



# KEEP YOUR COOL

It's utter rubbish what they say about redheads that they have hot tempers. And I should know. Loss of temper isn't hair colour discriminate.

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Losing your temper with your partner in the middle of a row is an excellent sport. But showing uncontrolled anger in the office is absolutely positively out of the question.

Firstly, and most importantly, if anyone had an ounce of respect for you they lose it. Secondly when you've gone that far, there is nowhere else to go. Surely the threat of you losing your temper, and the fear that evokes, is better – just the very thought of losing it, rather than actually doing it. I mean, they don't have to think you have the potential to become a mad axe-wielding murderer but a little knee trembling never hurt anyone.

How often have you seen grown men cuss and swear in the office? Don't they look like plonkers – or rather like teenagers showing off in front of each other outside a McDonalds?

We've all needed to let off steam – we had a bad commute in, someone's not done what they said they would and your behind on your work as a result, AND the photocopier isn't working. That's when a lot of people lose it – their tempers, their dignity and often their ability to judge what is and is not OK to say in the office.

## SOUNDS FAMILIAR

Physiological changes occur when you lose your temper: there's an increase in your heart rate, adrenaline pumps into your body, your muscles tense, your digestion gets interrupted, you could end up with hypertension and depression. So losing your temper simply isn't

good for you. However, it's a primary emotion and letting go every now and then is probably healthy, a reasonable amount of anger is necessary for survival.

The issue is really one of 'being in control'. Different things trigger different people, so know what bugs you and keep away from it if you can. If you can't, then learn how to harness that anger and handle it in a way that's not destructive to you and those around you.

## THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH GETTING ANGRY. HOW YOU EXPRESS IT IS WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.

### HERE'S HOW:

1. If you're too angry to think rationally, remove yourself from the situation.
2. Give yourself a few quiet minutes alone to cool down. Think of something relaxing.
3. When you feel your body relax, take a few deep breaths.
4. Return to the original situation and try a different approach.
5. If your new approach doesn't help you stay in control of your temper, repeat steps 1–4

### TIPS:

1. Find something that relaxes you (music, skateboarding, drawing, etc.) and do it regularly.
2. If you've got a problem with someone, don't hold it inside, let him/her know about it.

Even the favourite outlet – plain old swearing – needs to be controlled. Swearing at technology is a modern-day pastime for many of us, but it's not fair on those around you if you are constantly foul-mouthed around machinery. And, you know what? It won't make a jot of difference to the outcome.

Making a habit of reasoning things out with yourself before hitting the roof can save you some embarrassing memories. Evaluate whether or not a situation demands a full-on blow out. A short temper is like a short-circuit. The sparks fly and you explode. Instead, let the moment pass. Take time off to control your internal responses.

If something is making you mad and you have to do something about it, then talk it over with someone first. It will help you get it in perspective and you can feel angered without being in front of the person or situation that is causing it in the first place, leaving you in a better state to actually go back and deal with it.

Don't forget, one of the great human capabilities is language, so mind what you say because it can have a very great effect. Words said in anger can be regretted for a long time afterwards. Consider it a challenge to couch your suggestions in polite language, rather than stating your mind bluntly. And avoid those swear words. Try saying, 'I think you could do with more training' instead of 'You don't know what the f\*\*k you're doing.' A little bit of humour will get you much further than a whole heap of anger. ■