

TED Tuesday

Stepping Into Anger

Welcome to TED Tuesday. TED stands for The Emotional Driver — a project with a simple mission: to discover how our emotions can be teachers and guides, not foes to fight against.

Today, we're stepping deeper into the world of emotions. Understanding them gives us insight into why we experience what we do, and even more importantly, what those emotions can teach us.

To start, let's talk about **emotional zones**.

In yoga, emotions are often described through the science of the **Doshas**. In the yoga therapy tradition I studied, we've simplified this language into three main zones:

- **Red Zone** — *Pitta Dosha*, with the elements of Fire and Water
- **White Zone** — *Vata Dosha*, with the elements of Air and Space
- **Blue Zone** — *Kapha Dosha*, with the elements of Earth and Water

As you can probably guess, **anger** lives in the **Red Zone — the zone of fire**. And that's what we're exploring today.

Understanding Anger

Anger is tricky. Fire burns — but it also transforms. A forest fire clears away overgrowth so that new life can emerge. In the same way, anger, when harnessed with awareness, can be one of our greatest teachers.

Often, anger shows up as a reaction we first learned in childhood — a way to protect ourselves. Instead of pushing it away, the first step is to **allow the anger to be felt** in a safe space.

Sometimes anger flares when it's hard to work with — like when I'm driving and someone cuts me off. If I'm alone, maybe I can play with my anger right there in the car. But most of the time, it helps to wait until I can explore it fully, so I can discover what it's teaching me.

Exploring Anger in the Body

When you meet your anger, try asking four questions:

1. **What am I feeling?** (Today, anger.)
2. **How am I feeling it?** Is it hot, strong, feverish, running wild?

3. **Where am I feeling it?** Belly, behind the eyes, in the back muscles, the jaw?
4. **What qualities does it have?** Does it feel hot, have a shape, a color, maybe even a smell?

Often, anger shows up as a *fire in the belly*. Naming and locating it in your body helps loosen its grip.

Working with the Opposites

Every emotion has natural opposites that can help restore balance. With anger, these opposites are especially powerful.

Think for a moment about fire's opposite: *cold*. Cold slows things down, like an ice flow moving steadily and giving us space. Or consider the opposite of destruction — building something new.

When we name these qualities — and each of us will discover our own, unique to our experience — we begin to uncover the “built-in” ways our emotions can soften and transform.

Anger, left unchecked, tends to run the same program in us again and again, whether the trigger is big and dramatic or small and subtle. The key is to notice the pattern and invite in its opposite — so the fire doesn't consume, but instead clears the way for new growth.

Here are **three practices** you can use to cool and transform anger:

1. **Cooling Breath (Śītalī or Śītkārī Prāṇāyāma):**
A breath technique for tempering heat in both body and mind. Perfect for those fiery moments.
2. **Clarity & Understanding Contemplation:**
A guided reflection to help you unpack the roots of your anger and gain insight into what it's trying to reveal.
3. **Light & Love Chant:**
My favorite. A chant that helps shift the mind out of anger's grip and back into joy, love, and spaciousness.

Each of these practices can stand alone or be combined.

Closing Invitation

So today, I invite you to sit back, find a comfortable space, and join me in exploring these practices. Anger doesn't have to control us — it can guide us, transform us, and teach us. Let's walk together into the fire of the Red Zone, and find the light it has to offer.