

## **Notes From *Anger Kills*** **by Redford Williams, M.D., and Virginia Williams, Ph.D.**

*Cynicism:* The degree to which you believe people are selfish and out mainly for themselves, that you cannot trust them to do the right, and that you are the only one you can really depend on.

*Anger:* Whether you are most likely to respond with anger, irritation, or annoyance when faced with life's frustrations.

*Aggression:* Your tendency to express your anger or irritation overtly toward other people, whether physically or verbally.

### **Survival Skills:**

1. Track your actions, feelings, thoughts.
2. Reason with yourself—Consider the objective facts that stimulated your reaction; consider only what you can actually observe, not what you infer.
3. Deflect anger:
  - Thought stopping (silently say, "Stop!" and substitute with something you enjoy)
  - Distraction (identify another focus and immerse yourself in it)
  - Meditation (relax, breathe, use mantra, "bring the mind home")—15 min./day, then in public (to yourself), then in all aspects of life
  - Avoid overstimulation (cut back on nicotine, sweets, caffeine; exercise regularly) (NOTE: Hostile personalities possess nervous systems that react too easily, even without stimulants)
4. Improve relationships:
  - Asserting yourself (empathize, *describe* the behavior, remind the other person of an agreement, share your feelings, ask for what you want—*future state*)
  - Building your relationship with your pets (can be symbolic for human relationships)
  - Listening (vs. concentrating on your own thoughts and agenda); think of it as a form of meditation; avoid being judgmental (each time you mentally judge, use thought stopping)
  - Trusting (force yourself to relinquish control—start with something inconsequential; don't expect this to be easy)
  - Community service
  - Empathy (an extension of reasoning with yourself—learn to look at things through the other person's eyes)
  - Tolerance (accept others as they are, not as you would like for them to be)
  - Forgiveness (consciously decide the other person wronged you and *choose* to forgive him or her; start with relatively minor wrongs and work your way up)
  - Have a confidant (use as a sounding board)
5. Adopt positive attitudes:
  - Humor (*catastrophize*—spin annoyances to ridiculous extremes, use *irony*, *slap-stick*, *puns*, *double entendres*)
  - Religion (find some fundamental value system/practice that makes you a *seeker*, someone who searches for meaning in the personal and social world)
  - Pretend today is your last