

FREE PDF

When Rage Takes Over

Four things. Not forty.

I have ADHD, and I've lived with the rage most of my life. I bit my sister when I was little. I've lost friendships and relationships because of it.

ADHD anger and rage never excuse bad behaviour, and I have never excused mine.

It does explain it, though. It's often called ADHD rage. Clinicians call it emotional dysregulation. It's the same anger everyone feels, but it arrives faster and harder, with almost no gap between feeling it and acting on it.

Once I understood that, I could do something about it. These are the four things that help me most.

1 Catch the warning window

There's almost always a gap between the first sign and the blow-up. Sometimes it's ten minutes. Sometimes it's four seconds. That gap is where you get a choice.

MINE

It starts in my stomach. I feel it building there before I've said a word.

For other people it's a clenched jaw, heat in the face, talking faster, or going very quiet. If you mask, it might be a flat "fine".

Do this: find your first sign. Practise noticing it on small things, like a slow queue or a website that won't load, so you catch it sooner when it's big.

2 Use your body in that window

Once you've caught the sign, you have seconds. Your body is already getting ready to fight, so trying to think your way out rarely works. Working through your body does.

Do this: breathe out longer than you breathe in. In for four, out for six or eight. Nobody can see you do it, in a meeting, in a queue or halfway through an argument. If focusing on your breath makes it worse, press your feet hard into the floor instead.

3 Get out before you can't

Leaving can feel like losing. It isn't. It stops the damage before it happens. You won't think of a good line in the middle of it, so have one ready.

WHAT I ACTUALLY SAY

"I need the bathroom." Or "I'm just getting a drink." And sometimes just "Sorry. I'll be back."

Do this: pick your line now. Then come back once you've settled. Coming back is what makes it an exit, not a walk-out. If you're leaving because you're scared, you don't owe anyone a return time.

4 Come back without prosecuting yourself

The blow-up lasts minutes. The 3am replay of every word can last days, and it doesn't repair anything.

Do this: wait until your breathing is back to normal. Then keep it short: "I snapped at you about the washing up. That wasn't fair. I'm sorry." Then stop. Ask yourself one question: what was my first sign, and when did I miss it?

This is the short version

My book, *The Tasmanian Devil Effect*, goes into why ADHD rage happens, how trauma feeds it, and what to do in the moments these four don't cover. You'll find it on my website, along with my free tools.

yourresetpower.com

Help, wherever you are

If you or anyone else is in danger right now, call your emergency number. If your anger has got physical, or you're frightened of what you might do to someone else or to yourself, please talk to someone. If you're scared of someone else's anger, these lines are for you too. All are free and confidential, and open 24 hours unless it says otherwise.

United Kingdom

Emergency: 999. On a mobile, if you can't speak, stay on the line and press 55.

Crisis, including thoughts of harming yourself:
Samaritans **116 123**

Children and young people: Childline **0800 1111**

Worried about your own behaviour: Respect Phonenumber **0808 8024040** (Mon to Fri, 10am to 5pm)

Domestic abuse:

England **0808 2000 247**

Scotland **0800 027 1234**

Wales **0808 80 10 800**

Northern Ireland **0808 802 1414**

Male victims of abuse: Men's Advice Line **0808 8010327** (Mon to Fri, 10am to 5pm)

Ireland

Emergency: 112 or 999

Crisis: Samaritans **116 123**

Domestic abuse: Women's Aid **1800 341 900**

Up to 18: Childline **1800 66 66 66**

United States

Emergency: 911

Crisis: Call or text **988**

Domestic abuse: **1-800-799-7233**, or text START to **88788**

Children and teens: Childhelp, call or text **1-800-422-4453**

Canada

Emergency: 911

Crisis: Call or text **9-8-8**

Domestic abuse: Find your local line at **sheltersafe.ca**

Young people: Kids Help Phone **1-800-668-6868**, or text CONNECT to **686868**

Australia

Emergency: 000

Crisis: Lifeline **13 11 14**

Domestic abuse: 1800RESPECT **1800 737 732**

Ages 5 to 25: Kids Helpline **1800 55 1800**

Men worried about their own behaviour: Men's Referral Service **1300 766 491**

New Zealand

Emergency: 111

Crisis: Call or text **1737**

Domestic abuse: Women's Refuge **0800 733 843**

Young people: Youthline **0800 376 633**, or text **234**

Somewhere else?

findahelpline.com lists free, confidential services in most countries.

Numbers checked September 2026.