

Online Relapse Prevention Group Discussion Questions

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From the book, *ACT On Life, Not On Anger*, by Eifert, McKay & Forsyth:

"Blowing off steam is not beneficial. One of the most renowned anger researchers, Carol Tavris (1989), rightly observed that people most prone to venting their rage get more, not less, angry when they do so. When anger is let out, it is typically met with anger right back; negative energy breeds more negative energy. Behavior such as yelling or even talking out an emotion doesn't reduce anger feelings. What actually happens is that you rehearse more of the same. Punching a pillow while thinking of someone you dislike is rehearsing punching the person. Venting anger typically serves to 'freeze' or solidify a hostile attitude or opinion."

The author says venting can become a way of rehearsing anger.

- Have you noticed situations where repeating the story of something upsetting kept the emotion alive longer than you expected?

The quote suggests that venting anger (yelling, ranting, punching a pillow) can actually strengthen anger rather than reduce it.

- How does that differ from how we practice identifying and naming emotions mindfully in therapy?
 - Looking back on your progress in treatment, how has your relationship with strong emotions like anger changed?
 - What helps you maintain that shift during stressful moments?
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An AI-generated infographic was sent to the group based on a section of the book, *The Anxious Perfectionist*, by Ong & Twohig:

The infographic indicates that healthy striving is motivated by **approach** (moving toward something meaningful), while harmful perfectionism is motivated by **avoidance** (fear of mistakes or judgment).

- Looking back over the past few weeks, what activities in your life were driven by approach motivation?
 - How do you recognize when the fear of making mistakes starts to take over again?
 - *Healthy striving* is associated with satisfaction and fulfillment, while harmful perfectionism often leads to distress and paralysis. When you pursue a goal now, how can you tell the difference between healthy striving and slipping back into perfectionistic pressure?
 - What signs indicate it might be time to loosen the standard or refocus on your values?
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For group discussion only. Please review at your own pace—there's no need to prepare "perfect" answers.