

SPEAKING YOUR TRUTH is empowering or disempowering?

by Feroza Sader

I want to share a quote that someone sent me: "Women are often discouraged from expressing themselves in the workplace when, in fact, they can capitalize on their emotional intelligence. As much as we like to think we can leave our problems at the door, this is not realistic!"

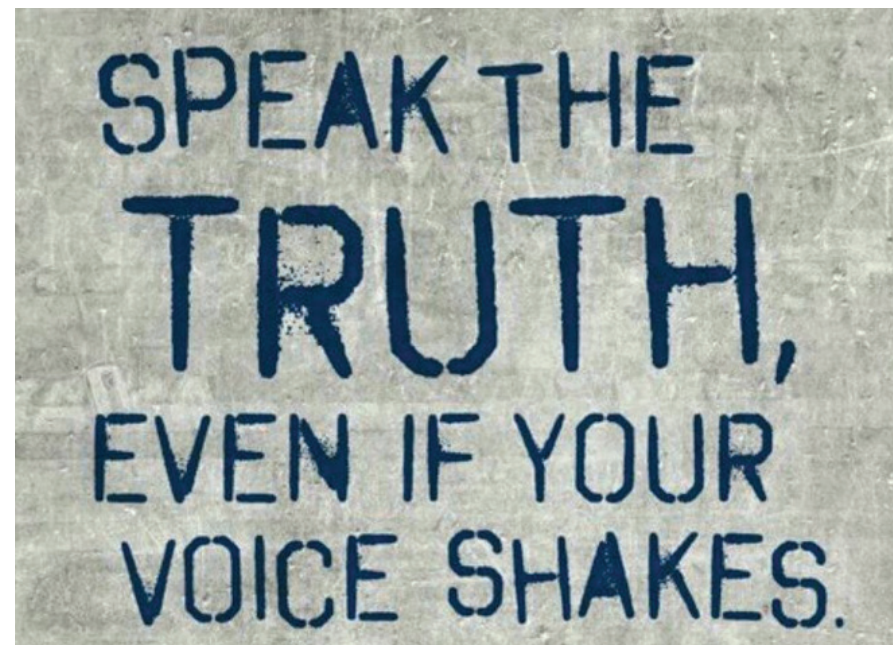
Do you think there is a line between appropriate passion and too much emotion?

Although passion has a legitimate place in business, it can sometimes be misinterpreted. Male colleagues or managers say things like: "She was too hyped up" and "she was too emotional," whereas we women believe we are simply advancing our cause or expressing an opinion, albeit with very strong conviction.

Women are often perceived as melodramatic or excitable and find ourselves having to reword or reposition what we have expressed. Sometimes our "impassioned" statement or opinion is even met with silence. Is this a style in our DNA?

Do you believe that we are more 'emotional' than men?

It's an interesting debate and one that will not reach mutual agreement. However, it does not harm to be aware that if we find ourselves sounding overcharged we need to tone down and regain cool composure because unchecked emotions can make our ideas come across as less convincing and also compromises our credibility.



The reality is that a communication style can enhance or destroy what we are saying!

Being sensitive has both advantages and disadvantages in the workplace. It is not a "defect" that needs to be overcome and should not be confused with shyness or introversion. On the other hand I have heard some colleagues say: "He is so insensitive"

Everyone now speaks about emotional intelligence as our EQ. What it basically refers to is our ability to:

- Identify and manage our emotions
- Pick up on the emotions of others and manage them; and in so doing
- Build trust and grow our influence.

Easier said than done?

Let's try this:

- Be aware of your emotions. Don't let tension build up and result in stress and anxiety.
- Balance good manners, empathy and kindness with assertiveness and establish boundaries. This enables you to neutralise difficult and toxic people.
- Avoid general expressions like: "I'm feeling awful". Emotionally intelligent people express themselves clearly: They define 'awful' as "irritable," "frustrated," "downtrodden," or "anxious." The more specific you are the better insight you have into what caused it, and what you should do about it.
- Don't hold grudges because you're holding on to stress. Let go and improve your emotional health.
- Don't focus on mistakes made. Let go and forget them; you have the ability to transform failures into nuggets of improvement.
- Don't camouflage your feelings. Emotional intelligence is not about being nice; it's about managing your emotions to achieve the best possible outcomes. Sometimes this means showing people that you're upset, sad, or frustrated.

Do you think that most of us at work are as emotionally intelligent as we can be?



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Feroza lives by this saying: 'There are only two days in the year that nothing can be done. Yesterday and tomorrow'. So today is the right day to love, do and live.