

## The Angry Protector Mode

When the Angry Protector Mode is activated within our personality system, we find ourselves attempting to defend our Vulnerable Child by putting up a wall of anger that's designed to keep other people at a distance. When we're blended with a part that's in this particular mode, our behaviour is usually seen by those around us as aggressive, prickly, and completely off-putting. However, parts in this mode have no real intent to harm anyone, either verbally or physically, they simply want to push people away from us in order to make sure we stay safe. The Angry Protector constantly breaks the connection we have with other people, regardless of their importance in our lives, and we are filled with the experience of frustration, resentment, and irritability whenever this mode has been activated in our system.

The Angry Protector Mode can often follow on from a period of blending with the Angry Child Mode. In that, the Angry Child is trying to get the people around us to listen to what it is that we're trying to say, and when those needs are not met, and the people don't hear us, we flip into the Angry Protector Mode pushing people away as a way to protect the possible activation of our Vulnerable Child. The Angry Protector will show up in our language with phrases like, "Stay away from me," or, "I don't want anything to do with you, you're pissing me off right now," and it is often followed by an Avoidant Protector Mode fleeing the situation by storming off.

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**“Throughout my life, there were many times when I would put up a wall of anger designed to keep people away. I would mode flip, back and forth from an angry child to an angry protector in a frantic attempt to defend my vulnerable child.”**

~Steven Morris

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For me, once the coping mechanism of substance was no longer used, or effective, anger was the most dominant coping mechanism in my system whenever my vulnerable child was under threat. As I previously mentioned, the textbook example was exactly how it played out for me. First, my Angry Child would come to the surface trying to make people listen to what I had to say, and then when people wouldn't listen, or agree, in the way I wanted them too, it would quickly flip into an Angry Protector, followed by an Avoidant Protector that would push everyone away and isolate myself in a frantic attempt to find safety in my solitude. One of the biggest problems with this behaviour pattern was that it intensified my underlying sense of loneliness due to my perceived lack of emotional connection with anyone significant in my life.

Recognizing the presence of mode flipping is an important part of understanding our system. When we mode-flip, we jump from one behaviour to another, desperately trying to distance or distract ourselves from other emotional experiences in our system. Knowledge is the key to change, but knowledge alone is not enough. When my Angry Protector Mode was blended in my system, I had no

control over my words or actions. I would fly into fits of rage, pushing everyone away, and activating a wall of self-righteous resentment towards others about the things I had perceived them to have done, or not done. This level of anger and contempt is another addictive process which kept me stuck in my pain and suffering for decades.

As I stepped into recovery, it was incredibly important to understand this part of my personality to better appreciate its purpose in my system. Every single part of me has a reason for its presence, and I had to create an internally safe space for my parts to express their feelings. The Angry Protector is an effective tool for shielding the Vulnerable Child from threat. Its behaviour patterns are often seen as aggressive, prickly, and off putting by those around me, which causes them to back away from any attempt to penetrate my guard. The only purpose of the Angry protector is to keep the child safe, to stop anyone from activating the loneliness, sadness, shame, and guilt that I held at the core of my system.

Gaining access to the Vulnerable Child means getting past the protection mechanisms, which the Angry Protector is most definitely one of. The only way to do this is to get to know it, to appreciate its purpose in our system by listening to and acknowledge its fears. I needed to mindfully create the opportunity for this part to lessen its hypervigilance with empathy and compassion, to appreciate its purpose and to be grateful for the way it does its job. Once I was able to do this, I was taking the steps needed toward the Life I want to Live, creating opportunities to behave differently, and opening up the possibility for liberating the parts of me that were experiencing emotional pain.

Next, let's check in to see how you relate to this Mode in your own behaviours. Answer the questions below based on your personal experiences and the rating scale provided.

Never 0	Sometimes 1	50/50 2	Often 3	Always 4
Description				Score
I usually get angry at other people and push them away from me in order to protect myself from how they make me feel.				
I find myself putting up a wall of anger when I don't relate to people around me, generally because I want to be left alone.				

Based on the scores you gave for the questions above, and the way you relate to the description provided on the previous pages, how Relevant is the Angry Protector Mode to you in your life? Add the two scores together to calculate your prevalence score. On a scale of 0 – 8, 0 being not present at all, and 8 being present in my life every day, rate your experience of the Angry Protector Mode.

My Angry Protector Mode has a prevalence score of \_\_\_/8.

On the next page, take the time to explore your experience of the Angry Protector Mode, see if you can identify how you feel when this Mode is active, how you are thinking when this Mode is active, what you do when this Mode is active, and what situations you might need to be aware of that can activate this way of thinking in your personality system.

- a. When I am in the Angry Protector Mode, I experience the following feelings (List the emotions you experience in the Angry Protector Mode, focus on the feelings in your system when you hold resentment and judgement for the people around you, and you're trying to push them away).

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- b. When I am in the Angry Protector Mode, I am having the following thoughts (List the thoughts you are having when you're in the Angry Protector Mode, be specific, focus on thoughts that point out how the story in your system is an accurate one, how the narrative has to be true, and how there is no alternative to what you are hearing).

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- c. When I am in the Angry Protector Mode, I behave in the following ways (List the things you do, the way you act, and how you react when you're in the Angry Protector Mode).

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- d. The following situations are likely to be involved in triggering my Angry Protector Mode (List the situations you are aware of that have activated this mode of behaviour in the past).

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