



A Leader's Journey: 8 Tips to Turn Down a Heated Situation

One day a colleague of mine confronted me with an issue that was bothering her after giving me the silent treatment all morning. She felt hurt and unappreciated because I had not recognized her for something she did for me. I apologized for the oversight and said I was wrong to have not given her credit when credit was due. However, it was not enough. She proceeded to keep going with it and then started threatening to withdraw support she was giving me on a project. Instead of remaining calm, I got caught up in her escalated emotions, became angry and “blew up,” which immediately shutdown all communication. I quickly apologized and suggested we discuss the issue when we were all in a better state of mind and left the room.

When you encounter someone who seems angry or irrational, remember they are usually nice people just like you and me who want to be heard, respected and valued in that moment. Here are 8 tips to help you turn down a heated situation:

1. Open your mind and mouth - Be willing to openly discuss the matter with a sincere and caring attitude. Express your desire to work through the situation to find a mutually agreeable solution.

2. Remain calm - Do everything in your power to be at peace, internally and externally. Don't allow yourself to get caught up in the other person's emotions. During a conflict, some people try to draw others in. Instead, maintain a peaceful sense of caring and understanding, and stay cool.

3. Allow them express their perspective - If you can listen without resistance or retaliation, an angry person will usually calm down. Sometimes all they need is to know that they are being heard and to feel that they are valued. If you listen without fighting back, emotions will naturally dissipate. Just ensure that each person is being treated respectfully.

4. See it from their side - Sincerely consider the other person's point of view. Imagine yourself in their position. How would you feel? How would you react? What would you be seeking to solve the problem and make things better? When you can look at the situation from their perspective resolution often comes easier.

5. Validate without judgment – Let the other person know that you hear what they are saying and express your desire to find a fair resolution. That is often enough to nip any conflict in the bud. State what you believe the other person is expressing. You do not have to agree with them; you are just validating and acknowledging their point of view.

6. Take a time out - If the circumstance begins to feel out of control, or becomes verbally or physically abusive, then be sure to take a time out. As much as humanly possible under these conditions, stay calm and centered. Express that tempers are high and you honestly DO want to find a mutual solution. Suggest that you both take a little time away and then reconvene later.

7. Consider the need to concede – Consider how you may have played a role in the problem so that you can apologize and take responsibility for your part. Let the other person know that you realize your role and offer ways to rectify the situation. This can diffuse tempers in a matter of seconds.

8. Visualize reconciliation - Use the powerful tool of visualization to see a successful reconciliation. Picture yourselves working together in a complete state of harmony and cooperation.

I hope you found these tips valuable. Please feel free to pass this blog on to others.

Wishing you peace and success,

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