

# When you want to blow a fuse, chew on this...

Tips on dealing with anger before it gets out of hand

LIZA VAN WYK

EVERYONE, even the most and level-headed among us, experiences anger in life, particularly at work where we spend most of our day.

For many, the changing nature of the workplace is partly to blame.

During these economic downturns, more is expected of employees, but there are less and less financial rewards and job security to balance the greater demands.

The result is employees feel increasingly frustrated, anxious, and angry.

Unfortunately, anger spells trouble. The workplace environment may not be much fun.

Fury over work can make your



**KEEP YOUR COOL:** Anger in the workplace is unavoidable. The trick is to handle angry situations in such a way that they do not affect your co-workers nor overall productivity.

home life tense. After all, few of us can completely separate our jobs from the rest of our lives.

That's why it's essential to learn to manage your work anger before it harms you.

Psychologists say we have three choices when faced with something that angers us: venting by yelling or snapping at co-workers, resulting in stress and your co-workers avoiding you; turning anger

inward; stopping being hard on yourself, cooling down and reflecting on the situation.

How can you manage anger at work to make this year prosperous?

If you find yourself becoming tense and angry, try these common-sense techniques:

- Change your habits. Do not take on too many tasks, especially if you are already overloading yourself. Manage your time better.

- Forgive those who anger you. If a co-worker upsets you, or if you and an offender have had harsh words, talk to him or her.

Forgive, apologise (many times the apologies are mutual). Do not hold a grudge.

- Relax. Take deep breaths, count to 10 slowly, or just close your eyes and say "relax". If you're really agitated, excuse yourself for a minute and get a glass of water.

- Remember, it's not always about you.

- Figure out your boss's hot buttons, and then don't press them.

View people as they are, rather than as you think they should be.

- Deal with anger at work on the spot, or at least on that same day. In general, little tempests are always better than big storms.

- Pick your battles. Some work woes are not worth fighting over; save your breath for more critical matters.

- Discuss your anger with friends, loved ones or those who anger you. Talk it out.

Let people close to you know what is on your mind.

Do not hold it in. Calmly tell others when they upset you – they may not realise what they did to make you angry.

- Last, act smart when you're mad. Turn the situation into an opportunity to make a positive change.

● Liza van Wyk is CEO of AstroTech Training. They offer leadership development training.

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