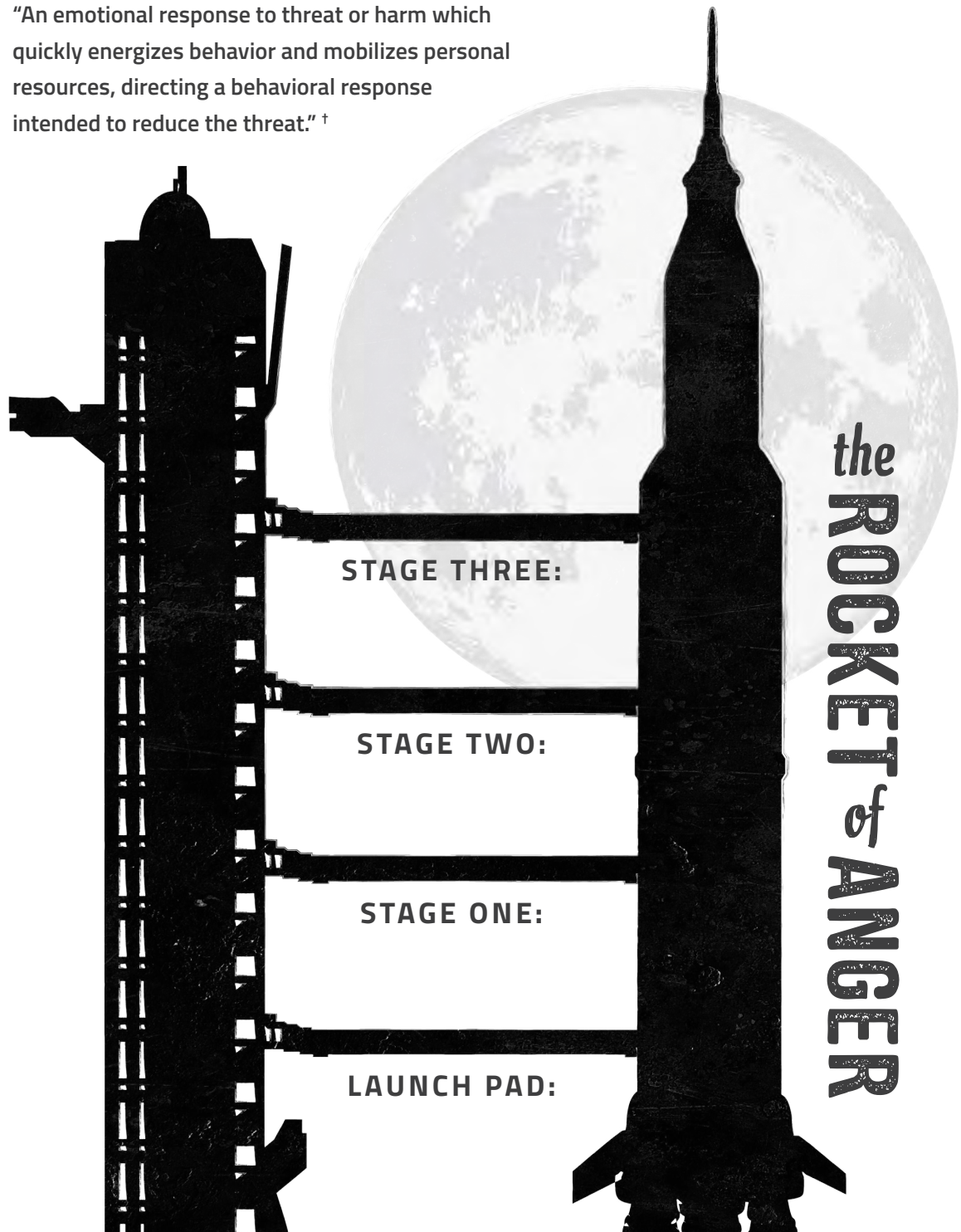


## ANGER *Defined*

"An emotional response to threat or harm which quickly energizes behavior and mobilizes personal resources, directing a behavioral response intended to reduce the threat." †



† Raymond W. Novaco, Ph.D., "The Functions and Regulation of the Arousal of Anger," American Journal of Psychiatry 133 (10); 1976. Pp 1124-1128.



# WHAT MAKES YOU **ANGRY**?

There will always be circumstances in life that make you angry. Something happens, you get offended or frustrated, and, like a rocket taking off from the launch pad, the situation escalates.

Check the boxes by the following issues or events that often push your “launch” button. Then, go back and put a double checkmark next to the three issues that always seem to set you off the most.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being insulted               | <input type="checkbox"/> Bullies                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being left out               | <input type="checkbox"/> Betrayal                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> False accusations            | <input type="checkbox"/> Unmet expectations        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unfair criticism             | <input type="checkbox"/> Being verbally threatened |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being scared or shocked      | <input type="checkbox"/> What else?                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Injustice                    | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prejudice                    | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humiliation or embarrassment | _____  |



# CUES THAT YOUR ANGER HAS LAUNCHED

What are some of your personal cues – things that, when you observe them, you know your anger is escalating and will keep going unless you put the brakes on? Circle any of the example cues below that apply to you, and in the blanks, write in any additional specific examples that come to mind.

## 1. PHYSICAL CUES

- *Rapid heartbeat*
- *Agitated pacing*
- *Feeling hot or flushed*
- *Clenched fists*
- *Raised voice*
- *Bulging veins in the neck*
- *Slamming a door*
- *Tightness in the chest*
- *Others?* \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. EMOTIONAL CUES

- *Fear*
- *Anger*
- *Sadness*
- *Disgust*
- *Joy*
- *Surprise*

## 3. FANTASIES AND IMAGES

- *Punching an offender in the mouth*
- *Throwing a drink in someone's face*
- *Ramming a bad driver off the road*
- *Tossing a computer across the room*
- *Others?* \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. RED FLAG WORDS AND SITUATIONS

- *A name you were called or teased with during childhood*
- *Certain profane language or insults regarding your heritage, ethnicity, or relatives*
- *Specific criticisms like "You'll never amount to anything" or "You're not very smart"*
- *Reminders of negative combat experience or departments you've served*
- *Thoughts about ex-spouses*
- *Past financial frustrations*
- *Others?* \_\_\_\_\_





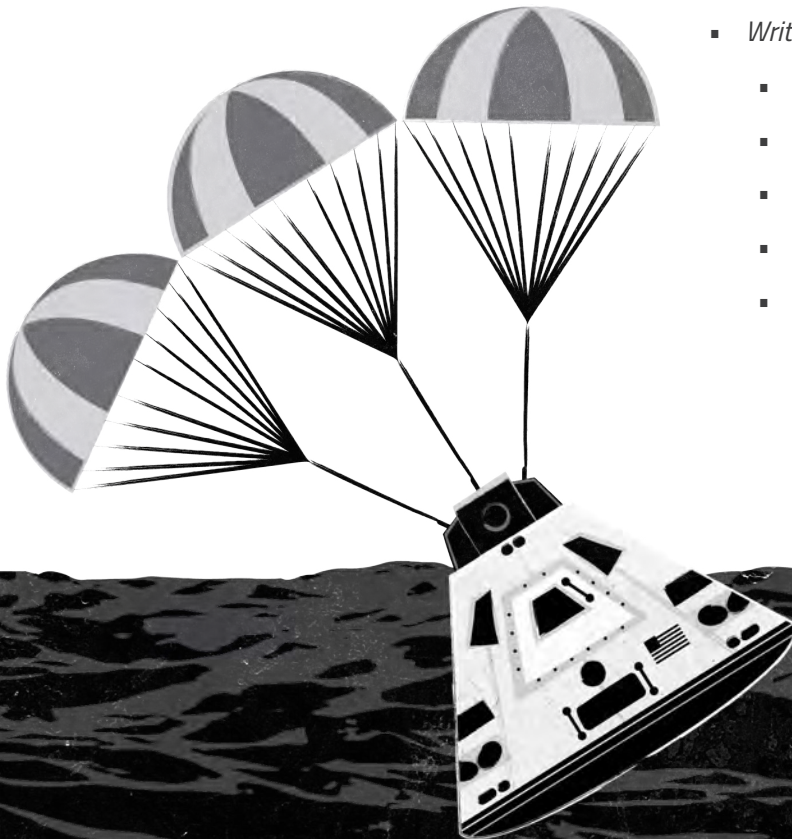
# Choose Your Actions

When you realize your anger has launched, what will you choose to do now to make sure you don't blow up? Circle any of the actions below that you feel would be most helpful to you, or write in any additional productive choices that come to mind.

- *Make a quick mental calculation of the consequences of going nuclear*
- *Take five deep breaths or count backwards from 20*
- *Ask yourself, "What was I expecting here? Is it realistic?"*
- *Ask yourself, "What really triggered this? What was my primary emotion?"*
- *Say "Hold on a second," turn around, and walk a few paces away*
- *Call a friend – perhaps someone from your REBOOT group – and talk it out*
- *Think through how to bring about a constructive, win-win outcome to the conflict*
- *Make a decision about getting better sleep (if you can)*
- *Write down your experience in journal form*
  - *Engage in one of your favorite hobbies*
  - *Read your Bible, meditate on Scripture*
  - *Put on some favorite, soothing music*
  - *Go work out or go for a walk*
  - *What else?*

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# Listen to the Right Words

Negative self-talk taps into our insecurities, and it's made worse by Satan, who is intent on trying to get us to explode with unmanaged emotions. But positive self-talk can decompress a situation and help us take wise actions in response to anger.

Below is a list of some good examples of self-talk that could be helpful for you to memorize and rehearse in your own mind when you face a heated situation. Circle any of these that resonate with you.

- *"This could be a tough situation, but I know how to deal with it."*
- *"I can work out a plan to handle this. Easy does it."*
- *"Remember – stick to the issues and don't take it personally."*
- *"As long as I keep my cool, I'm in control of the situation."*
- *"I don't need to prove myself. I won't make more out of this than I have to."*
- *"There is no point in getting mad. What do I need to do to resolve this?"*
- *"Look for the positives, and don't jump to conclusions."*
- *"Relax and slow things down."*
- *"Take a deep breath. Take the issue point by point."*
- *"Situational awareness! My anger is an alarm. Where's the real threat, or is there one?"*
- *"He probably wants me to get angry. But I'm going to deal with it constructively."*
- *"I know what's happening here, and I'm going to bring this rocket back down to earth."*

## THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

**MY *Personal* ANGER CONTROL PLAN**

Review your markings and notes from the previous pages to construct your anger control plan. Write your responses to each of the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share elements of your plan with the group at next week's meeting.

**LAUNCH PAD** — What are the situations that launch my angry responses?

**STAGE ONE** — Which two primary emotions are most often triggered in me?

**STAGE TWO** — What are the "cues" that indicate to me that my anger is escalating?

**STAGE THREE** — What actions can I take in response to my anger to help it be constructive rather than destructive?

**THE RIGHT WORDS** — What can I tell myself to de-escalate my anger?