

Rage at Work

with

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Rage can be addictive. Do you work with a rageaholic?

Rageaholics are anger addicts. They compulsively use anger to trigger mood changes. Frequent temper tantrums, furious outbursts and extreme mood swings are common signs that you're dealing with a rageaholic. So how do cope if there's a rageaholic in your life? Here are some important points to keep in mind.

1. You can't change them

You are dealing with someone who is addicted. If you try to protect them or rescue them, you're enabling their behaviour. Focus on managing your situation, rather than attempting to change the rageaholic.

2. Rage makes them feel powerful

Anger releases adrenaline, which makes the rageaholic feel unbeatable. The feeling is so enjoyable that the rageaholic seeks to experience it again and again. This means the rage an anger addict directs at you is *never* really caused by you. Keep this in mind when you are dealing with one of their outbursts.

3. Logic won't work

Rageaholism is irrational - it stems from suppressed feelings. There is no point trying to reason with an anger addict, because the adrenaline surging through their body distorts their thinking. Resist the temptation to argue, defend yourself, or present a logical case. Instead, let the rage addict vent and then allow half an hour for the physical effects of their anger to subside.

4. You need a safety plan

Living with a rageaholic can hurt you mentally or physically. Take steps to protect yourself. These might include:

- Finding a counsellor to help you deal with the trauma the rageaholic inflicts
- Ensuring you are never alone with the rageaholic
- Using stress management techniques
- Creating an escape plan to ensure you can get away from the rage addict if they become violent

Book one of our conflict resolution trainers to run a course on mental health in the workplace for your team. [Contact us now](#)

Calm down now!

by **Eleanor Shakiba**

Director, Think Learn Succeed

Do you freeze with fear when someone yells at you? Although this is a natural reaction, it doesn't really help. In fact, some people will take advantage of your paralysis and escalate their screaming. Here are five verbal techniques that will put you back in control.

Find a point of agreement

It's very hard to continue screaming at someone who says, "I agree." Aim to find something – no matter how small – to concur with. This throws the shouter off balance. Remember, you don't have to agree with everything they say. For example, try saying, "I agree this must be upsetting for you." This slips agreement into the conversation without suggesting you agree with their hostile message.

Shift into neutral

Aim to use neutral words. These steer the conversation away from blame and back towards problem solving. Avoid emotional trigger phrases such as "you should" or "mistake". Instead, use solution focussed words like "solve", "discuss" and "now".

Keep it short

Angry people have short attention spans. They tune out if you give long-winded explanations. Keep your message concise. Repeat it until it gets through. Useful phrases include, "Let's discuss this now" and "Focus on solving this."

Don't say "don't"

Think about what police officers say when faced with an armed offender. They say "put the gun down." This contrasts starkly with the less effective option, "don't shoot." Always tell angry people what you want them to do. Avoid saying "don't" because they'll filter it out. Instead say, "sit down here" or "lower your voice."

Listen up

Shouting is a sign that someone wants to be heard. If you ignore their need, the yelling will continue. If you listen, the other person will calm down faster. Communicate that you're listening by saying, "tell me more about..." Demonstrate you've heard the other person's message by saying, "It sounds as though..." The time *you* spend listening is time *they* spend settling down.

Need advice on what to say in difficult situations? [Send your question](#) and we'll answer it in a future newsletter.

Bully at work

Real Life Success Story

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Tessa had been walking on eggshells for seven years. Her boss was an anger addict. Now his bullying was making her sick.

Tessa worked as an accounts manager in a Brisbane communications company. The stress of dealing with her boss' anger was taking its toll. Tessa was suffering from daily migraines. She was unable to sleep and felt tearful and anxious. In desperation, she booked a program of communication coaching at Think Learn Succeed.

The coach explained that Tessa was dealing with a case of workplace bullying. Then she helped Tessa put an action plan into place. It included steps such as:

Checking the company's policies on bullying and harassment

These policies are often in workplace induction packages, displayed on notice boards or accessible through company intranets. Usually, they outline both formal and informal processes for handling bullying and harassment.

Seeking advice

At work, advice and assistance are usually available from health and safety representatives, human resources teams and unions. Outside work, information can be provided by lawyers, organisational psychologists or mental health practitioners.

Keeping a written record of all incidents

Having an accurate record of the bully's behaviour is very useful if you need to make a formal complaint. It's important that written records are factual, rather than interpretive. For example, you wouldn't write, "Mark raged at me." Instead, you'd write, "Mark called me an idiot for not remembering to order the sandwiches for the team meeting. He said I was an 'incompetent fool'. I do not recall being asked to order sandwiches."

Seeking a new job

Tessa decided that she didn't want to make a formal complaint, as doing so would increase her stress. She preferred to find a job in a new company. Within three months, Tessa had moved into a new position. She was careful to check the culture of her new organisation before she accepted this role. She is now happily working in a bully-free business.

Learn more about it

Bullying can happen in any workplace. No-one deserves the physical and psychological abuse it involves. In *Bully Busting at Work* you'll find out what you're expected to do – as a staff member – to keep your workplace safe and bully-free.

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What's New

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New Courses for Your Team:

Service Essentials for Managers

As a manager, you play a crucial role in the delivery of customer service. This course takes you beyond the theory of quality service. It shows you how to change the behaviours of your team, so that service excellence is reflected in everything they do. You'll start by identifying what your team currently does well and what needs to change. Then you'll master key tools to use with your team in order to build better service systems.

Read course outline.

News from Eleanor Shakiba

Where to see Eleanor this month:

9 July: **Creating Confidence and Motivation with NLP** [Sydney](#)

25 July: **Assertive Communication** [Sydney](#)

27 July: **Dealing with Difficult People** [Sydney](#)

Or book your one to one session with Eleanor. Call 0433 126 841

New Resources for You

Stay Calm Under Pressure Podcast

If you're exposed to anger or bullying, you need to manage your reactions. This thought programming audio session will teach you how. It guides you through exercises to help you relax and to boost your self confidence.

Download now

About Think Learn Succeed

We teach people to create, relate and communicate. If you need team training, we can create a customised session. If you want individual coaching, we'll deliver it by phone or face to face.

Contact us to find out how we can help.