something big, think in terms of sleeping on it.

The method has five parts.

Know your early signs. The outburst feels instant, but the body gives notice. Common signs are heat in the face or chest, a tight jaw, clenched hands, and a voice that goes either loud or very quiet and precise. Some people find they've started talking faster or interrupting. There are signs in your thinking too. The words "always" and "never" turn up, or you catch yourself drafting a devastating sentence. Find your own two or three. The earlier you catch it, the easier everything after it becomes, because leaving at four out of ten is simple and leaving at nine is very hard.

Leave properly. Storming out is part of the outburst, and to the other person it feels like punishment. A proper exit has three pieces. You say what's happening, that you're coming back, and when. "I'm getting too angry to talk about this well. I'm going to take twenty minutes and then I'd like to come back to it." Choose your own wording now, while you're calm, and tell the people you live with what it means. It needs agreeing in advance because someone who's halfway through an argument, watching you head for the door, will otherwise assume you're dodging. The promise to come back is what makes it different from walking out. Keep that promise every time, and they'll learn to trust the exit.

Bring the heat down, and don't feed it. This is where the research from chapter 3 comes in. The things that help are the ones that slow the body. Breathe slowly, making the out-breath longer than

the in-breath, for a few minutes. Walk at an ordinary pace. Splash cold water on your face, make tea, fold the washing, water the plants. The things that don't help are the ones that keep the body revved or the mind fixed on the target. That rules out hitting things, and it rules out pacing the garden while you compose your closing speech. It also rules out texting a friend your side of the story, or driving, which is a poor idea anyway with your attention elsewhere. A hard run belongs on this list as well, to many people's surprise. In Kjærvi and Bushman's review, vigorous exercise did nothing reliable for anger, whatever else it does for you.

You can't stop the replay by ordering yourself to stop, so give your mind a job. One that's been tested is to go over the incident as if you were a third person watching from across the room. Dominik Mischkowski, Ethan Kross and Bushman tried this with people who had just been provoked. Those who stepped back and saw the scene from outside had fewer aggressive thoughts, felt less angry and behaved less aggressively than those who relived it through their own eyes. From across the room you can see two tired people in a kitchen, which from the inside is very hard to see.

Find the point. When you're cooler, ask three questions. What actually happened, in camera terms? What's my story about it, and what else could explain it? What do I want to be different? Sometimes the answer to the third is "nothing, I was tired and it didn't matter," and then you drop it, properly, with no sulk held in reserve. If you find you can't drop it, then it does matter, and you should say so. Sometimes the answer is that the person you're really angry with wasn't in the room.

Say it. Go back when you said you would. Use the form from the last chapter, which is what happened, what it cost you, and what you'd like. Then listen to the reply, which may include something you hadn't known. This step matters as much as the twenty minutes do. If you wait and then never raise anything, you're back to swallowing it. Your points will pile up in the file, and the rule will come to feel like a gag. The delay is there so that your complaint can land.

A few situations need their own notes.

Written messages are the easy case. Write the furious email if you like, but leave the address line empty, and look at it again tomorrow. I'd be surprised if you still wanted to send the first draft once you've slept. The same goes for posts and replies online.

Driving is the hard case, because you can't leave. There the rule shrinks to not engaging at all. That means no gestures, no horn held down, no closing up on the car in front. The other driver will be out of your life in ninety seconds if you let them go.

At work you often can't walk out of a meeting. The exit line has an office version. "I'd like to think about that and come back to you this afternoon" does the same job, and nobody in the room needs to know why you said it. Then do come back to it.

With small children you often can't take twenty minutes. Take two. Check they're safe, go into the next room, breathe slowly, and come back. It's better to tell a four-year-old "I need a minute because I'm feeling cross" than to let them see you lose your temper, and they learn from it what to do with their own feelings.

If your version is the long silence, the first twenty minutes aren't where you go wrong. Your difficulty is at the far end, where the break never finishes. So give it a limit. Say that you're upset and not ready to talk, name a time within the next day, and keep to it. "I'm angry about last night and I can't talk about it yet. Can we sit down after dinner tomorrow?" A break with an end is a pause. A break with no end is the old silence, and the other person will take it as punishment however quiet you are.

You can also prepare a plan in advance for the situation that most often sets you off. The form is "when X happens, I will do Y." For example, "when I feel my jaw tighten during homework, I'll say I'm getting a glass of water and go and get one." A plan that's made while calm and tied to a specific cue has a much better chance of turning up when it's needed than a general intention to do better.

If you've decided, tell someone today. Tell the person who's seen the most of your temper, give them your exit line, and ask them to let you use it.

When the heat comes back

You'll be angry again, possibly this week. The feeling will arrive as quickly as it always has, because nothing in this book changes your first second. What I'd like is for that not to alarm you. The return of the urge doesn't mean the decision has failed. It's the situation the decision was made for.

The urge comes as a bodily state with a push behind it, and it's usually accompanied by a thought. The thought is nearly always some version of "this time is different." This time they really have gone too far. This time a calm word won't do. This time it's justified.

Notice that the thought can be correct. They may well have gone too far, and your anger may be entirely fair. The rule was never "stay calm unless it's justified," since it always feels justified. The rule is that a justified point will still be justified in twenty minutes and will be better put. So you don't have to win the argument with yourself about whether your anger is fair. Grant it, and leave the room.

It's best not to debate the urge at all. You'll be debating with a mind that has already taken a side, and it argues well. Use your exit line and move your feet. The physical act of walking to another room does more than any amount of reasoning in your head.

An urge behaves in a predictable way when it's not acted on. It climbs, it peaks, and then it falls. While it's climbing it seems as though it will go on climbing until something gives. It won't. If you can watch it with a bit of curiosity, noticing the heat in your chest

and the speeches writing themselves, you'll find the peak comes sooner than you expected. Every time you sit through one, you add to your own evidence that the urge is something you experience and needn't obey. I'd put more faith in that evidence than in anything written here.

Some specific difficulties will come up.

You'll catch it late. At first you may only notice when you're already shouting. In that case stop in the middle of the sentence. It feels absurd, like braking in the middle of a junction, and it's entirely allowed. "I'm shouting. I'm going to stop and take my twenty minutes." A row abandoned halfway through is a real success, and the people around you will see it as one. With practice, you'll catch the signs earlier.

The other person follows you. Some people can't bear an unfinished argument and will come after you down the hall, still talking. This is why the exit needs to be agreed beforehand, in a calm hour. If it happens anyway, repeat the line once, with the time you'll be back, and keep going. Leave the house and walk round the block if you need to. Don't explain further, because explaining turns into arguing about the exit.

The other person is the one shouting. You don't have to match their volume, and you don't have to stand there and take it. "I want to hear this, but not like this. I'll be back in twenty minutes" works in both directions. If someone's anger makes you afraid for your safety, that's a different situation, and leaving and getting help come before any technique.

You'll feel strange, even fake. If you've shouted for twenty years, speaking calmly while angry can feel false, as though you're acting. You aren't hiding the anger. You can state it outright. What you're dropping is one way of showing it, and the new way will feel odd for a while. Any new habit does at first.

You may also feel flat. The outburst gave you a surge, and its absence can feel like something's missing, particularly if rows were the main way strong feeling got expressed in your house. That usually fades. I'd rather warn you than have you take it as a sign that you've lost something important.

One caution about keeping count. It's tempting to tally days without an outburst. I'd advise against making much of the streak, because a streak makes one bad evening look like a disaster, as though the count has gone back to nothing. It hasn't, and chapter 13 explains why.

Old anger

Some anger has nothing to do with this evening. You're in the shower, or driving, or lying awake at two in the morning, and you're in an argument with somebody who isn't there. It might be the ex who lied to you, or the boss who pushed you out and was promoted afterwards. It might be a parent, or the brother who handled the will. You put your case brilliantly and they have no answer. You've won this argument several hundred times, and you'll probably be arguing it again tomorrow.

The method in chapter 10 depends on a point that can be delivered. You cool down, find the point, and say it to the right person. Old anger is the case where that seems impossible. The person may be dead, or gone, or so sure of their own version that nothing you said would reach them. So the anger goes round and round.

The belief that keeps it going deserves respect. It says that holding on is the only justice you have. Nobody else remembers what happened, or nobody else cares. If you stopped being angry, it would amount to saying that it didn't matter, and they'd have got away with it completely. In that way the anger is being loyal to the person you were when it happened. It's also the only surviving record that you were wronged.

I'd ask who is paying for that record. Each replay brings the heat back. Your jaw sets and your heart rate climbs, and ten minutes of your morning go to a person who may not have thought of you in years. We saw in chapter 4 that going over a grievance keeps anger alive. With old anger that's almost the entire mechanism, because

no new offences are coming in. The feeling is being kept going by replay. Meanwhile the other person pays nothing. It's like a trial that you reconvene every day, serving as prosecutor and witness, while the defendant never attends and doesn't know the court is in session.

So ask the chapter 10 question here as well. What do I want to be different? The answers fall into two groups.

Sometimes there's still something to be done. It could be a conversation you've put off for ten years, a formal complaint, some legal step, or a letter setting out what happened and how it affected you, sent with no expectation of a good reply. If something of that kind exists, part of the endless replay may be your mind pointing out that you haven't done it. Do it, or decide with your eyes open that you won't and that the price is too high. Both of those count as decisions. It's the years of being about to do it that keep the case open.

Sometimes nothing can be done. They've died, or they're out of reach, or you know from long experience that they'll never see it. In that case the anger is asking for something nobody can give it, which is a different past. I say this as gently as I can, because it's a sad thing to take in, and sadness is often what lies under old anger. This is my interpretation and not an established fact, but I think for many people anger is the easier of the two to feel. While you're angry you feel strong, and when you're sad you just feel the loss. A grudge can be a way of not grieving.

Letting go, in the sense I mean, asks less of you than you might fear. It doesn't mean deciding that what happened was acceptable, and you don't have to reconcile with anyone or let them back into your life. Nor does it require a warm feeling of forgiveness that you can't produce. You can keep the verdict. What they did was wrong, and you can believe that until the day you die. You can keep what it taught you about whom to trust and what you won't put up with again. The only thing you give up is going to the hearing.

In practice that's a small act you repeat. When the replay starts, name it. "That's the old case again." Ask once whether there's any action to take. If not, put your attention back on what's in front of you, the way you'd come back to a book after a noise outside. It'll start up again, maybe within the hour. Don't treat that as failure. The replay has had years of practice, and what you're doing is simply not practising it any further. Over months I'd expect it to come round less often and with less force. I can't promise it goes away altogether.

Some people find it useful to write a letter they'll never send, with everything in it. The test is the one from chapter 3, which is how you feel when you've finished. If writing it leaves you clearer and a bit lighter, that's fine. If it leaves you stirred up and drafting extra paragraphs in your head, it has become another replay, and you should stop.

One caveat. If your old anger is about abuse, violence or some other serious harm, I'm not suggesting you tidy it away with a technique from a short book. Anger of that kind is often tied up

with trauma, and a good therapist is the right person to work through it with. It's worth seeking one out even if the events were a long time ago.

After a bad one

At some point you'll lose your temper again. It may come after three good weeks, on a day when you were ill and the car failed its test and somebody said the one thing. I'm telling you this now so that when it happens you'll recognise it as a normal part of changing a long habit. It doesn't prove that the book was wrong or that you didn't want it enough.

What matters is the next hour. The old pattern after an outburst had two stages, a defence followed by shame, and neither helped anyone. Here's another sequence.

First, stop as early as you can. Stopping at minute three is better than stopping at minute ten, even though it may not feel that way. Every further minute adds things said that you'll have to repair.

Second, cool down the same way as before. Go for the slow breathing and the walk, and see the scene from across the room.

Third, repair it, and do it properly. A useful apology names what you did, in specific terms. "I shouted at you and I called you lazy. That was wrong, and you didn't deserve it." It doesn't include the word "but." "I'm sorry I shouted, but you know how I get when you ignore me" isn't an apology. It's the argument starting again. It also doesn't ask the other person to say it's all right. They may not be ready to, and they don't owe you that on your timetable.

Your original point, if you had one, doesn't disappear because you delivered it badly. It does have to wait. Bring it up separately, later, in the form from chapter 9. If you put the grievance and the

apology in the same breath, they'll hear only the grievance.

If it was your children you shouted at, apologise to them too. Some parents worry that this weakens their authority. I'd say it strengthens it. A child who hears "I was wrong to shout, and I'm sorry. I was angry about the mess, and that's still something we need to sort out" is learning that a person can get angry and make a mistake and then put it right. Most of us never got that lesson as children.

Fourth, go over the episode calmly, and do it to learn from it. You aren't looking for reasons to feel worse. Work back through the chapters. What state were you in, in terms of sleep, food, drink and the day you'd had? What story were you telling yourself, and did it turn out to be true? What was the first sign, and when did you notice it? Could you have used the exit line, and if you didn't, what got in the way? Usually you'll find one specific weak spot, and it'll be something small and fixable like "I never have these conversations well after nine at night." That's much more use to you than "I'm hopeless."

A lapse doesn't put you back at the start. Everything you've understood is still understood, and every urge you sat through still counts. If anything a lapse shows you the conditions in which your method is weakest, so you can strengthen it there.

Now, trust. If you've had a temper for years, the people close to you have adapted to it, in the ways described in chapter 5. They won't drop those adaptations because you read a book and had a good fortnight. They may well be wary of the new calm and wait to see if it lasts. They may even test it, without meaning to. It can feel unfair

when you're trying so hard. But a few weeks is a short record compared with years, and the only thing that changes their minds is time and consistency. Don't ask them for credit. If the change holds, they'll notice it for themselves.

Last, professional help. Seeing a professional is a sensible next step for many readers, and it's not a last resort. Anger is among the problems that respond well to treatment. Amy Lee and Raymond DiGiuseppe reviewed the existing meta-analyses of anger treatment in 2018. They found that psychological therapies, mostly cognitive behavioural therapy, produced at least moderate improvements fairly consistently, in ordinary adults and in people with psychiatric diagnoses alike. A course of that kind covers much of what this book covers, with a trained person helping you apply it to your own life, and with practice, which a book can't supply.

I'd urge you to seek that help if any of the following is true. You've been violent or threatening towards anyone, or you've broken things to frighten someone. People at home are afraid of you. Your anger has cost you a job or a relationship, or brought you into contact with the police. You have rages that seem to come from nowhere, or they've begun recently. You're also struggling with low mood, anxiety, trauma, or heavy drinking or drug use, all of which can show up as anger. Or you've given the approach in this book an honest few months and things aren't improving. Your doctor is the usual place to start, and they can also check for physical causes. If you ever feel you might seriously hurt someone or yourself, contact emergency services or a crisis line straight away.

The next time

You've finished the book, and at some point in the next few days you're going to be angry. I'd like you to be ready for that, so here are three things to do before it happens. Together they take about fifteen minutes.

Settle on your exit line and say it aloud once, so it won't be new in your mouth when you need it. "I'm getting too angry to do this well. I'm going to take twenty minutes and then I'll come back."

Tell the person who most often sees your temper what the line means and that you'll keep the promise in it. You may find this conversation harder than you expect, and it may go better than you expect. You don't have to make a speech or a grand promise. "I'm trying something. When I say this, I'm not walking out on you. I'm making sure I come back able to listen."

Pick the one condition from chapter 7 that accounts for most of your bad evenings, and make one dull arrangement to deal with it. It might be a snack at four, five minutes in the car before you go inside, or a rule about not raising serious subjects after ten.

Then wait for the next time. When it comes, you'll feel the heat rise and hear the thought that this one is different. Use the line and go. Twenty minutes later, check two things. See whether the point is still true, and see how it feels to go back into the room as someone who can make it.

I expect the first time will be clumsy. You may leave late and go back too early, and you may say the thing less well than you'd hoped. It will still go differently from the evening in chapter 1. The house won't go silent, you won't have a sentence to regret, and you won't have an evening to rebuild. There'll be a complaint, made by someone who plainly meant it, and another person who could actually hear it. That's what your anger was after all along.

Notes

The punching bag experiment in chapters 3 and 4 is Brad Bushman, "Does venting anger feed or extinguish the flame? Catharsis, rumination, distraction, anger, and aggressive responding", *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 2002, volume 28, pages 724 to 731.

The review of 154 studies in chapters 3 and 10 is Sophie Kjærvik and Brad Bushman, "A meta-analytic review of anger management activities that increase or decrease arousal: what fuels or douses rage?", *Clinical Psychology Review*, 2024, volume 109, article 102414.

The film experiment in chapter 4 is James Gross, "Antecedent- and response-focused emotion regulation: divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1998, volume 74, pages 224 to 237. The film was chosen to produce disgust and not anger, so applying the result to anger is my extension of it.

The review in chapter 6 is Stéphanie Klein Tuentje, Stefan Bogaerts and Wim Veling, "Hostile attribution bias and aggression in adults: a systematic review", *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2019, volume 46, pages 66 to 81.

In chapter 7, leftover arousal is from Dolf Zillmann, "Excitation transfer in communication-mediated aggressive behavior", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 1971, volume 7, pages 419 to 434. The sleep study is Zlatan Krizan and Garrett Hisler, "Sleepy

anger: restricted sleep amplifies angry feelings", *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 2019, volume 148, pages 1239 to 1250. The hunger study is Viren Swami, Samantha Hochstöger, Erik Kargl and Stefan Stieger, "Hangry in the field: an experience sampling study on the impact of hunger on anger, irritability, and affect", *PLOS ONE*, 2022, volume 17, article e0269629. It shows a link between hunger and irritability and can't prove that one causes the other. The alcohol review is Brad Bushman and Harris Cooper, "Effects of alcohol on human aggression: an integrative research review", *Psychological Bulletin*, 1990, volume 107, pages 341 to 354. Its main analysis used studies of male social drinkers. The review of displaced aggression is Amy Marcus-Newhall, William Pedersen, Mike Carlson and Norman Miller, "Displaced aggression is alive and well: a meta-analytic review", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2000, volume 78, pages 670 to 689. The two experiments on a trivial annoyance from the second person are William Pedersen, Candace Gonzales and Norman Miller, "The moderating effect of trivial triggering provocation on displaced aggression", in the same journal and year, volume 78, pages 913 to 927.

The link between shame and irritability in chapter 8 is from June Tangney, Patricia Wagner, Carey Fletcher and Richard Gramzow, "Shamed into anger? The relation of shame and guilt to anger and self-reported aggression", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1992, volume 62, pages 669 to 675. It surveyed undergraduates and shows a link, not a cause. The idea that shame after an outburst brings the next one nearer is my interpretation.

The across-the-room technique in chapter 10 is from Dominik Mischkowski, Ethan Kross and Brad Bushman, "Flies on the wall are less aggressive: self-distancing 'in the heat of the moment' reduces aggressive thoughts, angry feelings and aggressive behavior", *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 2012, volume 48, pages 1187 to 1191. The "when X happens, I will do Y" plans are known in the research as implementation intentions. See Peter Gollwitzer and Paschal Sheeran, "Implementation intentions and goal achievement: a meta-analysis of effects and processes", *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 2006, volume 38, pages 69 to 119.

The review of anger treatments in chapter 13 is Amy Lee and Raymond DiGiuseppe, "Anger and aggression treatments: a review of meta-analyses", *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 2018, volume 19, pages 65 to 74.

The twenty-minute figure, the split between the point and the heat, the account of why outbursts fail to get a point heard, and the chapter on old anger are my own reasoning and interpretation. Test them against your own experience, as the exercises ask you to.

This book is general information and is no substitute for medical or psychological care.