

WORDS ARE LIKE STONES

By: Robert S. Sher

Recently, while in the waiting room of a physician's office, I heard the Office Manager lash out at an employee over a project. The employee picked up their belongings and left.

This is as good a time as any to remind all of you about the importance of controlling your frustrations and temper. In my career as a CFO and now as a business coach, I have learned that people need little reminders every now and then so they know what type of behavior is proper in any situation.

I've heard a lot of disturbing stories lately about bosses and colleagues behaving badly and I've had far too many inquiries about how to deal with it. One client asked me if there was a rule book for "diffusing a bomb", a client contact with a terrible temper. She started meetings with threats and blamed them for missing deadlines that she missed.

I cannot tell you how to make someone stop bullying on-the-job but I can reiterate how important it is to stay centered to live more positively. Ultimately this attitude will make you happier in life and then help you develop a strategy toward that goal.

It may also be enough to diffuse the temper of any client like the one above. We will all get more if we choose honey over vinegar.

When put into an uncomfortable situation, go to your inner strength and remember to treat people with civility. Treat them with respect within and outside the organization. Treat them in the same manner you wish to be treated.

When something triggers a negative emotion, you can hold back your frustrations by following these few steps:

- Put your comments on a seven-second time delay in a similar way radio and TV stations air news and interviews. They delay them for a few seconds in case they need to edit them. This helps you from saying what immediately comes to mind.
- Write your thoughts in a letter, stick it in a desk drawer and read it the next day as if you are the person receiving this letter. How would this make you feel? That is how the recipient will feel.
- Focus on the positive. Start every day with a simple 'good morning' to everyone you pass on your way to your office or cubicle. Don't whine. Don't complain. The keys to being positive are survival, focus and persistence.
- Show appreciation to your employees and customers; have one-to-one meetings.
- Praise employees in public; criticize in private.

- Don't spend a lot of time blaming others. Don't blame an attorney who files a lawsuit you authorized against a vendor when you do not understand the risks. Don't blame your accountant for an omission on your tax form when you file your tax returns without reviewing them. Don't complain about the banker who arranged your line of credit when you didn't read the covenants. And please don't grumble about your employees not treating customers well.
- Remember that ultimately you are responsible for your own actions. You do not have the right to point fingers at those who have let you down or expect others to come forward and fix your problems.
- Please and thank you are three of the most wonderful words in the English language.

And just remember, words are like stones – once you throw them out, you can never take them back.

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