

## Writing Anger and Other Intense Emotions: Part 1

By: Saraiya Kanning

**Grade Level:** 6-12

**Time Frame:** 60 minutes

**Objective:** Students will explore anger and express the dynamics of this emotion using metaphorical language.

**Prior Knowledge and Skills:** Grade level reading and comprehension, some practice writing metaphors and using sensory language.

**Required Materials:** whiteboard and markers, paper and pencil,

**Literary Model:** [War Within Myself](#) by Daniel K.

### Sequence of Activities:

#### Read and Discuss Literary Model (10 min):

Before we start writing, read and discuss the below poem by Daniel K.

After reading it once out loud as a class, listen to the poet read it [here](#).

As you listen, highlight any lines or phrases that speak to you, make you feel an emotion, make you confused or curious, or stand out to you in any other way you find interesting.

### War Within Myself

By Daniel K.

I've been fighting a War Within Myself all my life,  
Tired of the hurt, the pain, the strife.  
Anger consumes me from day to day,  
Cellies now walking on eggshells, unsure of what to say.  
I do pray each night for the peace that I need in my heart,  
I need it before I tear what friendships I have apart.  
Prison has a funny way of doing some things,  
Leaves me wondering what tomorrow may bring.  
I'm tired of the hate, anger and pain that I feel,  
I just want my heart and soul to be healed.  
I want to be able to simply laugh at a joke,  
I need someone to help me before I lose all hope.  
My heart is almost completely hardened with what I've been through,  
I need someone, anyone, maybe that someone is you.  
I'm fighting a War Within Myself, and I'm so tired,  
So nervous, scared, like I'm on a high tight wire.  
I hope that I don't fall before someone catches me,  
But then again... maybe it's my destiny.

**About this Poem (this excerpt is taken from Poets.Org):**

This poem is published in partnership with Free Minds Book Club & Writing Workshop, an organization based in Washington, DC, that is committed to elevating and amplifying the voices of those directly impacted by the prison system. Through creative writing, job readiness training, and violence prevention outreach, Free Minds assists members, who are incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youths and adults, in realizing their own potential. The poet's last name was withheld on request in consideration of their privacy.

**Questions for Group Discussion or for Quiet Individual Journaling:**

1. What are some lines or phrases you highlighted? Read it out for the class.
2. What emotions exist in this poem? Likely, you will find more than one.
3. Can you find a simile in this poem? Similes use the word "like" to make a comparison.
4. Are anger and hope related? Is it possible to feel them at the same time?
5. How do you experience anger and hope?

**Collaborative Writing (10-15 min):**

Write a group poem together. Write down student ideas into one poem. They can build off each other's ideas, or each new idea can take the poem in a different direction. We are still working with metaphor, specifically similes, through a series of "like" statements. As students share ideas, ask them to think about their own anger or anger as seen in another person and how it feels, looks, or behaves. See below for a Collaborative Poem Worksheet at the bottom of the page.

**Individual Writing Prompt (10-15 min):**

Instructions for students:

Use the worksheet at the bottom of this document to write your "Anger is like" poem. You can add more lines than the worksheet gives if you feel so inspired. You can change the beginning of each line, if you feel so inspired. The only thing I ask is that you use your 5 senses (hearing, taste, touch, smell, and sight) to bring imagery and description to your poem. Turn anger into something we can see with our eyes, feel with our fingers, smell with our nostrils, taste with our tongues, and hear with our ears. **Make anger alive and touchable.** And then end your poem with your thoughts on what heals anger.

**Note:** If you don't feel inspired to write about anger, feel free to pick a different emotion. Anger is the original prompt, but you could also pick any other feeling from sorrow to boredom. Whatever you pick, pick something that is very real to you. An emotion with which you are very familiar.

**Optional Sharing or Art (10 min or continue in a follow-up session):**

Save 10 minutes at the end of class for volunteers to share their poems. Writing about anger or any intense emotion means being vulnerable, so it's also okay if students aren't comfortable sharing. Another option is to draw or create a representation of this emotion using the metaphors that appear in their poem.

**Collaborative Poem:**

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick an animal, real or imagined)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(now describe how that animal behaves or moves – as in “folding its many arms”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick an object that has scent)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(describe this scent – “acidic and sharp”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick anything that makes a sound)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(describe the sound – as in “hissing”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick something has texture)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(describe the feel of this texture – “rough and peeling”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick something has vivid color)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(describe this color as vividly as you can– “neon orange lava”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick something has noticeable taste)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(describe this taste – “toasted, burnt, dull and nutty”)*

Anger heals with/through

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*(what heals anger?)*

Anger heals with/through

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*(Come up with one more idea – this time make it an action – what action heals anger? Something you or someone else does to you to heal anger.)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_

Emotion Poem Worksheet:

Poem Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick an animal, real or imagined)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(now describe how that animal behaves or moves – as in “folding its many arms”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick an object that has scent)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(describe this scent – “acidic and sharp”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick anything that makes a sound)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(describe the sound – as in “hissing”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick something has texture)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(describe the feel of this texture – “rough and peeling”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_  
*(pick something has vivid color)*

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*(describe this color as vividly as you can– “neon orange lava”)*

Anger is like a/the \_\_\_\_\_

*(pick something has noticeable taste)*

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*(describe this taste – “toasted, burnt, dull and nutty”)*

Anger heals with/through \_\_\_\_\_

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*(what heals anger?)*

Anger heals with/through \_\_\_\_\_

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*(Come up with one more idea – this time make it an action – what action heals anger? Something you or someone else does to you to heal anger.)*