

The ANGER – HEART ATTACK CONNECTION

By George Gillas

SPECIAL REPORT: THE ANGER – HEART ATTACK CONNECTION

A person who is most prone to anger is about three times more likely to have a heart attack or sudden cardiac death than someone who is the least anger-prone.

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Researchers have long suspected that emotional states such as anger, anxiety, and depression have an impact on health. Now, with research to back them up, revealing correlations are being established.

According to Janice E. Williams, Ph.D., M.P.H., lead author of the study conducted at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “The implications of our study are that anger could potentially lead to heart attacks, especially among middle-aged men and women with normal blood pressure.”

Researchers analyzed data from nearly 13,000 people for up to six years. During the study, 256 individuals had heart attacks.

Individuals who were most prone to anger were 2.69 times more likely to have a heart attack or sudden death than those with lower ratings on a standard 40-point scale. Individuals who scored moderate were 35% more likely to experience a coronary event.

“These findings were also true even after taking into account the presence of risk factors such as smoking, having diabetes, cholesterol levels and excess weight,” Williams said.

The design of the study shows anger is not a consequence of ill health. Anger, according to the study, precedes the heart attack. Heart attacks occur when a blood vessel is blocked by a blood clot that forms on plaque, a collection of fat on the vessel. Stress hormones may cause the plaque to rupture, resulting in a clot that blocks the artery.

So, how do you know if you are one of the angry individuals prone to this problem? Here are some things to think about. Or better yet, ask someone who knows you well – and really be willing to listen to the answers. This is the kind of feedback that could save your life.

Do You Have a High-Risk Personality?

According to: *Psychosomatic Medicine 2000;62.*

You may be at higher risk of heart disease or heart attacks if you are a man and:

- You interrupt others in the middle of a sentence
- You are among those who feel a flash of irritation when they are interrupted
- You have full-blown outward expressions of anger
- You tend to talk over others or interrupt conversations

You may be at higher risk of heart disease or heart attacks if you are a woman and:

- You have covert expressions of anger such as wearing angry expressions
- You make cutting remarks

Both sexes are at risk if they have a dominant personality or are constantly irritable.

This study shows that people who have a dominant personality (one sign being a tendency to interrupt others) have a 47% higher risk of heart disease. Those who had high scores of irritability have a 27% increase in heart disease risk compared to their less domineering, easygoing counterparts.

What's the feedback so far? Do you interrupt? Do you talk over others? Do you seem to have an angry, bitter countenance? Are you willing to accept the feedback of those who know you best?

Rating Your Anger.

The following is the Spielberger Trait Anger Scale, which is a standard rating scale for anger. Use a 1 – 4 scale: 1 representing "almost never," 2 representing "sometimes," 3 representing "often," and 4 representing "almost always."

1. I am quick tempered.
2. I have a fiery temper.
3. I am a hot-headed person.
4. I get angry when I am slowed down by other's mistakes.
5. I feel annoyed when I am not given recognition for doing good work.
6. I fly off the handle.
7. When I get angry, I say nasty things.
8. It makes me furious when I am criticized in front of others.
9. When I get frustrated, I feel like hitting someone.
10. I feel infuriated when I do a good job and get a poor evaluation.

Participants in the study had an average score of 16 points. What is your score?

The Physiological Link.

On August 5, 2003 Peter Lavelle of ABC Science Online reported new findings in the latest issue of *Psychosomatic Medicine*. The journal report suggests that emotions trigger the production of inflammatory proteins which may cause hardening of the arteries known as atherosclerosis.

The protein, interleukin 6 (or IL-6) is much higher in men who are angry and depressed, according to Associate Professor Edward Suarez of the Duke University Medical Center in North Carolina, who led the study.

This connection of anger and hostility to the production of IL-6 is the first time a physiological link has been made between emotional state and heart disease.

Suarez examined the link between depression and hostility and IL-6 levels and found that men who scored highest on both questionnaires had IL-6 levels that were two to five times higher than men who scored low on both questionnaires or scored high on only one questionnaire.

Previous research conducted by Suarez and colleagues showed that a protein released by immune cells and other tissues called tumor necrosis factor (TNF) is also higher in men who are aggressive and hostile. TNF plays a role in directing immune system cells to infections or inflammation in the body.

Scientists are also finding evidence that chronic infections, autoimmune conditions and inflammation work together to increase heart disease risk. The journal *Circulation* published a report on May 13, 2003 showing a strong relationship between these three conditions and heart attack rates in a study of more than 4000 men in Finland.

“Men who are hostile and exhibit depressive symptoms, even in the mild to moderate range, are at heightened risk for a cardiac event,” Suarez wrote.

Now, What Can You Do About It?

The obvious part of this answer involves diet and exercise. The relationship between diet, exercise and good heart health is well documented. If you need help in these two areas consult a personal trainer and a nutritionist.

Vigorous exercise can help to deal with anger, as can discussing your anger in a safe and calm manner.

Anger management courses and/or counseling can also, over time, help to mediate anger. One limitation with counseling and anger management courses is that they don't do anything to *eliminate* the anger from your past.

Time Line Therapy™

In the mid 1980's Dr. Tad James created a therapeutic technique called Time Line Therapy™. Time Line Therapy™ is unique in its speed and effectiveness.

Time Line Therapy™ does not involve hypnosis, counseling, “energy work” or any “new-age” metaphysical practices. Time Line Therapy™ simply utilizes the mind's ability to access the root cause of anger and eliminate the need for the emotion.

Emotions, at the unconscious level, are stored in a chain – a package or gestalt. This chain, as with any other chain, has to have a first link or event. Most therapies spend countless hours analyzing conscious significant emotional events (SEEs). The result is that the client has “closure” or “acceptance” of the SEE but all the preceding events, both conscious and unconscious, are left unaffected. Anger management courses often attempt to rationalize emotions. Unfortunately, we cannot use logic to resolve our emotional problems. Logic and emotions are different aspects of our awareness.

Time Line Therapy™ allows a client to eliminate all anger (and other emotions) from all their memories. The result is the client can recall memories when they felt anger -- and find the emotion gone.

Behavior changes instantly and easily because the client is now without the burden of years of accumulated past anger. Your unconscious mind is capable of making these changes in an instant. Time, as you know it now, is not relevant to your unconscious mind. Quickly, close your eyes now, and remember being a child and looking at your elementary school from the playground.

How long did it take you to “travel” many years? It was nearly instantaneous, was it not? Why then, should it take years of therapy to make a change?

The reality is you no longer need old emotions that do not serve you. You can be completely free of them and their effects. And you can do it without years of therapy or even having to reveal your “deepest, darkest secrets.”

Time Line Therapy™ has one other main advantage as a therapeutic intervention. The content of the event has no bearing on releasing the emotions. In other words, clients need not recall or re-live tired old memories. Many clients eliminate emotions without any regard for the content of the memory. This makes the entire process easy, fun and fast.

A basic presupposition of Time Line Therapy™ is that the client has all the resources and all the answers to all their problems. The therapist's duty is to guide them and assist them in letting go. Quickly. Easily. Permanently.

Time Line Therapy™ is a technology which eliminates the emotions from your memories. The result of the work is that you will be able to recall the events about which you used to feel an emotion, but the emotion itself will be gone. The memory will no longer affect your mood.

What this does for your behavior is significant. After Time Line Therapy™, clients find themselves responding automatically and effortlessly with healthier choices. Imagine for a moment how your daily life would be different now if you had no anger in any of your past memories. Can you imagine the petty annoyances not being so annoying? Can you visualize the unwanted arguments never getting started? Will communication and understanding improve? How many other aspects of your life can change now, when anger is no longer a part of your history?

And consider for a moment – what is the possible long-term benefit to your health?

To find out more about Time Line Therapy™ and what it can do for you,

Visit us at www.GeorgeGillas.com and download the report:

The Mind – Body Connection Made Simple

Contact George Gillas today:

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What happens below the surface of our consciousness is what dictates our behavior and our lives.

“The body is constantly eaves-dropping on the internal dialog...”

- Deepak Chopra