

10 Tips To Cope With Negative Emotions At Work

By Rachna D. Jain

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It's a fact of life - if you want to succeed in business, you need to know how to interact and communicate effectively with your employees, business partners, vendors, prospects, and customers. As a small business owner, this might involve rapid shifting from one type of language to another. For example, how you'd explain your expectations to your employees might be different than how you'd convey these to your business partner or potential client.

As we all know, sometimes language breaks down, and communication grinds to a halt. This can leave the owner feeling irritable, angry, frustrated... and with a desire to vent to his/her employees or staff.

While there may be instances that such sharing would be appropriate or helpful, there are many instances where this is not the case, and venting anyway may result in a significant loss of credibility and respect from key employees and contacts.

So, what are some effective ways to manage emotions in the work place environment?

1. Good self-care is the best medicine. An employer who tends to his/her own physical, emotional and mental needs, regularly, is going to be more adept at managing negative or hostile emotions at work. Start with adequate sleep, good nutrition, and regular exercise.
2. Know what anger and frustration feels like to you - both in your head and in your body. Sometimes, we can get really "cut off" from our feelings and act rashly without knowing why. Spend some time knowing what anger feels like to you, and where you notice it in your body.
3. Take a 10 minute walk. When you desire to "vent", excuse yourself from the office and take a brisk 10 minute walk around the parking lot or neighborhood. This will clear your mind and may save you from losing your temper.
4. Vent to a mentor, coach, or trusted colleague. The act of sharing your frustration and fears will calm you down. These people can support you and help you move forward.
5. Ask, "What am I afraid of?". Most often, anger or frustration appears when one of our fears has been activated. By going directly for the source of your feelings, you may be able to short-circuit them.

6. Make an exhaustive "do not want" list. In this list, you write down everything you do NOT want in the situation such as "to look foolish", "to be unprepared", etc.. Once you write this all down - ALL OF IT- you will clear your mind and be ready to generate productive solutions.

7. Distract yourself. Sometimes, getting your mind off the upsetting subject is enough to calm you down. Consider closing your door and playing computer games or something equally mindless (but absorbing). Shifting your focus will shift your attitude.

8. Ask, "What's working about this situation?" This tip comes from Kurt Wright's book, "Breaking the Rules", and suggests that we all can manage stress better if we start looking at "what's working" rather than "what's wrong". Many times, communication breakdowns or glitches can show you where better systems need to be created and placed and ultimately, will enhance the viability of your organization.

9. Take an action. Sometimes, when one piece of the business plan isn't moving, it may mean that another part is ready to be acted upon. Rather than feeling annoyed and frustrated, transform that energy into positive movement forward, where you can.

10. Make a strong request. If you would like something to be different, start the process of making it so. Contact key people, letting them know that you'd like to work on the impasse, and make your needs and those of your business known. Sometimes, just communicating about your desires in the form of an appropriate request can move situations along.

Regular use of these tips will help you stay well balanced & happy as your business grows and flourishes. Try them and see!

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