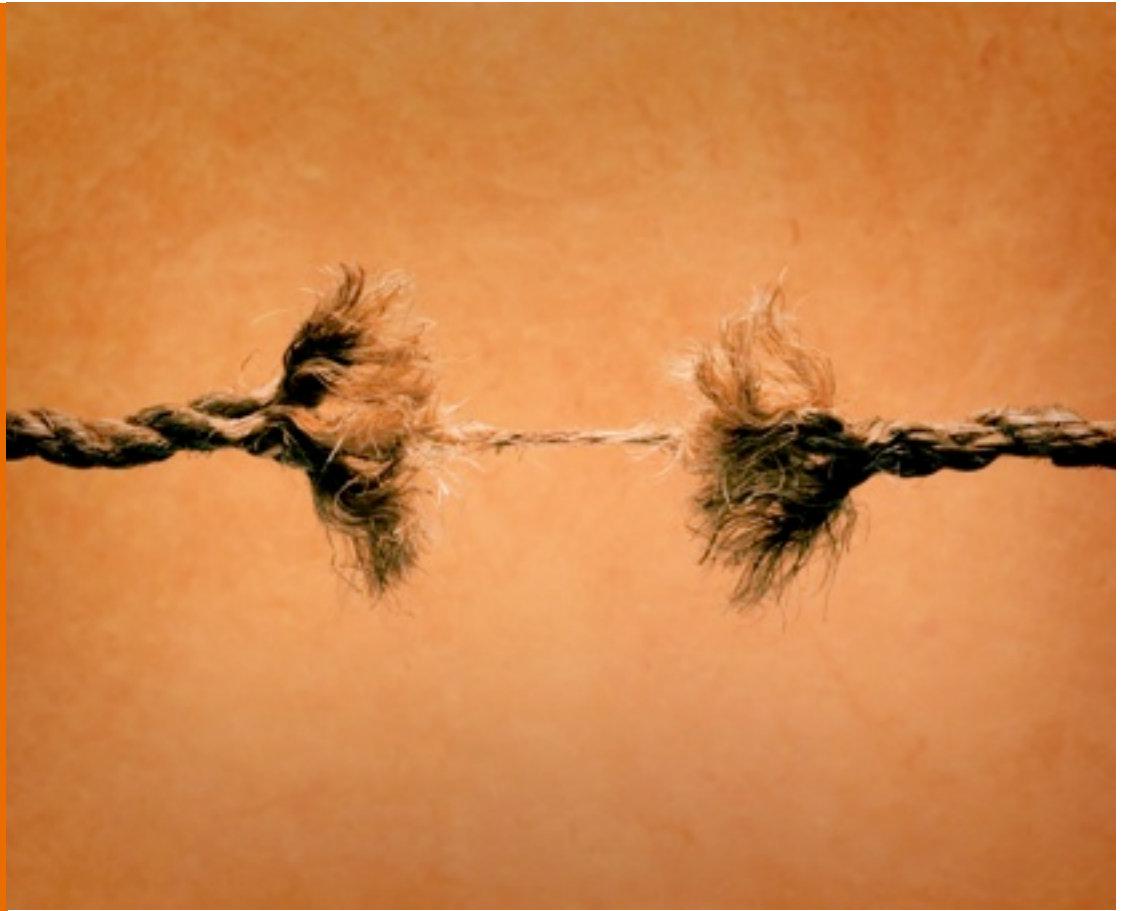


# MORPH

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## Emotions at work!

By Nicole Perry

Ever walked away from a heated conversation or disagreement and thought I wish I handled that better? Have you ever had that moment when you felt your temperature rise and then shut down completely for fear of what may come out?

### **It's okay to feel that way**

First of all, it is okay to have strong emotions - emotions are natural and normal. As a society we tend to shun emotions and it is seen as a negative or a no no to express yourself particularly when you are angry.

If you accept that it is okay to feel a certain way, then you will approach things differently. Allowing yourself to sit within the emotion when it arises simply dissipates it! In contrast,

holding on and restricting it will only lead to further explosions of emotions that can seem inappropriate or an overreaction to the situation.

Experiencing strong emotions is not to be mistaken for bullying. Using power and aggression to forcefully get your way is not appropriate in or outside the workplace.

### **What lies beneath...**

Experiencing emotions in the office is inevitable. Strong emotions are merely indicators that there is something more going on under the surface that requires our attention. Most of the time we don't even realise what has happened. We just feel angry, cranky, frustrated or annoyed.

How much time do you spend exploring these things? How well do you know yourself and what sets you off? Taking time to peel back the surface and look beneath presents you with a deeper insight into your world and ultimately enriches your relationships.

Ask yourself, what is upsetting you the most? What is it about that situation that pushed your buttons?

### **What's your code?**

We all operate by an invisible code. Each of us has our own unique code, constantly guiding our decisions and behaviours. These codes are how we see ourselves and what's important to us. These codes contain the conditions, things and feelings



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we must have to be minimally satisfied in life. They contain our value set. And when these are breached emotions flood through.

No one walks around with their codes written neatly above their head. Usually we don't realise the importance of them until they are challenged. Conversely, we may accidentally challenge other people's codes and only realise this when the interaction takes a different turn to what we were expecting.

So... how well do you know your code?

Exploring this in a non-judgemental and safe way will allow you to gain a deeper understanding of yourself. Recognising what code has been breached allows you to realise what is important to you and know that it is okay to feel like that.

**Now take a walk on the otherside**

In any interaction, there is more than one person, more than one account of what went on. So, it is also wise to look at it from the other person's shoes. Take time to explore what stories you are running. What assumptions have you

made about the other person, their motives or behaviours?

How often do we jump to conclusions without understanding the full picture? Then after the incident we fuel the fire by repeating it over and over to our work colleagues, our partner, our friends - each time the story changes slightly and builds in significance creating an even bigger gap between the two in conflict.

**Take ownership and engage in it**

The thing about emotions and conflict is that they appear hand in hand. They will always be part of our life - there's no escaping that.

Rather than accepting it and embracing it in a healthy way, we view conflict negatively. Our culture teaches us to avoid conflict and as a result it escalates into something bigger than it needs to be. Rarely are we encouraged to take responsibility and engage in difficult conversations in a proactive and empowering way.

Embracing conflict doesn't necessarily mean you will always find a resolution. Embracing conflict is about owning your part in it and managing it.

**A different outcome**

So what does all this mean?

Awareness brings understanding and understanding brings choice. Having this new insight gives you an opportunity to choose to respond in a different way. If you know what is important to you and you understand what triggers you, you are more at ease with yourself and more in control and able to manage future situations. You are equipped to approach it differently if you so choose to.

When you consider how you manage strong emotions and conflict, how do you want to be perceived?

**For more information on change please visit the Transformational Change website**

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