

## Calming Tactics Worksheet

A calming tactic is an action that you employ to cool down your negative triggers to avoid a negative result.

Use this worksheet to brainstorm some ways to calm yourself when you experience stress at work. I list a few examples to inspire your creativity.

Some calming tactics can be employed in the moment and some are used to prepare us for the heat of the moment.

1. Deep breathing;
2. Saying a phrase like "take a pause"
3. Taking a walk;
4. Take a 5 minute break;
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Once you decide on an appropriate calming tactic, use it the next time you get triggered. If, for instance, you feel frustrated when paperwork hasn't been submitted on time, instead of sending a nasty email, first use one of your strategies to calm down. Then take an action that upholds your intention to keep the relationship with yourself and others dignified and respectful. One action that could support your desired result is to directly give the person feedback about your concern.

### **A Word about Breathing**

I want to mention a special note about breathing as a calming tactic. Breathing has been used for thousands of years in religious and spiritual traditions like yoga (they call it meditation) as the premier way to calm the mind and body. I don't usually like to

argue with thousand-year-old wisdom so I have cultivated this technique and found it extremely helpful.

This is how you do it: Sit in a chair or on a meditation cushion (called a zabuton or a zafu) and place your hands in a comfortable position. You don't need to cross your legs, but if you can, give it a try. You can also sit on a regular straight-backed chair or on the edge of your bed if that is more comfortable. Once you are all set in your seated position, take a few deep breaths through your nose and feel your abdomen rise and fall. Just begin to breathe through your nose and expanding and contracting your belly as the air goes in and out.

You will find that your thoughts begin to take your attention from your breathing. This is completely natural. The point of this exercise is that once you catch your attention drifting, just refocus back on the breath. Make an intention to be more interested in observing your breath than the contents of your mind. As you keep coming back to the breath over and over again, you will begin to experience a calmness, a serenity.

Similarly, if you have discomfort in your body from your seated position, just observe the discomfort but then return to the breath. Pain and discomfort will subside; resist the temptation to move to alleviate the pain, for instance. It is very interesting when you can observe numbness or an itch and let it change without your moving or changing it. As you continue to make your breath your primary focus, everything else will be in the background and not so prominent.

This skill of breathing or meditating practiced well can develop the muscle of calmness on demand. When you get into a stressful situation you will remember that breathing can help you calm down so that you can think clearly. Just ten minutes a day before bed or when you wake up can do wonders to develop this calming strategy over time.