

Timely Information for Personal Success

Managing Emotions in the Workplace

By Angela Civitella

Emotions are part of the human condition. As a result, we deal with them in every interaction, every single day. From work to home to social events, life, and family, our emotions range depending on many factors. In the workplace, when expectations are high and resources are low, emotional outbursts can seem like the norm rather than the exception. If you are in a position of leadership, you have the added pressure to set the tone for others to follow. This is not always an easy thing to do while managing a team at the same time.

Navigating Office Emotions in the New Year

Aiming for an “emotion free” business environment, while perhaps a nice thought, is also completely unrealistic. Too many unforeseen events make it impossible to work in an emotionally controlled environment. The secret to success is learning how to manage those emotions, whether you are in an entry level position or the CEO.

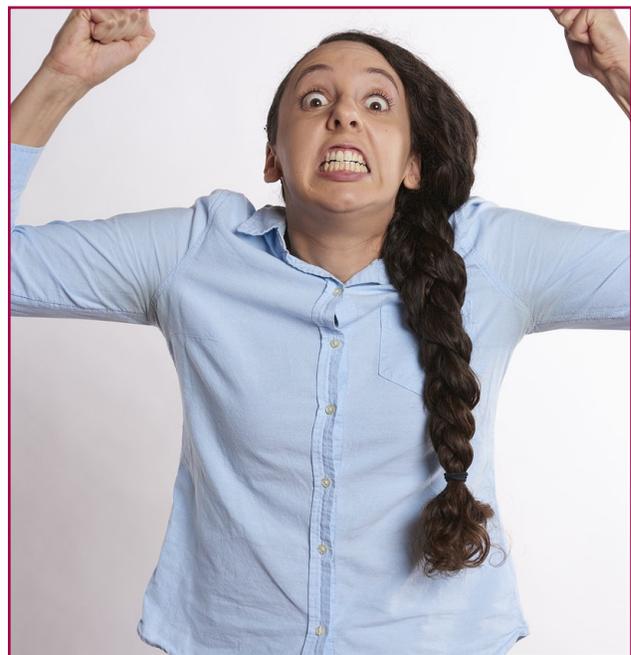
The following are suggestions to help you navigate the sometimes-messy world of alpha personalities, divas, and leaders in the making, to come out victorious.

❖ **Remember that honesty goes a long way.** No one likes to work with Mr. or Mrs. Perfect. If you’re honest about your struggles, your team will kick in an extra layer of loyalty and trust because they can relate to you. In fact, it might make them more mindful about creating chaos themselves. It’s good to be honest. Try it, you won’t be sorry. This

doesn’t mean you have to divulge all the little personal details of your life, but being more open about certain things will strengthen the bond of the team. What you’ll more than likely find is a co-worker who opens up and says something like, “I often feel that way” or “Let me tell you how I deal with...” Personal relationships strengthen leading to more professional success.

❖ **Don’t wait for Armageddon.** As a leader, go deeper and look for what is triggering an employee’s emotional behavior in the first place. This positions

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Healthy Recipe: Chicken Dijon

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 4 chicken breasts, boneless, skinless, (about 4 ounces each), cut into 1-inch strips
- 1/2 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 168
- Protein: 27 g.
- Carbohydrates: 2 g.
- Sodium: 154 mg.
- Saturated fat: 1 g.
- Fat: 5 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- ➊ Heat the olive oil in a non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until the onion becomes tender, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute more.
- ➋ Turn the heat up to medium-high. Season the chicken with salt and pepper and add it to the skillet. Sauté the chicken until it is golden brown on all sides, about 4 minutes.
- ➌ Quickly add the chicken broth and stir with a wooden spoon to release any caramelized bits that are stuck to the pan. Cook until the chicken broth has reduced by half. Stir in the mustard.
- ➍ Serve with, or over rice pilaf.

Serving size: 1 chicken breast

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you to deal with issues at their root level and provides insight into the “danger zones” to avoid. You will be in a much better position to prevent an outburst by avoiding the boiling point. Don’t pretend chaos isn’t happening. Help whomever is having a meltdown gain their sanity back. The key is to deal with workplace emotions swiftly, but *without* making the other person feel attacked or threatened. Be clear about what is being criticized and focus on the outcome not the process of resolving the issue.

❖ **Recognize the link between gender and crying.** Women are six times more likely than men to cry at work. Tears are the workplace equivalent of a “check engine” sign. It could mean we are overworked, we are sick, we feel angry, or we are frustrated. Rather than seeing tears as a sign of weakness, they signify that there is an underlying need that should be addressed. Get to work and

address it. By the way, men experience emotions too. They just have different ways of expressing and dealing with them.

❖ **Manage your own emotions at work.** Last but not least, if you are a leader feeling overwhelmed, take a well-deserved breather. Keep it short, no need to explain, simply say, ‘You know what, I need a break. I’ll be back in 30 minutes.’ And just like that, take a break. Taking time to focus on your own mental health and well-being is one of the most important things you can do for professional success. Neglecting your emotions will have adverse effects. Not only will this help you tremendously, but as a leader it’s setting an important example for your employees that says it’s okay to take care of yourself.

Summary

When it comes to emotions in the workplace, leaders have a complex challenge where the ripple effect of *any* emotional situation can run deep. This is an area where great leaders can really set themselves apart by approaching emotions as something *healthy* for the business. It is believed that these profound social changes, in tandem with the new scientific insights into the ways each gender operates, will transform the future of interpersonal dynamics on the job. ■

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